

## CHAPTER FOUR

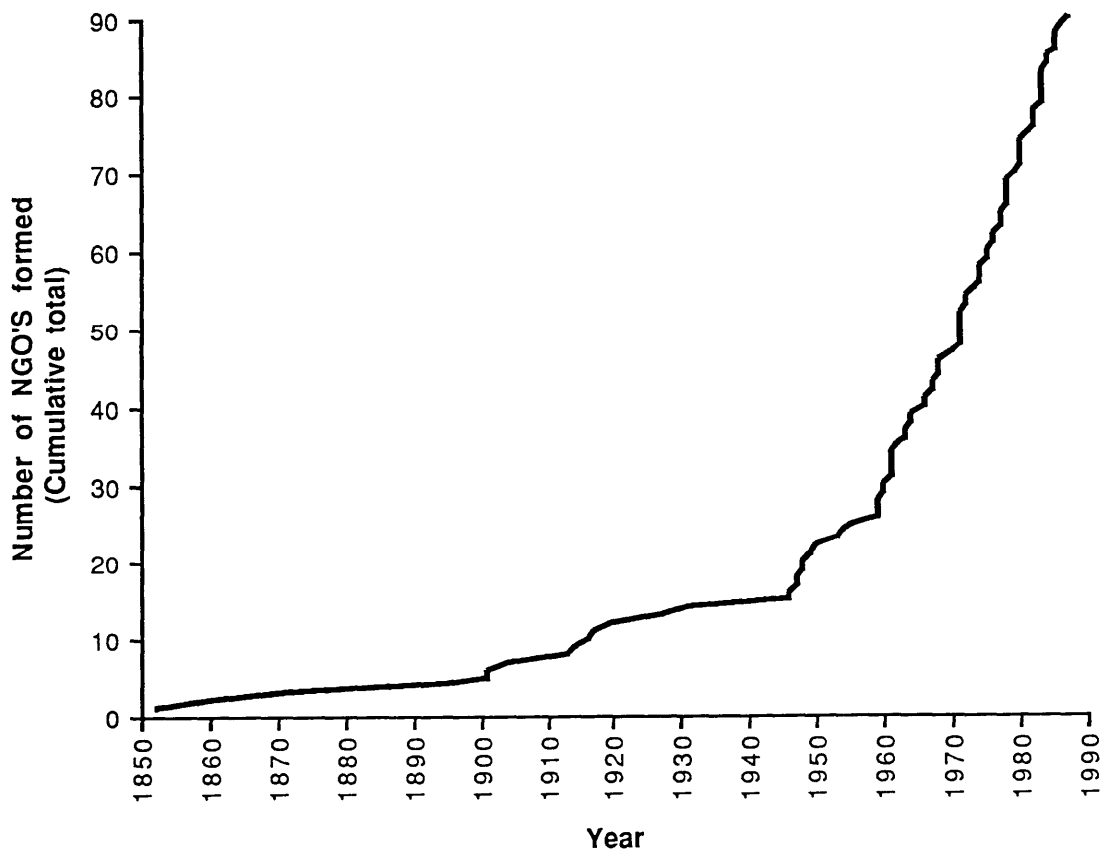
### UNITY IN DIVERSITY: THE CHANGING FACE OF THE AUSTRALIAN NGO COMMUNITY

Before presenting the descriptions of five selected NGOs which provide the substance for the comparative analysis to follow, it is necessary to locate the agencies in the context of the wider community of Australian NGOs. The influences on, and changes occurring within, that community inevitably impact upon its members. Therefore, this chapter presents a precis of the history and growth of the Australian NGO community.

#### **The Genesis of a Voluntary Aid Movement**

Australian voluntary aid activity was very limited before World War II. Although evangelism was their major aim, Christian Missions were the earliest Australian organisations to provide any sort of material aid to the developing world - a common feature in the development of voluntary aid movements in most Western countries (Lissner, 1977:58ff.). For example, the Australian Board of Missions operated informally from 1850, and was officially formed in 1872. Interserve Australia was originally established as the Zenana Bible and Medical Mission in England in 1852, the South Seas Evangelical Mission Ltd. was established in 1904, and the Australian Churches of Christ Overseas Mission Board Inc. formed in 1901. The majority of Australian missionary agencies were established before the Second World War (see Figure 4.1 and Appendix 1). Confronted with the overwhelming needs of host communities, most missionary agencies saw themselves as having a dual responsibility in the world '... comprising both evangelism and social action - a concept which is laid upon us by the model of our Saviour's mission in the world'

Figure 4.1 Formation Dates of Australian Non-Government Development Assistance Agencies



**Sources:** Most information used for the preparation of this graph was compiled from a survey sent to member agencies of the Australian Council for Overseas Aid in early 1988. The remainder was kindly supplied by Dr. Ross McLeod, who collated it from Agency Organisation Reviews prepared by individual agencies for the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau. For details of the formation dates of individual agencies, see Appendix 1.

(Stott, 1975:34). Practically, for most agencies, this meant sharing the Christian Gospel as well as the provision of welfare in the form of material goods, and health and education services. Such assistance was usually provided as a result of decisions by the Australian-based agency, after needs were defined by expatriate missionaries. Western technology (especially health technology) and education were seen to provide solutions to needs of indigenous peoples. In recent years, many missionary agencies have adopted the terminology and project approach used by development practitioners and are increasingly involved in the definition and implementation of development projects at the request of partner churches. For example, Interserve originally provided medical and educational services for women and children in India. The work of the agency has been extended to include a wide range of community health and development projects throughout Asia and the Middle East, which are today provided only at the invitation of nationals.

The late nineteenth century also witnessed the formation of some charities and service clubs which are now involved in the delivery of development assistance. For example, the National Council of Australia of the St. Vincent de Paul Society was set up in 1895. The Young Women's Christian Association of Australia was formed in 1860 to assist in the education of women and to encourage them to reach their full potential. After the turn of the century, the National Council of the Young Men's Christian Association of Australia was formed in 1901 and the Lions Club International was formed in 1917. Development assistance has not always been the prime focus of these agencies which were chiefly concerned with charitable works or community service at home. Today however, most are involved in development work. For example, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul works 'to relieve the needs of deprived members of the community, be these needs material, physical, psychological or social ...' (ACFOA, 1988:27). In addition to work at home, the Australian Society assists its branches in Asia and Oceania with monthly contributions to enable the financing of small self-help projects.

A third group of agencies was established in response to specific

needs - the distress of individuals whose lives were devastated by wars or disasters, and the plight of refugees and orphaned children. For example, the International Red Cross was first established in 1863 in Britain and made sporadic responses to those affected by disasters and wars by providing relief supplies. An Australian branch of the Red Cross was formed nine days after the outbreak of the First World War, primarily to provide services on battlefields and in regions recovering from the devastation of war (Donovan, 1977; Henry, 1970:24-26). Today, through its international network, the International Red Cross is able to provide disaster and emergency relief worldwide. The Save the Children Fund was first established in 1919 in the United Kingdom to assist children who were innocent victims of the First World War. Similarly, the international organisation Foster Parents Plan was established in 1937, initially to assist children displaced by the Spanish Civil War (Molumphy, 1984). The work of both organisations has extended dramatically from charitable provision for individual children, to include emphasis on the social and economic development of the community as a whole. As one author described the changes in philosophy evident in the work of Foster Parents Plan:

In the shambles of postwar Europe the Foster Child was immediately identifiable by his new coat or sturdy shoes. ... The little Greek boy, once legless and sullen on a Piraeus dock, scoots around with new legs on a shiny bicycle in an appeal from the 1950s. A similar appeal now might show the "before" child standing in a dusty lane in front of a dilapidated little house. The "after" photographs might look much the same. Looking more closely, one might see a cement well in the background which was not there before, or, perhaps, a few ducks or chickens. The little house might now have a new roof - not intrinsically dramatic. ...

What would not show in the "after" photograph is the fact that the child does not have intestinal parasites, or pneumonia, that a community garden provides the vegetables to prevent anemia, that the child now has access to a safer water supply (Molumphy, 1984:308).

### **The Post World War II Organisational Boom**

The Second World War provided the stimulus for the emergence of new aid programs. While relief and reconstruction of war-torn Europe were the focus of official programs, the plight of displaced persons prompted the formation of new voluntary organisations (Webb, 1977a:6; Lissner, 1977:58-67; Reid, 1986:8; Hunt, 1986:7-8). For example, the United Nations Association of Australia was established in 1946 and ran a major post-war appeal - the United Nations 1948 Appeal for Children (Henry, 1970:34ff.). The Federation of Australian Jewish Welfare Societies commenced its activities in 1947. The agency was primarily concerned with welfare work on behalf of Jewish people, initially with the provision of relief in the post-war period, and later offering assistance to Australian immigrants. In addition, international Roman Catholic agencies and the World Council of Churches enlisted Australian community support for relief programs. The Australian Council for the World Council of Churches was established in 1948 and in its early years was primarily concerned with support of refugees and provision of relief supplies (Henry, 1970:14-23).

The Second World War not only spawned a host of relief agencies, it was also '... the catalyst which radically altered the power balance between the forces of colonialism and independence' (Tiffen *et al.*, 1977:82). The struggles and poverty facing many of the newly independent nations were transmitted to the developed world through improved communications systems and increased travel. Early official aid transfers were generally motivated by political and strategic interests (and still are!), in particular the desire to establish diplomatic relations with newly independent nations and to prevent the spread of communism amongst them (Hunt, 1986:7-8). Corresponding to a growth in aid disbursements, the 1950s and 1960s witnessed the emergence of theories of foreign aid. As detailed in Chapter One, the basic assumptions of most theorists were that economic growth equalled development, that aid programs could assist by helping to remove obstacles to economic growth and by providing necessary injections of capital, and that rapid economic growth would lead

to benefits which would eventually 'trickle down' to the poor (Hunt, 1986:8-10; Riddell, 1987:87-92; Hellinger et al., 1988:16-18). Generally, optimism prevailed about the ability of transfers of Western capital and technology to promote development and alleviate poverty.

The combination of increased official involvement in the developing world, increasing affluence in the developed nations coupled with growing community awareness of the needs of the developing world, and the emerging theoretical framework providing a justification for aid activity (outlined above), was reflected in rapid numerical growth of Australian NGOs. For example, the Lutheran World Service was formed in 1950, the Food for Peace Campaign (subsequently to become Community Aid Abroad) was established in 1953, and 1959 saw the formation of Australian Baptist World Aid and Quaker Service Australia. This organisational boom continued into the next decade with For Those Who Have Less formed in 1962, Australian Catholic Relief in 1964, World Vision of Australia in 1966, and the Australian Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific in 1967.

United Nations initiatives such as the proclamation of the First Development Decade in 1960 provided the impetus for fundraising appeals, some of which eventually became permanent organisations. For example, The World Refugee Appeal of 1960 provided the impetus for an ongoing campaign on behalf of refugees, resulting in the formation of Austcare in 1967. In 1961, the United Nations mounted another appeal - the Freedom From Hunger Campaign. This resulted in a continuing Australian Campaign under that name, concerned mainly in its early years of operation with agricultural development and food production. In 1961, the Overseas Service Bureau was formed to encourage skilled persons, through the Australian Volunteers Abroad scheme, to serve overseas (the first Australian volunteer had commenced overseas service in 1951). The Bureau hoped that sharing of expertise would encourage host communities to become self-sufficient.

Government financial assistance to newly independent nations and voluntary endeavours became increasingly concerned with issues of economic development rather than of relief alone. As one commentator observed:

In 1950, Australia encouraged the establishment of the Colombo Plan, to co-ordinate material development and aid efforts in non-communist poor nations of Asia ... This transition of Australian official aid from a relief to a development effort was paralleled in the community (Webb, 1977a:6).

A corresponding change in the emphasis of activities of voluntary aid agencies was apparent during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Through the experience of delivering development assistance, agency staff realised that handouts of material goods to provide relief for individuals were only a palliative measure. Such experiences led to a new rhetoric amongst Australian NGOs. Increasingly, their concern was to encourage communities to help themselves, to provide training or services which would benefit the community over the long-term. Reflecting such broadened concerns and insights, the Food for Peace Campaign changed its name to Community Aid Abroad in 1962. Similarly, Henry recorded that by 1967 the concerns of the Australian Council of Churches had widened from its primary focus on refugees and relief and introduced expenditure on a range of development projects, including the provision of health facilities and personnel (1970:17-19). Concurrent with these changes was an emerging emphasis on the effectiveness of aid: 'The effectiveness ... is a constant concern of organisations. They are particularly anxious to find ways and means of ensuring its effectiveness from the view point of the recipient country ...' (Anderson, 1964:139).

Emphasis on aid effectiveness meant that the relationship between donor organisations and recipient communities began to assume increasing importance:

A sensitivity to the recipients' attitudes to aid, and to the desirability of making aid a two-way process, wherever possible, was emphasised ...  
Many organisations try to incorporate in their aid programmes the opportunity for co-operative effort between the donor and the recipient. For example, Community Aid

Abroad sponsors cooperative development ventures in India, with Indians themselves providing the leadership and organisation, and voluntary aid bodies the capital; Church organisations contribute funds to aid the development of national churches in Asia and elsewhere, leaving the latter a completely free hand in their use; service clubs channel funds and other aid through their opposite numbers in Asian countries who recommend which projects should be helped in the first place (Anderson, 1964:129).

The 1950's and 1960's were significant not only for the organisational 'baby boom' which occurred, but for the change in orientation of Australian NGOs from the primacy of relief aid and a charity mentality to concern with promoting long-term benefits for recipient groups, with the effectiveness of aid endeavours and with the increasing participation of recipient communities in the aid relationship. The only survey undertaken in this period revealed that the emerging voluntary aid community shared a common motivation for aid giving:

It is clear ... that the general motivation behind voluntary aid programmes is humanitarian, rather than political, being based on a conviction of the need to contribute directly to the well-being of the people of less developed countries, and to devise ways of increasing this well-being. Church organisations are concerned with the practical application of Christianity while others find common ground in a general, humanitarian approach (Anderson, 1964:128).

It was also a feature of the NGO community in the mid 60's that 'well established Church organisations provided the solid core of Australia's voluntary aid effort' (Anderson, 1964:129). Not only were Church based agencies significant numerically, but 'Their influence and activity spread beyond the confines of the organisations ... as they sponsor certain other aid organisations and are often represented on the latter's committees' (Anderson, 1964:129).

### **The Formation of the Australian Council for Overseas Aid**

The formation of the Australian Council for Overseas Aid in 1965 marked the beginning of a new era for the Australian NGO community - an era of increased communication and cooperation between



agencies (particularly in relation to joint fundraising campaigns) and greater coordination of lobbying and advocacy activities. In more recent times, the Council has acted as a vehicle for communication and negotiation with government, particularly in relation to government funding of NGO programs and participation of NGOs in the official aid program.

The origins of the Australian Council for Overseas Aid lay in a Seminar of April, 1964, held at the Australian National University in Canberra. Initiated by Sir John Crawford (then Director of the Research School of Pacific Studies at the University), the seminar was attended by representatives of sixteen non-government aid agencies and was held as a first attempt (and only early attempt by academics) to '... obtain an overall picture of the activities of the many and diverse Australian organisations engaged in foreign aid activities ...' (Anderson, 1964:127). One outcome of the meeting was a recognition of the shared aims and values of the organisations and of the possible benefits of cooperation between them:

The existence of common problems and the value seen in sharing knowledge and experience in the overseas aid field led several participants to the conclusion that the time was ripe for the consideration of some type of standing body in Australia to facilitate the exchange of information and ideas between voluntary organisations and to provide a forum for discussion. With the increasing activity which is likely to occur if current plans of organisations are implemented, it is highly likely that the need for cooperative effort in the provision of some common services such as training, publicity, briefing, technical advice to field workers etc. will become more apparent. A standing body could well be useful in this connection. Also, if organisations could be systematically apprised through such a body of what other organisations are doing, they would perhaps be better able to decide where to direct their own aid efforts (Anderson, 1964:141).

The voluntary organisations were stimulated to meet again in July 1964, when they appointed a 'Committee of Seven'. The group met in late 1964 and again in early 1965 to discuss the formation and constitution of an umbrella organisation for the NGO community.

The Australian Council for Overseas Aid (hereafter ACFOA) was formally constituted in March 1965. The private aid community was

growing rapidly, reflecting strong community support for their work. It was in the interests of the NGO community to establish a forum for discussion, sharing of information, cooperation and coordination. The then Federal Department of External Affairs was not without an interest in the formation of a coordinating body for the NGO community. Reid suggested that the Minister, Sir Paul Hasluck, encouraged and facilitated the formation of ACFOA to create a vehicle to enable government to relate to the NGO community more easily (Reid, 1986:90). Henry traced the steps leading to the formation of ACFOA, in particular the involvement of government in encouraging and facilitating the formation of the Council (Henry, 1970:61; 77-78). Certainly, it did not take long for the Department of External Affairs to ask ACFOA to coordinate voluntary foreign aid operations in South Vietnam, providing finance for ACFOA to conduct a study of aid needs in South Vietnam (Henry, 1970:61).

ACFOA was created to facilitate co-ordination of activities of various voluntary aid organisations and encourage liaison between agencies, thus allowing discussions about matters of interest common to them. ACFOA was also seen as a potential lobby group to the government on affairs of concern to voluntary agencies. The Council initially consisted of 20 member organisations, and was directed by a five member committee. Its stated aims were:

1. to provide for consultation and cooperation between member organisations concerning their work at home and abroad;
2. to provide for consultation and cooperation with the Commonwealth and State Governments, and the United Nations and its specialised agencies, in the field of overseas aid both at home and abroad;
3. to bring the needs for, and the purposes and results of overseas aid, before member organisations, the Australian community and Governments and to prepare and disseminate information on aid activities and issues of development, including refugee and migrant services (Quoted in Reid, 1986:91).

In 1989, ACFOA had 35 full member and 53 associate member organisations. The work of the Council is sustained by annual subscriptions from members, plus a yearly grant from the Commonwealth Government. ACFOA policy is established at an Annual Council Meeting

consisting of representatives of each member organisation. Each agency has one vote. An Executive Committee is elected from amongst the Council members. The principal office bearers oversee the operation of the organisation throughout the year. Today, ACFOA Standing Policy lists the purposes of the Council as:

- a) The Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA) is the association of Australian non-government organisations which are concerned with international development and overseas aid.
- b) ACFOA provides for consultation and co-operation between members concerning their work at home and abroad and with Governments in Australia, other national Governments and the United Nations and its specialised agencies.
- c) ACFOA undertakes to help develop an awareness and understanding of the causes of world poverty and the actions required by the nation to help build a more just international economic order (ACFOA, 1987b:A1.0).

In fulfilling these aims, ACFOA currently engages in a wide range of activities, including publicity campaigns intended to educate the public and urging political action (e.g. the 'One World Campaign' of 1989 and the 'Aid For Change' campaign of 1991 and 1992, discussed later); fostering relationships with NGOs of other nations (in 1989 this included initiatives to meet with NGOs in Japan and Indonesia); support of an Appraisal and Evaluation Unit to assist member agencies to assess the effectiveness of their project work; support of research on issues pertinent to aid and development; support for Development Education co-ordination; participation in delegations to developing countries; sponsoring of delegations from such nations to Australia to meet with Australian government officials; and involvement in international forums representing voluntary aid agencies from throughout the developed world.

Writing five years after the formation of the Council, Henry regarded the likelihood of its long-term effective operation as remote:

... there is the tension between the movement's aim to re-emphasise universal moral principles and the individual commitment of supporters to the maintenance of their individual organisations. This tension leads predictably to great difficulties for the movement as a whole in determining its political tactics. In the present loosely

federated co-operative and consultative arrangement under which A.C.F.O.A. operated this tension is almost crippling. ... the present expectations of the member organisations in A.C.F.O.A., if they hoped A.C.F.O.A. could be an effective forum for vigorous activity on the issue of aid to the developing countries, were doomed in such a stalemating structure (Henry, 1970:275).

A further study, conducted in 1977, suggested that 'There is a strong consensus that ACFOA is necessary and wanted by its members' (Tiffen *et al.*, 1977:1). Despite this agreement, many were critical of ACFOA, claiming that it had 'become an entity in itself, pursuing its own programs and concerns rather than serving its members' and that the Council had developed a strong political bias (Tiffen *et al.*, 1977:3). Although such negative comments were made by member agencies, a majority of members acknowledged the achievements of the Council as follows:

Many saw ACFOA's principal achievement as having survived despite all the problems confronting it. Other achievements mentioned included: having established successful relations with the Government, having been a forum for increasing communication and dialogue between the agencies, and the promotion of development education (Tiffen *et al.*, 1977:1).

In addition, some agencies felt that ACFOA had offered stimuli which encouraged thinking about development issues. The research also acknowledged that the very diversity of the NGO community constrained the Council's performance, to a certain extent forcing it to adopt courses of action which could not meet with approval by all members.

To analyse the successes or failings of the Council over time in fulfilling its purposes is not one of the aims of this research. However, several longstanding members of the NGO community emphasised that initiatives by the Council have successfully stimulated considerable debate and prompted change within the NGO community. Certainly, ACFOA has become the major vehicle for communication between NGOs and government,<sup>1</sup> and has indeed been a vehicle for

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<sup>1</sup> It is often assumed that NGOs must belong to ACFOA in order to access official aid funds, thus accounting for ACFOA's increased membership. In fact, many Australian NGOs participate in a funding relationship with AIDAB without joining ACFOA.

co-ordination and co-operation amongst a community consisting of very diverse members. Tribute to its perceived effectiveness has been its growing membership. The formation of the Council in 1965 was a major event in the life of the evolving voluntary aid community and change amongst Australian NGOs cannot be discussed without constant reference to the influence of ACFOA. Some ACFOA initiatives which have had far-reaching implications for the NGO community as a whole will be discussed subsequently in their historical context.

### **The Politicisation of NGO Activity, 1965-1980**

The fifteen years after the formation of ACFOA were marked by an increased politicisation of NGO activity. ACFOA activities stimulated debate which contributed to this process, as did the introduction of a separate official overseas aid program (discussed later). Of prime importance was a series of international events which demanded a response from Australian NGOs, and prompted public controversy about their role.

Australian military involvement in the Vietnam War precipitated widespread debate and political activism within the Australian community, forcing the question of politics and aid onto the agenda of most Australian NGOs. As previously mentioned, the first government funds provided to ACFOA were for the co-ordination of voluntary aid activity to South Vietnam. While NGO efforts were largely concentrated in the South, when faced with the undeniable need of victims of war in North Vietnam, many groups decided they could not ignore them, and sent funds to the war-torn North. The ensuing controversy led to Federal Government attempts to prevent Australian aid being sent to that country:

... in 1967 ... the Federal Government was introducing legislation to prevent the sending of aid to North Vietnam. This was as a result of the activity of various left-wing groups in Australia who were ... emphasising that Australia was in fact not at war with North Vietnam, and that a citizen should thus be free to materially support North Vietnam. The government's legislation and the consequent

publicity brought to light the fact that the Australian Red Cross, a highly respectable and uniquely placed organisation, was also forwarding money to that country. ... assertion of internationalism and humanitarianism resulted in the Government exempting the Red Cross from the operation of the proposed legislation. ... The Australian Council of Churches Organisation telegraphed the then Prime Minister on several occasions, seeking the same concession for all members of A.C.F.O.A., or deletion of the exemption for the Red Cross. Later in February 1968, the A.C.C. announced it had sent \$18,000 to Geneva for Vietnam. It was stated that "the money could go to either North or South Vietnam" (Henry, 1970:98-99).

Accusations that major aid agencies had been infiltrated by communists were rife. Henry recorded that prominent personalities publicly affirmed their intention to donate funds to the North Vietnamese, while it was announced in Parliament that both the World Council of Churches and Australian Catholic Relief had sent money to North Vietnam (Henry, 1970:101). The controversy prompted many agencies to affirm a position that aid should be available to all in need, irrespective of the political stance of their governments. Not to provide aid for such reasons was as political an act as to do so.

The debate about Australian involvement in Vietnam had even more profound implications for the NGO Community. It contributed to a questioning of the involvement of developed nations in the developing world, and to a realisation that NGO activity at home, not only in the field, was required:

Through the activities of anti-war activists many people have come to realize that wars such as the Vietnam war are related to the fact that the wealth and power of America and other "developed" countries depends to a large extent on being able to invest in the Third World, use its natural resources and trade with it on terms unfavourable to the Third World. ... Therefore the rich become involved in military operations to suppress those elements in the Third World which would expropriate foreign companies and impose more stringent controls on the exploitation and use of their national resources.

This understanding of the Vietnam War leads people to see that "action for development" starts in the rich world. We must reassess our own society and its relations with the Third World. ... by looking at all aspects of Australia's relations with the Third World - military, diplomatic, trade, investment and aid (Newell, 1972:4).

Controversy erupted again over the involvement of voluntary agencies in campaigns to combat human rights abuses in the early 1970s. A tour of Australia by the South African Springbok team in June and July, 1971, prompted a series of public demonstrations, and widespread debate within the community about racism. The NGO movement became involved in campaigns against apartheid and Australian Catholic Relief and the Australian Council of Churches supported the World Council of Churches in its Program to Combat Racism. ACFOA's information and education periodical at the time, Development News Digest, reported that the World Council of Churches had donated funds to organisations fighting racism, to go to 'medical, education and social service activities of liberation movements in Angola, Mozambique, South Africa and Guinea-Bissau' (ACFOA, 1973a:11). Member churches and Christian agencies were urged to press for a withdrawal of investment in, and cessation of trading with, South Africa. Support for liberation movements provoked outbursts from those who felt the World Council of Churches should not take a 'political stand' and to accusations that church agencies were supporting terrorists.

ACFOA publications throughout the 1970s featured reports on issues of major concern to its members - apartheid, racism and support of liberation movements. Many agencies became involved in campaigns to lobby the Federal government, arguing that growth in Australian investments in South Africa forced the Australian business world and government into 'the position of upholding the present Government in South Africa ... to protect their economic interests. The Australian Government therefore is positively supporting the inhuman system of apartheid as enforced by the South African Government' (Noone, 1973:6). ACFOA urged its members to take a stand and offer positive support to the black South Africans in their struggle.

The activities of some Australian aid agencies in response to civil war in East Timor fuelled controversy over the policy and actions of the Australian Government. Attitudes of Australian NGOs to East Timor have been well documented. Hill has traced the concern of agencies over Portuguese colonialism in the area from as early

as 1968 (Hill, 1980a:8). Some agencies began to support self-determination for the East Timorese, 'even before any of them had met any Timorese and before any political parties had been formed in East Timor' (Hill, 1980a:9). Shortly after the coup in East Timor against the Portuguese administration on August 6, 1975, the ACFOA Annual Council meeting called on the Australian Government to express support for the principle of self-determination for the East Timorese. A week after the full scale invasion of East Timor of December 7, 1975, the ACFOA Executive decided to take a stand which was strongly critical of Australian Government policy:

... the ACFOA executive called on the Australian Government to help establish a neutral zone for refugees and relief distribution in East Timor, to call on all parties to observe the Geneva conventions, to insist that the International Committee of the Red Cross be allowed to return to East Timor immediately and to offer facilities to enable refugees to be brought to Australia. No reaction to these requests was forthcoming from the Australian Government. The frustration of the aid agencies in not being able to continue their work in East Timor was expressed in the second resolution of the executive: 'Recognising the obstruction of aid programmes to East Timor, through Indonesian intransigence, the Executive of ACFOA commends the Australian Government's action in suspending the delivery of two Nomad aircraft to Indonesia. We call for the further suspension of all military aid to Indonesia until such time as Indonesia has ceased its present intervention in East Timor' (Hill, 1980a:12-13).

A resolute campaign by ACFOA against Australian recognition of Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor meant that Australian NGOs were not permitted to work in East Timor by the Indonesian government. The International Red Cross and U.S. Catholic Relief Services were, in late 1979, allowed to begin work in East Timor. However, after detailing the nature and extent of their work, Walsh argued that both were 'conducting their programmes there on objectionable Indonesian Government terms' (1980:21). ACFOA and the majority of Australian NGOs were determined that the first priority of the agencies should be to fight for the rights of the East Timorese and to 'question the propriety of giving aid without justice' (Walsh, 1980:21).

The conflict in East Timor prompted NGO activity which was



significant for several reasons. As Hill recorded, this was the first occasion on which ACFOA had called for the suspension of military aid to any country (1980a:13). In addition, she argued that:

... ACFOA has reached a whole new public and come to the notice of a number of audiences it would not have, had it not become involved in the Timor issue. For example increased co-operation between aid agencies and journalists has resulted to a large degree from contacts made at the time of the Indonesian invasion of East Timor or immediately before. The death of the six journalists and the fact that journalists as well as aid agencies are excluded from East Timor has given some journalists a new sense of identity with the aid agencies and more working relationships have evolved in relation to other parts of the world as well (Hill, 1980a:14).

In an interview, one longstanding member of the NGO community commented on the importance of East Timor thus:

This was the first time aid agencies responded immediately and automatically to need and there was tremendous solidarity in their actions ... ACFOA and most member agencies made the decision that protecting the rights of the East Timorese was as important as the provision of relief (Rollason, 1990).

Significantly, the incident provoked a sharp division between ACFOA and government policy, giving further impetus to the role of the voluntary aid community as a critic of government on moral and humanitarian grounds.

### **The Emergence of Dependency Theories and Structural Debates**

While Australian involvement in international affairs precipitated considerable debate and change amongst Australian NGOs, the voluntary aid community was also influenced by a growing understanding of the processes which account for the existence of poverty in the developing world. Change from a charity approach to an emphasis on needs-based, self-help projects had occurred in their rhetoric, as a result of the NGOs own experiences in the field (discussed earlier). The late 1960s and early 1970s ushered in a period of widespread disillusionment with dominant theories of

development and aid practices. Such disillusionment is reflected in the comments of aid theorists of the early 1970s:

... the aid agency which tries ... to ensure that aid promotes 'development' is like a blind-folded man with his leg chained to the door post and one hand behind his back, in a totally unfamiliar room in which someone whom he cannot see and does not know keeps on moving the furniture around (White, 1971:6).

Some development theorists rejected the notion that injections of capital could stimulate economic growth, stressing that entrenched inegalitarian structures could hinder development and that economic growth under such circumstances could increase inequalities in developing nations. As Riddell recently summarised:

... the assumption that the effects of economic growth would necessarily trickle down to the poorest groups within developing countries came increasingly under question; this led to more emphasis being put on the distinction between economic growth and economic development, to distribution questions being added to the agenda for development policy, and to the drawing up of needs-based and welfare-specific targets as well as, or in some instances in place of, growth targets. Relief of poverty was always a central reason for providing aid. It was disillusion with the assumed method of alleviating poverty indirectly through accelerating the growth rate - that led to an increasing emphasis on direct action through targeting aid to the poor (1987:93).

As Chapter One detailed, theorists argued increasingly that structural imbalances, such as an imbalance in international trade which favoured affluent nations, were the real factors hindering development, and that the distribution of aid could do little to effect the radical changes in international structures which could assist the poor nations.<sup>1</sup> By the late 1970s, 'the central element of development studies was the view that underdevelopment or dependency, however defined, were not simply static conditions or symptoms, but products of dynamic processes, primarily engendered within the rich world' (Connell, 1988:1). Growing understanding of the interrelatedness

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<sup>1</sup> Summaries of theoretical debates about the importance of international structures in hindering development can be found in Wignaraja (1977), Riddell (1987), Mouzelis (1988) and Trainer (1989).

of the rich and poor nations led to questioning of the relevance of aid projects. As Goldsworthy suggested in a discussion of the politics of development: '... the rise of dependency and other critical-left approaches ... reconceptualised the global relationship between First World and Third as exploitative rather than supportive. In this schema, the political development project ('trying to help') simply looked hypocritical' (1988:55).

These debates contributed to a recognition that aid had not begun to solve problems of world poverty and social justice, leading Australian NGOs to a fundamental re-examination of their role:

... many Australians have become increasingly engaged in the processes of exploring and questioning both the nature of world development and the contribution aid can provide. Increasingly, there is concern, too, about the relation between domestic development and our place in the global struggle for increased political, economic and social justice (Webb, 1977a:7).

Reflecting broader discussions about global inequality, the debate within voluntary agencies increasingly became one focusing on trade and the workings of the international economic system. The task of NGOs was seen as extending beyond the disbursement of aid, to include the promotion of awareness and actions which could lead to significant changes in the structure of world society. As Webb suggested, an emphasis on action at home, not only on the distribution of aid, grew out of this shift in understanding:

Earlier, for most supporters of aid, the problem was seen to be 'out there' and the task was to transfer resources overseas as aid. Increasingly, however, the problem has been seen also to be 'over here', that is also within attitudes and structures of the donors (1977b:1).

Contributed to by the involvement of the voluntary agencies in the international events mentioned earlier, this changing orientation was expressed in a number of ways.

#### a) The Formation of Development Education Agencies

Changes in understanding, outlined above, resulted in the

formation of a number of new agencies whose raison d'etre was not to operate as funding organisations, but to initiate discussion and promote education of the Australian populace about issues of development and justice. For example, 1971 saw the genesis of Action for World Development (AWD), International Development Action (IDA) and the Asian Bureau Australia (ABA). IDA was concerned to encourage Australians to prevent the Australian government from acting in developing countries 'in the defence of Australian interests against indigenous aspirations' (Newell, 1972:4). The ABA, a non-denominational Christian organisation, sought to educate Australians to the needs of those in Asia and the Pacific. Its activities were described as engaging in 'research, documentation, public education and policy intervention, acting on matters of justice in the relationship between Australian people and our Asian and Pacific neighbours' (ACFOA, 1988:11).

Of particular significance in the early 1970s was the Action for World Development Campaign. The ecumenical agency, AWD, was formed in 1971 as a joint venture of the Australian Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church. The agency was set up to organise a national education campaign, with the involvement of Australian church groups of all denominations. The aims of the campaign were described as:

... to help Australians 'to a true appreciation of the aspirations and needs of other nations, of the ways by which we can hinder or help the development of others and of the actions which are possible for us as Australians'.  
 ... the churches must be concerned to create a new public opinion which placed the welfare of people first and which evaluated economic development and social planning in terms of their direct contribution to humanity and to the creation of a just and responsible world society (ACFOA, 1972a:3).

Over 200,000 Australians participated in the national education campaign. Many current supporters of the voluntary aid movement regard the campaign as having had a major impact in confronting the public with issues of world development and in mobilising ongoing active support for the voluntary aid effort.

In the late 1970s, several more agencies sharing a primary

concern with educating the public were formed. The Development Education Group of South Australia was initiated in 1978 and 'co-ordinates and fosters a process by which people are assisted to develop a critical awareness of the social, economic and political structures that affect our daily lives' (ACFOA, 1988:46). As well as publishing educational materials for use in schools and community groups, the DEG holds public seminars and workshops, and seeks to influence curriculum development for schools and adult education programs.

Trading Partners and the World Development Tea Co-operative, formed in 1978 and 1979 respectively, were also established with a mandate to educate the public - particularly about the injustice of international trading relationships. The World Development Tea Co-operative markets tea in Australia, primarily as a means of increasing awareness of social justice issues - to build consumer resistance to what it regards as exploitative action of Western multinationals operating in the developing world (see Whelan, 1982). Trading Partners was also an alternative marketing organisation, supporting the self-help efforts of indigenous peoples by importing and selling their handicrafts. It was hoped that these activities would also help overseas partners by 'creating more awareness of peoples struggles for better lives in the developing world, and linking this to the need for trade justice' (ACFOA, 1988:55).

#### b) Dualism in Agency Function

The new emphasis on development education had far-reaching implications for existing voluntary aid agencies. In the aftermath of the Action for World Development Campaign, ACFOA's Education Unit (which had been established in early 1972) organised the first 'National Conference on Development Education'. Held in Canberra in January of 1973, the conference attracted participants from educational institutions, aid agencies and lobby groups and included representatives from Papua New Guinea, Fiji, South East Asia, and from the Australian Aboriginal community. Major recommendations

arising from the Conference included:

\* Aboriginal Studies should be introduced into primary and secondary schools and the Commonwealth should finance curriculum development projects which would involve aborigines.

\* The Commonwealth and State Education Departments to conduct regular in-service seminars on development, using the resources of voluntary groups, universities, the black community.

\* Existing teaching material and resources should be re-examined and biased treatment of other cultures eliminated.

\* Teacher training courses should include intercultural studies programmes which would give trainees an opportunity to examine their attitudes and prejudices. Such a programme would deal with racism, poverty, underdevelopment, limits of growth (ACFOA, 1973b:3).

One observer suggested that the Conference was '... an extremely catalytic event. It ushered in a five year period of intense activity and high optimism in the field of development education' (Hill, 1980b:20). Following the impact of the AWD campaign and the Education Conference, and reinforced by a growing understanding of the factors hindering development, many agencies began to acknowledge the importance of development education. They began to see the work of forming public opinion within Australia as of equal importance to funding overseas project work. Agencies employed development education officers who prepared materials for use in schools, churches and community groups; resource centres were established; educational films were produced; newsletters and magazines were published; and agencies tried to influence the content of curricula for schools and tertiary institutions. Many agencies urged their members to be more actively involved in lobbying activities.

The flurry of development education activities slowed in 1978, following an ACFOA Summer School of Development which was held in Tasmania in January of that year. Hill observed a 'considerable uneasiness' at the Conference, suggesting that it 'made many participants among the NGOs question the value of all the centralization and co-ordination which ACFOA was doing' (1980b:21). In her discussion of development education in Australia, Burns argued that a waning of enthusiasm for development education occurred

following the ACFOA Summer School of 1978:

... in the field of inter-agency co-operation in general, a widening gap had appeared between those with an established educational programme and rationale, and those who saw in the increasingly political content of those programmes, including that of the ACFOA education unit, some threat both to the way in which their aid programmes operate and to the whole rationale of aid, including the likelihood of withdrawal of public support and government grants because of the critical content of development action resulting from the issues raised through education (Burns, 1981:36).

The ACFOA Unit was closed for financial reasons following the Summer School and ACFOA decided to undertake a review of its activities.

Despite a lessening of enthusiasm for the extension of development education activities, their introduction has had ongoing implications for Australian NGOs. Alliband argued that 'there is a basic dualism in the role of a voluntary aid agency in the 1980s, which is manifested in different ways throughout the range of a NGO's external and internal relationships' (1983:54). Using the Australian Freedom From Hunger Campaign as an example, the significance of this dualism for agency behaviour was illustrated:

Historically, the Australian Freedom From Hunger Campaign adhered to the former view of poverty being caused by endogenous factors, but over the past decade the second view of poverty being caused primarily by exploitative power relationships has gained predominance. Nevertheless the first view does persist within Freedom From Hunger, and the conflicts between these two views provide one of the principal internal dynamics of the organisation. In practice, the difference in perceptions shown above is reflected in the two key roles of a voluntary aid agency, such as Freedom From Hunger. These two roles are its development assistance program and its community education program (Alliband, 1983:54-55).

The dualism described continues to be a trait of many Australian voluntary aid agencies today.

### c) The Changing Focus of Development Project Work

Changes in development thinking by NGOs not only ushered in

a period of intense educational activity, but also prompted an examination of the effectiveness of aid programs. The emergence of new development paradigms did not result in any consensus among development theorists. However, with hindsight, Hunt suggested that the debate resulted in a reappraisal of aid strategies during the late 1960's and early 1970's. As outlined in Chapter One (see p. 15), Hunt identified six alternative approaches to aid distribution: appropriate technology, employment generation, integrated rural development, women and development, participation and basic human needs, arguing that:

The six approaches ... share a number of principles which have now become entrenched in aid rhetoric. These include: a modification of the growth objective to include equity and distributional concerns; a recognition of the need to target aid and development efforts to the poor; attention to the issue of who benefits and who stands to be disadvantaged by social and technological interventions; and an awareness that development encompasses both social and economic factors (1986:25).

Many of the principles outlined have become entrenched in the rhetoric of Australian NGOs. A growing concern with the suitability of technology for local conditions and cultures was reflected in the formation of two Australian organisations - Appropriate Technology and Community Awareness (APACE) formed in 1976, and the Association for Research and Environmental Aid (AREA) established in 1977. Both groups believe that capital-intensive Western technology is not necessarily appropriate for communities in the developing world and endeavour to implement appropriate technology projects abroad. AREA seeks to encourage sound environmental management and APACE, as a research foundation, is also involved in the design of technologies suitable for use in the developing world. In addition to encouraging the formation of these agencies, a growing conviction that local communities should be involved in determining the suitability of technology transferred to them, led most Australian NGOs to reject the assumption that Western technology was the answer to problems of underdevelopment.

The shift away from the delivery of relief supplies and Western technology to a search for long-term solutions for impoverished



communities resulted in an increased emphasis being placed on support of projects which aimed to create employment. Often involving training, such projects aimed to develop cottage industries in local communities and to improve agricultural productivity. All aimed at encouraging self-sufficiency and improving the ability of beneficiaries to survive. Many agencies participated in implementing integrated rural development projects which aimed to encourage self-sufficiency of small communities, and were 'generally designed to integrate rural infrastructure construction with programs to: increase crop production; improve marketing facilities; ... provide or upgrade health, education or other social services; and expand opportunities for off-farm employment' (Hunt, 1986:19).

The satisfaction of basic needs became the catch-cry of agency rhetoric, following widespread acceptance of the view that the primary objective of development was to provide the minimal requirements for human existence.<sup>1</sup> This included the provision of food, clothing and shelter, as well as basic services such as education, health and sanitation. In order to meet such needs, NGOs were commonly involved in community projects aiming to improve nutrition, health, education, shelter and provide safe drinking water and sanitation.

While satisfaction of basic needs was the rationale for many projects, participation of local communities in defining and implementing projects was increasingly stressed by the NGOs. Consultation with local people was aimed to ensure that their needs were being met rather than solutions being imposed by outsiders. Through field experience, agencies realised that if indigenous groups were involved in the processes of selecting and managing aid projects, then those projects were more likely to be supported and successful. Part of this participatory approach, now enshrined in the objectives of most voluntary aid agencies, is to ensure that the needs of women are not neglected in development planning. Two agencies with a specific mandate to ensure the participation of women in development

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<sup>1</sup> Hunt (1986:21ff.) provides an excellent summary of the development of, and growth in acceptance of, basic needs philosophy.

efforts were formed in Australia during the United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985). The Women and Development Network of Australia (WADNA) was formed in 1981 'to help Australian women act together with women of the Third World on issues of justice, aid and development' (ACFOA, 1988:29). The International Women's Development Agency (IWDA), formed in 1985, has similar objectives and 'actively promotes projects and programs which demonstrate women's competence and effectiveness as agents of development ...' (ACFOA, 1988:23).

While it is beyond the scope of this brief historical account to explore changes in project orientation in depth, definite trends were observed by commentators writing at the time. Hill argued that 'self-reliance, local control, partnership, appropriate technology, peoples' participation, including the participation of women, were all values which came very much to the fore as opposed to the 'hand-out mentality', 'band-aid type solutions', and huge capital intensive projects which engendered dependency' (Hill, 1980b:21). Sharp summarised the major changes in agency orientation which occurred throughout the 1970s thus:

Since the beginning of the seventies there has been a radical shift in the approach to voluntary aid ... from the approach typified by the "bowl appeal" to actions designed to support movements for social changes which might remove the sources of inequality, poverty and oppression. This change has found expression in two ways. Firstly there has been increased emphasis in the rich countries on the need for "structural aid" ... - establishment and support for rural, co-operative, self-help projects, support for liberation movements and the development of literacy programme. Secondly, there has been an attempt to raise the consciousness and heighten the understanding of those in the "rich" countries .... that impoverishment was the other side of their own enrichment: the root cause was to be found in the process of unequal exchange generated by the world capitalist system (Sharp, 1978:47).

### **NGO/Government Co-operation**

In the Australian context, the funding relationship of the NGOs with the official government aid body - today known as the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau (AIDAB) - must be explored. The genesis and importance of this body is briefly outlined in the following pages.

#### a) Australian Official Development Assistance

Australian Government 'assistance' abroad was first evident in the transfer of resources to Papua New Guinea. Official links with the country, established in the 1880s, contributed to a concentration of Australian resources there - initially in administration during the pre-World War II period, and later as grants of aid to the Territory. Earliest aid allocations outside PNG were for post-war relief and rehabilitation programs established by the United Nations. The Colombo Plan, created in 1950 to promote co-operative support by Commonwealth nations for economic and social development in south and south-east Asia, subsequently became a major vehicle for disbursement of Australian Official Development Assistance (AODA). Over the following two decades, aid allocations gradually expanded to include participation in international and regional bilateral aid programmes and increased support for multilateral operations. Until 1973, aid functions and staff were scattered through a number of Federal and State departments, and no integrated method or planning existed, making any assessment of the nature and extent of AODA impossible.

In 1972, the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs established a sub-committee to consider all aspects of Australian aid.<sup>1</sup> In a submission to the sub-committee made on 12 July 1972, ACFOA emphasised the importance of an aid program which attempts

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<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed report on the Parliamentary enquiry on aid and ACFOA's response to it, see ACFOA, 1972b:4-7.

ACFOA emphasised the importance of an aid program which attempts to promote social justice, stressed the responsibility of the government to support community education programs, and argued for tax deductibility for donations made to voluntary agencies. In August of 1972, ACFOA adopted policies which argued (in line with UN policy) for an increase in official aid to 0.7% of GNP by 1985, and urged the establishment of a Statutory Authority for Overseas Development directly responsible to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. The opportunity for the redirections urged by the voluntary aid community came with the election of a Federal Labor Government in December 1972. The new regime was 'seen by a small constituency of people interested in aid issues and dissatisfied with the existing programs as a major opportunity for a change in direction for Australia's aid policies and programs' (Viviani and Wilenski, 1979:91). The newly elected government acted quickly in relation to the reorganisation of foreign aid activities. Viviani and Wilenski (1979) have documented the influence of individuals and policies in leading to change.

In September, 1973, the Australian Government established a separate statutory body which was to have responsibility for the administration of all Australian aid - bilateral and multilateral. The new body - the Australian Development Assistance Agency (ADAA) - was responsible to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and absorbed the aid functions then carried out by the Department of Education, the Treasury, and the Department of External Affairs. In his speech on the Australian Development Assistance Agency Bill of March 1974, the Prime Minister stated:

The Government believes that the Agency will contribute to the achievement of a more efficient aid administration, to a comprehensive and systematic approach towards the increasingly complex range of Australia's aid activities, and not least to the formulation of aid policies which will take up the challenge of the future. The Government will look to the agency for the development of innovative policies responsive to the needs for economic self-reliance and social justice in developing countries (Whitlam, 1974:4).

Proponents of an aid agency believed that, even though foreign policy

is inevitably a major factor in the determination of ODA policy, separate aid administration was the only way to ensure that research and evaluation, integration of aid projects, and development concerns of recipient nations received high priority in the formulation of the Australian aid program. It was hoped that conflicting viewpoints of different departments handling ODA would be minimised, coordination of activities increased, and a more comprehensive policy could operate more quickly and effectively if administered by one body.

One study of Australian aid administration suggested that the formation of ADAA in fact brought very few changes in the organisation and direction of official aid. One reason given for the conservative nature of change was administrative:

Thus, what had been intended by some to be a brave new start in the aid field, began life in its embryo form simply as the redesignation of the offices occupied by a large number of public servants, all of whom continued in their old tasks in much the same way (Viviani and Wilenski, 1979:96-97).

Although ADAA expressed strongly its concern to meet the basic needs of poorest peoples, and to improve the social and income distribution effects of aid, the agency was reported to have achieved little of this:

The part of the agency concerned with the administration of bilateral aid had a strong commitment to traditional projects in infrastructure, tied aid, and an unwillingness to assume any significant degree of onshore costs. The structure of their operations and their standard operating procedures were geared to this; they preferred this degree of accountability and control. Those in the agency who looked for innovation and experimentation which would lead to a great involvement of Australian aid in social welfare programs and to an impact on 'people's' problems rather than a government's were not closely involved in the administration of bilateral programs, and therefore their influence on these was limited (Viviani and Wilenski, 1979:111-112).

ADAA was short-lived. Following the dismissal of the Federal Labor Government in November 1975, a policy of economic stringency was enforced by the new Liberal Government - a policy which was to lead to the abolition of the Agency. The centralised administration

of aid, established with the formation of ADAA, was maintained within a new organisation - the Australian Development Assistance Bureau (ADAB). The new organisation was a part of the Department of Foreign Affairs rather than the independent aid agency that ADAA had been. The Bureau was to administer the provision of aid, both multilateral and bilateral, to developing countries, was to formulate aid policy, and was granted a substantial degree of autonomy in relation to the financial management of ODA. In 1987, the Australian Development Assistance Bureau was renamed the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau (AIDAB).

b) Government Assistance to NGOs

In 1983/84, official support for NGO activities, including the delivery of emergency aid and relief assistance, totalled A\$10 million. By 1989/90, A\$50 million was channelled through Australian NGOs (AIDAB, 1990:2). Although only a small proportion of ODA is disbursed through NGOs, the funding available is significant to many NGOs. ACFOA staff reported that some agencies derive as much as 70 per cent of their income from government subsidies. The history of government funding of Australian NGOs is briefly traced below.

Government financial assistance was first given to the NGO community in 1965/66 in the form of grants to the Australian Volunteers Abroad Program (AVA) and the Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA). Support for volunteer programs has continued, with funds given to the Overseas Service Bureau to support the Australian Volunteers Abroad Scheme. Qualified Australians are recruited to work as volunteers in developing countries for two years. Similarly, AIDAB supports the Australian Executive Service Overseas Program (AESOP) which utilises the services of active retired persons with skills which can be used to serve developing countries. On occasion, grants have also been given to the Church Missionary Society, Interserve and the Paulian Lay Society to assist in support of volunteers serving abroad. ACFOA has also continued to receive an annual grant from AIDAB.

In 1974/75 a program of regular financial assistance to Australian NGOs was introduced. As ADAA reported at the time:

Non-government organisations have the flexibility to respond quickly and achieve results in situations where Government aid cannot operate. They can provide assistance, secure local cooperation and provide some incidental training towards self-reliance at the grass-roots level, where needs are greatest. Their projects, being of smaller scale, can be geared to specific local needs. Within Australia, they increase community awareness of development needs and promote personal involvement in aid efforts. The Government recognises the value of these endeavours and wishes to assist them.

Accordingly, the Government adopted a significant new initiative in 1974-75 by approving financial support for selected overseas aid projects being carried out or supported by Australian nongovernment organisations. The sum of \$232,000 was provided in 1974-75 as an initial contribution to launch this program (ADAA, 1975:39).

The Project Subsidy Scheme (PSS), as it has become known, allows the co-financing of individual NGO projects. NGOs have been able to participate in the administration of the PSS through a Committee formed to assess projects - today known as the Committee for Development Co-operation (CDC). The CDC consists of equal numbers of representatives selected from AIDAB and from the NGO community. The latter are nominated from amongst ACFOA members. The joint committee's functions include making recommendations to AIDAB on the eligibility of NGOs which apply to participate in the Project Subsidy Scheme, as well as on the suitability of project applications seeking subsidies. Criteria used in considering which projects should be given financial support are that they:

- a) encourage and facilitate self-help through local participation in defining goals, devising means and contributing to costs and in the execution and management of the project;
- b) make resources available to the most needy groups in developing countries so as to create new opportunities for these groups to participate in their own economic, social and human advancement;
- c) encourage women as well as men to take the initiative in improving their participation in development;
- d) have clearly stated goals and well defined and quantified objectives, time-tables, and programs for implementation which will allow evaluation of achievements;
- e) are financially and economically sound, with potential benefits significantly in excess of the costs involved;

- f) use innovative approaches to problem-solving and have potential for wider application in other communities;
- g) strengthen counterpart organisations in developing countries so that they can sustain the project, where necessary, after Australian assistance has been phased out;
- h) complement the development needs of the recipient country and are acceptable to the appropriate authorities; and
- i) encourage sound environmental/ecological practices (AIDAB, 1987a:14).

In addition to fulfilling project criteria, organisations seeking funding must be Australian, non-government, managed efficiently and have the capacity to ensure competent implementation of overseas projects (ADAB, 1983:1; AIDAB, 1987a:7).

In the past, projects were funded on the basis of a 1:1 ratio, or a 3:1 ratio for projects in countries designated as least developed or in Pacific Island communities. Since 1985, subsidies in the ratio of 3:1 have been allocated for projects undertaken by eligible NGOs, irrespective of the geographical location of projects. To qualify for this subsidy, agencies must have satisfied the requirements of the program for several years. They are given an indicative planning figure (IPF) and may receive a 3:1 subsidy for each dollar spent overseas (to the limit of their IPF). Agencies who have not participated regularly in the PSS are not allocated an IPF, but may apply for subsidies on a dollar for dollar basis for individual projects. Each project is assessed on the basis of the criteria listed above. Project subsidies have accounted for a substantial share of total assistance given by AIDAB to the NGOs. (see Table 4.1). In 1988/89, A\$8 million was allocated for distribution through the PSS.

A recent innovation is the introduction of program funding within the AIDAB/NGO Co-operation Program for some NGOs for the 1990-91 financial year. Fifteen agencies have been selected to receive block grants which they may spend on their own programs, then report retrospectively to AIDAB. These agencies are selected on the basis of proven organisational capacity and their ability to manage effective aid projects. In 1990-91 approximately 75% of project subsidy funding will be distributed through these agencies (AIDAB,



1990:3). The introduction of program funding signifies a new level of trust in the relationship between AIDAB and Australian NGOs, as well as reflecting the fact that program funding is more easily administered than the selection and funding of individual projects.

**TABLE 4.1 Government Aid Via NGOs: 1986/87**

	(\$A Millions)
Project Subsidies	5
Volunteer Programs	2
Emergency Assistance	2.8
Food Aid	6.3
ACFOA	.25
Other	2.5
Total for Australian NGOs	<u>18.9</u>

**Source:** AIDAB, 1987b:4

Funding for emergency relief and refugees account for a large proportion of total financial assistance given by AIDAB to Australian NGOs (see Table 4.2). Voluntary agencies co-operate extensively with AIDAB in the delivery of emergency relief and food aid. In recent years, NGOs have been active in delivering such aid to Kampuchea, Ethiopia and Mozambique.

Government financial assistance has also been given to the NGO community indirectly. Before 1980, the Federal Government on occasion allowed tax deductibility for donations made to selected agencies or for specific appeals. For example, in 1979-80, the Federal Government introduced tax deductibility for donations made to appeals for Kampuchea and East Timor:

The plight of the Kampuchean people has become a particular concern of the Australian public ... The concern shown by the Australian public in this case - and in a similar appeal by the Australian Red Cross for those suffering in East Timor - has been matched by the Government allowing as tax deductions contributions made to these appeals during 1979-80. These were the first occasions for which such donations have been made eligible as tax deductions (Peacock, 1980:1).

In August 1980, it was announced that contributors to approved

Table 4.2 Summary of Official Aid through Australian NGOs, 1989-90

<u>AUSTRALIAN NGOs</u>	A\$
DEVELOPMENT PROJECT SUBSIDIES (AIDAB-NGO CO-OPERATION PROGRAM)	8,464,965
DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION	724,735
NGO PROJECTS FUNDED FROM COUNTRY PROGRAMS	7,743,539
NGO ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVES	675,000
WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT FUND	354,775
SOUTHERN AFRICAN NGO PARTICIPATION PROGRAM	3,550,224
SPECIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR SOUTH AFRICANS AND NAMIBIANS	2,680,861
HEALTH ACTIVITIES	2,016,101
EMERGENCY RELIEF AND REFUGEES	19,377,946
VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS	3,718,020
OTHER	1,045,136
<u>TOTAL FOR AUSTRALIAN NGOs</u>	50,351,302

Source: AIDAB, 1990:6

Australian NGOs would be able to claim donations above A\$2 as an income tax deduction. By foregoing taxation revenue, the Government encouraged the public to support the work of Australian NGOs:

... In recognition of the work performed by many of the voluntary bodies involved in the provision of overseas aid, the government has decided in principle to allow taxation deductions for gifts made to eligible non-government organisations. We believe this concession will assist these voluntary organisations to significantly increase the practical and effective aid they are presently providing to people in very necessitous circumstances in a number of developing countries around the world (Peacock & Howard, cited in ADAB, 1980:86).

In addition to the above forms of financial support of NGO activity, AIDAB has more recently encouraged NGOs to participate in its general development program in a number of ways. For example, the Women in Development Fund was established in 1984/5 to support training, research, income generation, health and other small scale projects with the specific aim of helping women. NGOs are able to apply for funding for projects which meet the guidelines of this fund. Similarly, agencies and tertiary institutions can apply for funding to support participation in seminars relevant to development issues under the International Seminars Support Scheme (ISSS). Under the 'NGO Watch' (Women and Their Children's Health) program, NGOs were encouraged by AIDAB to apply for funding for community based primary health care projects which focus on the health of women and children. Most recently, the NGO Environment Initiative was established to provide funding for environmental projects, initiated by Australian NGOs (AIDAB, 1990:4).

By 1980, in recognition of the quality and benefits of much NGO aid, ADAB began to explore ways of involving Australian NGOs in its bilateral program:

The ability of NGOs to service some of the areas of most serious poverty and to operate at the grass roots level at which the official program cannot readily function has long been recognised. Efforts are continuing to link the NGOs with the official program to fill gaps at the local level previously left unfilled by major projects, both through small scale development projects and organisation of local involvement in self-help programs. Inspections

of bilateral projects to identify possible NGO inputs will continue this year (Peacock, 1980:9).

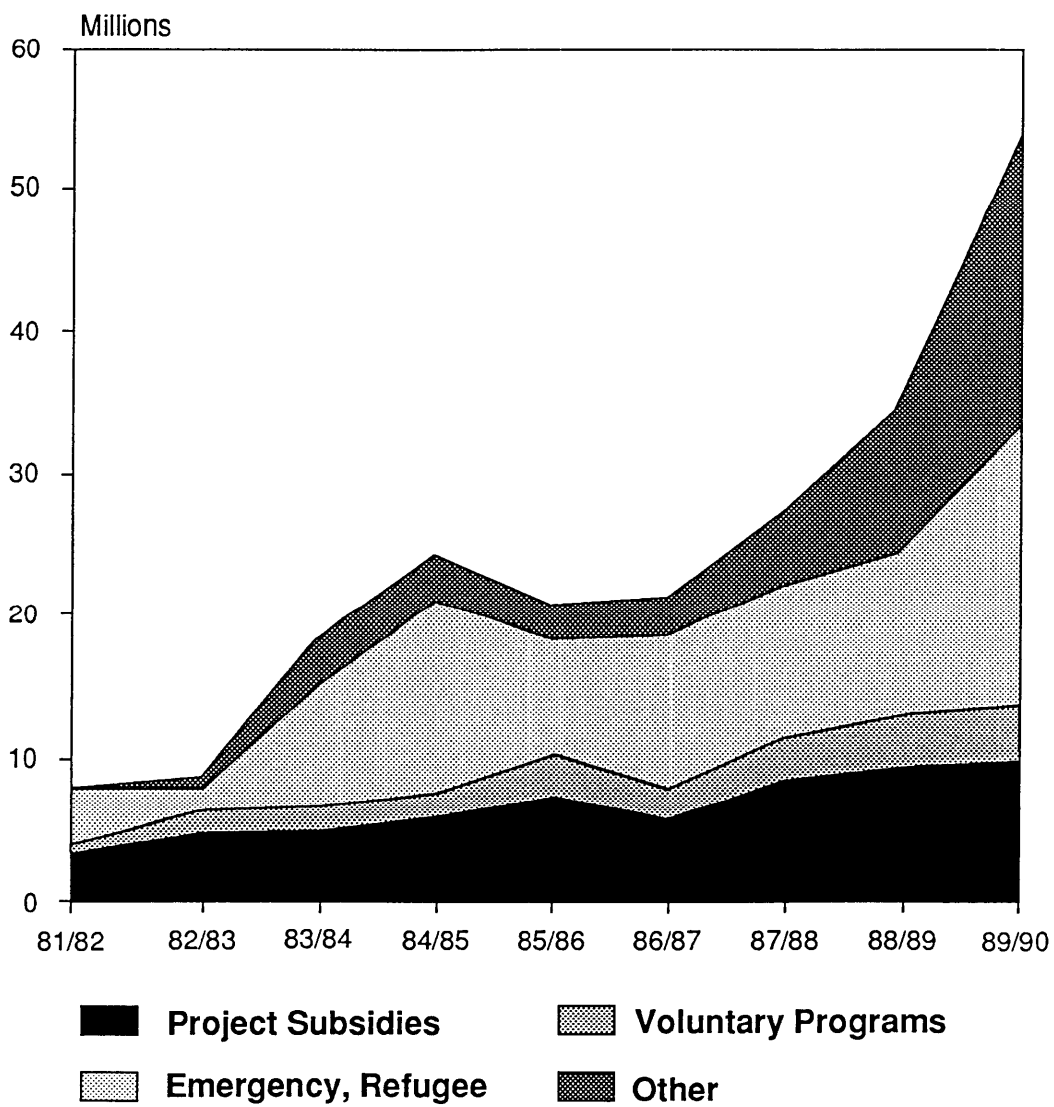
In 1982, AIDAB invited NGOs to participate in its bilateral program, under a scheme known as BINGO. Approved NGO projects which complemented the Government's bilateral program could be wholly funded through the official aid program. In 1982-3, A\$382,000 were disbursed to NGOs through the BINGO scheme. This increased to A\$3.07 million in 1983/4. This scheme was superseded in 1985.

NGOs are currently able to participate in the bilateral program in a number of ways. Under the Special Assistance Program for South Africans and Namibians (SAPSAN) which was introduced in 1986/87, NGOs are able to seek full funding for projects with the aim of supporting black South Africans to prepare for the post-apartheid period and Namibians to prepare for independence. Under the Southern African NGO Participation Program (SANGOP), NGOs are able to seek funding for rural health or village level agriculture projects in the nine Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) countries. Similarly, NGOs can obtain full funding for projects which address basic human needs in Vietnam, Kampuchea and Laos under the Indochina program. Some NGOs have also been able to gain access to bilateral funds for project work in the Philippines under the Philippines Australia Community Assistance Program (PACAP) scheme. On occasion, agencies with experience in a particular region or sector are approached and invited to provide services to AIDAB by managing a project. In addition, individual NGOs '... which wish to tender for the supply of services to the official program will be regarded as agents and required to meet the regular requirements of this relationship' (AIDAB, 1987a:31).

#### c) Implications of Official Funding of NGO Activities

In the past fifteen years, the level of government funding of voluntary agency activities has increased steadily, as have the number of options available for NGO involvement in the official aid program (see Figure 4.2). By 1988, more than 20% of Australian NGO funds

**Figure 4.2** Official Aid through Australian NGOs (in \$A), 1981-2 to 1989-90



Source: AIDAB, 1990:7

were derived from government, with some agencies drawing as much as half of their total funding from this source. Despite this trend, there has been little attempt to explore the implications of the increasingly complex relationship between government and the NGO community. Some agency personnel suggest that it is imperative that NGOs espousing the benefits of a poverty focused aid program and the advantages of their aid should be willing to participate in the government aid program to assist in the growth of an official program with a clear poverty focus. Most agencies insist that the availability of government funding has been advantageous in allowing them to extend their overseas activities, and many argue that an ongoing relationship with AIDAB has encouraged 'increased professionalism' amongst the voluntary organisations.

Conversely, Bysouth argued that increased government financing of NGO programs has not necessarily been positive. She suggested that when government funding was limited, agencies were forced to assess and improve the quality of their programs in order to compete for funds. After studying government subsidised NGO projects, Bysouth questioned 'the capacity of NGOs to perform in those areas regarded as their particular preserve, namely targetting towards the poorest and development ... in a manner designed to promote self-sufficiency' (Bysouth, 1986:215). In support of her views, Bysouth cited a 1983 review, conducted by the CDC, of government subsidised projects in New Guinea which found that few projects were developmentally sound. Thence, it was suggested that the quality of NGO projects did not match their rhetoric:

The implications of these criticisms are extremely serious. First they raise doubts as to whether it is possible for NGOs to consistently promote development of the poorest, based upon principles of self-help and local participation. Secondly, they raise doubts about the feasibility of increasing the development impact of NGO programmes by channelling more funds through these organisations, since it appears that as the size and number of NGOs and their projects have increased, the quality of their development programs has deteriorated. Thirdly, these criticisms cast doubt upon the credibility of NGO demands ... How could NGOs argue for a broad-scale poverty-oriented program if they are themselves incapable of implementing such a program even on a small scale? (Bysouth, 1986:215).

While Bysouth suggested a declining quality in NGO programs, one recent case study of a bilateral government project which involved cooperation between AIDAB, the Thai Government, an Australian NGO and local NGOs presented a more positive view:

The role of both government and NGOs should be to assist with and facilitate peoples' development, each according to their particular skills and advantages. For example, NGOs have advantages in helping to articulate people's needs during the planning phase. They would also have advantages with regard to monitoring and evaluation (assuming that a qualitative approach was required). NGOs also have an advantage in the area of social investigation and analysis. On the other hand, government has advantages in the areas of infrastructure development, resource provision and delivery, co-ordination and technical services.

... effective community consultation is a prerequisite for effective development, and consultation must be a critical component at all stages in the project cycle. ... the best exponents of effective community consultation at present are to be found in the NGO community (Bennoun *et al.*, 1988:5.2.2).

However, such optimism about the benefits of co-operative efforts by government and NGOs must be tempered by the findings of one recent study. The research analysed the influences of AIDAB requirements on the preparation of project design proposals for World Vision Australia projects to be funded as part of the official bilateral program. The author of the study suggested that:

The differences in the process give rise to a prima facie case for arguing that the NGO philosophy of community development can be compromised in seeking funds from government sources in this way. ... A number of other issues are also raised relating to the constraints facing NGOs in designing government funded projects including limited time frames, the project approach, sustainability criteria, competition with other NGOs, emphasis on over-monitoring, targetting the most needy, the implications of projects size, recipient government priorities compared to local needs, and Australian identity (Nichols, 1990:1).

Such assertions demand attention. As the Rev. Neville Ross wrote in 1988 at the end of his first year as Chairman of ACFOA:

... the most crucial issue currently facing the voluntary aid community is 'The Management of the NGO Relationship with Government'. Putting it bluntly, the potential for government to effect

changes in NGO perspectives and programs in even the most benign relationship cannot be overstated. ...

As development agencies, it is our task to give form and focus to human hopes for change. How we manage our relationship with government and how we translate our idealism into practical strategies will show either the hollowness of our words or the genuineness of our commitment to our partners in the Third World (Ross, 1988:2-3).

It is impossible to analyse the effects of participation in the official aid program and receipt of government funding on the NGO community as a whole. The case studies in following chapters will explore the effects of the increasingly complex web of government/NGO relationships on individual Australian non-government aid agencies.

### **The 1980s and Beyond**

The priorities and rhetoric of Australian NGOs were well-established by the 1980s. Participation, partnership, poverty-focus, grass roots involvement, provision of basic needs, appropriateness, innovativeness, and support for social justice have remained catch cries of the voluntary aid movement. Significant events of the past decade have not changed the primacy of these objectives, but have expanded public exposure to the voluntary aid community and widened the scope of NGO activities.

#### **a) Disaster Appeals - Kampuchea and Ethiopia**

From the perspective of the Australian public, probably the most significant events involving Australian NGOs in the eighties were major emergency relief appeals. In the face of two crises, the NGOs pooled their resources and approached the public with appeals for funds through the International Disaster Emergencies Committee (IDEC). IDEC was formed in 1973 by ACFOA to co-ordinate requests for public funds following a disaster or emergency in another nation.



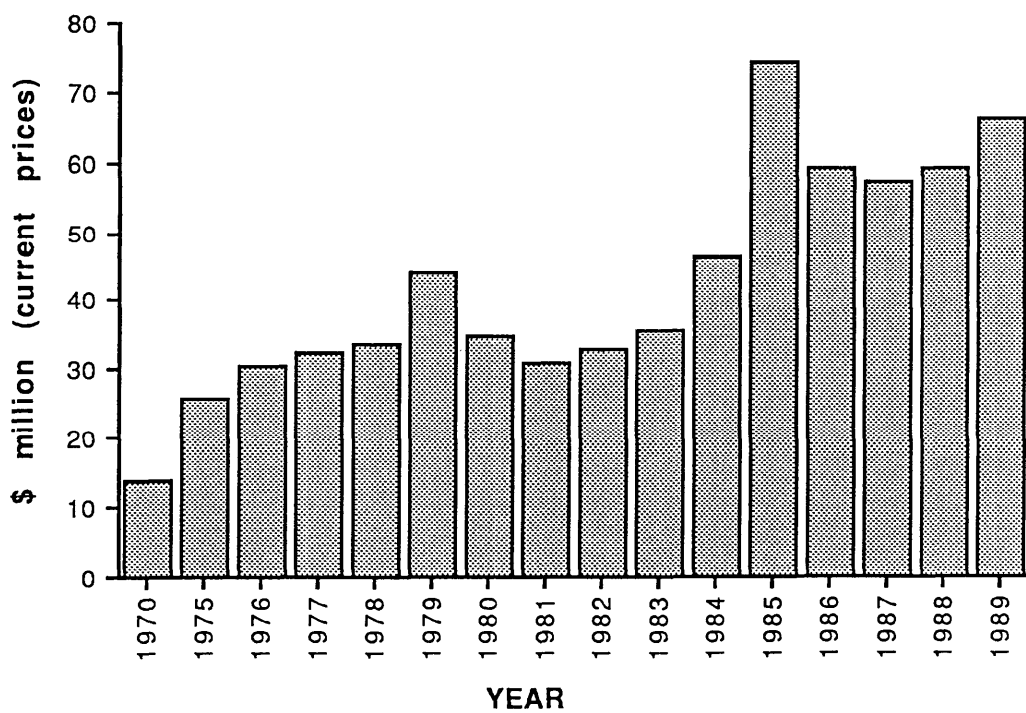
Following graphic reports of suffering and starvation in Kampuchea by journalist John Pilger, IDEC announced the commencement of the Kampuchean Relief Appeal in September, 1979. The Appeal had an initial target of A\$1 million, which was far exceeded. Generating the greatest response to any appeal of its type in Australia, A\$10.5 million were raised from 3 million Australians in 1979-80.<sup>1</sup> Australian public response to the needs of Kampuchea was unprecedented. The close proximity of the country, Australian involvement in the War in Vietnam and horror at the treatment of the Khmers by the Pol Pot regime, combined to give Australians a special commitment to the needs of the nation.

Involvement of Australian NGOs in Kampuchea was significant for several reasons. The income from the 1979 Appeal provided agencies with extremely large amounts of money for the first time (see Figure 4.3). Many leaders in the NGO community suggest this led to an expansion of the capacity and influence of Australian agencies. The huge public response to the Appeal and the urgency of the need in Kampuchea, also convinced the Government to allow tax deductibility for donations to the Appeal - a first step towards the extension of tax deductibility status to other voluntary agency activities. The Appeal resulted in a continuing and unique involvement of Australian voluntary agencies in Kampuchea - the NGOs collectively accepted the international responsibility for relief, then rehabilitation and redevelopment of the nation. Australian agencies became involved in projects which were on a scale 'larger than normal and which contributed to getting the system working again in Cambodia. Irrigation canals, pumps, fertilizer plants, pharmaceutical plants, power stations and many other areas were on the long list of needs ...' (Ashton, 1989:11). In recent years, funds have been transferred to NGOs through AIDAB's Indo-China section and the section has been willing to consider funding proposals for three year periods. For the first time, NGOs have been able to

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<sup>1</sup> An interesting historical perspective on the Kampuchean appeals can be gained by reading accounts published by ACFOA in the 'Kampuchea Papers', Development News Digest, 30, 1979.

Figure 4.3 Total Flows of Grants (in \$A) from Australian Voluntary Agencies to the Developing World, 1970 - 89 (years ending 31 December)



**Sources:** Statistics were compiled from a number of sources: ADAB, 1984a:22; Peacock, A. 1980:15; AIDAB, 1988a:68; AIDAB, 1989:78; and statistics for 1987-89 were kindly supplied by Ms P. Lee, ACFOA Research Officer.

undertake planning for large, long-term projects with some certainty about funding. In addition, work in Kampuchea resulted in a new level of co-ordination and co-operation amongst Australian agencies. In 1986, a joint Australian NGO office was opened in Kampuchea, the first permanent Australian presence in the country since the crisis of 1979. As Ashton described the extent of agency co-operation in the country:

A characteristic of Australian NGOs in Cambodia has been the large degree of information sharing and co-operation between agencies, both Australian and international. This has been important because the limited resources of individual NGOs have precluded them addressing major restoration and development tasks alone. Instead, agencies have tended to tackle discrete yet inter-related programmes within national priorities dictated by the Cambodian Government. ...

This is not to deny that there is never (sic) duplication of efforts or conflict of interest, a normal occurrence exacerbated by the isolation of Cambodia and the particular difficulties that aid personnel face working there. What is impressive, is the degree to which agencies do try to remediate this ... (1989:18).

The activities of voluntary agencies from developed nations were thrust further into the public eye following massive media exposure of the extent of despair in the famine devastated Horn of Africa. Many Australian agencies were already involved in Africa, but the need was so great that in October 1984, IDEC launched the Ethiopian Famine Appeal. In six weeks, A\$3.3 million were raised. In July 1985, following Live Aid concerts internationally, Australian agencies and IDEC became involved in the 'OZ for Africa Live Aid Telethon'. The event was significant because of its massive impact on the public and because of the unprecedented level of co-operation between NGOs, media, and private industry. As the ACFOA Annual Report of 1985 recorded:

The Live Aid event proved to be a remarkable exercise in cooperation, not only between the stars of the rock music industry around the world, but also between the stars of the Australian entertainment and television industry. Whilst ABC TV carried the concert, Channel 7 and Channel 9 studios in capital cities around Australia hosted the telethon.

Generous contributions and assistance came from a number of companies such as Wang, Telecom and OTC as well as

numerous individuals (ACFOA, 1985:17).

The tremendous public response elicited by the appeals had continued effects, prompting increased financial commitment to NGOs which lasted well beyond the media campaigns. In addition, the Australian Government channelled A\$7 million of emergency humanitarian and food aid through Australian voluntary agencies during 1984-85. Thus, 'the Government affirmed the capacity and effectiveness of NGOs in channelling food and aid emergency relief' (ACFOA, 1985:31).

#### b) The Quality of Aid

The 1980s were also marked by a growing focus on the quality of aid by the NGO community. Increased involvement with ADAB gave voluntary agencies new insights into the official aid program prompting a spate of discussions on the quality of aid. As John Birch (then Chairman of ACFOA) wrote in 1985:

Whilst the closer relationship between Government and the voluntary sector creates concern about lost autonomy, it also provides increased opportunities for effecting (sic.) the direction and quality of the Government aid program. Advocacy will be an increasingly important task but our polemics will need to be supported by technical analysis (Birch, in ACFOA, 1985:2).

NGO commitment to constant lobbying about the level of Government official aid was extended to include concern with the effectiveness of official aid in helping the poor. In 1981, Richards prepared an evaluation report on behalf of Community Aid Abroad, which examined the impact on the poor of a large Australian government aid project in the province of Zamboanga del Sur in the Southern Philippines. The integrated rural development project involved road construction, irrigation development and an agricultural component. CAA's interest in the project was precipitated by reports from social action groups in the Philippines which suggest the roads were being 'used by military and constabulary units to oppress the poorer sections of the local communities' (Richards, 1981:1). After detailed study of the impact of the project, Richards concluded that 'indicators at the present (pilot) stage are that the project is benefiting mainly

the wealthier members of the community' (1981:65). Further it was suggested that the Philippines-Australian Development Assistance Programme (PADAP) was reinforcing unjust social conditions:

The province is heavily militarized ... What this implies for a community is almost impossible to understand without firsthand experience. It is not simply a holding operation until things improve, with or without PADAP assistance, but a set of activities to sustain in the longer term the existing social order, stifling even reasonable attempts at social criticism. Military activity weighs heavily on the poorer in the community, those whose condition we believe PADAP should aim to improve. Systematically penetrating the economic and social fabric of the community, militarization is setting up conditions which call for its continuing existence. PADAP, as a Philippines government project, cannot escape being associated with military as well as civilian activities of that government. ... Poverty in Zamboanga del Sur is a complex of many factors. Those who seek to minimise the importance of the distribution benefits of the project are flying in the face of issues basic to the achievement of the project's Ultimate Objective. Peace and order will come with a just social order, but one cannot foresee that PADAP will be making a significant contribution thereto. In fact, it is more likely, perhaps unwittingly, to exacerbate the situation it is "designed" to relieve (Richards, 1981:66).

Although unclear whether this project was typical or not, longstanding members of the NGO community regarded this report as a catalyst which precipitated debate within Australia about the quality of official aid.

Criticism was similarly levelled at another ADAB project in the Philippines. Located in Northern Samar, the integrated rural development project included road construction, water supply, provision of electricity, construction of wharves and technical help with the aim of improving agricultural productivity. This program was attacked because 'it served the central government and its international partners at the expense of the poor' (Shoesmith, 1982:32). Road construction aided the military dictatorship and it was estimated that in 1979 a 'campaign of systematic terror' in Northern Samar 'created 50,000 refugees and emptied more than 80 villages' (Shoesmith, 1982:32). In addition, roads opened the area for exploitation of deposits of bauxite and uranium by American and Japanese multinationals and the roads were located with economic

development in mind rather than priority being placed on needs of the local poor. Critiques of ADAB's involvement in the project featured in ACFOA publications:

The Samar project is instructive for the insight it provides into ADAB thinking on bilateral aid. First it is painfully obvious that the Australian Government was poorly informed on the actual situation in Samar and discovered very late the highly political and critical situation which exists there ...

Second, aid officials, although increasingly aware of the 'security' problem avoid knowing too much about the overall political situation and the difficult issues this raises for Australian Government involvement. The Philippines is, to put it simply, a dictatorship. Our aid, as Filipino critics point out, supports that dictatorship. It is also controversial because it serves the interests of multinationals and their local partners whatever the good intentions of the project planners. Critics of the project in Samar allege that there was no attempt to consult with people affected or to identify their needs (Shoesmith, 1982:32).

Concern with the quality of Australian ODA was also reflected in submissions made by voluntary agencies to the Committee to Review Australia's Overseas Aid Program. The Report of the Committee (known as the Jackson Report) was released in June of 1984. A spate of articles criticised the assumptions about development and aid inherent in the Jackson Report.<sup>1</sup> ACFOA organised a series of seminars to discuss the Report, and subsequently submitted a response to the Report to the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence. The Committee did endorse the Jackson Report's recommendations 'for the doubling of funds allocated to small scale, community based projects undertaken by NGO's, as well as supporting the allocation of public funds for development education', thus recognising the quality of NGO activities (ACFOA, 1985:4). Outstanding in the memories of ACFOA and NGO staff of the time is the commonality of purpose displayed by the voluntary aid community in submissions and reactions to the Jackson Report: 'The submissions made by

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<sup>1</sup> The release of the Jackson Report was followed by the publication of numerous articles reacting to the recommendations of the Committee to Review the Australian Overseas Aid Program. For example, see Eldridge (1985), Stent (1985), Forbes (1985), Jackson (1985), Vale (1985) and also Bysouth (1986).

voluntary agencies to the Overseas Aid Review showed a high degree of common philosophy on development issues' (ACFOA, 1985:2).

c) Evaluation

The concern of NGOs with the quality of aid was not limited to criticism of the official aid program. Increased public exposure during the major disaster appeals in the first half of the decade, combined with growing involvement in the official aid program, brought demands for greater accountability:

Government funds are being provided to voluntary agencies in recognition of their community support and their success in delivering humanitarian aid. The provision of these funds however, is creating a demand for increased professionalism in project design, supervision and evaluation and suggestions for standardised accounting procedures and voluntary agency definitions (Birch in ACFOA, 1985:2).

Debate about the quality of voluntary aid focused on the importance of the evaluation of completed projects, as well as on monitoring of on-going projects. Reflecting the increasing prominence of project evaluation amongst international development agencies, ACFOA held workshops on evaluation in 1985, and issued a publication on the topic which explored the possibilities of participatory-style evaluation reflective of NGO philosophies:

Underlying the commitment of partnership, equity, participation or self-reliance is a belief that the processes of development are of prime importance. To be consistent, NGO evaluation needs to be developed to achieve maximum participation in process, whilst facilitating the kind of local capability and skills which make this meaningful (Porter and Clark, 1985:25).

The development of useful evaluative methods is a continuing process for Australian NGOs. Most agencies pay lip-service to the importance of the evaluative process. In 1987, ACFOA commenced operation of an Appraisal and Evaluation Unit to assist agencies in project design and appraisal, long-term planning and evaluation of projects.

## d) The Environment

A study of ADAB funded NGO projects conducted in 1983 suggested that 'the environmental issue has arisen as a concern of NGOs in 1982/83' (ADAB, 1983:27). The emphasis on evaluation of projects during the latter half of the 1980's fostered a concern amongst NGOs to ensure their projects were sustainable. Mounting evidence that aid projects could be environmentally destructive and cause a new set of long-term problems for developing nations, arm-in-arm with increasing public concern in the developed world about environmental degradation, brought the environment firmly onto the agenda of most NGOs by the end of the decade. The strength of public concern about the issues, engendered in part by the activities of the conservation movement and environmental lobby within Australia, provided the focus for a major publicity campaign organised by ACFOA. The installation of a new Minister for Foreign Affairs after a period of declining Government commitment to aid provided the timing for a campaign. The One World Campaign focused on the interrelatedness of worldwide environmental destruction with other issues the voluntary aid movement had long sought to bring to public attention:

The Campaign's theme is "One World Or None", and it seeks to convince Australians that they can act to change the world. It is focusing on the interconnections between four issues:

- environment and development: achieving sustainable development in harmony with the environment;
- the global economy and the fight against poverty: more aid, fairer trade and measures to lift the debt burden from developing countries;
- disarmament for development: redirecting global arms expenditure to food, shelter, health and education for the world's poor;
- protecting human rights: the right of all people to participate in decisions that affect their lives (ACFOA, 1989:6).

Aiming to work through the media and local community organisations, the One World Campaign was launched in June 1989. Continuing into 1990, the Campaign was marked by a high degree of unity and co-operation amongst Australian NGOs. Playing on the growing realisation of Australians that environmental destruction will affect the whole world, the campaign stressed that the environmental problems



of the developing world can only be solved through the solution of debt burdens and the relief of world poverty. Continuing its focus on the environment, ACFOA recently engaged in a two-year campaign to develop an 'alternative vision of how Australian aid funds could be allocated' (ACFOA, 1992:vii). ACFOA hopes to encourage a greater focus on poverty and on environmental sustainability in the official aid program through its publication of Aid for Change: A Plan to Reshape Australia's Overseas Aid (ACFOA, 1992). In environmental issues, the voluntary aid community seems to have found a new platform with which to reach the Australian public - an issue which appears to have popular appeal and growing respectability in the eyes of the public and the media.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has not attempted to present a snap-shot of the Australian NGO community with current statistical data about agency sizes, locations, numbers of employees, extent of assistance from volunteers, sizes of support bases, or categories of development projects. To do so is fraught with difficulties. Reliable statistical information about such a diversity of organisations is impossible to obtain (see McLeod, 1991:20). Even ACFOA finds it difficult to collect accurate financial data from its member agencies, although one recent attempt to present some information of this type has been made (McLeod, 1991). Nor was collation of statistical information germane to the aims of this study, which are to analyse the major influences on NGO behaviour and to assess the validity of claims commonly made about the advantages and disadvantages of non-government development aid organisations. Similarly, it is beyond the scope of this research to attempt to compare the experience of the Australian NGO community with that of NGO communities in other developed nations. A comparative analysis of the historical growth and change of NGO communities in Europe, North America and Australia would be a fascinating study in itself, although scarcity of existing research about NGO communities (discussed on pp. 57-60) would make

such an international comparison difficult to accomplish.

Not all historical events were of equal importance for all agencies and neither have the organisations undergone change to the same extent or at the same pace. Despite this, changing trends in philosophies and priorities of Australian voluntary aid agencies have been clearly demonstrated and significant events in their history highlighted. This history has been written from an Australian perspective, drawing on Australian sources. It is silent on the influence over time of recipient groups on Australian agencies. The extent to which change has been precipitated through the ongoing partnership relationship between organisations and their counterparts in the developing world can only be assessed with reference to the history and experience of individual agencies. Similarly, the paucity of information and the diversity of the community means no general assessment of the extent of the impact of wider development thought on Australian NGOs can be made. It has also been impossible in a general historical account to explore the tremendous contribution made to the emerging voluntary aid movement in Australia by key personalities. The commitment and vision of individuals have played a major role in the formation of individual agencies, in fostering the relationship between NGOs and Government, in encouraging inter-agency collaboration and co-operation, and in ensuring issues have been forced onto the agenda of the aid movement. Understanding of the significant role played by individuals and of the impact of wider development thought on agency activities can only be gained through research into operations of individual agencies. Similarly, the diversity of approaches and philosophies of Australian NGOs can only be illustrated more fully by detailed study of individual agencies. Accordingly, the following five chapters present detailed descriptions of selected Australian NGOs. This descriptive historical account has provided a context in which to locate the study of individual organisations and a setting for contemporary issues of significance for the Australian voluntary aid community.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT

This chapter presents the first descriptive case study of an Australian non-government development aid agency; of a small, secular organisation with a relatively short history. The agency was formed during a period when Australian NGOs began to question the suitability for local conditions and cultures of technologies supplied to poor communities by Western agencies (see p. 105). Appropriate Technology and Community Environment is a single purpose organisation which aims to design and deliver appropriate technologies to improve the living standards of communities in the developing world.

#### History

Appropriate Technology and Community Environment (APACE) was officially formed and registered as a charitable organisation in 1976. The agency is also classified as an approved research institution by the CSIRO (Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation), which enables APACE to offer a 150 per cent tax concession to financial supporters of its research activities. APACE is similar to Britain's Intermediate Technology Development Group, founded by the late Dr. E.F. Schumacher (author of the well-known book Small Is Beautiful).

The agency was established in Australia largely as a result of the research interests and commitment of Dr. Robert Waddell. During a term at the University of Papua New Guinea, Waddell met Tony Power (a graduate in agricultural science) who was bitten by what Waddell calls the 'Schumacher bug'. Power attempted to attract Australian funding for research into appropriate technology and its application in developing countries, without success. He eventually

received some funding from the Dag Hammarskjold Foundation which enabled him to establish the South Pacific Appropriate Technology Foundation (SPATF) and the Appropriate Technology Development Institute (ATDI) in Lae. An offshoot of ATDI, known as Village Equipment Supplies (VES), aims to give Papua New Guineans access to much-needed technology. The VES supplies small-scale implements which have been redesigned by ATDI to suit local conditions. Today, the ATDI is linked to the University of Technology in Lae. In addition to provision of technology, the organisation aims to persuade people with resources and expertise to assist the program.

In 1974, Dr. Waddell brought his knowledge of the ATDI to Australia. In 1975, he was involved in the introduction of a course on the problems of underdeveloped countries at the University of New South Wales. Continued interest in the developing world prompted him to search for people with skills or expertise which could be used to establish an Australian appropriate technology group. Eventually three others joined him - Dick McCann (a chemical engineer), Russell Reeves (a research chemist) and Graham Clarke, who was involved with research into community environment problems. Together they formed Appropriate Technology and Community Environment.

The agency has suffered frequent setbacks throughout its history, largely due to funding shortages. Shortly after APACE was formed, McCann received a grant to conduct research on the use of alcohol fuel crops. APACE asked the NSW State government for funds to set up an appropriate technology and research centre. Funds were promised, so APACE leased a property in the Bathurst/Orange district in NSW. Reeves and McCann resigned from their jobs and, with the assistance of volunteers, turned a cottage on the property into an office and laboratory. The research resulted in the production of a solar distillation unit for extracting alcohol from sugar beet. APACE's work on energy and agriculture was publicised at shows, agricultural fairs and in country newspapers and the future of the organisation seemed assured. Although this enthusiastic start suffered a severe setback when promised government funding was not released, eventually a National Energy Research Development and

Demonstration Council (NERDDC) grant allowed some research to continue.

The problem of a site for the continuing research programme was solved when Hawkesbury Agricultural College (in Richmond, NSW) offered accommodation. In 1978, APACE Research Ltd. was formed. Based at the College, research has continued. Since its formation, APACE Research Ltd. (in conjunction with Shell, Albright and Wilson) has taken out two world-wide patents for advances in energy-saving processes - one for devising a process for the extraction of ethanol from fermented liquid without distillation (thus saving power), and the other for creating a stable blend of alcohol and diesel fuel. The dream of those at APACE was to market this technology to provide royalties to fund the ongoing research work of the agency. In 1986, APACE was prepared to float a company on the stock exchange, using the ethanol extraction process. However, the crash in oil prices at the time meant that the agency did not proceed with its plans.

While research into alternative fuel production processes has not provided APACE with a reliable source of income, another technological innovation has led to involvement in continuing development projects. In response to requests from Solomon Island villagers for a source of electricity, a micro-hydro-electricity team was set up at the (then) Institute of Technology in Sydney in 1979. Co-ordinated by Dr. Paul Bryce, the group produced a turbine suited to the needs of village communities. The turbine was selected as one of three Australian renewable energy systems displayed at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Regional Meeting in 1980. This 'sale' of technology funded research until 1983, when the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation appointed Dr. Bryce as Project Manager and Chief Technical Advisor. A small team was appointed, whose consulting fees were largely fed back into further experimentation and laboratory equipment. The first installation of a turbine, with generation and electronic control and protection, was in the Solomon Islands village of Iriri in 1983, and led to the agency's involvement in a number of related development projects (discussed in more detail later). The group has since been involved

in the installation of other turbines and plans to supply more.

In addition to continuing research work into alternative fuels and micro-hydroelectricity projects, APACE was the inspiration for a separate group known as APACE Development Consultants Ltd., formed in 1988. As the non-profit consultancy service advertises itself:

APACE DC offers consulting services in sustainable and participatory development. We plan and manage projects which are cost-effective, environmentally sound, generate productive employment, and involve the local people in planning and management wherever possible. We support the effective transfer of technology by the development of self-sustaining processes: training of government and community personnel, and the use of Australian or locally available technology which is appropriate for the environmental and socio-economic conditions (APACE Development Consultants Ltd, n.d.).

The agency is also involved in the pre-feasibility design and negotiating stage of an Appropriate Technology Centre. The Centre is planned as a training and demonstration centre for Australian and Asian-Pacific students, as well as providing development education for the wider Australian community.

In addition to the activities above, APACE operated a Rural Development Centre - a 10 hectare farm at Federal in northern NSW - until 1988. The farm delivered organically grown fruit to Sydney for sale, and was used as a demonstration farm for courses and workshops. (The death of the convenor in 1988 prevented continued operation of the farm.) APACE-CEED (Community Enterprise and Employment Development) was set up in 1986 to promote the growing and marketing of organically grown food and to create employment (Waddell, 1987:1). This resulted in the establishment of market gardens in Maitland, in the Hunter Valley, and the Eastwood area of Sydney. Through research and participation in conferences held by the National Association for Sustainable Agriculture Australia (NASAA), APACE has contributed to the emerging definition of licensed standards for organically grown foods (APACE, 1989a:4-5).

## Philosophy

The philosophy and purposes of APACE are broadly outlined in its Constitution:

- (i) to undertake research into and development of technologies appropriate to particular environmental and social circumstances
- (ii) to develop informed public opinion on matters relating to the environment
- (iii) to act as a channel of enquiry in connection with programs affecting the environment
- (iv) to promote and undertake research into environmental matters (APACE, n.d.a:1).

The agency's main concerns are with the use or misuse of technology and the promotion of environmentally sustainable development. APACE does not believe one form of technology is appropriate for all circumstances:

... there is no such thing as the appropriate technology. It is not the case that wheelbarrows and spades are always to be preferred to trucks and mechanical excavators; either may be appropriate in different situations ...  
Appropriate technology is not one particular hard and fast set of tools (Waddell, Bryce and Bryce, 1988:1).

The central assumption made by APACE members is that consideration of community values and societal structures should be an absolute condition of any attempt to transfer technology to the developing world:

... we have to ask the question: what societal characteristics are valued. We can then move on to decide what sort of technology can help to bring about that sort of society. For example, a society which is hierarchical with centralized political and economic power and in which people are accustomed to rely upon, and accept, non-local management may prefer centralized power stations and large corporations to flat-plate collectors, micro-hydro electricity systems and small-scale decentralized businesses (Waddell et al., 1988:1).

Finally, but equally important, APACE is concerned with the preservation of the environment, believing '... technology should satisfy the basic obligation of all engineering initiatives to retain a sustainable environment' (Waddell et al., 1988:5). The agency seeks to develop technology which is not environmentally exploitative and

which can be manufactured in the country for which it is produced.

APACE also aims to design technology which local communities are able to maintain without assistance. With these concerns in mind, APACE was established

... precisely because we felt there was a need to identify, invent or redesign technology to fit the needs of a society as the people immediately concerned saw them. Initially we concentrated on the needs of our neighbours in South Pacific countries like Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands where some of us already had friends and acquaintances. We tried to match our technological knowledge and facilities to their expressed needs (Waddell et al., 1988:2).

Members of APACE believe that the strength of the agency lies in its ability to harness the expertise of members from a wide variety of disciplines. APACE is the only aid agency currently operating in Australia whose sole purpose is to research, design, manufacture and supply technology to meet the expressed needs of communities in the developing world.

### **Structure and Staffing**

The agency is an independent, Australian organisation. APACE has considered joining an international appropriate technology group, the Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG), but representatives say its inability to pay the joining fees has prevented this. Although intending to operate independently, APACE hoped membership of a wider body would facilitate sharing of knowledge and expertise, and would perhaps provide opportunities for it to tap new sources of funding.

The agency is run by an elected Executive Committee, consisting of President, Vice-President (two positions), Treasurer, Secretary and three other elected committee members. Of these, one has been elected the 'project officer', because experience over time has demonstrated that it is easier for one person to handle negotiations with AIDAB in relation to project funding, correspondence, and



administrative tasks associated with projects in progress. The Executive meets six times each year, and extra meetings are held if required. A number of separate committees were also established, including a research committee, an education committee and a fund-raising committee. The Constitution allows for the formation of extra committees, which are required to report at regular intervals to the Executive. According to one interviewee, the success of these committees is largely dependent on the level of commitment of individuals on them. Extra committees report to the Executive and are recommending bodies rather than participants in the decision-making process.

No staff are employed by APACE, although its Constitution does allow the Executive to appoint staff if it decides to do so. All decisions are made by the Committee, and its members voluntarily oversee ongoing work between committee meetings. Committee members report on their activities at each meeting of the Executive, at a public annual general meeting, and in the APACE National Newsletter, which is the main vehicle for communication with agency members. Apart from meetings of the Executive and the distribution of newsletters, there is no formal mechanism for regular communication between Committee members. However, in practice, there is regular communication by telephone and mail. Volunteers suggested that communication amongst agency members is adequate and the work of the agency has not been hampered at all by communication difficulties.

A totally voluntary organisation, APACE does not maintain an office or administrative centre. Most work of the agency is completed by a core of about fifteen active volunteers. One spokesperson commented that over the years a committed core of academics has contributed the most to the work of the agency, particularly in its early stages of growth. It is they who have been involved in research projects and have developed new technologies as a basis for project work. However, this support base has now broadened to include a cross-section of volunteers who share the general philosophy of APACE. Some interviewees commented that the role of volunteers has grown over the years, involving them in an increasingly wide range of

activities. Few would have envisaged the necessity for tasks, such as the writing of project proposals for AIDAB, which face APACE volunteers today.

In 1988, APACE reported having 200 regular subscribers to its newsletters (APACE, 1988a:3). The extent of the community base of the agency has varied over the years. In the early 1980s, rising oil prices brought widespread interest in alternative forms of energy, research into low energy fuel production processes attracted interest, and membership rose to approximately 300. Numbers then declined, but are now on the increase again. Recent increased public interest in the preservation of the environment and sustainable development has led to renewed interest in the work of APACE. Popular support for sustainable development has placed special demands upon the agency, whose volunteers now claim to be overwhelmed with requests for assistance with the design and implementation of projects. The administrative burdens are now beyond the capacity of a purely voluntary agency, so APACE has begun to instigate structural change, including incorporation and initial discussions regarding institutional support.

### **Funding and Expenditure**

The agency has insufficient funds to employ staff to concentrate on generating funds for the agency. Those committed to the ongoing research program of the organisation expressed frustration that the agency is 'just nibbling at the edges of what it wants to do most of the time' because of the ongoing problem of a scarcity of funds. APACE has never operated as a fund-raising body. Membership subscriptions (currently A\$15 per annum) are the only regular source of income, although membership numbers vary from year to year. APACE relies on word of mouth, conferences and public lectures to spread interest in the agency. Most project funding has come from AIDAB, with a substantial grant in the past from the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (APACE, 1984). Generous donations

have also been given by individual APACE members or their families, and by philanthropist Dick Smith (APACE, 1983).

In the financial year to 30 June, 1989, APACE's total income was A\$39,300 (APACE, 1989e). Of that total, 3.8 per cent was received through members' subscriptions, 14 per cent from donations, 24.7 per cent from AIDAB, 40.7 per cent from the Australian Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific (AFPSP), and 4.7 per cent from a garage sale. The remaining 12.1 per cent was derived from miscellaneous sources such as functions, interest, and a management fee. The large percentage of income received from AFPSP is only a feature of the last two financial years, during which the Foundation funded APACE to complete one project. In this instance, funds were allocated to the AFPSP by AIDAB and these funds were then transferred to APACE (AFPSP, 1987 and APACE, 1988e:2). In 1987, of a total income of close to A\$24,000, AIDAB grants accounted for 48 per cent of agency income (APACE, 1987).

In 1989, 82.3 per cent of APACE's total expenditure was directly on project support (APACE, 1989e). Administrative costs, including printing and stationery, postage, ACFOA membership fees and bank charges, accounted for 7.5 per cent of total expenditure. The remaining expenditure included costs associated with a conference. APACE's voluntary structure ensures agency administrative costs are minimal.

### **Development Projects**

The agency is currently involved in a number of ongoing development projects - micro-hydro-electricity projects in the Solomon Islands, micro-hydro projects and portable saw mills in Papua New Guinea, survey and feasibility studies for a micro-hydro-electricity scheme in Fiji, an earth construction program in Nepal, micro-hydro teaching units in engineering departments in Indonesian tertiary institutions, and a desalinisation project in Thailand. The

geographical focus of APACE's project work has not changed greatly over time and the agency does not have any set policy regarding the countries in which it will work. Concentration of projects in countries close to Australia has developed as a result of personal contacts of APACE members with individuals from those countries. New projects have often been generated in the same region after news of a project's benefits has spread among local communities.

Major ongoing project work has resulted from the development of a micro-hydro-electricity scheme for the Solomon Islands; a project typical of the way in which needs are identified, technology developed and APACE projects implemented. The genesis of the micro-hydro-electricity schemes occurred when Dr. Waddell met a Solomon Islander at the Young Nations Conference held at the University of NSW in 1976. He later visited him and met his fellow villagers in Iriri. The villagers asked Waddell and APACE for assistance to develop a source of power, hoping to establish a means of generating revenue for the village community other than that available to them through the logging activities of large multinational companies.

After consideration of various alternatives, APACE decided to develop a small hydro-electricity scheme (Bryce and Bemand, 1985). A research group under Dr. Paul Bryce developed new technology at the then Institute of Technology in Sydney. A generous donation from philanthropist Dick Smith and a substantial grant from UNIDO enabled the group to establish the first scheme in Iriri. Completed in 1983, the scheme provided lighting for 110 villagers and power to drive tools and copra drying facilities (Somerville, 1988:41). Prior to the invention of this scheme, the only alternative sources of electricity for remote areas were diesel and petrol driven generators which used costly fuels and were not easily maintained by local people (Bryce and Mismail, 1989:1-3).

The micro-hydro-electricity scheme at Iriri was APACE's first major project and a constant source of learning for the agency. The site for the scheme was selected because the technical difficulties it posed would enable the research team to adjust the system to

overcome problems likely to be encountered in the installation of future projects. A pilot project, it was established with the understanding that there would be an ongoing tie with the Australian research team to enable modification and improvement of the technology over time. APACE aims to ensure that ultimately villagers will be able to manufacture parts for and maintain their own turbines.

Independent research demonstrated that the generation of electricity at Iriri 'has reduced the social and economic strains under which the Iriri community has lived for several decades' (Krajenbrink, 1984:9). The availability of power has led to further requests from villagers for APACE to assist them - in establishing their own wood milling projects, in setting up cold storage systems, and in considering new methods of marketing and farming. The men requested basic mathematics classes to assist them in timber cutting and women have similarly asked for sewing classes. An initial request for an energy source has thus involved APACE in a wide diversity of projects within one community.

APACE representatives believe the scheme successfully provides small communities with 'improved quality of life, an increased degree of self-sufficiency and better employment opportunities' (APACE, n.d.c). This scheme involves the full range of services APACE can offer - from the initial request, to the design and installation of an appropriate technology, to modification and improvement of the technology over time, and to training in the use of, and opportunities made available by, the technology provided (Bryce and Mismail, 1989:1). The success of the scheme has led to its replication in East Java and Papua New Guinea and two further schemes are under construction in the Solomon Islands. Further, the installation of micro-hydro schemes has led to the involvement of APACE volunteers in projects associated with the establishment of local industries which use newly available power supplies.

Field partners rarely have access to APACE guidelines. As happened in Iriri, most APACE project requests have come directly from local communities, usually from community leaders, after learning

of APACE's work through acquaintances or after meeting an agency representative (APACE, 1989d:64). APACE does not have any formal project identification, vetting or appraisal procedures. After a potential recipient group approaches APACE, the Executive Committee considers its request. If consistent with the general philosophy of the agency and the Executive believes agency volunteers have the expertise and capacity to handle it, the Committee will try to raise money for initial investigation of the project. Where the Committee response is extremely positive, a feasibility study in the field may be carried out. APACE only agrees to consider a feasibility study for projects it is confident the agency can complete and which local communities will be able to maintain. APACE assumes that projects will involve some community education and training in order to ensure that any technology transferred to the community will not be misused or under-utilised. APACE believes local initiative and involvement in projects are essential. It only responds to requests from local communities willing to be involved in the installation and administration of projects through contributions of time and labour. Some cash commitment is expected, commensurate with community capacity to pay.

Ongoing monitoring of projects is carried out by APACE volunteers, in many cases for years after initial transfer of technology. Whenever APACE volunteers visit a country in which an agency project has been implemented, they take the opportunity to visit projects. Recipient communities are expected to correspond with the agency on a regular basis to enable ongoing evaluation and upgrading of equipment as technological changes occur. One spokesperson stated that remoteness of some recipient communities and lack of communication skills makes effective monitoring of projects extremely difficult. To overcome these problems, APACE usually incorporates a communication skills component into its projects, teaching the terminology necessary for use of the technology and for making future requests for assistance. In addition, those responsible for feedback to the agency are taught to write a report and how to write and post a letter. In communities with which APACE has worked, local people would not, in the normal course of events,

have cause to write letters. Despite these difficulties, APACE believes that direct communication with local people is, in most cases, preferred to the alternative of dealing through third-party agencies.

A major focus of evaluation is on the suitability and effectiveness of technology supplied. The social and economic impact of projects is considered from the perspective of both the target community and APACE members. APACE members observe economic changes over a number of years to see if the project continues to benefit the local community, and so decisions can be made about the economic viability of future projects using similar technology. No formal evaluation procedures are used, and difficulties of communication with remote communities hinder the evaluation process as they do the ongoing monitoring of projects. The evaluation process depends on reports being sent by target communities to the agency or on occasional field visits by APACE members. Limited funds prevent full-scale, in-field evaluations being conducted by APACE members.

The agency sends final evaluation reports to appropriate government departments in countries where projects have been completed. By so doing, APACE hopes to contribute to the development of local government thinking and policy, demonstrating the possibilities of using appropriate technologies. In the Solomon Islands, APACE members believe they can change a government bias towards urban electrification by showing that rural electrification is possible and viable.

The agency depends on adequate feedback from projects and volunteers admit that much agency learning occurs through trial and error. All technology is tested extensively within Australia under laboratory conditions, but the learning process inevitably continues with the transfer of technology to its permanent site. The intention of the micro-hydro team was to use the first project as a constant teaching project which would allow them to refine and adapt equipment to suit difficulties as they arose.

At present, the agency is also administering a desalinization project in Northeast Thailand, advising and training villagers in environmental management (APACE, 1988f). APACE volunteers believe their operations to date have been successful because substantial research was undertaken before project commencement, and ongoing relationships with local communities allow constant modification and extension of projects to suit their needs.

### **Development Education and Advocacy**

The agency emphasised the importance of its educative function: 'The aim of APACE is to promote general public interest in the development of decentralised, ecologically sound technology, both in Australia and abroad ...' (APACE, n.d.b:1). To this end, APACE organises seminars, workshops and conferences for its members and the wider public. For example, in conjunction with the University of Technology in Sydney, APACE presented a film night in July 1988, entitled 'Appropriate Technology in Action' (APACE, 1988d). Included were films about the application of three forms of technology - a low cost biogas generator, a microhydro electricity generator, and a portable saw mill. Significant educational events organised by the agency include two 'Schumacher Conferences', the first of which was held in 1983. The Second Schumacher Memorial Conference was held in Newcastle (NSW), in November 1986. Planned by APACE and community groups in the Hunter Valley, its theme was 'Technology and Employment' (Waddell, 1987:1).

The main means for regular communication with agency members is through a quarterly newsletter, APACE National Newsletter. It not only aims to inform members about agency activities, but is intended to be educational, including articles about appropriate technology and sustainable development. The newsletter also publishes details of relevant symposiums, conferences and seminars. Some APACE members expressed regret that the agency lacks sufficient funds to send volunteers to conferences and to visit appropriate technology



projects in other countries. However, the newsletter allows APACE members to publish details of their research, enabling readers to learn about the development of new, appropriate technologies. Subscribers are encouraged to respond, thus providing some feedback for the authors.

Members of APACE are occasionally asked to speak about the work and philosophy of the agency. Some volunteers have visited schools and service clubs, and lectures have been delivered to tertiary and secondary students. APACE does not have any full-time personnel to accept speaking engagements on a regular basis. Such activities have occurred irregularly, in response to requests from the public rather than arising from any co-ordinated effort by the agency to educate the general public. However, the agency has recently generated a planned program, which includes the production of a resource package for use by senior secondary students. An educational video has been produced about APACE's micro-hydro-electricity projects in the Solomon Islands.

Despite limits imposed by the availability of personnel, APACE members believe the agency has an important educational role, as the only Australian aid agency with a specific focus on the development and transfer of appropriate technology. Over time, as the knowledge of those in APACE has increased through the experience of developing technology and administering projects involving its introduction, the educational message of the agency has broadened. The agency has become increasingly concerned with what members believe is a cause of poverty - the over-consumption of world resources by the 'developed' nations. As the founder and current Vice President of APACE, wrote recently:

I should like to emphasise that when I first set up APACE in 1976 our original intention was to help 'them out there'. Over the years we have had a change of outlook. Like the late Dr. Schumacher we have come to realise that we are all in this game together and that 'appropriate technology' is a philosophy which has to be applied to both 'developed' and 'developing' countries. ... People are beginning to realise, at long last, that we live in a finite world and that we, in the 'developed' countries, cannot continue to hog the earth's resources and maintain a pattern of

life which is clearly unsustainable ... It is for this reason that we have stepped up our activities in Australia and tried, in our small way, to work with those who are trying to demonstrate that it is possible to live a life which is much less exploitative of the earth's resources, both human and physical (Waddell, 1989:1-2).

APACE has neither the staff or resources to be involved in advocacy activities on a regular basis. Indeed, it is clear the agency does not have a formulated strategy for involvement in advocacy work:

Some APACE members have been wondering about our public image ... should we be (heaven forbid) more militant? We have a bright yellow banner - should we be there? - Did we miss an opportunity at the rally held last year at Bradfield Park protesting against the Harbour Tunnel? - Several APACE members attended. Should we (APACE) write 'Letters to the Editor', a timehonoured method of support or disapproval ...

... 'the old order is bankrupt' (is that hole up there getting bigger or smaller?) and right now seems a good time to push our cause a little harder (APACE, 1988b:1).

The agency does encourage its members to take personal action. For example, the agency urged members to write to the State Minister for Mineral Resources and Energy, protesting at the proposed closure of the Energy Information Centre in Sydney (APACE, 1989b:2). Similarly, APACE members have written to politicians, including a plea for an increase in the percentage of official aid money to be channelled through Australian NGOs, and for a Federal Government policy of delivering '... disinterested, relevant and useful aid which genuinely helps the recipients ...' (APACE, 1988c:5).

### **Relations with Other NGOs and ACFOA**

The Objects of APACE encourage active co-operation with other NGOs (APACE, n.d.a:1). The time constraints facing APACE volunteers mean that, in practice, the agency has only limited involvement in inter-agency consultation and co-operation. When possible, APACE members attend ACFOA or AIDAB seminars or conferences, to extend their knowledge of issues facing the wider NGO community.

The agency joined ACFOA as an Associate Member in 1976. APACE is prepared to support ACFOA activities but, in reality, its members have insufficient time to participate in the Council's ventures. Some in APACE feel the agency needs help to restructure itself and to develop the expertise of individual volunteers. The organisation cannot afford to employ people to do this, and sees ACFOA as the only possible source of the expertise and advice necessary to assist APACE to operate more efficiently and effectively. ACFOA also has the capacity to co-ordinate opportunities for agencies to share their expertise and experiences. For example, volunteers described the difficulties they encountered in relation to shipping and customs laws when attempting to transfer technology into foreign countries. Rather than struggling through procedures and endeavouring to learn how to streamline them, it would be beneficial if APACE could learn about the more efficient procedures which have been developed over time by other larger agencies.

Without an office of its own, APACE has used facilities owned by other agencies. For example, photocopying services, duplicating equipment and library resources have been used at the Ideas Centre in Sydney.

Recently, APACE was invited to join a number of groups involved in researching environmental issues; groups sharing a concern that the energy-consuming lifestyle of the developed world is unsustainable. For example, a joint research and education project between APACE and the Sydney branch of the Friends of the Earth will research the greenhouse effect and explore the effectiveness of strategies which could reverse the processes contributing to the problem. Similarly, in 1989 APACE was invited to join a research committee (called the 'Greenhouse Alert Project') organised by the Social Education Association (APACE, 1989c).

In its development project work, APACE has collaborated with the Australian Foundation for Peoples of the South Pacific (AFPSP). Primarily, the relationship was a funding one, with the AFPSP providing money (received from AIDAB) for the installation of

micro-hydro-electricity generators - A\$10,000 in 1988 and A\$16,000 in 1989. APACE identified and administered the projects.

Apart from these links, APACE has rarely co-operated with other NGOs. The agency is not opposed to the idea, and regrets that it presently lacks the capacity to deal with requests sent to it by other NGOs. For example, the Adventist Development Relief Agency recently sent requests for eight separate pieces of technology it wants developed to meet the needs of its partners. APACE volunteers did not have the time or resources to undertake the necessary work, although they did offer guidance. APACE members are critical of the delivery of inappropriate technology as part of Australian aid projects. Although its members have the expertise to help, they expressed frustration that constraints of time and money prevent them from assisting to right these perceived wrongs.

As part of the general expansion program of the agency, APACE has discussed team efforts with several NGOs which possess complementary strengths. Some projects may be undertaken in which a partner agency provides administrative back-up for APACE's implementation skills.

### **Relations with AIDAB**

With limited fund-raising capacity, APACE is largely dependent on AIDAB for the financing of its projects. It has been given an Indicative Planning Figure through the Project Subsidy Scheme of A\$33,000, but is rarely able to use all that is available because it does not have the resources to manage many projects at one time. Acceptance of AIDAB funding has not posed ethical problems, nor has APACE experienced practical difficulties in obtaining or accepting funding from AIDAB. Agency members are usually sure about the viability of planned projects and are able to produce project proposals which are acceptable to AIDAB. APACE has not experienced major problems in working with AIDAB; the projects officer attributes

this to the facts that APACE projects have met with PSS guidelines and AIDAB staff appreciate the agency's insistence that recipient communities contribute time, labour and some funds towards each project.

The only problem mentioned by APACE volunteers in relation to the acceptance of AIDAB grants was the seemingly endless paperwork required in relation to each grant. While those interviewed accept the need for accountability, the paperwork often seems to be overwhelming. For example, one spokesperson mentioned that for a grant of A\$1,600 three detailed reports were required by AIDAB, including itemising accounts for very small amounts like A\$4.35. The time required for the completion of such tasks is a drain on already busy volunteers.

The agency has been unable to include contributions of time and expertise given by professional volunteers as part of the cost of projects submitted to the AIDAB/NGO Committee for Development Co-operation for a matching dollar for dollar grant. Other agencies are able to employ consultants and include their fees in the overall cost of the project. APACE does not have the funds to employ consultants, and relies on the time and expertise of volunteers. APACE volunteers believe they should be able to include a cost figure for voluntary contributions, thus effectively increasing the amount of funding they could apply for under the Project Subsidy Scheme. APACE members believe this system has, in the past, discriminated against agencies relying heavily on voluntary input for the administration of development projects.

The agency would like to extend its research work and needs funds for the development of new technology. Often specific research tasks do not fit easily into PSS guidelines which were developed specifically for the selection of individual development projects for funding. APACE members would like to see AIDAB give more support to research into technology which would benefit those in developing communities and could be transferred not only by APACE, but by other aid agencies as well.

## The Future

Volunteers interviewed (see Appendix 4 for a list of those interviewed) saw plans of the agency in terms of their role within the agency, from solutions to practical operational problems, to plans to extend the capacity and range of activities of the agency. Practical concerns include the pressures associated with increasing complexity of the organisation, the growing administrative load in relation to project operations, the demands AIDAB requirements are placing on the agency's voluntary structure, as well as the effect of funding shortages on the extent of APACE's activities. Some agency members wish to attract more public money through fund-raising activities. Others believe such campaigns would detract volunteer time from the agency's main tasks, but are willing to contribute time to the preparation of applications to AIDAB for project subsidies and applications for research grants.

The agency would like to see other aid agencies working through it, knowing members can offer expertise and advice in relation to the implementation of appropriate technology. APACE wishes to increase its output in this way, but volunteers admit it does not have the capacity to do so. Even if funds were available, the voluntary structure of APACE places severe constraints on the extension of agency activities.

A goal of the agency is to establish an appropriate technology demonstration centre in New South Wales. Agency members see an enormous demand for information in this field but, to date, there has been no co-ordinated effort within Australia. A detailed proposal for the Asia/Pacific Appropriate Technology Centre has been drawn up, and financial backing is being investigated. APACE finds itself in a paradoxical position. Those interviewed admit there is little hope of generating public enthusiasm for the agency's work without an end product (like the Centre) as an obvious focus for its work, yet public support is necessary to allow agency plans to become reality.

## Conclusions

The most striking characteristic of APACE is its total dependence on volunteers. That the agency exists at all can be attributed to the inspiration, dedication and enthusiasm of its founder, Dr. Waddell. Its formation, growth and continued operation are entirely a product of the commitment of this individual and a small core of like-minded volunteers. The success or failure of individual agency activities largely depend on the level of commitment and enthusiasm of the volunteers involved.

The agency's focus on appropriate technology is a major constraint. Its special purpose means it lacks the broad appeal of other NGOs, so attracting relatively few supporters and therefore few volunteers committed to devoting time and energy to agency activities. Its small support base and resulting shortage of funds means it lacks the capacity to engage in fund-raising campaigns.

Throughout its history, funding shortages have prevented APACE from realising some goals and have hindered the extension of its activities. The failure of promised government funding to materialise, and the crash in oil prices which ended hopes of a flow of royalties to finance agency operations, limited its activities in its early years of operation. The need for funds has forced APACE to be dependent on AIDAB for continued project funding. Future work is now largely dependent on the vagaries of government funding. To date, APACE members feel the agency is at a disadvantage because it is a specialist research agency and AIDAB funds are not available for research.

Although APACE members have not experienced problems on philosophical grounds with application for and receipt of government funds, accountability requirements have proved overwhelming for busy volunteers. The administrative load imposed by this funding relationship has forced APACE to consider procuring office accommodation and paid staff. While the funding relationship could force radical changes for the agency, it is unclear how such changes

would be financed.

The small size of NGOs is often cited as an advantage which enables rapid response to need. APACE's work is clearly being limited by its small size. Dependence on government funding with its associated administrative work, and on the availability of volunteer time, prevents APACE from responding quickly to requests for aid. On the other hand, APACE cannot be accused of selecting projects which are easily 'sold' to the donor public. Free from the fund-raising dilemma faced by many agencies, APACE does not depend for its existence on its ability to convince the general public of the comparative worth of its activities.

The agency is a participatory organisation, involving members in all levels of agency operations, including decision-making, research, project work and administrative tasks. The small size of APACE and its activities has resulted in the establishment of good ongoing personal relationships between recipient communities and agency personnel. The personal involvement of APACE volunteers with individuals in recipient communities means that the agency receives adequate feedback to allow assessment of, and modification of, its programs.

While the small size of the agency and its volunteer base have some clear benefits, this trait has resulted in sporadic and limited development education efforts. Despite its aim to educate the general public about the need for appropriate technology and sustainability in development efforts, pressures on volunteer time mean APACE's educational message is unable to have broad impact. Such an impact could only be achieved if agency members target its message strategically - concentrating on other agencies whose sole purpose is development education, to ensure knowledge about the importance of appropriate technology and sustainability is shared.

It could be expected that total dependence on volunteer time would result in an amateurish and non-professional organisation. However, APACE has successfully harnessed the skills of highly



qualified professionals. The voluntary agency structure means there is a danger that its development efforts could be haphazard, as they are dependent on the skills and interests of its set of members at a particular time. This is not to say that APACE's development efforts are ineffective. Rather, dependence on volunteers can cause problems of continuity. For example, the death of one volunteer resulted in the demise of one ongoing agency activity (see p. 135). Similarly, one interviewee, after long involvement in Iriri as well as hosting Iriri villagers in her Australian home while they learnt to maintain technology supplied to their community, confessed to suffering from 'volunteer burnout' - a point of exhaustion arising from over-commitment, which led to lessened enthusiasm for her voluntary work. Waning enthusiasm of volunteers can contribute to problems of continuity in agency activities.

Undoubtedly, as the only Australian single-purpose organisation with a special focus on the appropriateness of technology for the developing world, APACE has an important contribution to make to the Australian NGO community. Yet, shortages of funds and volunteer time mean that, in practice, the agency is able to offer little to the wider NGO community.

Despite the aforementioned constraints imposed by scarcity of funds and its voluntary nature, APACE does offer many of the general advantages ascribed to NGOs. With the development of new technology as one of its major aims and achievements, APACE is certainly innovative. The agency has also demonstrated flexibility, designing and modifying micro-hydro-electricity technology to suit local conditions and embarking on extensions of project work to suit the expressed requirements of recipient communities (see p. 144). While it is too soon to gauge the success and replicability of its desalinization program, the micro-hydro-electricity technology has certainly proved to be replicable (see p. 143). One of APACE's major strengths is its ability to tap the expertise and range of skills possessed by its volunteers, without incurring cost. The agency is thus able to operate with minimal overhead costs, maximising the proportion of funds spent directly on project work. Recipient

communities are also expected to contribute labour, funds and materials to projects, further assisting the agency to minimise costs.

In keeping with claims about the comparative advantage of NGOs, many APACE projects are located in relatively inaccessible areas, which are often unserved by governments. The 'NGO approach' (see p. 39) places emphasis on process and empowerment rather than the provision of tangible goods. Although APACE provides technology and expertise, its emphasis is on supply of resources which enable communities to establish their own power source and industries, giving them control over their own lives. Local people are taught to maintain equipment so they are not dependent on outside expertise.

In addition, APACE attempts to adopt a participatory model of development. Projects are initiated only in response to requests from local communities and ongoing relationships with local communities ensure ongoing consultation, participation and feedback. The extent and success of local participation cannot be gauged without extensive fieldwork. While there have been accusations that one APACE project ignored negative impacts on local women (Nesbitt, 1986:11), APACE members defend their activities as based on lengthy consultation with, and good knowledge of, local communities (Bryce and Bryce, 1986). However, assessment of the quality of projects in the field is beyond the ambit of this thesis. What is clear from discussions with members of APACE, is a definite commitment to involvement of local communities in all aspects of project work, and evidence of ongoing personal contact with members of beneficiary communities.

## CHAPTER SIX

### COMMUNITY AID ABROAD

Community Aid Abroad is one of the few Australian NGOs founded in the post-war era, whose sole purpose was to meet the needs of the poor in developing countries (cf. pp. 86-87). In 1991, it was the fifth largest Australian agency based on annual budget figures (McLeod, 1991:32) and its staffing levels placed it amongst the largest four agencies (McLeod, 1991:35). Community Aid Abroad's long history of working solely as a development aid agency, its comparatively large size and its secular base, prompted its selection for study, enabling comparison with the smaller, recently formed or church-affiliated organisations examined in this study.

#### **History**

Community Aid Abroad (CAA) was founded by Father Tucker, an Anglican clergyman. Described as a 'provocative and convincing spokesman on behalf of the underprivileged' (Deane, 1978:10), Father Tucker had founded the Brotherhood of St. Laurence in 1931 in Adamstown in New South Wales to care for the poor and to campaign about issues of injustice, such as inadequate welfare services, slum abolition, and the plight of the aged. In 1933, the Brotherhood was relocated to Fitzroy in Victoria (Deane, 1978:9). After World War II, with increasing press coverage about developing countries, particularly the decolonization movements in India and Indonesia, Father Tucker became concerned about the needs of the impoverished in those countries (Deane, 1978:11).

During the early 1950s, Tucker sought to share his concern

through the media, and by speaking to church congregations, at meetings and rallies. In 1953, after hearing Father Tucker speak at a chapel service, an elderly pensioner donated some funds. Weekly collections were taken thereafter, and sent to a hospital in India (Deane, 1978:16) - the beginnings of an aid movement.

Similarly, as a result of hearing Father Tucker address them about the needs of the poor overseas, some business women established a local group in the Melbourne suburb of Hawthorn, in 1954. It became known as the Food for Peace Campaign. Eventually, Food for Peace Campaign groups were established in other Melbourne suburbs and throughout Victoria. After five years, eight groups had been established and A\$10,000 collected through their activities.

In 1962, the first full-time Director of the Campaign was appointed and the name of the Campaign was changed to Community Aid Abroad, in acknowledgement of the direction the movement was taking:

... Father Tucker had been quoted in the press as saying: "Our groups should not simply raise money to give hand-outs of food. The hungry man is hungry tomorrow. Our movement should strive to assist projects of self-help and those which are concerned with improved food production and health standards" ... (Deane, 1978:18).

The new name included the idea of assisting communities, rather than the notion of provision of food in order to maintain peace.

By 1965, 80 groups had been formed, with an annual income of A\$120,000 (Deane, 1978:19). The activities of CAA soon spread beyond Victoria, with the establishment of groups in Adelaide (1964), Sydney (1966) and Perth (1977). The extension of CAA's group structure continued. The agency experienced rapid growth in 1972, with the number of local groups reaching 160, and record fundraising in that year. This was attributed to increased public awareness resulting from the '... benefit derived from the Action for World Development Programme, which had only recently been undertaken as a joint venture by the Australian Council of Churches and Australian Catholic Relief' (Deane, 1978:28; cf. p. 101).

By 1968, CAA's local groups were referred to as the 'strength and heart of CAA', not only because of their fundraising potential, but 'because they represent the uniquely personal character of CAA's approach to aid' (CAA, 1968:4). Groups were able to select and support a project, raise funds for it and receive regular progress reports. Community groups also became a vehicle for the education of group members and their personal contacts. CAA's group structure was seen as a reflection of the agency's evolving development philosophy, with its emphasis on a people-centred, participatory approach to development. Small community support groups continue to be a feature of CAA's structure, offering committed supporters the opportunity for personal involvement in fundraising, educational and lobbying activities. Today, CAA has 170 local groups, and has offices in every state capital, as well as in Canberra.

In 1972, CAA became the Australian affiliate of the International Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (Oxfam) network, which had originated with Oxfam United Kingdom, a large voluntary development and relief agency (CAA, 1971:13). CAA had cooperated with Oxfam in the field since 1965. In Africa, CAA relied on Oxfam field officers in the selection and administration of projects (CAA, 1968:3). The agencies share a similar philosophy and CAA continues to enjoy a close working relationship with Oxfam.

By the mid 1960s, CAA had extended its activities to include some lobbying and development education activities. The agency began to campaign for an increase in the volume of Australian government aid, and to allocate some of its income to educational activities focused on development and poverty issues and aimed at the Australian public.

During the early 1970s, CAA debated the possibility of extending its work to support Australian Aborigines. The decision was made to fund some Aboriginal projects in 1975 - for the support of research into the effects of colonial development on Aboriginal society, for a land rights conference in North Queensland, and for an Aboriginal Education Conference in Lismore, N.S.W. One former Chairman of CAA

admitted the decision to support Aboriginal work was not totally acceptable to him at the time. Some thought it preferable to send all funds overseas. However, CAA's decision helped staff and supporters to appreciate that problems of underdevelopment existed within Australia (CAA, 1976a:6). CAA still extends support to Aboriginal groups today. In addition to the extension of its activities, the agency developed two subsidiary companies, both of which still exist in some form.

A major initiative of CAA was to establish Trade Action Pty. Ltd. (initially known as Trade Aid) in 1965. Through contact with overseas partners, CAA staff and supporters realised that developing countries needed greater opportunities for trading. In 1964, CAA spent A\$500 on handicrafts in Delhi, and later sold them in Melbourne. This led to the establishment of Trade Action, a wholly owned subsidiary of CAA, in the following year. By 1978, Trade Action operated 22 stores throughout Australia, selling hand-made articles from developing countries. The enterprise provided employment for artisans in developing countries and introduced Australians to the crafts and cultures of Asia. In addition, dividends were used to subsidise CAA's administrative and overhead costs, maximising the percentage of voluntary donations which could be distributed overseas. From 1965 to 1976, Trade Action fulfilled its objectives (CAA, 1978:1). However, after incurring losses in 1977 and 1978 (Scott, 1979:2), the subsidiary was sold in 1979.

Locally-based trading in handicrafts continued through CAA groups (CAA, 1980:13). In addition, in 1984 the National Executive of CAA decided to introduce a mail order catalogue selling handicrafts (CAA, 1984:18). It was so profitable that the venture was continued and has been outstandingly successful. In 1986, it was decided to coordinate all the trading activities of CAA (CAA, 1986:20). The subsidiary formed - CAA Trading Pty. Ltd, - incorporates shops, a mail order operation in Sydney and a House Party operation in Adelaide.

The original trading venture, Trade Action, was based on a

competitive commercial model, with goods being purchased from commercial operators in India and its aim being to maximise sales. Some CAA supporters were critical of this approach - criticisms which were taken into account in the establishment of the new venture. CAA Trading focuses on providing markets for the benefit of poor craftspeople, not only on maximising profits. In addition, CAA Trading aims to educate Australians about issues of justice in world trade. The subsidiary describes itself as having the following aims:

- 1) To support artisans in poor countries by selling their products in Australia
- 2) to educate Australians about the circumstances and the need of artisans in poor countries
- 3) to earn profits from trading in Australia which can be used to support CAA and its work (CAA Trading, n.d.:1).

In 1983, CAA Development Services was established. Committed to working amongst the poorest groups in the developing world, CAA staff believed they had learnt lessons at the micro level which were applicable to large-scale development projects:

The key is to work with recipient communities to increase their levels of motivation, to ensure that projects are designed to meet their needs and to increase the knowledge, skills and organisational capacity of these communities so that they are better able to participate in and gain the greatest benefit from, development projects' (CAA Development Services, n.d.:7).

Increasing amounts of government money were being channelled through Australian NGOs from the late 1970s (cf. pp. 111-120). By 1980, CAA had applied for and accepted government funds for their projects and AIDAB was inviting NGOs to participate in large-scale development projects. CAA staff felt there was a growing opportunity for NGOs to influence government development assistance. The idea of a consultancy service was conceived through which CAA 'could structure involvement with government without damaging the voluntary nature of the organisation' (CAA, 1989a:6). It was hoped that lessons learnt about participation of local communities could be passed on to government, bilateral and multilateral donor agencies and other NGOs through this consultancy service. The objective of CAA Development Services was 'to be a catalyst from within the system to re-orient Australian development assistance policy and practice'

(CAA, 1989a:1). In May 1987, the name of the service was changed to International Development Support Services (IDSS) in the hope that it would allow IDSS to operate independently of the parent organisation (CAA, 1989a:7).

In the six years of operation to 1989, IDSS completed sixteen consultancy contracts. The Service struggled to promote the idea of community development to major agencies. Recently however, IDSS won a major contract with the Asian Development Bank (International Development Support Services, 1989). This has generated more ongoing work than the service currently has the capacity to handle.

Trading and consultancy operations are continuing features of CAA's work, but the focus of agency activities has always been its commitment to assist communities in the developing world in their struggles against poverty and oppression. An extension of this aim for CAA, and for its subsidiaries, has been to educate the public about the needs of the developing world and the part Australians can play in assisting to meet them.

### **Philosophy**

A Review of CAA's Policy and Activities undertaken in 1969 summarised the aims of the organisation as:

- a) to make Australians conscious of the needs of people in poorer countries.
- b) to encourage Australians to contribute personally to projects of a development nature.
- c) to promote trade opportunities for developing countries.
- d) to stimulate interest in the people, problems, progress, politics, culture of people in developing countries.
- e) to create an awareness of the complexities of the process of development.
- f) to promote interest in the Commonwealth Government's aid policies, and press for increased and more effective aid appropriations, and more sympathetic tariff and trade policies (Scott, 1969:1).

CAA's basic objectives, although elaborated further in recent



publications, have not changed, despite extension of the variety of activities undertaken in attempting to fulfil these objectives.

Although CAA's raison d'etre has not varied, a clearly defined development philosophy has evolved. From the beginning of the 1960s, CAA's founder stressed the importance of projects which benefitted whole communities rather than individuals (see p. 157), and which encouraged communities to help themselves. David Scott, former CAA director and later its Chairman, argued that CAA's basic concerns were always to assist the poorest of poor communities in a process of development rather than to offer handouts to individuals. However, as a result of experience over time and through continuing consultation with indigenous organisations in India (see CAA, 1976b), CAA's development philosophy grew in sophistication. The definition of development currently employed by CAA is:

'Development' is seen by CAA as the process by which individuals identify themselves as a community and work to expand the capacity of that community to share equitably in its resources for the benefit of all its members. The development process will inevitably depend on the community acquiring the necessary knowledge, power, values and organisational structures not only to accomplish the above goals, but to ensure it is not achieved at the expense either of other communities or of the environment (CAA, 1983a:3).

Kaye Bysouth, former Executive Officer of IDSS, summarised philosophical changes as being 'away from the sense that the content of projects is important, to the sense that the organisation of people is important'. Emphasis today is placed on the process of development - on encouraging people of the poorest communities to work together to acquire skills and knowledge, which will enable them to understand the causes of their poverty, and to work towards a solution. The organisation of communities to work together, and the expansion of their knowledge about local legal and power structures can help to empower them, enabling them to work for change. Hand in hand with these beliefs is a concern to ensure that development projects are sustainable, that benefits will continue after the withdrawal of funding. Concentration on the growth of skills and structures, rather than on provision of tangible inputs, empowers communities to work

for their own social and economic development. In addition, CAA tries to ensure that its projects do not cause any adverse effects on the environment or on communities living near the beneficiary group.

Central to CAA's development philosophy is a belief in the importance of 'people's participation' - that local people in developing countries articulate their own needs and are actively involved in strategies to meet them (this philosophy was discussed in more detail on pp. 41-44). Agency staff have learnt that ideas and technologies transferred from the developed world are often inappropriate and that projects will not succeed without the active support of recipient groups and their involvement in all stages of project design, implementation and evaluation. CAA has developed partnership relationships with indigenous organisations sharing this understanding (discussed later). The agency works with and through such local groups in the design and implementation of its development projects, seeking to maximise participation and dialogue.

Belief in the participatory process is not only enshrined in CAA's development philosophy, but it underpins the operational structure of the agency within Australia.

### **Structure and Staffing**

A non-profit company limited by guarantee, CAA was registered under the Victorian Companies Act (1961) in September, 1962 (CAA, 1962:1). An independent, secular organisation, CAA does not have ties to any church or political party. It has developed a group constituency outside that of church-based organisations, although some of its constituency are church members who see value in belonging to a secular agency. CAA does take a strong stand on issues related to development, justice, equality and oppression.

As previously mentioned, CAA believes its organisational

structure should reflect its participatory development philosophy - that it should encourage members to participate in decision-making processes, as well as in fundraising, educational and advocacy work. CAA provides an opportunity for those interested in development issues to be involved, rather than confining their commitment to the agency to monetary contributions (Arnold, L. 1978:2.2).

One volunteer suggested that the group structure of CAA keeps the agency in touch with its constituency. However, CAA's committed group members have been described by some staff as a strength and, at times, a frustration. They can be reliably called upon to support CAA in its media campaigns or in advocacy work, writing letters, visiting members of Parliament and so on. However, responses of groups' members can hamper rapid introduction of initiatives. As one staff member commented: 'Our supporters are very issue-oriented people who care a hell of a lot. It's great when they are going your way ... but they are quick to respond if you aren't going their way.' Positively, this provides an effective system of checks and balances, making the agency more accountable to its members and preventing it from moving in a direction they regard as tangential to its main purpose.

CAA's community groups are not homogeneous, with their activities and concerns largely dependent on the personalities of the group members. Some have become special interest groups, devoting themselves to campaigning and support for one particular issue. For example, in Victoria, an Aboriginal issues group meets regularly, even producing its own newsletter (CAA Aboriginal Support Group, 1989). The only restriction which CAA places on group activities is that they may only support projects which have been endorsed at a national level.

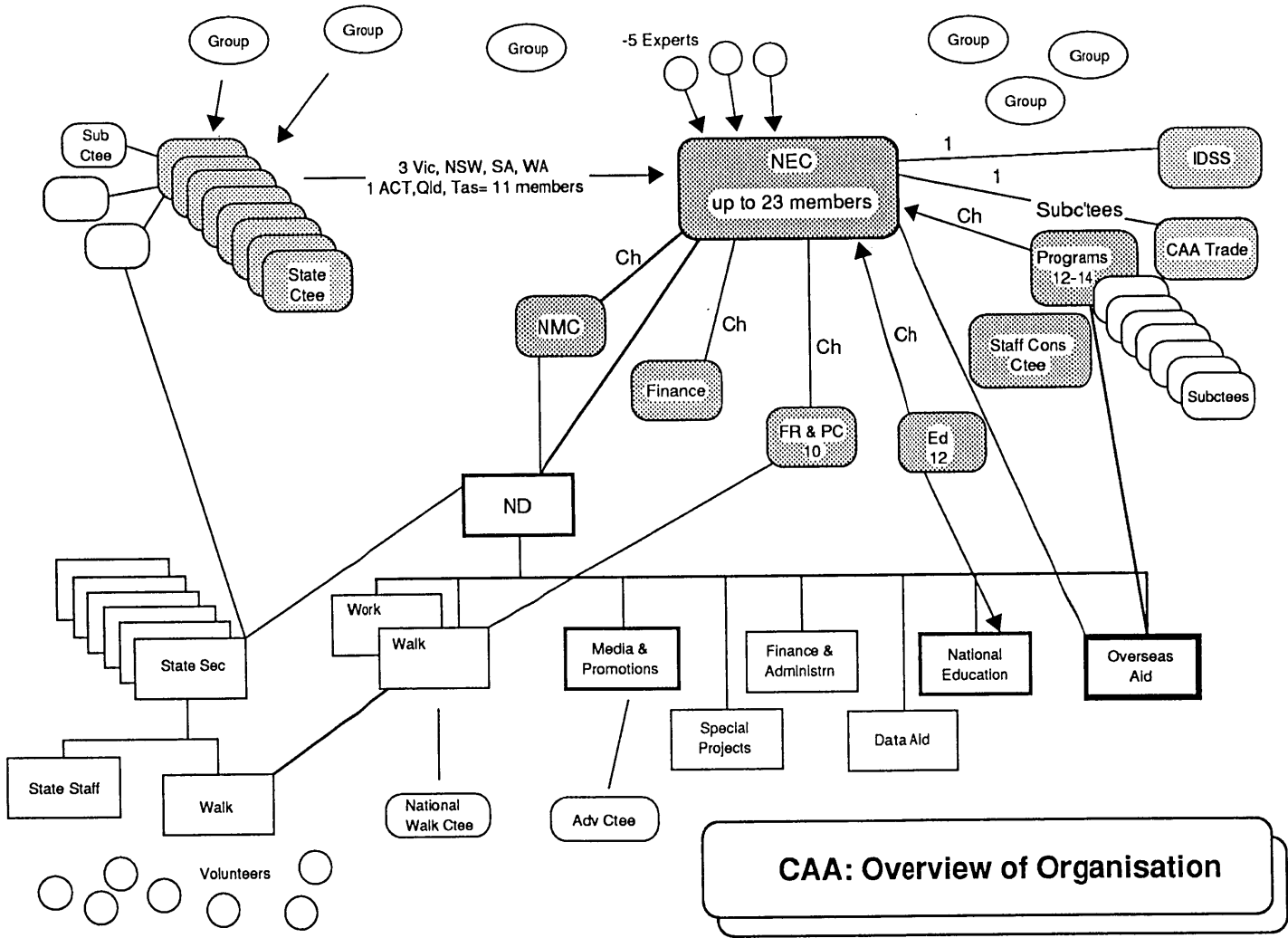
Commitment to a democratised structure has, over time, led to the growth of a complex organisational structure. All professional staff are bound by the policy decisions of CAA's National Executive whose membership is drawn from state committees and thus ultimately from CAA's urban and rural group structure (CAA, 1988:2).

Responsibilities of the National Executive are devolved to a Program Committee, Development Education Committee and to Fundraising Committees at both national and State levels. To cope with increasing complexity and specialisation the work of the Program Committee is shared by specialist regional subcommittees.

CAA's National Director is directly responsible to the National Executive Committee (see Figure 6.1). All other staff are directly accountable to the National Director, with the exception of State secretaries who are technically responsible to their state committees as well. Staff of subsidiaries are directly responsible to their respective Boards of Directors through the General Manager in the case of CAA Trading and the Managing Director in the case of IDSS. Both subsidiary companies are legally independent, although they accept policy direction from the National Executive Committee.

The National Executive Committee (NEC) of fifteen persons, consists of elected representatives from state committees, the executives of IDSS and CAA Trading, the chairperson of the Program Committee and up to three co-opted experts. Dealing with broad policy issues, the NEC meets four or five times yearly. State Committees consist of representatives elected from amongst each state's local groups. Employed staff are permitted to attend National Executive meetings and participate in discussions. In mid-1989, a senior management committee, the Operations Committee, was formed. This committee meets fortnightly to facilitate the exchange of information amongst staff section heads in the agency.

Rapid organisational growth in recent years resulted in decision-making power increasingly falling to the National Executive Committee and staff of the National office in Melbourne. Some members are concerned to ensure that this process does not undermine the democratic structure of the organisation. A few staff suggested that, in practice, staff tend to work together, regarding the voluntary committee structure as useful only as a rubber stamp. Despite this, most agreed that voluntary contributions at a committee level were essential to ensure the agency did not lose touch with



Source: Diagram prepared for Community Aid Abroad's National Executive Committee by John Little and Associates, Consultants to Management, 4th November, 1989.

Figure 6.1 Organisational Structure of Community Aid Abroad

its constituent base. Volunteers believe their participation promotes initiative, gives CAA's constituency a sense of personal involvement, and encourages greater commitment to the agency.

Some tensions have arisen because decisions made at an Executive level sometimes are not readily acceptable to the state committees. The problem is mainly one of distance - communication flows are inadequate to ensure proper consultation. Despite this dissatisfaction, state committees and groups still retain a fair degree of autonomy. They can develop their own fund-raising programs and run their own development education campaigns, within broad guidelines established by the National Executive Committee (for example, see CAA Victorian State Committee, 1989:3). CAA is striving to ensure that the agency is both democratic and expert, encouraging maximum involvement of its constituency, without sacrificing operational efficiency.

Although an independent organisation, CAA does have strong links with the international Oxfam network (see p. 158). Association with Oxfam puts at CAA's disposal a world-wide network, which has at times provided financial and professional support. All agencies belonging to the Oxfam network are independent and equal. Access to this international network is regarded by some CAA staff as one of the strengths of the agency. CAA works with Oxfam on a regular basis, sharing information, co-operating in joint projects and sharing development education materials. Members of the Oxfam network share information about field partners and often fund projects administered by other Oxfam groups. For example, Oxfam Hong Kong is not operational in the field, but has channelled money through CAA to famine victims in Northern Ethiopia and Eritrea.

In 1971, the agency employed 8 staff. In 1989, 80 equivalent full-time staff were employed (including field staff). Of these, 33 were employed in the National Office in Melbourne, 25 worked in state offices throughout Australia, and 22 field staff were employed. Many staff members work full-time, but may only be paid for 2 or 3 days per week. CAA's subsidiary operations also employ staff -

4 by the IDSS and approximately 26 by CAA Trading.

In addition to employed staff who also give much time voluntarily, the contribution of volunteers to the agency is extremely important. They contribute to administrative tasks, fund-raising, educational activities and advocacy work. All committee members (and thus the management structure of CAA) are entirely voluntary.

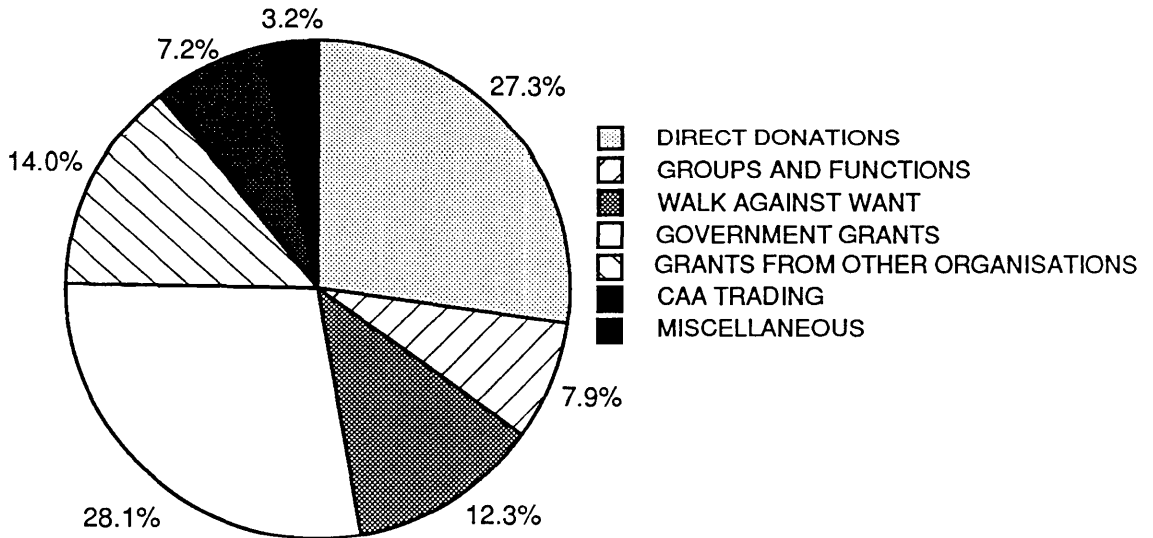
The volunteer base of CAA has been a regular source of employees. People who have moved up through the group and committee structure and have developed a strong understanding and commitment to the agency's aims and ethos have frequently made good employees. Some expressed concern that while this ensured commitment to CAA's ideals, using the volunteer base as a source of staff can cause the agency to become introverted. To counter this, some outside expertise has been brought into the agency in recent years. Staff salaries are low in comparison to those offered by many other agencies, which means that those willing to work for the organisation are generally committed to its philosophy and objectives.

Although CAA rarely employs consultants, it has recently employed a management consultant and plans to seek the advice of a consultant in relation to its marketing strategy. Generally, the feeling of agency staff is that the financial costs involved are too great. CAA has usually been able to find additional expertise amongst its own constituency or through the Oxfam network.

### **Funding and Expenditure**

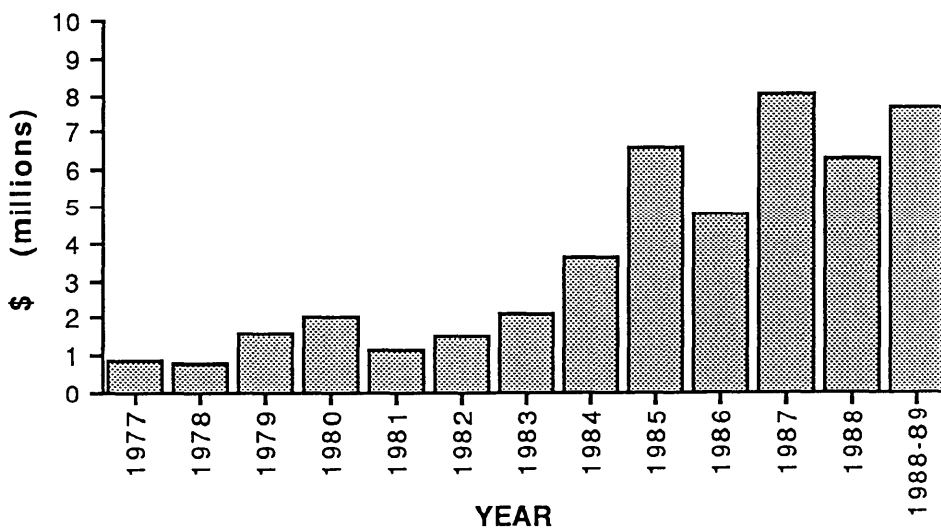
In the financial year from July 1988 to June 1989, CAA's total income was almost A\$7.7 million (CAA, 1989c:2). As Figure 6.2 illustrates, 27.3 per cent (or A\$2.14 million) was contributed directly by individual donors, and 7.9 per cent (or A\$0.62 million) was raised by community support groups and at the functions they organised. Australian Government grants accounted for 28.1 per

Figure 6.2 Sources of Income for Community Aid Abroad, 1988-1989



Source: Based on figures printed in CAA, Annual Review, January 1988 - June 1989.

Figure 6.3 Community Aid Abroad's Total Annual Income, 1977 - 1989



Source: Figures as printed in CAA Annual Reports, 1977-1989.  
 Note: As agency records changed from a calendar year to a financial year in 1988, the figures for both the 1988 calendar year and the 1988/89 financial year are shown.

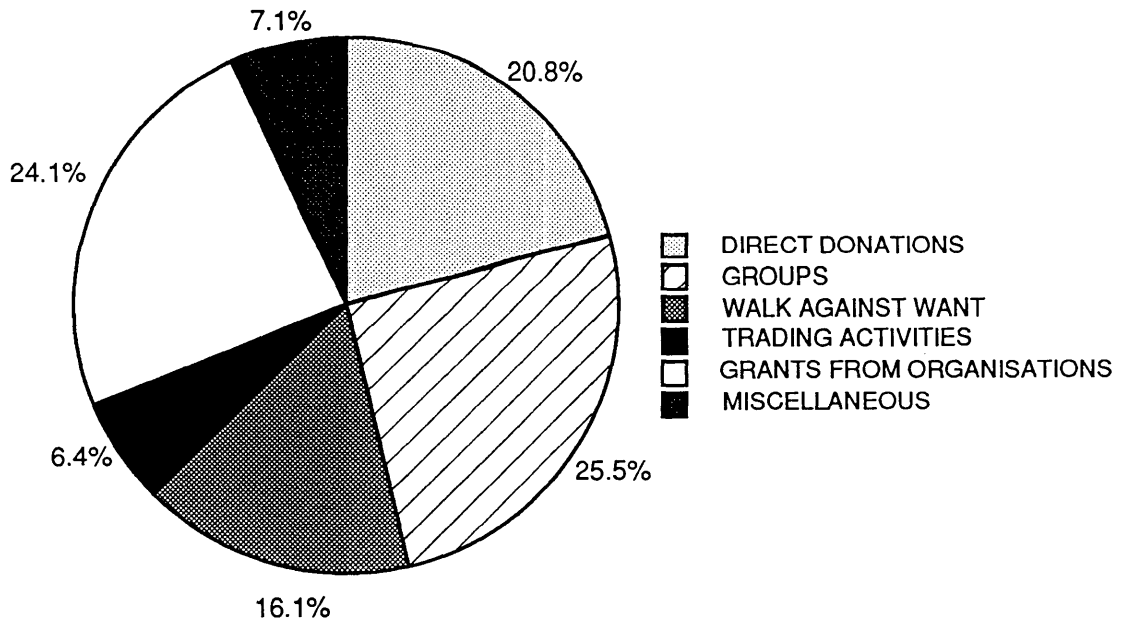


cent of CAA's income, and a further 14 per cent was received as grants from subsidiary operations and from Oxfam branches. The 'Walk Against Want Campaign' is a major fund-raiser for the agency, responsible for 12.3 per cent of income in 1988-89. CAA Trading (cf. pp. 159-160) is also a significant source of agency funds, its profits contributing 7.2% of income in 1988-89 (CAA, 1989c:2).

CAA has seen a rapid growth in its income in the last decade, with significant increases in recent years (see Figure 6.3). Significant increases in income in some years were largely a reflection of major appeals for disasters (discussed earlier in more detail, see pp. 121-122). In 1980, approximately A\$800,000 was given to CAA for distribution by the International Disasters Emergency Committee (IDEC) and its member organisations (CAA, 1980:15). Similarly, in 1985, the drought and famine in the Horn of Africa became a focus for CAA's work and fund-raising endeavours, prompting a 78 per cent increase in income (CAA, 1985:1). Successful Band Aid concerts drew widespread public attention to Africa in that year (see p. 124). Increased public awareness was consolidated into longer term commitment for CAA with levels of giving remaining greater than they had been before 1985. The large leap in income in 1987 was largely due to increased contributions of emergency relief funding given by AIDAB in that year (CAA, 1987:2).

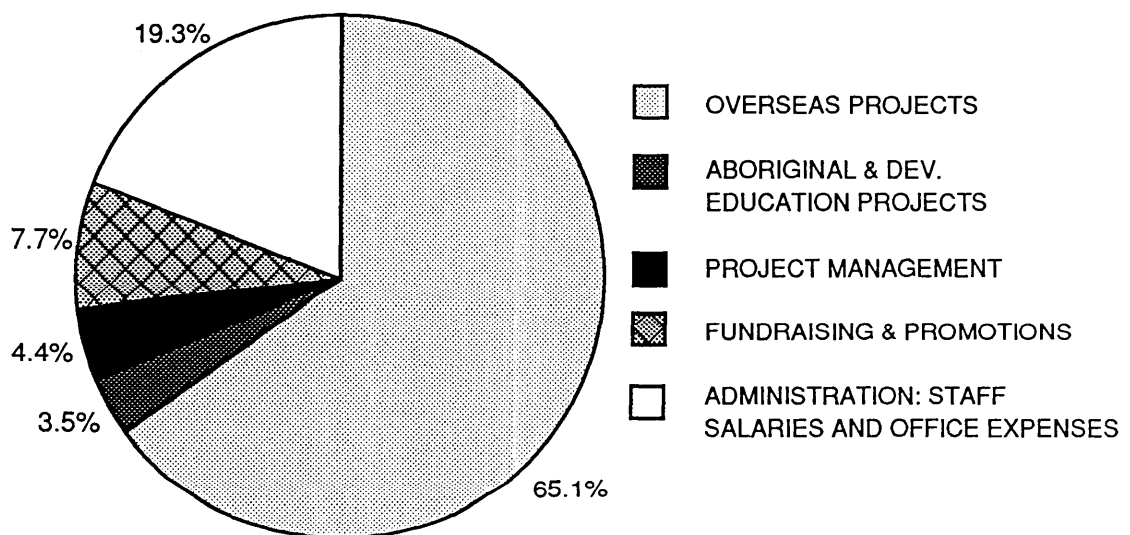
Figure 6.4 illustrates CAA's sources of income for 1981. If compared with those of 1988-89 (see Figure 6.2), some interesting trends emerge. One striking trend is the declining importance in percentage terms of community groups as a source of agency income, and the increased significance of direct donations. Funds raised in the Walk Against Want have increased in relation to income from groups, but have declined in overall importance. Government grants have contributed significantly to CAA's income - 28 per cent in 1986 (CAA, 1986:2), 43 per cent in 1987 (inflated by large amounts of emergency relief funding) (CAA, 1987:2) and 28 per cent in 1988-89 (CAA, 1989c:2). Also important has been the rapid growth in income derived from profits from CAA Trading - from 2.5 per cent in its first full year of operation as CAA Mail Order in 1985 (CAA, 1985:20)

**Figure 6.4 Sources of Income for Community Aid Abroad, 1981**



**Source:** Based on financial data printed in CAA, 1981 Annual Report.

**Figure 6.5 Expenditure by Community Aid Abroad, July 1988 - June 1989**



**Source:** Based on financial data printed in CAA, Annual Review, January, 1988 - July, 1989.  
**Note:** Grants from Organisations primarily consisted of Government grants.

to 7.2 per cent in 1988-89 (CAA, 1989c:2).

Direct donations have been encouraged in the last decade, using a number of fund-raising ventures. Since 1983, CAA has operated 'Australians AWARE', which encourages supporters to subscribe to the scheme by contributing at least A\$10 each month, with most donations made by direct debit from bank accounts (CAA, 1983a:17). Each AWARE member receives a bulletin which describes a selected project for the month and reports on the progress of previously featured projects. The scheme encourages ongoing financial commitment and informs and educates donors about the work of CAA's project partners as they strive to bring about social change in their communities. During 1984, AWARE membership doubled from 500 to 1000 (CAA, 1984:16). By June of 1990, AWARE members numbered over 6,500 (CAA, 1990:20).

The establishment of a data processing subsidiary, CAA Data Aid, during 1980 also boosted the importance of direct donations to CAA (CAA, 1980:14). Maintenance of CAA's list of 11,000 subscribers to its 'Review' newsletter was previously handled by an outside computer bureau. (By June of 1990, CAA Review had a circulation of 50,000). Data Aid has used direct response promotions such as newspaper advertisements, direct mail, the distribution of appropriate brochures, and the insertion of CAA brochures in newsletters of like-minded organisations. The results of these ventures are monitored and computers used to track the origins of CAA's income. By 1983, the response to Data Aid's direct promotions accounted for 20 per cent of CAA's total community support (CAA, 1983a:17). Today, Data Aid conducts up-to-date response analyses for individual promotions and acts as a data processing bureau for several outside organisations, particularly subscription systems.

Another recent CAA initiative aiming to encourage direct donations is the 'Work Against Want' campaign, first held in October, 1989. This scheme encourages CAA supporters to donate one day's salary to CAA on a set day each year. Approximately A\$300,000 were raised by this scheme (from about 4,500 participants) in its first year.

CAA may have adopted a sophisticated computerised marketing system, but its promotional activities are not carried out in isolation from the agency's philosophy and wider work:

There are many philosophical contradictions inherent in promotional work. We know, for example, that the most effective newspaper advertisement is the simplistic tear-jerker, particularly the 'please help the starving child' variety. But to use that approach would be a betrayal of many of the things for which CAA stands. It would foster paternalistic 'do-gooder' attitudes, whereas CAA wishes to promote a partnership with the poor. It would propagate further the myth of the helplessness of the poor, whilst CAA aims to demonstrate the tremendous enthusiasm and determination with which our project partners confront their poverty. So we balance on a tightrope between designing successful promotions and at the same time remaining true to CAA's philosophy (CAA, 1983a:17).

In addition to this constraint on CAA's promotional image, CAA aims to make advertising educational, 'so that those who do not feel enough motivation to respond directly will get some benefit from it. Our advertising is a tool gradually to move public opinion towards a clearer and more sympathetic understanding of the poor and their needs and aspirations' (CAA, 1987:12).

Recently, CAA has sought media coverage for its appeals and activities. Today, CAA has a media unit consisting of three staff; a journalist with public relations skills, a media officer with a background in film production, and an administrative assistant. Media staff are developing a corporate image for CAA as a serious, long-term development agency which is growing and dealing with aid delivery in a particular way. Publicity material aims to show the public how CAA operates in the field and why it operates in that way.

Some tension has arisen about the centralisation of CAA's promotional activities. Historically, individual groups and state offices have produced their own promotional materials. Some wish to retain the autonomy of states and groups, while others would prefer to see all media centrally monitored, to ensure consistency of image and factual information. Groups and state committees are still free (within general nationally agreed guidelines) to produce their own

materials, but consultation before publication is encouraged.

In 1988-89, 65.1 per cent of CAA's income was spent on support of overseas projects, 4.4 per cent of income was spent on costs of project management and 3.5 per cent of income was devoted to the support of development education and Aboriginal projects (CAA, 1989c:2). Costs of fund-raising and promotions amounted to 7.7 per cent (although CAA maintains that some promotional materials are also educational in content), and administration, including staff salaries and office expenses, accounted for 19.3 per cent of total expenditure (see Figure 6.5).

A comparison of CAA's expenditure in 1988/89 financial year with that of previous years reveals that agency priorities have remained fairly consistent (see Table 6.1), with the exception of 1985 when figures are distorted by significantly increased giving for famine relief during the Ethiopian crisis.

Funds spent on agency overheads (general administration plus fund-raising and promotions) have not exceeded 30 per cent. CAA tries to ensure that spending on overheads remains below this figure. It has been increasingly difficult to restrict agency operating costs in recent years, as a result of increasing salary, rental and fund-raising costs, and competition for the aid dollar. According to the Director of Finance, CAA's desire to limit increases in spending on overheads and promotion reflects public concern with the percentage of donated money spent in the field. He expressed concern that it costs money to raise money, and the public are often unconvinced that spending money to make money can be justified. Raising A\$7 million at a cost of 30 per cent is better than raising A\$6 million at a cost of 20 per cent because more money is available for CAA's projects. The Director of Finance believes that public concern is a factor preventing higher spending as a means of increasing agency income and operations.

The agency's structure allows its constituency to assist in promoting agency activities, raising funds and contributing to agency

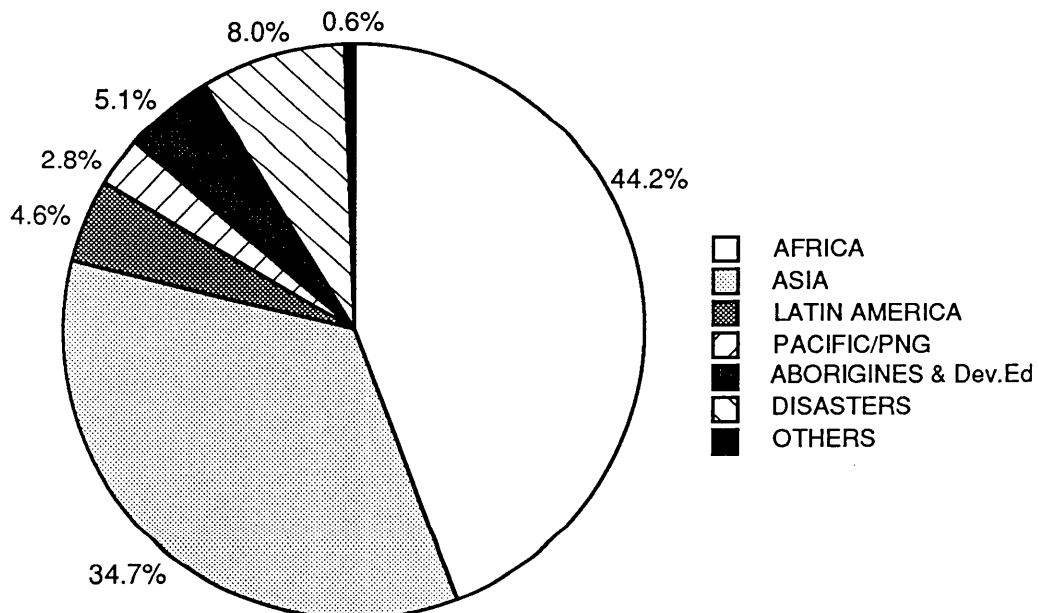
**Table 6.1 Summary of Expenditure by Community Aid Abroad,  
1975 - 1985**

Year	O/S Projects	Aboriginal & Dev. Ed Projects	Fund-raising & Promotions	Admin. Costs	Education
1975	69.3%	1.9%	10.2%	18.6%	*
1977	61.6%	4.9%	7.7%	18.5%	7.3%
1979	74.4%	3.7%	5.5%	12.4%	4.0%
1981	58.0%	8.3%	8.8%	17.0%	7.9%
1983	74.1%	4.5%	7.2%	7.8%	6.4%
1985	82.0%	2.0%	7.0%	5.0%	4.0%

**Source:** Compiled from financial data published in CAA Annual Reports 1975 - 1985.

\* **Note:** Prior to 1977 educational expenses were included with costs of fund-raising and promotions.

**Figure 6.6 Percentage Regional Distribution of CAA Aid, 1988 - 1989**



**Source:** Compiled using financial data from CAA Annual Review, January 1988 - June 1989.

operations without adding to the costs of administration. For example, one committed volunteer devotes a day each week to cataloguing and maintaining the agency's library. Another visits major donors, thanking them for their support and encouraging them to consider making bequests to the agency. Another volunteer arranges study tours for CAA's constituency. One volunteer suggested that such tasks should be carried out by volunteers, as CAA supporters would not like to see their donations being used for these purposes.

### Development Projects

In its early years of operation, the geographical focus of CAA's aid was Asia, with a significant proportion of funding allocated to India (see Table 6.2). In 1968, more than two-thirds of total project expenditure was sent to India (CAA, 1968:15).

**Table 6.2 Distribution by Country of CAA Project Funds, 1968**

Country	Percentage of Aid Expenditure
India	45.47%
Overseas Service Bureau Australia	5.11%
Malaysia	4.36%
Africa	2.83%
New Guinea	2.68%
Pakistan	2.49%
Indonesia	2.09%
Others	3.11%
<hr/>	
TOTAL AID	66.14%
	(of CAA's total expenditure)

**Source:** CAA, Annual Report, 1968.

In the last fifteen years, the geographical focus of CAA's work has broadened significantly (see Figure 6.6). Overwhelming need in Africa, especially following the famine of the 1980s, prompted ongoing involvement in the region. The agency felt it necessary to play a role in South Africa and Central America where intense conflict generated significant need. In addition, CAA has supported Australian Aboriginal groups since 1975. As a former Overseas Aid Director wrote:

From the time of my earliest visit to India, I was astounded at the amount of questioning and subsequently at the level of concern and challenge I encountered about CAA's work amongst Aboriginal communities in Australia. It soon became apparent that CAA could not maintain its integrity unless we were genuinely involved in our own domestic version of the Third World ... (O'Sullivan, 1987:8).

In the past, CAA has not devoted a large percentage of its funds to the Pacific region. In line with its own strategic and commercial interests (cf. p. 113), the Australian Government encouraged NGO activity in the region and the international Oxfam network indicated that CAA should take an active role in the Pacific because of its geographical proximity. However, CAA staff believed that the 'comparative subsistence affluence' (to use the words of the Projects Officer) of Pacific nations made their need less urgent than those elsewhere. In addition, CAA staff were not convinced that the lessons the agency had learnt in other regions were applicable to development processes in small island economies. However, following a review of its Pacific program in 1989, the agency has decided to increase its emphasis on the Pacific, giving the following reasons: the recent breakdown of subsistence affluence; the Kanaky (New Caledonian) struggle for self-determination; and the need to focus attention on the implications of the Australian Government's security, commercial and trade interests in the region and the consequent exploitation of the Pacific's natural and human resource base.

In keeping with the geographic emphasis and scope of its work, the Projects Section at CAA now has seven different program desks - for Central America, Southern Africa, the Horn of Africa, South Asia, South-east Asia and Indochina, Aboriginal Australia and the



Pacific. In addition, there is a separate Disasters Response Desk which does not have a specific regional focus but has given priority to six countries/regions for special focus - all of Africa, Southern Africa (particularly Mozambique and Namibia), the Philippines, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka in South Asia, the Pacific and Central America. While CAA may respond to disasters all over the world, priority is given to regions in which the agency is already involved in long-term development work, ensuring that emergency responses are coordinated with longer term development strategies.

Field offices are located in Sri Lanka, India (2 offices), Bangladesh, Mozambique, and the Sudan. In addition, CAA has full or part-time staff in Laos and Thailand, shares an office with Oxfam Canada in Namibia, and plans to open an office in Cambodia. CAA supports a field representative and at least one other staff member in each office. Technical or other consultants are sometimes contracted for specific purposes and time periods. CAA prefers to employ nationals in field offices and makes exemptions only when local expertise is unavailable.

In 1970, CAA described its project emphasis as follows:

... to help 'grass roots' or village level projects involved in \* Improving the production and marketing of crops \* Helping to extend education opportunities \* Creating more employment through the development of agriculture and small scale industries \* Assisting health and family planning programmes (CAA, 1970:5).

While CAA's emphasis has always been to assist communities and encourage 'self-help' schemes, the content of projects has changed over time. Early project lists reveal that many projects related to the provision of goods or services useful to the local community. In 1970, for example, projects included the provision of tangible inputs such as:

CEYLON  
SHRAMADANA MOVEMENT - A\$5,359.57. For the purchase and shipment of two tractors and equipment to Ceylon from United Kingdom. The tractors will be used for development work camps organised by the Shramadana Movement.  
INDIA

ABHOY ASHRAM, BALARAMPUR, WEST BENGAL - A\$42,221.50. Assistance was given to the Ashram for concreting of workshop floor, deep boring of 3 wells, purchase of welding machine, disc plough and seed drill and grant to Mechanical Training Programme.

ADVIASI SANSKAR MANDAL, BULSAR DISTRICT, GUJARAT STATE - A\$284. To purchase piping for waterworks projects at this centre providing education to tribal children.

ADVIASI SEVA SAMITI, GUJARAT STATE - A\$41,773. Partial grant for deepening a well and for the provision of piping.

ANAND NIKETAN SAHRAM, GUJARAT STATE - A\$4,458.58. For the purchase and installation of a grain mill at Gajlavant Village, the construction of a trade training school and providing teachers' salaries for 2 years, and village irrigation project at Khadkia Village (CAA, 1970:6-7).

While the agency is still willing to provide such resources, today there is a clearer focus on supporting issues-based work, encouraging what CAA staff term 'empowerment'. The agency offers assistance to groups struggling to achieve self-determination and supports local organisations working to mobilise communities to work together to solve their social and economic problems. For example, in 1988-89, CAA supported the following development projects:

DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION ON APARTHEID - The Labour and Economic Research Centre (LERC) in Johannesburg, South Africa, is an independent body, researching effects of apartheid, disseminating information, and encouraging networking and action to oppose apartheid.

CAMPAIGN TO STOP LAWAAIKAMP TOWNSHIP REMOVAL - Between 1960 and 1982 an estimated 3.5 million Africans were forcibly moved to 'clear' land for white farmers, to conform with the Group Areas Act. The George Municipality on the south coast of Cape Province wants to move the 40 year old black settlement of Lawaai kamp to redevelop the area for 'coloureds'. The community is resisting the move and with the help of the National Committee Against Removals will fight the removal using publicity and legal campaigns.

BONDED LABOURERS TRAINING AND INCOME GENERATING PROJECT - The work of CKMS has facilitated the release and rehabilitation of over 5000 bonded agricultural labourers, the establishment of labour associations and grain banks and has played a key role in increasing minimum wages for labourers in the Chattisgarh region. Activities in this phase of the project included: continuing to work for the release of bonded labourers, rehabilitation programs, extending the grain bank concept, lobbying for wage increases for labourers, strengthening women's associations (CAA, 1989b:4-5).

Many CAA projects are training programs, imparting skills to enable local people to work for change: teaching women how to

participate in decision-making processes and structures; training trade union leaders; training in managerial skills; training farmers in water management, reforestation and soil conservation; and training women to run co-operative income generating operations. CAA aims to ensure that, wherever possible, only local goods and personnel are used in projects. Few development projects provide 'technology', but where they do, it is specialist technology unavailable locally, or is appropriate to local conditions. As an example of the former, artificial eyes were provided in Eritrea (CAA, 1989b:3). At the other extreme, seeds, tools and cooking pots have been provided in Mozambique to assist families to achieve self-sufficiency in food production (CAA, 1989b:4).

Projects are identified in a number of different ways: through existing partners and field staff; through Oxfam agencies; following field visits by members of CAA staff; and many are sent directly to CAA. The same network of partners, field staff and Oxfam agencies and personnel is used to assess the suitability of projects, and all requests are checked against an extensive list of project selection criteria (see Appendix 6).

Currently, approval for projects can be given at several levels.

- a) Field Representative Discretionary Budget of up to A\$5,000 per year (normally covering six or seven small grants).
- b) Regional Program Coordinator approval limit of A\$5,000 per project (Melbourne desk).
- c) Overseas Aid Director's approval limit is for projects between A\$5,000 - 25,000 per project.
- d) Regional Committee (e.g. Horn of Africa) approval is necessary for projects greater than A\$25,000.
- e) If projects are politically sensitive or developmentally controversial they are referred to the Program Committee or perhaps even to the National Executive Committee regardless of their monetary value.

A different approval process applies for responses to disasters. Because of the need for urgent action, the National Director, Overseas

Aid Director, Program Committee Chairperson, Regional Committee Chairperson and Disasters Response Coordinator can approve projects, regardless of their monetary value, without a formal meeting.

Regional committees consist of relevant program staff and volunteers who have a particular interest, expertise or experience in the region. The Committees have responsibility for project approval and discuss broader policy concerns in the region. They recommend three-year country/regional program strategy papers for approval by the Program Committee (see hereafter) and play a role in project and program monitoring and evaluation. The Program Committee consists of the Chairperson of each regional committee, CAA's Chairperson, the National Director, the Overseas Aid Director, the Executive Director of IDSS, and the National Education Officer. The Chairperson of the Program Committee is always a volunteer. Meeting every two months, the committee discusses broad policy issues related to the whole development assistance program. It also acts to integrate all regional committees, to approve regional program strategy papers (to be ratified formally by the National Executive Committee), and to make decisions about involvement in a new country or in new programs.

Overseas partners are not directly involved in project selection, but have access to agency project application forms and appraisal guidelines. All project partners receive copies of CAA's annual project listings, and are sent copies of the newsletter 'CAA Review'. CAA believes partnership is a two-way process. Partners are invited to comment on CAA's activities, and CAA staff believe it is important that information about project selection criteria and monitoring procedures is made available to all partners. Before a project is funded, indigenous organisations seeking support are appraised by field representatives. The principal ingredients for such appraisal are vision, genuineness or sincerity, and technical (including organizational) competence (see Appendix 6).

Regular monitoring of projects is undertaken in regions where CAA has field offices. Monitoring is largely the responsibility of

CAA field representatives, who spend on average 10-15 days each month visiting projects and discussing issues with project partners. Project reports are produced six monthly. Where there are no field officers, agency project staff from each regional desk visit a country at least twice a year. The Overseas Aid Director and other CAA staff visit projects periodically, and board members, where possible, travel to see CAA programs. No formal format is used for monitoring of projects, as CAA found such formats too constraining. Through discussion with partners, staff ascertain whether projects are being implemented effectively and accord with agency philosophy.

Similarly, project evaluation is conducted informally, with a framework determined in each case after consultation with project partners. Evaluation of project aid was initiated in 1976, beginning with a lengthy consultation between CAA and its Indian project partners (CAA, 1976b). By 1981, CAA had employed a full-time evaluation officer. CAA regards evaluation as essential to provide a basis for reassessment of agency policy and practice and as an 'important investment in future cost-effectiveness' (CAA, 1986:9). CAA is convinced that self-evaluation, or participatory evaluation, is often most effective. Formal evaluations frequently seemed to CAA staff and field partners to ignore the fact that projects are built on relationships with people and that measurement of tangible, easily quantifiable project outputs is not an accurate measure of a project's success.

Careful initial choice of project partners ensures they have commonality of purpose with CAA, thus facilitating the success of participatory evaluation processes. CAA staff are committed to the ideal of continuous discussion with field partners and the belief that only indigenous project administrators are in a position to identify and solve problems as they arise.

CAA does not usually undertake separate appraisal or evaluation procedures for projects which have received AIDAB funding. Funding is only accepted for projects which meet CAA's selection criteria. Using information collected through the monitoring process conducted

during the life of the project, CAA staff prepare evaluation reports in a format acceptable to AIDAB.

While extension of the process of participatory evaluation remains a challenge for agency project staff, the 'bottom up' approach to project identification and implementation is seen by staff as a strength of the agency. CAA's Overseas Aid Director believes the partnership relationships the agency has developed over a long time period are a significant strength of the agency. Ongoing discussions with partners have been a major force in the shaping of the agency's development philosophy and processes of project selection, monitoring and evaluation.

#### **Development Education and Advocacy**

Development education and advocacy work have always been listed amongst CAA's priorities. The Memorandum of Association of CAA, dated July 1962, lists one of the main objectives of the agency as:

- (4) To conduct research into causes of poverty and disease, and to publish the findings by lectures, meetings, films, books, exhibitions and otherwise, particularly in schools and universities, in order to educate the public (CAA, 1962:1).

In the past, the content of CAA's educational work was based on long-term solutions to problems of poverty and injustice and on the contribution individuals could make. Emphasis was on extension of public awareness of the needs of the developing world, and on convincing affluent Australians of their moral responsibility to share their wealth with the less fortunate in neighbouring countries (CAA, 1968:1-2). The expected outcome of such education was an increase in available funds, thus increasing the amount of aid the agency could deliver. In addition, agency members were urged to lobby the government to do the same.

Today, the ultimate goal of CAA's development education efforts is more sophisticated:

To improve the well-being of the poor and oppressed in the Third World by working in Australia to eliminate those attitudes and activities by people here which are adversely affecting them. In particular, this means raising awareness and understanding in the Australian community of the situation of the world's poor and oppressed and of the nature of development; and preventing those activities by groups in Australia (business, government etc.) which are directly supporting or contributing to poverty, hunger, ill-health, exploitation or oppression (Atkinson, 1985:1).

CAA encourages political action as a means of achieving short-term and long-term solutions. For example, CAA would argue that the principal action required in South Africa is to destroy apartheid. So, its role is to educate about the nature of the problems in South Africa, to engage in lobbying and advocacy work and to urge its constituency and the wider public to encourage political change.

Historical factors led to the increasing politicisation of CAA's educational message and advocacy work. The Director of CAA from 1970 to 1975, Jim Webb, believed strongly in the political role of the agency:

... CAA recognized that easy talk about development as liberation had little meaning if it was confined simply to economic aspects such as seeds or fertilizers for agriculture, while millions suffered political servitude. Liberation is a whole experience of economic, social and political existence. We should never rest while men are subject to political oppression. We should never rest while there is within our power the capacity to assist liberation of the enslaved (Webb, 1973:13).

This philosophy led to the formation of a research action agency in 1973 - The Light Powder and Construction Works (LPCW) (CAA, 1973:11). The magazine of the LPCW, The Powder Magazine, presented a radical analysis of domestic issues as well as of the processes contributing to underdevelopment and poverty. CAA's constituency was divided over the activities of the LPCW.

Soul-searching about the educational contribution that CAA should make on behalf of its field partners continued throughout the 1970s, and was brought to a head over CAA's involvement in East Timor. CAA had an active program in Indonesia and had a field office there. When the Indonesians invaded East Timor in 1975, some of CAA's

partners were killed. CAA found itself faced with a dilemma: should it speak out about the atrocities of the Indonesian army and defend the right of the East Timorese to self-determination? To do so would perhaps endanger the agency's field partners in Indonesia, but CAA staff felt obliged to inform the Australian public about the issues involved and to urge the Australian Government to censure the actions of the Indonesian government. The agency decided to withdraw from its Indonesian activities, closing its office and handing its project work to Oxfam. Despite fears that some of its constituency would be alienated, CAA decided to take political action, publicising its concerns about East Timor and lobbying the government to take action on behalf of the East Timorese (Hill, 1980a:12).

Many CAA members left the organisation over its political stance in relation to East Timor. However, a new set of supporters, sympathetic to its position, was drawn to the agency because of its willingness to take a political stand. CAA has continued to adopt a strong political stand in relation to some issues, supported by a more homogeneous constituency.

Each of CAA's seven state offices (including the ACT) has a staff person partly or fully responsible for development education. A full-time National Education Officer is employed to coordinate educational activities at a national level. In addition to staff whose prime concern is education, all sections of the organisation are to some extent involved in educational activities. Community groups are often involved in educational and lobbying activities, and project staff are frequently involved in educating CAA groups or giving seminars on field activities.

Integration of all activities is part of CAA's basic philosophy. Fund-raising and aid distribution are tools to achieve other objectives, which include promoting changing attitudes and encouraging social and political change. All activities are interrelated. As the National Education Officer wrote:

... why do we bother continuing with our project support work? The answer is because it has taken on a significance



far beyond that of the positive development which it may generate at the local level. It is the means by which we form partnerships which supply us with the understanding, motivation and credibility to act in the larger scene, in the First World and our own societies, on the larger issues.

For example the significance of our support for the work of REST [Relief Society of Tigray] in Tigray is not only that it results in the construction of useful wells in the Province. It also generates a partnership which gives us the ability to raise awareness in the wider community about what is happening in northern Ethiopia, to generate support from other sources, and to put international pressure on the Ethiopian and Soviet Governments to desist. This is at least as important as the wells - and I would argue that in the long term it is more important (Atkinson, 1989:1).

Limited resources have led CAA to focus its educational activities on what it regards as the most strategic segments of Australian society - on opinion formers and decision-makers. So, rather than concentrating activities in schools, CAA seeks to educate journalists, politicians, educators and its constituency who may, in turn, influence others. Although it does not concentrate its activities in schools, CAA does provide resources for teachers to use. The agency's educational activities have been divided into two types by the National Education Officer:

- 1) Community Education - comprising study programs, lectures, seminars, workshops, visits by overseas speakers, study tours to Third World countries, media publicity and production and distribution of literature.
- 2) Community Action - involving establishment and support of action groups, lobbying through letter campaigns and visits, media publicity, financial support of action groups (Atkinson, 1985:1).

### **Relations with Other NGOs and ACFOA**

CAA has a long history of co-operation with other Australian NGOs. In the early 1970s, CAA groups actively supported the Overseas Service Bureau (OSB), raising funds for the support of Australian Volunteers Abroad and administrative and training activities of OSB

(CAA, 1970:4). CAA groups raised funds for the purchase and transport of livestock to Pakistan and India to assist a small Australian aid agency known as For Those Who Have Less (CAA, 1970:4). CAA donated grants for educational activities to the student group International Development Action during the early 1970s (CAA, 1970:4). CAA has also assisted Austcare in its appeals and Austcare has at times provided funds for CAA activities (CAA, 1971:13). With the Australian Council of Churches, Australian Catholic Relief, St. Vincent de Paul Society and the Methodist Overseas Mission, CAA was a partner in a wholesaling venture called Trading Partners (CAA, 1977a:15). During the Ethiopian famine crisis in 1984, CAA cooperated actively with the Australian Freedom From Hunger Campaign, the Australian Council of Churches and Australian Catholic Relief in aid programs in Eritrea and Tigray (CAA, 1984:3). CAA was also involved in the founding of the International Disasters Emergency Committee.

One spokesperson suggested that although CAA has engaged in co-operative ventures with other NGOs, there has been little functional integration of activities. Agencies are in principle prepared to work together in the field or in educational campaigns, but have acknowledged that they have different emphases and constituencies. Some staff suggested that true integration of activities is unlikely to occur because agencies frequently have a basic difference of vision which, when transferred into practical details, causes insoluble difficulties. In addition, different agency administrative structures and personalities often prevent effective co-operation. Nevertheless, some staff believe CAA should encourage greater co-operation in the field with agencies sharing a similar philosophy. In an attempt to foster co-operation and better understanding, CAA's Director participates in regular meetings of Melbourne NGO Directors. Some CAA staff are concerned to facilitate co-operation on development education activities, believing that large, co-ordinated campaigns could have greater impact on the Australian community and would be more cost-effective.

The agency was a founding member of ACFOA and CAA Directors

have served on the ACFOA Executive Committee. Several interviewees claimed that ACFOA has played an important part in encouraging agency interaction and, through its educational campaigns, has prompted agencies to consider broader issues such as those of trade, international debt and the environment. Some believe that ACFOA's most significant role lies in its ability to co-ordinate NGOs so they are able to lobby government more effectively. However, CAA staff suggested ACFOA's role is limited by the diversity of organisations it represents. Sometimes, this forces a dilution of the message CAA members and staff would like to see presented.

### **Relations with AIDAB**

Historically, CAA's relationship with AIDAB has been an ambivalent one. CAA has assumed a role its National Director calls that of 'self-appointed government critic', yet CAA has accepted government funding through the Project Subsidy Scheme since 1975, and has willingly participated in AIDAB's bilateral programme. Today, despite public criticism of Government policy, CAA staff believe the agency enjoys a good relationship with AIDAB.

CAA has always been concerned to lobby government about the quantity and quality of Australia's official development assistance and CAA has not been afraid to take a public stand in relation to international political issues (CAA, 1977b:19; CAA, 1981:1-2). In addition, CAA's role as critic of the official aid program is also clearly evident in its reports. For example:

CAA researcher Dr Bob Richards carried out an important study of the Australian Development Assistance Bureau's road building project in Zamboanga Del Sur and a critical analysis was presented to ADAB at the end of the year. In short, the Zamboanga report raised serious doubts about the criteria which led to the original decision to implement the project. Dr Richards also challenged assumptions as to the supposed benefit for the poor in the Zamboanga region (CAA, 1981:2).

The agency makes strong political statements and encourages

its members to do the same. In 1983, CAA supporters were encouraged '... to approach their local members of Parliament to draw attention to the alarming faults in the government's recent aid programme' (CAA, 1983a:1). The following points were presented as some of the major problems of the official aid programme : that foreign policy concerns dominated the choice of aid recipients; that too much emphasis was placed on recipient government priorities; that projects are tailored to what Australia can provide rather than what the poor really need; and that too much emphasis is placed on technical inputs and expertise (CAA, 1983b:2-3). In addition, in more recent years, CAA's subsidiary IDSS has aimed to influence the form of Australian ODA projects (cf. p. 160-161).

In 1975, CAA received its first grant from the Australian Development Assistance Agency (A\$40,000), allocated as a matching grant for specific projects in India, Bangladesh and Indonesia. Since then, CAA has accepted increased funding from AIDAB (see Figure 6.2). Some CAA representatives believe the channelling of AIDAB funding through NGOs ensures that a greater percentage of government money is used to help the poorest communities in a positive way. AIDAB funding has allowed CAA to significantly increase the quantity of its program, without changing the direction or form of its own projects. CAA ensures that projects to be supported are first selected according to its own criteria, and only those likely to meet criteria of the Committee for Development Co-operation are used to apply for Project Subsidy Scheme grants (cf. pp. 111-113). Some staff suggested that AIDAB funding has enabled the extension of agency activities, and one expressed the view that AIDAB funding may have prompted greater involvement in Indochina than would otherwise have occurred. Others argued that CAA's priorities have not changed because, despite significant funding incentives from AIDAB, the agency resisted concentrating its efforts on the Pacific nations (cf. p. 177). CAA staff believe they are sufficiently sure of agency objectives to resist the temptation to accept funds if its priorities could be placed at risk.

On occasion, AIDAB officials have asked CAA to administer a

project for them. The agency is prepared to act as a conduit for AIDAB, but only where projects are philosophically acceptable to CAA. For example, CAA agreed to administer a training programme for Kanak students in Australia, proposed by AIDAB, but only because agency staff believed the project to be developmentally and philosophically sound. The agency was the first to participate in AIDAB's BINGO scheme (NGO participation in the bilateral program - cf. p. 117), participating in a Somalia Health Care Project. Reasons for doing so were two-fold - CAA wished to expand its own work and also wanted to have more impact on development thinking, particularly within AIDAB. Frequently CAA makes suggestions to AIDAB regarding projects suitable for inclusion in its bilateral program. The agency is currently involved in AIDAB's Special Assistance Program for South Africans and Namibians (SAPSAN) and South African NGO Participation Program (SANGOP) bilateral programs (cf. pp. 117-119). In all cases, projects have emerged through CAA's discussions with its partners and AIDAB has subsequently approved them and provided funds. While some have been successfully adopted, many are rejected because of what CAA staff see as 'an incompatibility of vision' between the two agencies. CAA staff believe that AIDAB serves a multitude of purposes, and that most Bureau staff have no real comprehension of processes of development as CAA perceives them. This often leads to difficulties for CAA in fulfilling bureaucratic requirements. For example, one staff member suggested that AIDAB's evaluation requirements are often unrealistic. Citing the example of a duck project, the comment was made that AIDAB staff would be more interested in the number of eggs produced than in the leadership and management skills developed amongst local people involved in the implementation of the project. CAA believes the government should have a role in humanitarian development assistance and that by being involved in AIDAB's programs, the agency can act as a catalyst, helping to shape the official aid program.

Despite general acceptance of the importance of such ongoing work with AIDAB, there is concern that the agency could become too dependent on government funding. There is an ongoing and unresolved debate within CAA about the percentage of funds it should accept

from AIDAB. The fear is not that the agency will compromise its own objectives but rather, with a sudden shift in government policy, CAA's own goals and projects could suffer. In the last two years, CAA has been developing a long-term financial strategy for all project work overseas, to ensure that cuts in outside funding will not jeopardise program continuity. Diversification of fundraising activities (away from reliance on government funding) is a significant element of this strategy.

### **The Future**

In an agency with eighty employees and a participatory decision-making structure, it is likely there will be a diversity of opinion about future goals. A major controversy within CAA lies in the conflict between what interviewees term 'professionalism' and 'voluntarism'. Some stressed that CAA should never become a 'maxi-fund-raising' agency, but should continue to emphasise that people will ultimately bring about widespread change - this philosophy should permeate every aspect of CAA's field operations, and should continue to direct the structure and administration of the agency within Australia. On the other hand, as CAA becomes more sophisticated in terms of fund-raising and development expertise, there is a danger that the original democratic link with its constituency could be weakened. The agency is endeavouring to maintain the involvement of volunteers at all levels.

CAA's philosophy was seen by some staff as a factor preventing the agency from adopting a 'professional' image, using aggressive advertising and developing a more sophisticated infrastructure. One interviewee saw the agency as bound by a 'culture of poverty' and an unwillingness to 'think big' and invest funds in equipment which could assist to maximise agency administrative efficiency. Those holding this view conceded that the image of poverty served CAA well in some ways, attracting free or comparatively cheap media time, and ensuring that donors committed to CAA's philosophy were

not deterred by increased spending on overheads rather than on project funding.

Staff suggested the major future task facing CAA is to work out how to preserve its voluntary ethos and simultaneously become more professional. Some believed the agency's fiercely democratic tradition, expressed in a time-consuming participatory decision-making structure, can lead to inefficiencies when it comes to making quick decisions. However, those frustrated by such inefficiencies conceded that staff need to be cautious about forcing change, mindful of the duty they have as trustees of the Australian donor community. Other staff expressed the view that short-term inefficiencies, which enabled members and project partners to contribute to agency policy formulation, could lead to much greater agency effectiveness in the long-term.

The diversity of views within the agency was described as a 'creative tension', leading to agency self-evaluation. Some expressed a belief that CAA's past growth and development have been a result of constant self-evaluation. For any private organisation to continue to operate efficiently and effectively, it must not cease to be self-critical. To them a long-term goal of the agency should be to recognise the danger of complacency and engage in frequent re-assessment to ensure continued relevance.

A number of CAA staff believe the major weakness of CAA and of all NGOs in Australia is their failure to bring about a genuine, poverty-oriented aid program at a government level. They believe the challenge for CAA is to design large-scale projects which impact on poverty, encouraging local people to participate in mainstream development activities. Emphasis on the organisation of people rather than the content of projects must be transferred beyond the NGO community, to ensure that macro-level activities of governments reflect a concern with people-centred poverty-oriented aid.

In addition to these general goals for CAA's future, each department within the agency has plans for growth or change. Those

concerned with overseas projects wanted to strengthen the notion of partnership in CAA's activities. For some, this means ensuring that the communities CAA seeks to assist should be more involved in decision-making regarding the allocation of CAA funds. Some hope to see closer integration between field work and the desires of partners, and the campaigning and development education work of the agency. As well, it is hoped that increased documentation of lessons from CAA's field experience will contribute to the improvement of program and project quality, and provide a basis for more effective development education, campaigning and lobbying. Others felt CAA should concentrate even more on the support of projects which aim to develop stronger structures in recipient communities, rather than on traditional, tangible projects. The Overseas Aid Director believes the agency needs to focus more on a program rather than a project based approach to aid distribution - to plan a co-ordinated, long-term strategy for larger areas, rather than supporting many small, short-term projects. Some in the organisation would like to see decision-making regarding project selection progressively handed over to trusted partners.

Several of those interviewed expressed a desire to see CAA become more visible in its approach to lobbying activities. For some involved in development education, the focus of their activities should not only be to increase understanding, but to develop a link between education and action - to encourage CAA supporters to become a more effective political voice in Australia on behalf of their partners in the developing world (Atkinson, 1989:1).

The major goals of IDSS include that of the consultancy service expanding by attracting more contracts, and becoming financially self-supporting within three years. In addition, the Service hopes to attract a larger core of specialists available for consulting work who have a commitment to people-centred development (CAA, 1989a:31-2).

Several employees of CAA expressed a desire to see more cooperation between NGOs within Australia, as well as functional



integration in the field. They believed sharing of expertise and resources could produce more effective coordination of efforts in the field, and facilitate broader-based education campaigns which would have much greater impact for the available financial resources.<sup>1</sup>

## Conclusions

The word 'participatory' is an apt description of CAA's philosophy and is reflected in its development aid activities, organisational design and decision-making processes, and in its attempts to involve its constituency in all levels of agency operations. While the strong involvement of its constituency means resolution of problems can be time-consuming and not easily achieved, agency staff believe its democratic base is one of its strengths. CAA supporters have, in the past, contributed to agency change and to expansion of its activities. For example, they encouraged extension into Aboriginal project work and later prompted a change in the focus of CAA Trading. Strong links with its constituency have ensured the agency has been accountable to its members, publishing annual reports and audited financial statements since the early 1960s - practices only recently adopted by many Australian NGOs (see Appendix 2).

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<sup>1</sup> As previously outlined (see p. 76), the end point for data collection for this research was late in 1990. During the following year, CAA engaged in lengthy discussions with the Australian Freedom From Hunger Campaign (FFHC) which aimed to explore the possibility of a merger of the two NGOs (CAA, 1991a:3). The idea of merging the two organisations was not new (CAA, 1991b:2) and it would be an interesting exercise to trace the details of discussions and negotiations between the two organisations. To do so, however, would necessitate detailed understanding of the history, philosophy and operations of FFHC, which are not considered in this study. On December 17, 1991, CAA and FFHC signed an agreement to merge (CAA, 1991c:1). The official merger of the two organisations occurred on April 1, 1992 (CAA/FFH, 1992:7); a unique event in the history of the Australian NGO community. Reasons given to CAA members for the decision to merge included increased size, which it was believed would mean 'the organisation would have the clout to put development issues to the forefront of public issues', and would benefit from 'enhanced capacity to affect government policy' (CAA, 1991c:1). The other main arguments for the merger included improved fundraising capacity and economies of scale, which, it was argued, would enable the delivery of more aid to project partners (CAA, 1991c:1). The effects of the merger on the character of CAA will be interesting to observe.

Change over time has been more than a shift in rhetoric (cf. pp. 51-52); project lists reveal that the content of aid projects has changed significantly. Change was not only prompted by CAA's constituency at home. Development strategies employed by CAA have altered over time in response to the experience of staff members and to ongoing dialogue with field partners. Evaluation and feedback have also been an important part of organisational change. Corresponding to the first, second and third generation strategies of NGO activity identified by Korten (1987:147-150), the changes can be summarised as follows:

1. Relief and Welfare - CAA's early response to need was to collect funds to provide tangible resources, such as food, clothing and medical supplies.
2. Small-scale, self-reliant local development - after a decade of experience in the field, CAA staff realised 'handouts' were not a solution to problems of poverty and the agency began to fund self-help, community-based projects.
3. Sustainable Systems Development - Ongoing experience and dialogue with partners contributed to the agency's adoption of a strategic view of development aid - that by encouraging local organisations to develop leadership and management skills and gain control over their own resources, CAA can act as a catalyst, prompting sustainable development. An integral part of this strategy is a concern with process rather than provision of goods, and a belief that empowerment of local people holds the key to development of an institutional setting which will facilitate long-term development strategies.

Central to CAA's philosophy is a commitment to partnership being a two-way process. Unencumbered by ties to any church or political party, CAA has selected partners sharing its philosophy and has built working relationships with them. The agency's 'bottom up' approach to development and the partnership relationships it has formed over a long period are a significant strength of the agency. Certainly, ongoing dialogue with partners and the participatory approach to evaluation employed ensure the agency has regular contact with its field partners. Without extensive field work, it is impossible to assess how representative of the poorest groups such

partners are. However, it is clear that the agency uses comprehensive selection criteria which reflect agency philosophy, as a basis for choice of projects and implementing partners.

CAA's development education activities reflect its relationships with field partners. The agency believes strongly that it should not only educate about the needs of its partners, but should encourage lobbying and advocacy work to hasten political change on behalf of its partners. At times, the strength of its political message has been at the expense of its support base. However, others are attracted by CAA's uncompromising stand and by the agency's commitment to a philosophy which overrides its desire to access funds by any means.

CAA appears to be a dynamic, democratic organisation. However, the agency's participatory structure can be cumbersome, hindering rapid decision-making. To ensure this does not impede flexibility in meeting the needs of partners, discretionary budgets allow field staff and project officers to make immediate spending decisions where required.

The strongly held conviction that it is the organisation of people rather than the content of projects which is important has placed CAA at variance with the project-bound, control-oriented approach favoured by AIDAB. The strength of its own philosophy has allowed CAA to accept AIDAB funding to extend its own program, without allowing its priorities and procedures to be moulded by AIDAB preferences and requirements. Committed to serving the 'poorest of the poor', CAA has resisted government funding incentives to concentrate its activities on Australia's neighbours, in line with Australian strategic and commercial interests. Indeed, one of CAA's aims is to influence AIDAB's priorities. International Development Support Services was established as a means to transfer the lessons CAA had learnt about aid and development to larger government and multilateral aid donors.

Like APACE, CAA's formation was a product of the vision and

dedication of one energetic individual. Study of CAA's Annual Reports for a twenty year period reveal that committed staff and volunteers have had significant impact on the direction of agency operations. Additionally, CAA's links with Oxfam provided a wide network of partners and have brought the agency into contact with wider development thought.

CAA staff expressed the view that to become 'more professional' CAA needs to develop skills to enable it to serve its constituency and partners with integrity and dignity. In striving to develop its professional capacity, CAA has adopted a sophisticated marketing system, introduced a media unit and employed consultants regarding the reorganisation of its management structure. Despite these changes, the agency seeks to retain its voluntary ethos, regarding maintenance of its participatory approach as a priority.