COMPASSION and COMPROMISE

The Policy and Practice of Australian Non - Government Development Aid Agencies

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I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not being currently submitted for any other degree or qualification.

I certify that any help received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this thesis.

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

> It is a sign of the times that good deeds currently are being viewed with an increasing degree of skeptism, even suspicion ... yet to many private organisations ... the thought that they are motivated by anything other than compassion and altruism, and that their effectiveness is anything other than positive, is alien indeed. Good deeds are, by definition, good (John Sommer, 1977:1).

The genesis of this research lies in personal experiences while a member of the management committees of two Australian non-government development aid agencies - of sitting comfortably in a room making decisions with the potential to profoundly affect the lives of individuals who, because of a quirk of fate, were at the receiving end rather than the donor end of the aid process. The compassionate motivations of those involved in the decision-making process were unquestionable. Not so were their management techniques or expertise in the field of development. Thus, the following comments were made in the course of one such meeting:

> 'We can't always fund as a knee jerk reaction to what disasters are reported in the press ... '. 'But we must be seen by our donors to be responding to need';
> 'Does anyone know what is actually happening in Jordan? Do they need money? We did allocate some funds there but we can't find anyone to give it to';
> 'We can't reject this project - it could prove embarrassing when x (the project requestor) visits us next month ...';
> 'Where exactly has that tractor disappeared to? Still on the boat? We did buy Australian'.

Such discussions, and the basis for decisions to fund, frequently seemed divorced from any consideration of developmental effectiveness or of the needs of the people for whom donations were intended. These experiences sparked an interest in the workings of other aid agencies and planted a seed which was to grow into this study - a study of compassion and compromise.

It seems somewhat presumptuous to embark upon a study of the work of Australian non-government development aid organisations without either having worked with one or experienced at first hand their work in the field. Discussions with senior staff of some agencies and of the Australian Council For Overseas Aid have frequently left me feeling convinced that it is they, not I, who should have written this thesis. Their expertise, wisdom about aid issues and knowledge of the development aid experience of non-government agencies in Australia is enormous. I have learnt much from them and must gratefully acknowledge their generosity in being willing to share of their time, resources and ideas. Without their co-operation, a study of this nature would not have been possible. In particular, Russell Rollason, Dr. Laurie Zivetz and John Birch were generous with their time and knowledge. It is impossible to thank here each of the countless volunteers or workers in the non-government aid community who have shared their thoughts at conferences or informally at their place of work. I am grateful to them all. In addition, I am indebted to the many who gave of their time for formal interviews, particularly staff at the Australian Board of Missions, Appropriate Technology and Community Environment, Community Aid Abroad, Australian Catholic Relief and the Adventist Development and Relief Agency.

Funding provided through the Australian Council For Overseas Aid as part of a tripartite study of the community of Australian non-government organisations (discussed more fully in Chapter 3) assisted in meeting costs associated with my research. My involvement in that study from May 1989 until February 1991 prolonged the period of candidature, but was an invaluable source of data. My thanks are due to the Advisory Committee for that study for permission to retain documentation as source materials for my research. I am also indebted to members of that Committee - Dr. Brian Brogan, Dr. David Goldsworthy, Dr. Doug Porter, Dr. Ross McLeod, Dr. Laurie Zivetz, John Birch, Dr. John McKay, Russell Rollason and Anne Ryan - for their comments on early drafts of some case studies. While acknowledging their assistance, they are not responsible for the opinions and conclusions expressed in this work. The form and

substance of this thesis are my own. Abbreviated versions of the case studies in this thesis, some written collaboratively with Dr. Laurie Zivetz, and an edited version of Chapter Three of this thesis, were published under the title Doing Good: The Australian NGO Community in late 1991 (Zivetz et al., 1991).

Throughout the course of this research, several supervisors have offered invaluable assistance which must be acknowledged - Professor David Lea for pointing me towards the road, and for encouragement during the early stages of this research; Dr. Rob Crittenden for ably filling his shoes, wading through copious drafts, offering insights and re-fuelling interest in my subject; Associate Professor John Connell for diligently reading drafts, challenging my assumptions and offering scholarly guidance; and finally, to Associate Professor Jack Hobbs for oversight and practical assistance during the final stages of thesis writing and production.

At times, while writing this thesis, I felt rather like Eeyore when he grumbled (disgruntled because he found it difficult) to Winnie-the-Pooh: 'This writing business. Pencils and what-not. Over-rated if you ask me. Silly stuff. Nothing in it' (from 'Christopher Gives a Pooh Party', by A.A Milne). That I have persisted is tribute to the constant support of family and friends - the debts are many. The encouragement and assiduous proof-reading skills of my parents, Denise and Douglas Percival, are gratefully acknowledged. David and little Anya must be thanked for their patience, and for happily spending their early years playing with paper balls, piles of books and exploring libraries. To Stephen, my thanks for perseverance on what has been a long and, at times, arduous journey.

My personal belief that a more just world is worth striving for has also driven this research. Working alone, or through associations and organisations, individuals can contribute to change. To be effective catalysts of change, voluntary organisations must regularly assess their reason for being and ability to achieve their objectives. The intention of this work is to contribute, in some

small way, to that process.

* * * * *

At the request of examiners, some additions were made to this thesis during 1993. Accordingly, a new introductory chapter was added, to locate the study more firmly within the context of development theory. Smaller additions were made to what are now Chapters 2 and 10, to clarify meaning. Additional material has also been added to the literature review (see pp. 43; 48-50; 59-60), while extended footnotes providing further details have been added to what are now Chapters Three, Four, Six, Eight, Nine and Ten.

Several people must be thanked for their support and encouragement throughout the last year - Associate Professor John Connell for his continued support and scholarly advice; Associate Professor Lynn Meek for insights from organisation theory (which demonstrated clearly what my thesis was not); and Professor Jim Walmsley for his cheerful encouragement and constructive comments. My employers during the period of revision must be thanked - Professor Grant Harman, Associate Professor Lynn Meek and Dr. Kay Harman - for their positive encouragement and generosity in allowing time to enable completion of the additional work. So too, I am grateful for the continued support and practical assistance offered by family and friends.

ABSTRACT

In tandem with growth in acceptance by academics and development practitioners of the validity of theories of participatory development, non-government organisations delivering assistance to the developing world have rapidly increased in numbers and financial size. This research contributes to understanding of this little-studied group of agencies by outlining the history and development of Australian non-government development aid agencies, noting general changes and trends in the sector as a whole; studying a group of five Australian non-government agencies to enable comparative analysis of their activities; and comparing the behaviour of these agencies with the general strengths and weaknesses of voluntary development assistance agencies which are commonly cited in literature about them. Study of the policies and practices of individual agencies revealed that their activities are moulded by a complex web of factors including their genesis and historical development; influential individuals; the fund-raising imperative; their decision-making structures; the extent of contact and liaison with beneficiary groups; and their relationships with other organisations, including international aid agencies, denominational churches, other Australian non-government aid agencies, the Australian Council For Overseas Aid, and the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau. Despite common goals of assisting the poor in the developing world, the differences between the organisational histories, philosophies, modus operandi and development programs of individual agencies are considerable, reflecting variable responses to the influences on agency policies and practices. The history of Australian non-government aid organisations has been marked by compromise as the agencies strive to implement their compassionate ideals. They struggle to learn from past experiences and improve the efficacy of their aid; to balance the needs of recipients with the demands of competing for financial survival; and more recently, to access government funding while retaining their individuality

and autonomy. Aid delivered by Australian non-government organisations does not necessarily or solely reflect claims commonly made about voluntary agencies: that they are free from commercial considerations and independent of government; are flexible, innovative and prepared to take risks; have accurate knowledge of needs of the poor; and that their prime concern is to impart skills to enable the poor to become architects of their own development.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAO	Asian Aid Organisation
ABA	Asian Bureau Australia
ABM	Australian Board of Missions
ACC	Australian Council of Churches
ACFOA	Australian Council for Overseas Aid
ACR	Australian Catholic Relief
ADAA	Australian Development Assistance Agency
ADAB	Australian Development Assistance Bureau
ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency International
ADRA/SP	Adventist Development and Relief Agency/South Pacific Division
AESOP	Australian Executive Service Overseas Program
AFPSP	Australian Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific
AIDAB	Australian International Development Assistance Bureau
AODA	Australian Official Development Assistance
AODRO	Australian Overseas Disaster Response Organisation
APACE	Appropriate Technology and Community Environment
APACE-CEED	Appropriate Technology and Community Environment - Community Enterprise and Employment Development
APHD	Asia Partnership for Human Development
AREA	Association for Research and Environmental Aid
ATDI	Appropriate Technology Development Institute
AVA	Australian Volunteers Abroad
AWD	Action for World Development
BCJDP	Bishops' Committee for Justice, Development and Peace
BINGO	Bilateral/NGO Program
CAA	Community Aid Abroad
CADEC	Catholic Development Commission
CDC	Committee for Development Co-operation
CIDSE	Co-operation Internationale pour le Developpement et la Solidarite
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation

DEG	Development Education Group
GNP	Gross National Product
ICMC	International Catholic Migration Commission
IDA	International Development Action
IDEC	International Disaster Emergencies Committee
IDSS	International Development Support Services
IPF	Indicative Planning Figure
ISSS	International Seminars Support Service
ITDG	Intermediate Technology Development Group
IWDA	International Women's Development Agency
LPCW	Light Powder and Construction Works
MAWG	Mission Agencies Working Group
NASAA	National Association for Sustainable Agriculture Australia
NEC	National Executive Committee
NERDDC	National Energy Research Development and Demonstration Council
NGO	Non-government organisation
NGWO	Non-government welfare organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHD-FABC	Office of Human Development/Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences
OSB	Overseas Service Bureau
Oxfam	International Oxford Committee for Famine Relief
PACAP	Philippines Australia Community Assistance Program
PADAP	Philippines Australia Development Assistance Program
PPHD	Pacific Partnership for Human Development
PSS	Project Subsidy Scheme
PVO	Private voluntary organisation
REST	Relief Society of Tigray
SADCC	Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference
SANGOP	Southern African NGO Participation Program
SAPSAN	Special Assistance Program for South Africans and Namibians
SAWS	Seventh-Day Adventist Welfare Service (pre-1973) Seventh-Day Adventist World Service (post-1973)
SPATF	South Pacific Appropriate Technology Foundation

UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
VES	Village Equipment Supplies
WADNA	Women and Development Network of Australia