CHAPTER TEN

COMPASSION AND COMPROMISE

> Somebody identifies a need: an organisation is established to answer it. Too quickly the organisation becomes the be all and the end all; and the original need becomes therapy - tailored to meet the needs and convenience of the organisation itself. Dogma becomes a substitute for analysis and creative thought. ... To avoid this, it is essential to keep measuring activity against purpose. ... The key role of the genuinely voluntary organisation is its dynamism and drive; it should always be stretched, and it should certainly be cost-effective, not as an end in itself; but because of commitment to its objectives
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> (Judd, 1983:1).

It is impossible to portray in full the complexity of the Australian NGO community with five detailed case studies. However, together with the historical overview provided earlier, they provide a very clear indication of the diversity which exists amongst Australian NGOs. The obvious variations in financial size, age, focus of development activities and religious or secular origins which prompted their selection for study are the least of their differences. Although all agencies share a belief in their ability to assist poor communities in developing nations, their stated philosophies, operational styles, educational activities and development programs are vastly different. Influential individuals, historical circumstances, relationships with organisations in recipient nations, contact with ACFOA, the extent of their involvement in a funding relationship with AIDAB, theological differences in the case of church-based agencies, international linkages and relationships with the donor public, are some of the many factors which have shaped agency behaviour in the past and are likely to control their future operations. This chapter analyses the similarities and differences in behaviour of, and influences on,

the five agencies considered in detail in this study. Drawing on the general discussion at the beginning of this study, the strengths and weaknesses of Australian non-government development aid agencies are then discussed.

Agency Origins

The compassion and dedication of an individual, or of a group of individuals in the case of ACR, were the starting point and life force for each agency studied. All grew from the personal visions of their founders to assist those in less affluent nations to better their material standards of living. Except for APACE, the motivations of all individuals or groups of individuals influential in founding organisations were provided by Christian teaching with its emphasis on assisting the whole person: the spiritual, moral and material. It is there that the similarity ends. Although established by a clergyman, CAA was formed as a secular organisation, whose sole purpose was to deliver aid to developing communities, irrespective of their religious beliefs. For ABM, life-style evangelism along with the provision of health and educational professionals were its traditional priorities. One of the earliest organisations delivering material assistance from Australia, this missionary Board shared the dual focus on the spiritual and the temporal espoused by most missionary agencies. ADRA and ACR were established to represent the 'physical caring' arms of their respective churches and to be involved only in the meeting of material needs. Today, they work solely through partner churches in the developing world, and at home their staff, boards, volunteers and supporters are restricted to their respective denominational churches. Defending themselves against accusations of cultural imperialism, the church-based agencies argue that they support activities only at the request of existing indigenous churches.

Development Philosophies

With compassion for the poor in the developing world as their basic raison d'etre, it would seem reasonable to expect the major determinant of agency behaviour to be an articulated development philosophy. Surprisingly, for some agencies, compassion alone seems to be an end in itself. Established to meet a perceived need, some agencies seem to have blundered onto their present course, directed by a myriad of influences, without, to use Lord Judd's words, 'measuring activity against purpose' (Judd, 1983:1). They have become engaged in the selection, funding and administration of project aid, without clear developmental objectives to direct their operations. For example, ADRA/SP, administering one of the largest total NGO budgets in Australia, does not yet have a clearly defined set of project selection criteria. The ABM has recently diversified its activities away from its historical focus as a missionary agency, to administer discrete development projects. The Board is now struggling to articulate a philosophy which marries its concern for the spiritual to concern for the material well-being of recipient groups. APACE has a clear purpose - to research, design, manufacture and supply technology to meet the expressed needs of communities in the developing world. However, while the agency regards environmental sustainability and community involvement as important, its underlying development philosophy is not explicit. Emphasis is on the provision of tangible inputs to improve the living standards of beneficiary communities. In contrast, CAA has a finely tuned definition of development and corresponding project selection criteria. These emphasise the importance of encouraging poor communities to acquire knowledge and skills which will enable them to understand the causes of their poverty and to work towards a solution. ACR's carefully articulated philosophy similarly places emphasis on 'empowerment' - on assisting poor people to gain the knowledge, skills and authority needed to control their own destinies.

Ideals in Practice

Despite common motivations, differences in stated philosophies of the agencies are apparent. So too, clear differences are evident in the means used by each agency as it attempts to translate its ideals into practice. Korten's generational classification of the development strategies of voluntary agencies has been outlined previously and is illustrated in Table 10.1. It is clear that the classification system has some validity for the five agencies described in detail in this study. ADRA's development activities, with their focus on disaster relief and meeting of immediate needs by provision of tangible inputs, place the agency into Korten's first generation. While the need for relief following disasters is undeniable, Korten argued that, as a development strategy, relief and welfare approaches 'contributed little or nothing to the ability of the poor, whether countries or individuals, to meet their own needs on a sustained basis' (1987:148. See also Korten, 1990:118).

ABM's traditional and continuing focus on the provision of expatriate health and education professionals places its work partly in this first generation strategy. However, its recent development projects with their provision of training for local communities show that the agency is moving into the second generation of aid activity identified by Korten. What distinguishes these efforts is

> the stress on local self-reliance, with the intent that benefits would be sustained beyond the period of NGO assistance ... Second generation strategies by definition do not attempt to address the causes of the inadequacy of other service providers or the larger institutional and policy context of the NGOs own activities (Korten, 1987:148. See also Korten, 1990:118-120).

ABM fits into a common pattern described by Korten, that of NGOs 'working with the poor in southern countries to begin with first generation strategies' (Korten, 1990:118). Experience in the field leads them to question the validity of relief and welfare activities and to search for 'a more developmental approach' (Korten, 1990:118).

The focus of APACE's activities - the design and provision of

Table 10.1 Strategies of Development-Oriented NGOs: Four Generations

	Generation			
	First Relief and Welfare	**Second** Community Development	**Third** Sustainable Systems Development	**Fourth** People's Movements
Problem Definition	Shortage	Local inertia	Institutional and policy constraints	Inadequate Mobilizing Vision
Time Frame	Immediate	Project life	Ten to Twenty Years	Indefinite Future
Scope	Individual or Family	Neighborhood or Village	Region or Nation	National or Global
Chief Actors	NGO	NGO + Community	All Relevant Public & Private Institutions	Loosely Defined Networks of People & Organizations
NGO Role	Doer	Mobilizer	Catalyst	Activist/Educator
Management Orientation	Logistics Management	Project Management	Strategic Management	Coalescing and Energizing Self-Managing Networks
Development Education	Starving Children	Community Self-Help	Constraining Policies & Institutions	Spaceship Earth

Source: Korten, 1990:117

technology to foster self-reliant development in local communities - also places its activities in the second generation strategy identified by Korten. However, unlike ABM, APACE has been engaged in second generation strategies since its founding. These strategies, Korten argued, are 'developmental in concept, but it has become increasingly evident that their underlying assumptions are often overly simplistic' (Korten, 1990:120). Their activities are too limited and fragmented to have any lasting impact on local power structures which are 'maintained by protective national and international systems against which even the strongest village organizations are relatively powerless' (Korten, 1990:120).

With their emphasis on 'empowering' local peoples to control their own futures, CAA and ACR have clearly moved beyond first and second generation strategies. Study of the projects supported throughout the life of these agencies has revealed changes in the focus of their activities. While both still support some projects within the range of first and second generation strategies - some disaster relief, refugee support and some projects encouraging community self-reliance, the agencies believe in the strategic importance of 'working in a catalytic, foundation-like role rather than an operational service-delivery role' (Korten, 1987:149. See also Korten, 1990:121). For CAA this means supporting its 'partners' (local organisations) as they work to mobilise their local communities to seek change. As the description of CAA's project activities illustrated (see p. 179), CAA is clearly attempting, through its aid projects, to change systems and structures which it believes hinder development.

ACR has moved further along the continuum, handing power over spending to its partners, and emphasising that education, organisation and participation of the poor and oppressed in their struggles to control their lives are essential to foster change. As part of its strategy to promote change, ACR believes attitudes in the developed world must change, to enable creation of more just structures in trade, investment and migration. Accordingly, the agency's first objective is to educate Australians about the need for changes in

attitudes and lifestyles in the developed world, in order to facilitate sustained change for the world's poor communities and nations. In this educational focus ACR is moving towards Korten's most recently defined 'fourth generation strategy'. This strategy aims to facilitate people's movements through programs which 'look beyond focused initiatives aimed at changing specific policies and institutional sub-systems. Their goal is to energize a critical mass of independent, decentralized initiative, in support of a social vision' (Korten, 1990:127).

Empowerment as a strategy clearly differentiates the development activities of Australian NGOs. Korten suggested that in different program orientations 'there is an underlying direction of movement that makes it appropriate to label these orientations as first, second and third generation' (1987:147). Such a trend was clearly evident in the historical overview of the Australian NGO community presented in Chapter Three. ACR and CAA have certainly experienced changes in focus over time, which approximate the 'underlying direction of movement' Korten referred to. However, as Korten pointed out, 'the generational framework does not apply equally to all types of NGOs ... Its underlying logic assumes that the NGO will be led by the lessons of its own experience to focus its resources increasingly on more fundamental determinants of the problem it seeks to address' (Korten, 1990:122). Thus, in this study, the linear trend is applicable to CAA and ACR. However, the oldest agency, ABM, has not moved beyond second generation strategies; ADRA/SP is a relatively new organisation whose relief and welfare work falls within the first generation strategy; and APACE was formed with the express aim of pursuing strategies which Korten would identify as second generation strategies. Thus, as discussed in Chapter 2 (p. 37), the different strategic orientations co-exist or, as Korten suggested in comparing his generations to the human family, new generations take their place along with the older generation, without necessarily replacing them (Korten, 1987:156. See also Korten, 1990:129).

Korten suggested that the extent to which the focus of an agency changes depends on the extent to which the NGO:

> * Is clearly focused on trying to make a sustainable difference in the lives of the people it is assisting;
> * Has attempted to make explicit the theory underlying its intervention aimed at improving their lives; and
> * Engages in the regular and critical assessment of its own performance (Korten, 1990:122).

As illustrated earlier (see pp. 259ff.), an NGO's clarity of purpose, the extent to which it has explicated a development philosophy, and the focus of its development program are undoubtedly linked. Yet to date, research about NGOs has not endeavoured to explain what factors assist or hinder organisations in their attempts to develop philosophies and practices which are clearly based on the needs of the poor (see pp. 62ff.). Recent calls for research into the internal operations of NGOs reflect a growing recognition that NGO agendas are set by the general environment within which they function, rather than solely by the priorities of the poor they seek to serve (see Campbell, 1987; Cracknell, 1986; Tandon, 1991). Therefore, in order to account for the philosophical differences discussed earlier, and the different development strategies adopted by Australian NGOs, it is necessary to analyse the importance of other influences on NGO behaviour. These mediating factors can be summarised into ten categories, which are outlined in the following pages.

a. Influential Individuals

Surprisingly, the existing academic literature on NGOs ignores the significance of key individuals in shaping agency policy and practice.[1] In most agencies selected for study, individuals with vision, dedication and leadership skills had, and for some still

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[1] This is surprising given that the importance of leadership in organisational behaviour and change has long been recognised by sociologists and in management studies. For example, see Etzioni's well-known work on organisational control and leadership (Etzioni, 1964). Spencer et al. (1988) provide a useful summary of theories of leadership and control in organisations, of different leadership styles, and of their impact on organisations. Further exploration of the impact of leadership styles and of issues of power and control within NGOs would be a useful study, assisting to further understanding of these organisations and of the influences on their behaviour.

have, significant impact on agency behaviour. APACE, CAA and ADRA only exist because of the energy and commitment of individuals concerned to find some way to meet the needs of impoverished communities in other nations. That APACE has survived at all is a result of the enthusiasm and commitment of a small group of volunteers. Its initiatives in research and development were possible only because of the particular skills of its voluntary members. For example, the technological innovation and installation of micro-hydro-electricity projects were possible only because the agency attracted an academic with the appropriate qualifications and commitment.

Although not dependent on individuals for their continued existence, other agencies have articulated development philosophies and field practices which have been shaped in part by influential individuals. For example, recent changes in project priorities for ADRA/SP have been facilitated by the skills and life experiences of recently appointed staff who have encouraged support of long-term community development projects rather than continued concentration on provision of relief and welfare. ADRA/SP's streamlined administrative system, with low overheads and a high fund-raising capacity, was moulded by the administrative expertise of its Executive Director, George Laxton. CAA's early philosophy was shaped by its founder, Father Tucker. Published annual reports revealed that its National Director during the early 1970s, Jim Webb, was responsible for fostering the politicisation of CAA's educational message and for encouraging advocacy work. In a complex organisation with a long history, there have undoubtedly been many other influential people. ACR's current approach to partnership was clearly allowed to develop because its first National Executive Director, William Byrne, was open to the overtures of its partners regarding the sharing of decision-making power. Similarly, its current National Executive Director, Michael Whiteley, has encouraged the extension of the agency's development education activities. Thus, as the formation and survival of some agencies depended on the vision and energies of committed persons, so too the particular skills or expertise of individuals are able to influence the shape of an

agency's whole program.

With a very long complex institutional history, closely linked to that of the Australian Anglican Church, the influence of key personalities on ABM's history is less obvious. It is possible there have been some, pre-dating the memories of the staff interviewed for this study. Nevertheless, it is clear from the other case studies that the philosophies, development strategies and the nature of the relationship between agencies and their partners have been profoundly influenced by key individuals. The impact of individuals with a vision for the future must be acknowledged when accounting for the growth and change in agency activities, in addition to age and experience over time. Particularly in the formative years of most agencies, it appears that the moulding of their philosophies and practices was highly dependent on the vision, expertise and drive of a few influential persons.

b. Significant Historical Events

The historical overview of the formation and growth of the Australian NGO community (Chapter Four) highlighted international and domestic events which representatives of Australian NGOs believe have influenced the community's growth and development. The analysis of individual agencies has revealed that while all experienced changes precipitated to some extent by some significant external events, the agencies were not all affected by the same events in the same way. For example, the process of gaining independence in Papua New Guinea was reflected in ABM's changing approach to funding. By the 1970s, local churches were in charge of requesting personnel and administering them, and the ABM provided block grants, giving its partners the freedom to determine their own spending priorities. Conversely, having little direct contact with the communities it aims to assist, ADRA/SP was influenced little by trends towards independence abroad. Although nationalisation of decision-making processes was mentioned as a goal by some staff, power has remained

in the hands of expatriate staff of ADRA International and of the Australian based agency.

Although it has had a comparatively short life span, and has a specialised purpose, APACE has not been immune to the effects of international economic and political events. For example, the crash in oil prices in 1986 ended the organisation's dreams of marketing power-saving technology to fund its research and development activities. In contrast, recent increased public interest in environmental preservation and sustainability of development efforts has prompted renewed interest in the agency's work.

The precis of CAA's history illustrated that the agency's growth and character were similarly influenced by events external to the agency. For example, the agency experienced rapid growth in 1972, resulting from increased public interest in developing countries stimulated by the Action for World Development education campaign throughout Australia. The agency also benefitted financially from increased public awareness, later consolidated into long-term financial commitment, from the successful Band Aid concerts which drew widespread public attention to drought and famine in the Horn of Africa in 1985. Conflict in East Timor influenced the entire Australian NGO community. CAA's involvement in East Timor in 1975 sparked controversy, which ultimately resulted in the attraction of a more homogeneous agency constituency, supportive of the strong political stand adopted by the agency.

Korten noted that NGOs have 'undergone important changes over the years' (1987:147). This analysis enables elaboration of this general truism. A variety of experiences shape agency behaviour, ranging from the input of influential individuals to the impact of isolated international events. As illustrated above, significant historical events have precipitated change in APACE, ABM and CAA. However, this is not the case for all agencies. For example, it is not obvious that ADRA/SP or ACR have been influenced likewise by particular international events. Closely bound to their respective denominational churches, their growth and development have been tied

to the differing theological emphases of the institutional churches to which they belong. Such emphases and their influences are discussed below.

c. Theological Differences

The raisons d'etre of the three church-based agencies have a common basis in the Biblical injunction for Christians to love all people: to express God's love by working to meet the needs of all people. Despite this common philosophical basis, two of the agencies, ADRA/SP and ACR, lie at opposite ends of the 'empowerment spectrum' in terms of the types of development practices employed to give substance to their ideals. This disparity in practices reflects the very different theological emphases of the denominational churches to which they belong.

In keeping with Roman Catholic theological tradition and Papal statements, ACR places emphasis on justice, equality and sharing of power. Papal statements have been political in content, urging solidarity between rich and poor, stressing that trade relationships should not be one-sided and encouraging dialogue and mutual sharing between rich and poor nations in order to promote equality and understanding between nations. Such an emphasis has encouraged openness from ACR's leaders towards overtures from its partners to share power with them and to their insistence that the agency's first priority should be to educate Australians about needs abroad and about the structures which perpetuate poverty. The agency's willingness to share power, facilitated by Roman Catholic theology, is reflected in the unique partnership relationship it has developed with the Asian Partnership for Human Development and other regional and national Roman Catholic development agencies.

At the other extreme, ADRA/SP maintains a firm grip on decision-making power, and is highly dependent on its own expatriate staff, and those of ADRA International, for project identification, selection

and management. In common with the Roman Catholic Church, the Seventh-Day Adventists stress the importance of the Biblical injunction to assist others, irrespective of their race or religion. Adventism emphasises the dual responsibility of the Church to foster what it calls the restoration of the body and the soul. ADRA/SP has expressed this responsibility with large-scale provision of health and education facilities, and supply of food, health-care and life-support services following emergencies or natural disasters. The words 'justice', 'solidarity', and 'partnership' do not feature in theological statements issued by the Seventh-Day Adventist Church as they do in similar statements of the Roman Catholic Church. Rather, what ADRA/SP calls educational materials emphasise the importance of donating money in order to meet basic needs of the impoverished abroad. Thus, it is not surprising that the agency has concentrated little on the stimulation of processes designed to empower local communities to seek change. With expatriate-led decision-making, little direct contact with recipient communities, a theology which does not encourage any change in this relationship and a constituency which shares this theological understanding and accepts in faith the worth of the agency's work, ADRA/SP has experienced little stimulus to change.

In practice and philosophy, ABM lies somewhere in between the extremes represented by ACR and ADRA/SP. Sharing their concern for the spiritual and physical well-being of poor communities, ABM has, like ADRA/SP, provided health and education facilities abroad. However, unlike ADRA/SP, as communities abroad developed the skills to assume local control, a process of nationalisation gradually occurred. Power to determine funding priorities, and to request and administer expatriate staff, was increasingly handed back to local churches and their communities. Such changes were facilitated by ongoing dialogue with its partners. Unlike ACR, ABM does not have a clearly articulated philosophy of development which reflects the theological basis of the wider Anglican Church to which it belongs. The Anglican Church has only recently, in conjunction with its partners in the developing world, begun to define development as 'transformation - the deep rooted changing of people and the

structures of society' (Mission Agencies' Working Group, 1988:1). The lack of clarity in its philosophical position means that, in recent years, ABM has allowed its approach to project aid to be moulded by AIDAB requirements - a trend the agency is aware of. ABM is currently struggling to marry an emerging philosophy of development with the practical realities of project selection and administration. The agency is striving to balance its ideals of avoiding paternalism and handing power back to local communities, while accepting the need for accountability to its donors and to AIDAB.

The significant contribution made by church-based agencies has been documented (Lissner, 1977:12) and McLeod (1991:23) noted that 68.3% of funds distributed by Australian NGOs between 1986 and 1988 were sent from what he called 'religious-oriented' agencies. Despite this, literature about NGOs ignores the theological basis for the activities of church-based agencies and its contribution to agency philosophies and practices. This study has shown that the theological emphases of an agency's parent church can play a significant role in shaping agency behaviour. ACR's comparatively radical position has clearly been facilitated by the strongly articulated theological emphases of the Roman Catholic Church. For the other church-based agencies studied, ADRA/SP and ABM, the basic raison d'être of the agencies lies in Christian compassion and concern for the poor. However, unlike ACR, their development practices have been shaped less by a clear theological position and corresponding development philosopy than by other factors, which are discussed below.[1]

d. The Fund-Raising Imperative

Most voluntary agencies are dependent on public goodwill for

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[1] As noted previously (p. 257), a detailed examination of the changing theological emphases of denominational churches and of the effects of those changes on their development agencies would be an interesting study, providing further insight into the philosophies and practices of church-based NGOs.

their financial survival, so it is hardly surprising that the NGOs are shaped in part by this need. Recognition of the significant influence on agency behaviour of the necessity to raise funds is not new. The issue was explored by Lissner in 1977 (78; 87ff.), and more recently, in relation to Canadian NGOs, it was concluded that 'while NGOs themselves are aware of the long-term nature of development needs, the logic of 'mass-marketing' fundraising leads them to emphasize short-term responses rather than building long-term support for development' (Brodhead et al., 1988:89).

The ABM has a discrete constituency of Anglican church-goers who are committed to the same general Christian philosophy of sharing with those who have less. However, the Board admits it was much easier to attract funding for individual missionaries from a constituency committed to evangelism than to fund its new development project work. Similarly the agency was tempted to back away from distribution of block grants because this depersonalisation of the aid process reduced fund-raising capacity. Individual donors prefer the more personal relationship involved in funding an individual. The ABM has not altered its development program in order to attract donors, but has become convinced of the need to educate its constituency about its new involvement in development projects in order to ensure continued support for its work.

Beleaguered throughout its history by funding shortages, APACE lacks the financial resources to fulfil requests for assistance with the design and implementation of technology. Unlike the church-based agencies, APACE does not have a ready-made constituency to support its work. The agency finds itself in a 'Catch 22' situation. Without staff or a central office, its volunteers lack the time and resources to implement fund-raising campaigns to increase agency size and capacity. Thus, APACE's present and future activities are constrained by its inability to raise funds.

Despite its relatively short history, ADRA/SP has rapidly become Australia's fourth largest aid agency in terms of its annual income. This largely reflects the financial commitment of its constituency

which is taught by the Seventh-Day Adventist Church to contribute generously and regularly to the work of its agency. Several aspects of agency behaviour reflect its concern to maintain and extend its funding base, even at the expense of agency ideals. For example, ADRA/SP adopted and promoted the Asian Aid Organisation's child sponsorship program, despite its staff admitting they were aware of the disadvantages of such programs. This seems to have been an attempt to attract Seventh-Day Adventist supporters of the World Vision child sponsorship program back to their own church agency. Failing to recognise that all action (or inaction) has political consequences, ADRA/SP's preference is to remain 'apolitical', to avoid making any statements that may alienate its constituency.

Established as a secular agency, CAA could not rely on a ready-made support base and has had to work to develop its own constituency. Of the agencies selected as case studies, CAA was notable for the extent and diversity of its fund-raising endeavours. Such activities range from small community groups raising funds, to the annual Walk Against Want and Work Against Want, and to the operation of development related subsidiary companies aiming to directly assist the poor while raising funds for CAA's own activities - CAA Trading and International Development Support Services. The agency has established a sophisticated computerised marketing system to monitor the sources of its income, maintain a list of supporters, and run direct response promotions. The agency attempts to educate its public as well as elicit funds, and is concerned to ensure that it avoids what it describes as 'pornography of the poor' - the use of simplistic and demeaning emotive images to obtain funds. The involvement of volunteers in the management of the agency assists in this regard. For example, CAA Trade Action was criticised for operating on a competitive commercial model by CAA's constituency, and the emphasis of the new organisation was subsequently modified in accordance with their views.

Unlike CAA, as the official development agency of the Roman Catholic Church in Australia, ACR is able to rely on church members for financial support. The Lenten appeal, Project Compassion, is

a regular source of funds for the agency and, apart from sporadic appeals for disaster relief, its only organised fund-raising appeal. ACR's discrete constituency frees the agency from the need to engage in a multiplicity of fund-raising campaigns. The commitment of its constituency to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and to the Church's official aid agency mean ACR has been able to present educational campaigns to promote understanding of poverty, international debt and trade relations, with less fear of alienating its supporters and thereby jeopardising its income than it would have had if it was to compete amongst the wider public for funds.

In general, church-based agencies, with discrete constituencies which accept in faith the worth of their denominational development aid agency, have less need to direct their energies towards attracting donors, or to account for their activities to their supporters.[1] Yearly appeals to these constituencies, with the addition of regular contributions from each parish or diocese, provide a regular annual income for ACR and ABM. Despite its committed constituency, ADRA/SP displayed a willingness to sacrifice ideals in order to increase its income, a position reinforced by its staunchly 'apolitical' stance, which is adopted to minimise alienation of its supporters. Conversely, ABM, ACR and CAA believe they should try to educate their supporters rather than employ inappropriate development strategies in the interests of increasing agency income. APACE, with its specific focus, lacks popular appeal and has not been able to attract its own reliable funding base. CAA has had to implement imaginative appeals to attract donors and to maintain their support. Positively, this has made the agency more accountable to its supporters.

It is thus clearly undeniable that, in some way and to varying

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[1] While this generalisation appears, from my observations, to be valid, this is not to imply that members of one denomination always choose to support their denominational development agency. For example, some CAA supporters are church-goers who prefer to support a secular agency (see p. 163). It is beyond the scope of this thesis to conduct an in-depth study of the composition of the support-base of individual NGOs and the reasons for their attraction of donors. Such a study has not yet been undertaken, and would provide the basis for a useful piece of research.

degrees, every agency is affected by the fund-raising imperative. As Brodhead (1987:89) suggested, some agencies, for pragmatic reasons, sacrifice idealism for funds. However, other agencies, which have clearly articulated philosophies, seem more determined to resist the temptation to focus on immediate gain at the expense of building support for long-term development programs. Despite the diversity of responses to the need to access funds, every agency studied has accepted government funds from AIDAB. The influences and implications of the availability of AIDAB funds on these organisations are discussed below.

e. Official Funding - 'Another milch cow to plunder'

The growth in NGO output as a result of increased financing of their activities by donor governments was described in Chapter Two. As outlined in Chapter Four, a former Chairman of ACFOA warned that 'the potential for government to effect changes in NGO perspectives and programs in even the most benign relationship cannot be overstated' (Ross, 1988:2-3). The capacity of NGOs which receive large amounts of government funds to ensure the needs of the poor remain paramount has also been questioned (see p. 52; Tandon, 1991:73; Fowler, 1991). The preceding studies of individual Australian NGOs show that these concerns are well-founded. The regular availability of government funding through the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau since 1974 has undoubtedly been one of the major factors impacting on the behaviour of Australian NGOs. Using the words of one ABM staff-member, each agency regarded AIDAB as 'another milch cow to plunder'. While not all agencies are dependent on government funding for financial survival, every agency studied here has been influenced in some way. All agreed that government funding has facilitated the extension of their activities by increasing the number of projects implemented and broadening the geographical spread of agency activities.

Unless new sources of funding are found in the near future,

APACE is almost entirely dependent on the vagaries of official funding for its financial survival and for the shape and extent of its future work. Such dependence imposes limitations on agency activities - only projects meeting AIDAB's selection criteria and likely to meet accountability requirements can be funded by the agency.

The ABM is not dependent on AIDAB for its financial survival, but its relationship with AIDAB has been a major force for change in the focus of its development activities. Since 1987, the agency has implemented discrete development projects as a means of accessing AIDAB funding. Moving away from its traditional missionary focus and its system of block grant funding, the agency adopted AIDAB's project-bound operational style, selection criteria, and monitoring and evaluation procedures, before having defined its own approach to development. ABM claims this funding relationship has obvious financial benefits for ABM, and presumably for its partners. However, ABM staff realise this has led the agency to back away from a trust relationship which demanded little accountability, to an approach which seems comparatively paternalistic to beneficiary communities. The acceptance of AIDAB funding, with the associated demands for accountability, has prodded the agency into a new level of communication with its partners. While this may be beneficial in the long-term, the changing relationship is currently an uneasy one. Receipt of AIDAB funds has also prompted the Board to clarify its own philosophical position.

Although ADRA/SP only derives a relatively small percentage of its funding from official sources, it too has been influenced significantly by AIDAB. Without its own clearly articulated development philosophy, contact with AIDAB has encouraged thought about development strategies, providing impetus for a swing away from funding of expatriate run hospitals and schools throughout the developing world. Agency staff have also used AIDAB's selection criteria to convince others in the Adventist network of the unsuitability of some of the agency's past development efforts. Thus, both ABM and ADRA/SP have allowed their development practice to be moulded by AIDAB's procedures and priorities.

With relatively long histories functioning solely as development aid agencies, CAA and ACR have, over time, clarified their aims, articulated definitions of development, and identified strategies which they believe are appropriate to catalyse development. While both receive government funding, their larger size, financial strength and firmly held philosophies mean they have been less susceptible to influence by AIDAB. Despite its receipt of government funds, CAA has continued to criticise the quality of the official aid program, and in recent years, through its subsidiary, International Development Support Services, has sought to influence the form of Australian ODA projects. The agency believes that the involvement of IDSS in official bilateral programs can assist in ensuring that a greater percentage of government money is used to help the poorest people. CAA avoids the temptation to accept funds for projects which fall outside its own detailed selection criteria. In addition, the agency is endeavouring to diversify its funding base to ensure its projects do not suffer if changing government policy forces funding cuts.

ACR seems to be sure enough of its own objectives to avoid any compromises resulting from its acceptance of government funds. The agency restricts the amount of government funding it applies for, and is generally unwilling to participate in AIDAB's bilateral programs, believing they do not serve the best interests of recipient communities. On one occasion, the agency participated in a bilateral program in the Philippines at AIDAB's suggestion, but this was an exception. Like CAA, ACR usually refuses to select projects which are eligible for government funding but do not meet the agency's own selection criteria. It does admit to having applied, on rare occasions, for funding for technology that partner agencies had requested, although ACR would not normally regard provision of technology as a priority.

With more certain philosophical and financial strength, CAA and ACR seem best able to accept government funding without allowing their own development activities to be moulded by government requirements. On the other hand, ADRA/SP, ABM and APACE, without

carefully defined selection criteria and strongly articulated development philosophies, seem more likely to accept the priorities of what they regard as a 'professional' aid agency. For the most conservative agency which has adopted a first generation program orientation - ADRA/SP - this has been, in part, a positive influence, forcing some thought about development issues. ABM has been similarly influenced. However, the Board has, uncomfortably, begun to realise that acceptance of AIDAB's project-bound, control-oriented approach to development has forced it to back away from the trust relationship it previously held with its partners. For those agencies adopting 'empowerment' strategies, AIDAB's preference for short-term, discrete projects seems incompatible with the time-consuming participatory development processes they prefer. AIDAB's accountability and evaluation requirements have emphasised tangible, quantifiable results - at variance with the emphasis on process and empowerment of ACR and CAA.

There is also a clear difference in the way the agencies are able to relate to AIDAB. The two agencies with a strong philosophical stance centred around notions of justice and empowerment are openly critical of the government program. The others are less likely to be so. Uncertain of their own philosophical position, they lack a clear foundation for critical analysis of government development programs. ABM and APACE both experienced difficulties in handling AIDAB's administrative and accountability requirements, reflecting their small size and comparatively little experience in relating to the bureaucracy. Larger agencies, ACR, CAA and ADRA/SP, are better able to fulfill the administrative requirements associated with receipt of official funding.

Previous research by this author illustrated that the geographical distribution of Australian voluntary aid does not only reflect the relative need of recipient communities (Percival, 1981:88). This research reinforces this conclusion. Both ABM and ADRA/SP extended their programs to include African projects in response to the availability of AIDAB funds for projects in that region. Although the need of communities in much of Africa is

undeniable, involvement of both organisations in that continent was stimulated by the availability of AIDAB funds. The regional distribution of aid by some NGOs has thus been influenced by AIDAB's spending priorities. On the other hand, CAA resisted the temptation to make the Pacific (which the agency regarded as a comparatively affluent region) a spending priority, despite the availability of significant subsidies from AIDAB for projects undertaken in the region.

This analysis has illustrated that the pragmatic desire to maximise agency income and impact by seeking government funding has affected the practice, philosophies and geographical distribution of NGO projects. The extent to which agencies have allowed their priorities to be moulded by AIDAB varies. Some (like CAA) react by trying to influence the government program, others (like ACR) by avoiding involvement in AIDAB's bilateral program, in order to ensure their own priorities are not influenced by accountability to anyone other than their partners. Despite the variability of responses, they are sufficient to illustrate the necessity of considering the impact of an agency's relationship with government funding bodies in any assessment of their policies and programs.

f. Contact with ACFOA and other NGOs

Without exception, staff of the five agencies studied mentioned that their association with the Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA) has been a force for change. All believed ACFOA was responsible for stimulating thought about development and justice issues and providing opportunities for agencies to learn from each other. ACR, ADRA/SP, ABM and APACE all held that this learning process has contributed to agency change or refinement of their respective development philosophies. One agency, ACR, believed its stand on justice issues and the involvement of its staff on ACFOA committees has influenced the Council's own philosophy and political position.

In addition to its educational role, every agency mentioned that ACFOA had successfully encouraged agency interaction, particularly in facilitating co-ordination of lobbying activities. Although all agencies acknowledged the benefits of ACFOA's lobbying activities, this role of the Council was also the most controversial. For CAA's staff, ACFOA's political statements do not go far enough. They believe that the conservatism of some member agencies limits the usefulness of the Council as a lobbying force. For the three church-based agencies, ACFOA is not sufficiently circumspect in its statements. While ACR believes the Council has the right to publish its own statements, ADRA/SP prefers to remain 'apolitical' and expressed concern that ACFOA's political views could alienate supporters of NGOs.

All five agencies believed they should, in principle, co-operate with other Australian-based agencies. In practice, little inter-agency co-operation occurs. For APACE, time constraints facing volunteers have prevented much collaboration. Where it has occurred, APACE has shared office facilities of other agencies, or, on one occasion, received funding to implement a project for the Australian Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific. APACE believes its expertise could assist other agencies, but it lacks resources of time, personnel and money to offer its services to other NGOs. Working through their own denominational partner churches abroad, ABM and ACR co-operate little with other agencies in the field. In particular, ACR's block grant funding of regional Catholic consortiums generally rules out active co-operation in the field with other Australian NGOs. ADRA/SP similarly operates through its international church network, and generally does not co-operate in its project work. However, on occasion, it has worked through other Australian church-based agencies. CAA has raised funds for other Australian NGOs, but believes that differing agency constituencies, administrative structures and philosophies prevent active co-operation in the field.

Obviously, competition for the donor dollar means that some NGOs prefer to maintain a distinct identity in order to retain their

existing support base. This tends to militate against active co-operation. In general, co-operation does occur where it benefits the agency concerned. Thus, it is more likely to occur in fund-raising campaigns, where the agency benefits financially from the arrangement. Inter-agency co-operation is also more likely to occur where the agencies share a common philosophical basis. For example, ACR has co-operated with the Australian Council of Churches in education campaigns, and the church-based agencies have united in fund-raising appeals for African famine victims. Agencies involved in the provision of relief aid work in conjunction with the Australian Overseas Disaster Response Organisation and the International Disasters Emergency Committee, believing that co-ordination of disaster aid efforts is essential.

Although active collaboration between Australian NGOs is limited and depends to some extent on agency self-interest, ACFOA was acknowledged as contributing to agency learning. Thus, the influence of peak councils or agency representative bodies must also be recognised as a factor influencing the development of agency policies and practices.

g. International Institutions

The relationship of individual case study agencies with international development organisations has also been a force for change for some agencies. For others, the effect of such relationships has been to limit change. For example, ABM has had little contact with international development organisations outside the Anglican church network. The Board's recent attempts to clarify its philosophical position and develop appropriate aid strategies have in part been directed by its contact with the wider Anglican church and its associated missionary and development agencies. Responding to overtures from partner churches in the developing world, these missionary and development agencies first attempted, in 1986, to articulate a development philosophy which encompassed their

concerns for the spiritual and material well-being of all people, as well as moving away from the paternalistic attitudes of the past. That these changes have been so recent is reflected in the fact that ABM has, more slowly than other Australian NGOs, only recently begun to define its understanding of development and attempt to identify relevant program strategies.

With its relatively short life-span and its single-purpose focus, APACE has changed little in project orientation since the inception of the organisation. It has little formal contact with international organisations, although its members informally maintain interest in organisations committed to the development of technologies appropriate for use in developing communities.

Apart from constant communication with international Roman Catholic development organisations, ACR also seems to have little to do with outside organisations. Itself a leader in the establishment of partnership arrangements within the network of Roman Catholic agencies, it has been influenced more by the theological emphases of its parent church and by its relationship with recipient partner organisations than by other international development agencies.

The relationship with its parent organisation, ADRA International, has had a major impact on the shaping of ADRA/SP's policy and style of operation. Through attending ADRA International's staff training conferences, reading its quarterly journals, and working with ADRA International's staff, ADRA/SP maintains close contact with its parent organisation. ADRA International however, has a more clearly articulated development philosophy and, in rhetoric at least, seems to be moving away from its emphasis on relief and welfare. ADRA/SP has adopted the language of its parent organisation, but is slow to change in practice. Rapid change in its development strategies is unlikely while project identification, selection and administration are expatriate-led.

Community Aid Abroad's ongoing contact with Oxfam has confronted

the Australian agency with trends in international development institutions. In tandem with the other influences on agency behaviour identified in this study, this has contributed to agency learning and to the strength of CAA's philosophy, with its emphasis on empowerment and sustainability. Oxfam has also been a source of field knowledge and on-the-ground assistance with project implementation.

Direct contact with international development aid agencies has had variable impacts on the case study agencies. To some extent, all have been shaped by their contact with international institutions and depend on linkages with them for field information and project administration. The case study agencies have also been influenced indirectly by changes in international development thought. As previously discussed, all agencies acknowledged the influence of ACFOA in shaping their philosophies. ACFOA participates in forums with other Councils representing NGOs throughout the developed and developing world. Thus, trends in international development thought have filtered indirectly through the Council's educational activities to its member agencies.

h. Partnership Relationships

In keeping with the common claim that NGOs are able to implement participatory development strategies (Fowler, 1986:3; Schneider, 1988:15; Hellinger et al., 1988:3), it would seem reasonable to expect the major determinant of agency policy and practice to be the priorities of those they claim to serve and that, in line with agency rhetoric, they should serve the neediest communities. The responsiveness of agencies to the overtures of their partners is reflected directly in the extent to which they adopt 'empowerment' strategies.

That CAA and ACR have been receptive to demands of partner organisations concerning the needs of recipient communities is evident

in their approaches to aid practice. Continuing consultation with indigenous organisations in India contributed to CAA's current definition of development with its concentration on the growth of skills and structures to empower local communities to be architects of their own development. The centrality of the belief in 'people's participation' is evident in its style of project management, which seeks to encourage participation of local groups in project design and implementation. Challenges by CAA's partner agencies about the organisation's concern for Australian Aboriginal communities were instrumental in convincing CAA to extend its support to the Aboriginal poor within Australia. The agency employs only nationals in its field offices and its partners are informed about and invited to comment on its activities, in an effort to ensure CAA's decision-making is not divorced from those it aims to assist.

CAA has, in response to its partners, recognised the importance of the participation of recipient communities in development activities which are intended to be for their benefit. Similarly, ACR was receptive to the overtures of indigenous Roman Catholic agencies and allowed its development program to be moulded by their demands. ACR's philosophy and approach to development practice reflect its desire to avoid paternalism and allow partner agencies to determine their own priorities. This has resulted in the adoption of a system of block grant funding to regional consortiums of Roman Catholic development agencies, giving partner agencies power over decision-making processes. Without extensive field research, it is impossible to ascertain the extent to which regional decision-making bodies accurately represent recipient interests. However, ACR assumes that such consortiums have a better grasp of the needs of local communities than its own Australian-based staff could hope to have.

The aid practices of CAA and ACR contrast dramatically with the more paternalistic, expatriate-led practices of ADRA/SP. Discrete projects are identified, selected and administered by expatriates, and little emphasis is placed on participation of local communities. There is no evidence that recipients assist in the determination

of agency funding priorities or aid practices, although agency staff claimed to be pursuing a policy of nationalisation of ADRA/SP's field activities.

Historically, ABM modified its traditional missionary program to reflect independence in Papua New Guinea. Power to request and administer expatriate missionaries was increasingly given to local churches, which were later given block grants to allocate according to their own priorities. Reflecting its unclear development philosophy, ABM has adopted a variable approach to project selection. Some projects were identified after dialogue with its partners, some were initiated at AIDAB's suggestion, and others through chance contacts. However, the agency is sensitive to recipient interests, concerned that the adoption of AIDAB's project-bound approach has forced increasing agency control, and thus created tensions in ongoing relationships with recipient communities. The agency hopes to maintain mutual sharing and dialogue with its partners, struggling to balance its demands for accountability with its partner's rights to share in decision-making and administrative processes, and ensuring that project requests accord with conventional wisdom about 'good' development.

APACE also has an ad hoc approach to project selection, which depends on the current interests and qualifications of its voluntary members and on chance contacts of its volunteers with representatives of poor communities. However, projects resulting from ad hoc procedures are not necessarily any less worthwhile in promoting development than those identified through formal procedures. This personalised approach may in fact be positive, facilitating a level of dialogue and trust lacking in selection procedures based on fulfilment of formal requirements. While APACE lacks a clear strategy for project identification and selection, its projects have only originated at the request of recipients. The agency consults indigenous peoples regarding project design and implementation, and expects contributions of time and labour from beneficiary communities. Their feedback is essential for future modification of technology and has led to ongoing project work involving the application of

technology provided. Although technology designed for its partners is western in origin, APACE aims to create technologies which meet the expressed needs of its partners. APACE works directly with local communities, rather than through intermediary organisations or expatriates.

Recipient priorities have played an obvious role in shaping the current policy and practice of some Australian non-government development aid agencies. In this study, the historical evolution of CAA's and ACR's development philosophies and styles of aid management clearly reflects their responsiveness to recipient interests. Although, in the last decade, its relationship with AIDAB has been a significant influence on agency operations, ABM has a history of tailoring its program in response to its changing relationship with its partners. The Board is committed to maintaining an ongoing dialogue with its partners, aiming to enable recipients to participate in its decision-making processes. APACE's recent history, small size and limited capacity mean it is less clear that changes in agency orientation have occurred in response to its partners. However, it only funds following direct requests from poor communities. The personal contact of its volunteers with recipient communities means the agency has closer links with the recipients of its aid than agencies depending on indigenous NGOs or expatriate field staff for project identification, administration and evaluation. Of the five agencies studied, only ADRA/SP works primarily through expatriate field staff, operating as a funding organisation which has little direct contact with recipient groups. Much of its income is distributed in the form of relief aid where immediate needs are more obvious. It could be argued that time-intensive communication with local communities is not as essential for successful distribution of relief supplies as for the planning of sustainable community development programs. However, some development programs the agency has funded reflect the fact that they are initiated and managed by expatriates whose views about appropriate strategies fall firmly into the relief and welfare category, and at times are clearly inappropriate according to norms about what constitutes 'good development'.

The nature of the relationship of each agency with its partners clearly influences agency priorities. So too, agency practices and policies are influenced by the extent of participation by volunteers in every aspect of agency operations.

i. Volunteers

Contributions made by volunteers were encouraged to some extent by all five case study organisations. In every case, volunteers have served on the Board or Management Committee of the agency, thus contributing to the formulation of agency policies.

ABM uses the services of volunteers, when available, to assist in its national office with clerical duties, mailings, and for deputation and promotional work. However, the agency does not have any systematic way of using volunteer labour. ACR makes little use of volunteers at its national office. Both ABM and ACR use volunteers at a regional level to promote the work of their agencies. As part of a support and promotional network, ABM has formed Regional Advisory Committees consisting of volunteers. Similarly, ACR relies heavily on the voluntary labour of representatives appointed by the Bishop in each diocese to promote the agency's work in the region. ADRA/SP relies on volunteer labour for the stocking and maintenance of its warehouse stores. Volunteers are also used to despatch goods following an emergency, and volunteers from Adventist churches within receiving countries are used to assist in distribution of materials and food. The agency also supplies expatriate 'experts' for long and short-term periods at the request of poor communities. For these three agencies, volunteers have contributed to policy formulation and enabled reductions in agency administrative costs.

For CAA and APACE, the time and expertise of volunteers are more critical to their continued successful operation. CAA's participatory structure aims to involve its constituency in every level of agency operation. Accordingly, volunteers play an important

role in agency decision-making, in local groups, state committees and the National Committee. Community support groups raise funds, are vehicles for agency educational activities, and are a source of elected committee members. Volunteers maintain the agency's library, others visit donors to encourage them to make bequests to the agency, and others organise study tours to developing countries. Thus, volunteers play a significant role in CAA's operations.

Voluntary support is essential for APACE to survive. Without employed staff, the small agency relies on volunteers for every aspect of agency operation: policy formulation, management, fund-raising, research and design of technology, project identification, selection, implementation and evaluation, education of its constituency, and completion of administrative tasks in relation to receipt of AIDAB funding. The success of each agency endeavour depends on the level of commitment and expertise of its volunteers. While this allows the agency to operate with minimal overheads, problems of volunteer burnout, or failure to attract necessary expertise, severely limit the capacity of the agency. Thus, while the availability of volunteers is not a significant factor for all agencies, the future course of this NGO at least is bound by the extent of available volunteer time and the quality of voluntary expertise it is able to attract.

The five agencies discussed here all provide some opportunities for voluntary service which, in keeping with claims made about NGOs (Cernea, 1989:18), contribute to minimisation of agency costs and to the range of skills available to each agency. Without the vision and commitment of volunteers, NGOs would not be formed and their operations would be limited. The ability of some agencies to continue or extend their activities clearly depends on the extent and quality of voluntary skills available to them - yet another factor influential in constraining or enhancing the development of agency policies and practices.

j. Agency Structure

The involvement of volunteers in agency activities is related to the administrative structure of each agency, which either encourages or limits such participation. More than this, agency decision-making structures are significant in either fostering or constraining change in agency policies and practices.[1]

Responsible to the General Synod of the Anglican Church, ABM's Board is slow to change. Agency staff admit that Board members are generally out of touch with changes in development thought and with the daily practicalities of project selection and administration. However, in practice, most recommendations made by agency staff are accepted. This pattern seems to apply to ACR as well. Its National Committee is elected by the Bishop's Committee for Justice, Development and Peace and is responsible to that Committee. ACR staff asserted that the agency's day-to-day operations continue in practice with little reference to the National Committee or the Bishop's Committee. ADRA/SP is similarly bound to its denominational church. Through a complex representative system, ADRA/SP's Board of Management is elected by the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. Whereas ABM's Board and ACR's National Committee are national bodies, ADR/SP's Board includes personnel from Pacific nations, to ensure links throughout the region. ADRA/SP differs from ACR and ABM in its dependence on expatriate regional directors of ADRA International for project identification and implementation. These ties to its parent organisation mean the agency misses out on direct communication with recipient groups and has not established its own priorities based on dialogue with them. ACR and ABM also work primarily through the international denominational network with which they are associated. However, indigenous Roman Catholic and Anglican churches have undergone a process of nationalisation. The agencies therefore argue that their partners are in touch with the needs of the

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[1] This conclusion would not be surprising to those familiar with theories of organisational change or management (see pp. 3-4), but the influences of agency structure on agency practices have been largely ignored by those analysing the behaviour of NGOs.

communities to which they belong.

It is impossible to make generalisations about like structures having similar influences on agency behaviour, given that agencies with similar church-based administrative structures lie at opposite ends of the 'empowerment' spectrum in terms of philosophy. While ADRA/SP's structure, with its dependence on expatriate field staff, is undoubtedly a constraining influence, differences between the other church-based agencies are accounted for more by their theological basis, key individuals, the extent to which practice has been moulded by their contact with AIDAB, and the level of communication with their partners. Negatively, the limited involvement of their constituencies means that these agencies are not very accountable to their donors. Their 'faithful' constituencies (so termed by Zivetz and Ryan, 1991:106) accept in faith the worth of their work.

APACE's totally voluntary structure is a constraining factor. The agency is too small and, as previously mentioned, its total dependence on volunteers means it is hampered in its attempts to extend its activities or even to meet current demands for its services. Positively, the agency's small size and participatory structure allow the personal involvement of its volunteers in recipient communities, facilitating a one-to-one dialogue not possible for larger agencies. In some ways, this means the agency is much closer to the development process and is more accountable to its members and to those it seeks to serve.

Historically, CAA's democratic structure facilitated change in agency policy and practice. The involvement of its constituency in all levels of agency activities also provides a system of checks and balances, preventing the agency from losing sight of its objectives. In addition, the active involvement of its constituency ensures that the agency is accountable to its members. On the other hand, the cumbersome nature of CAA's participatory structure could impede agency flexibility, and hinder rapid decision-making. Aware of these problems, the agency has in place a series of discretionary

funding procedures, to ensure its partners are not adversely affected by dependence on time-consuming decision-making procedures in order to receive funds.

Although democratic structures are complex and the associated decision-making processes time-consuming, APACE and CAA are certainly more directly accountable to their constituencies than are those agencies with a Board appointed by an institution external to the agency. The active involvement of donors in decision-making processes can assist to keep the agency in tune with its objectives, to ensure the organisation does not 'become the be all and the end all; and the original need ... therapy - tailored to meet the needs and convenience of the organisation itself' (Judd, 1983:1). The organisational structures of NGOs can therefore play a significant role in shaping NGO behaviour.

Ideals or Pragmatism?

At the beginning of this chapter, five case study agencies were located on Korten's 'empowerment' spectrum (see pp. 296-300; Korten, 1987:147-149; Korten, 1990:117). As outlined in Chapters One and Two, much has been made in academic literature of the ideal of empowering local communities (Chambers, 1983; Schneider, 1988:235) and of the comparative advantage of NGOs in facilitating such changes (Streeten, 1987:92; Espiritu, 1989:206). Yet, as outlined in Chapter Two, little effort has been made to identify the factors which constrain or facilitate NGOs' attempts to implement participatory development strategies in order to empower local communities to seek change. This analysis has done so, demonstrating that the places of the five case study agencies on Korten's 'empowerment' spectrum are the result of a mix of what are primarily pragmatic influences on their behaviour, including: the influence of individuals, the nature of linkages of NGOs with their partners, significant historical events, theological differences for the church-based agencies, agency structure, the need to raise funds, the input of volunteers, and

contact with other development aid agencies, including international organisations, ACFOA and other Australian NGOs, and AIDAB.

Some factors are obviously more significant for some agencies than for others. Thus, it is not possible to rank influences on their behaviour in order of importance. This difficulty in making generalisations reflects an over-riding theme which emerged from the preceding comparative analysis; that despite the similarity of their basic raisons d'être, these agencies are an extremely diverse group. So, it is also not feasible, without similar study of a broader cross-section of Australian agencies, to assess the typicality of the agencies studied. However, it is possible to compare these agencies with the commonly cited general advantages and disadvantages of NGOs, which were presented in Chapter Two. Comparison of the policy and practices of the case study agencies with these advantages and disadvantages enables some measure of the ability of Australian NGOs to fulfil common expectations about them.

The Advantages and Disadvantages of Australian NGOs

In line with claims commonly made about them (Verghese, 1981:4), it is true that NGOs are unencumbered by the same political, strategic and commercial concerns which influence their government counterparts. Yet, the oft-cited ability of all agencies to be flexible and innovative (see for example, Tendler, 1982:5) is questionable. Some, like ACR and CAA, have shown flexibility in allowing their programs to be moulded by the demands of their partners. APACE has been innovative in the development of technology to meet the expressed requirements of poor communities. The development of ACR's partnership approach which involves the distribution of block grant funding was radical for the times. At the other extreme, ADRA/SP has shown itself to be less than innovative, using AIDAB's project selection criteria to educate its own Board about the inappropriateness of some 'development strategies' employed by the agency, such as the supply of Western tractors to poor rural

communities. The extent to which individual agencies are prepared to take risks is similarly variable. CAA has been prepared to take a political stand and risk alienating its constituency. ACR is prepared to take perhaps the ultimate risk - to forego accountability for its funds by handing total power over decision-making to regional consortiums. However, the fundraising imperative tempers the willingness of some NGOs to take risks. The concern of some agencies to remain 'apolitical' is testimony to this; to do so could alienate the donor public.

The common claim that NGOs are able to implement and administer development programs at low cost (Tendler, 1982:6; Kozlowski, 1983:13) seems to be well-founded for some agencies. ACR's system of block grant funding is easily administered, so the agency does not incur costs of project feasibility studies, monitoring and evaluation faced by most agencies. Dependent on volunteers for every aspect of the agency's operation, APACE is able to function with very low overheads. In line with claims made about their comparative advantage (Cernea, 1989:19), the use of volunteers to some extent by all agencies contributed to a reduction of costs. The insistence of some agencies on local contributions of time, labour and goods towards projects also assists in this regard. However, minimisation of costs as an aim should not override developmental objectives. The agency with the lowest administrative costs, ADRA/SP, is outstanding as a highly computerised, efficiently run organisation, with large fund-raising capacity and few staff. However, its approach to development does not involve time-consuming and costly processes of communication with poor communities. CAA may have higher overheads and employ more staff, but its project identification, selection and evaluation procedures encourage dialogue with recipient communities and are time-intensive processes which are comparatively costly. Thus, an agency which delivers goods and personnel tends to have lower relative administrative costs than an agency which adopts more time-intensive participatory processes which incur higher costs. Public obsession with cost-minimisation shows ignorance of the importance of participatory development and the necessity for costly ongoing dialogue with recipient communities in the processes of project

selection, monitoring and evaluation.

Voluntary organisations, it has been argued, attract committed, highly motivated personnel (Schneider, 1988:205). The dedication, sincerity and energy of the staff encountered within the NGO community were unquestionable. Many work tirelessly for salaries far less than they would receive in similar management positions in the business world. The compassion and commitment of agency staff to serving the poor was obvious. However, some lacked understanding of trends in development thought, and seemed ignorant of the negative effects aid projects could be having or, at least, that donor money might be wasted. For example, that ADRA/SP's newsletter featured a project in Africa boasting the construction of an English-style town complete with hedges, street signs, an air strip and shopping boutiques, while it lacked basic medical facilities, displays some naivety and ignorance about the inappropriateness of such 'development' for the local community. Similarly, the continued supply by some agencies of tangible inputs such as buildings and expatriate experts does not correspond with the ideals of empowerment and participatory development lauded as benefits of NGO programs. ACR's National Executive Director regarded staff 'commitment' as more important than qualifications in a development-related field. This seems to give some substance to one of the major criticisms levelled at NGOs which relates to their failure to employ highly qualified development professionals and, because of pressure to limit overheads, their failure to employ sufficient staff to enable local follow-up and project evaluation (Kozlowski, 1983:13; Schneider, 1988:24).

That NGOs gain from a wide range of skills offered by volunteers is also held to be a benefit of the voluntary sector (Schneider, 1988:205). For some agencies, this is the case. APACE taps a wide range of voluntary skills, from professional expertise in research and design of appropriate technologies, to clerical skills. CAA also usefully exploits a wide range of voluntary skills in all levels of agency operation. The other agencies use volunteers in a more limited way, but all, to some extent, do offer volunteers an opportunity to use skills while contributing to a worthwhile cause.

Writers on the voluntary sector have defended voluntary agencies as independent critics of government (Scott, 1981:1, Roughan, 1990:106); an attribute this research demonstrates does not apply to all Australian NGOs. CAA has been an outspoken critic of the quality of official aid programs, and ACR takes a strong stand on issues of justice. APACE and the ABM have also, on occasion, been critical of government policy. However, ADRA/SP, unwilling to jeopardise the goodwill of donors and government, prefers to adopt what it calls an 'apolitical' stance. The church-based agencies all expressed reservations about ACFOA's lobbying role, displaying some reluctance to be seen to be provocative by their constituencies. Thus, the record of the case study agencies as critics of the government program is mixed. Generally, those with a strongly articulated development philosophy, and therefore some basis for a critique of the official program, are more likely to engage in lobbying campaigns. However, the agencies are united in their willingness to lobby for increased levels of official development assistance and (of course) for increased funding of NGO programs.

Development education is regarded as a legitimate function of voluntary development aid agencies (Rollason, 1986:38). The historical overview of the Australian NGO community (Chapter Four) revealed that since the early 1970s the importance of development education has been entrenched in the rhetoric of the community. However, although all agencies pay lip-service to the importance of development education, for most agencies studied, development education is an adjunct to the agency's major purposes - fund-raising and the distribution of aid. While APACE believes it should be educating about the over-consumption of the world's resources by 'developed' nations, its educational activities are limited and sporadic, reflecting the limited time and resources of its voluntary personnel. ABM and ADRA/SP both acknowledge the importance of educating their constituencies. However, the lack of clarity in their own development philosophies is reflected in the fact that both agencies do not have formal strategies for development education. While ABM's literature has moved beyond the purely promotional and its traditional emphasis on expatriate missionaries serving the needy

overseas, the literature has not moved beyond a view of development which sees the support of discrete projects as a solution to poverty. ADRA/SP's educational efforts are primarily promotional, emphasising the needs of developing communities, the importance of giving to alleviate these needs, and the valuable contribution made by the agency to the meeting of such needs.

On the other hand, CAA and ACR believe in the strategic importance of development education programs. Both agencies argue that fund-raising and aid distribution are tools to achieve other objectives, which include promotion of changing attitudes and encouragement of social and political change. Both urge their constituencies to engage in lobbying and advocacy work, believing that political change is necessary to achieve long-term solutions. CAA strategically targets educators and political leaders, hoping to maximise impact for the financial cost. ACR's prime objective is to educate in order to change attitudes and structures. Working primarily through Roman Catholic Church schools, ACR aims to educate all Australian Roman Catholics to participate in the movement towards change for justice for its partners in the Third World. Its materials frequently focus on international structures or processes which contribute to poverty - western affluence and over-consumption, western contributions to international debt, and the exploitation of labour in developing countries by western-based companies. Planned education programs with their clear foci reflect CAA's and ACR's finely honed development philosophies. The priorities of these agencies clearly demonstrate that some NGOs do try to educate their constituencies, aiming to generate social and political changes which will benefit their partners abroad.

The most significant claim commonly made about the comparative advantage and effectiveness of NGOs is that they have direct links with the neediest groups in the developing world, therefore have more accurate local knowledge and understanding of local needs and capabilities (Kozlowski, 1983:12), and are able to employ participatory 'bottom-up' processes of project implementation (Streeten, 1987:92). It is claimed that NGOs emphasise processes,

particularly the 'empowerment' of local people rather than the provision of tangible goods (Tendler, 1982:5). The current recognition of the validity of arguments for participatory development by development practitioners was explored in more detail in Chapters One and Two. The acceptance that development efforts are likely to fail without the significant involvement of local communities is partially responsible for the increased popularity of voluntary agencies in the last decade (Fowler, 1986:3). That they are better defenders of recipient interests than multilateral or bilateral donors forms a vital part of NGO claims to legitimacy.

It is clear from the analysis of the methods of operation and project descriptions of five Australian agencies, that not all can claim to be in direct contact with poor communities and to implement 'empowerment' strategies. Only two of the five agencies studied, ACR and CAA, defined development in terms of promoting the ability of poor communities to determine their own destinies. The program orientations of these agencies reflect their philosophies of empowerment, with ACR handing power over spending to regional consortiums and CAA attempting to encourage dialogue with recipient communities at every stage of the project cycle.

Conversely, ABM and APACE do not have philosophies which emphasise 'empowerment' as a development strategy. ABM and APACE have direct links with local communities, but project identification for both agencies occurs in an ad hoc manner rather than as a result of the application of clearly defined selection criteria. Ultimately, whether projects are identified in an ad hoc manner or after measurement against formal selection criteria is unimportant. It is the content of the final project which is important. Positively, both agencies seek to encourage dialogue with local communities, and urge their participation in all levels of project implementation and evaluation. ABM's recent attempts to ensure that its aid is appropriate have forced a new level of communication with its partners. The agency is struggling to achieve a balance between allowing recipient communities to control the decision-making process and demanding accountability - ensuring that grants are spent

according to common wisdom about what constitutes 'good' development. Because of their small size and direct links with local communities, ABM and APACE do bring a one-to-one approach to the aid relationship. At least the intention of these agencies is to try to allow beneficiary communities to participate in decision-making processes. Although ADRA/SP tries to ensure requests originate with local communities, the agency is dependent on expatriate regional directors for vetting of project requests. Its decision-making processes are largely divorced from intended beneficiaries. ADRA/SP has supported projects which emphasise provision of tangible inputs - tractors, houses, schools - rather than the development of local institutional capacity or leadership and management skills.

It is clear that the five Australian agencies are not all engaged in 'bottom-up' participatory processes of development. Thus, this commonly accepted strength of NGOs is clearly not valid for all Australian NGOs. From the ability to be flexible and innovative to their chief claim to legitimacy - the ability to empower local communities and foster their participation in development strategies - the success of NGOs at fulfilling claims made in academic literature about their strengths is variable. Thus, this research illustrates that the generalisations about the comparative advantage of NGOs, outlined in Chapter Two, are not valid for all NGOs.

The extent to which generalisations made about the weaknesses of NGOs apply to the Australian NGO community is similarly variable. It is clear from this research that the NGOs studied here consult little with other agencies, so accusations of poor co-ordination of efforts (Streeten, 1987:92; Cernea, 1989:18-19) seem to be valid. So too, some projects supported by ADRA/SP raise questions about their long-term sustainability and show little understanding of local socio-economic circumstances. Thus, accusations regarding unsustainability and inadequate knowledge of local conditions (Kozlowski, 1983:13) are not without some merit. However, the other agencies all emphasised the importance of sustainability and the appropriateness of projects for the local culture and physical and economic environment. Some of the weaknesses ascribed to NGOs by

their critics relate to the effects of their projects in the field and cannot be addressed without field study. For example, the impact of NGO projects at a regional or national level (Cernea, 1989:18) and the suggestion that NGOs focus on those easiest to reach rather than the poorest (Clark, 1991:69) are impossible to address. Thus, study of the field programs of each agency would be a logical extension of this research, enabling assessment of the merits of these generalisations about the weaknesses of NGOs.

Some of the harsh criticisms of NGO activity which have emerged from the developing world seem to be well-founded for some agencies. Most apposite is Nyoni's suggestion that NGOs, claiming to help people through participation, democracy and self-help, are themselves non-participatory and non-democratic (Nyoni, 1987:53). Certainly, several case study agencies rely on hierarchical, non-participatory structures within Australia, while one clearly is at fault in encouraging little participation of recipient communities in its development program. Similarly, Dichter suggested that some agencies are not sure of 'what will work over the long haul, and if they are sure, being woefully short of the skills needed to accomplish the tasks' (1988:36). Similarly, lack of clarity about goals and purposes features in sociological literature as a major disadvantage of all non-profit organisations (Setterberg and Schulman, 1985:6-9). Certainly, as discussed at the beginning of this chapter, several of the agencies studied do not have clearly articulated development philosophies and are still struggling to find strategies which enable them to put into practice their emerging understanding of development priorities. That agencies 'short-change reflection in favour of action' (Dichter, 1988:36) seems to be true of some agencies; they are keen to increase their donor base and gain access to more AIDAB funds, before planning carefully the best use of additional funds to maximise benefits for their partners. However, such criticisms are generalisations, and while true of some case study agencies, are not for others. ACR and CAA do have clearly articulated development philosophies, have a history of modifying their programs in response to the needs of their partners, and attempt to promote the ability of poor communities to determine their own destinies.

For several of the agencies studied, evaluation was primarily conducted to satisfy AIDAB's accountability requirements. Limited staff time and pressure to minimise overhead costs meant little careful evaluation was undertaken in consultation with recipients. Thus, feedback and agency learning are limited. It seems, as Clark (1991:72) and Fowler (1991:71) have argued, that some agencies allow themselves to be primarily accountable to the source of government funds, more so than to their donors, and accountability to those they seek to assist has not been a priority. There is also a lack of evaluation because they are not sure what to assess. Clark defended the reluctance of NGOs to evaluate their projects, arguing that it resulted from the fact that there are no ready indices for popular participation or empowerment (Clark, 1991:71). The failure of many NGOs to evaluate field activities is not only because they deal primarily in non-quantifiable variables. When some agencies have not clarified their own philosophies and aims, and are unsure of the strategies to employ to realise their indefinite goals, it is not surprising that they are similarly uncertain about what and how to evaluate. These uncertainties lead some agencies, in this study ADRA/SP in particular, to concentrate on the provision of tangible goods which are easily accounted for. On the other hand, CAA and ACR do engage in project evaluation, encouraging participation by recipient communities in evaluations of the effectiveness of aid projects in meeting their needs. Thus, the criticism that NGOs are not accountable to their partners is, like most of the generalisations about the strengths and weaknesses of NGOs, not valid for all agencies.

Conclusions

This chapter has outlined the major influences on the behaviour of five Australian NGOs, influences which have received scant attention in studies which describe or evaluate the activities of NGOs. The extent to which each factor encourages compromises or increases the ability of an organisation to fulfil its potential

as a catalyst of development for poor communities varies for each agency. However, it is clear that the development programs of Australian NGOs cannot be fully evaluated or understood without reference to the extent of such influences on agency behaviour.

As this chapter has shown, in making compromises or unknowingly allowing itself to be distracted from its purpose, each agency varies in its ability to fulfil common expectations about the benefits of NGOs which dominate academic literature about their activities. Similarly, common criticisms of NGOs have some validity for some, but not all, agencies. Therefore, the case studies of five Australian NGOs illustrate that common assertions made about NGO behaviour in the literature about them are negated by the diversity of Australian NGOs' policies and practices. Although there is some truth in the generalisations which have been made about the strengths and weaknesses of NGOs, this study has clearly demonstrated that they are not valid for all agencies.

The ability of NGOs to implement 'participatory development strategies' has been lauded as their main advantage over other donors and, as Chapters One and Two illustrated, is a major reason for their current popularity. In adopting empowerment strategies and endeavouring to encourage dialogue with beneficiaries, in handing power over decision-making to their partners, some agencies are more successful at employing 'participatory development' strategies than are others. Other agencies are grappling with the issues, sometimes uncomfortably aware that they have compromised their purpose. Working in their favour is the obvious commitment and dedication of their personnel to an ideal - an ideal of creating a more just world and reducing the gap between rich and poor. By constantly 'measuring activity against purpose' (Judd, 1983:1), and becoming more responsive to those they should primarily be accountable to - the poor communities they purport to serve - these agencies could realise their full potential as catalysts of development.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

CONCLUSION

> 'Most voluntary agencies come into being from a sense of compassion or injustice ... it seems somehow to place such organizations above critical assessment of their own motivation and operations. ... but organizations exist to translate ideals into action, and actions are subject to assessment. Translating ideals entails choices, compromises ...' (Brodhead et al. 1988:31).

Increasing amounts of private and government money are being spent in the developing world by non-government organisations, suggesting that there is general acceptance of the worth of their activities. At the very least, it reflects the conviction that, in the absence of more effective measures and in the light of growing theoretical emphasis on the potency of human agency in catalysing change, NGOs, with their focus on participatory development, should be used to attempt to foster development. Despite this reality, as Chapters One and Two demonstrated, the activities of NGOs have been subjected to relatively little scrutiny. Existing literature presents general, assumed truths about the commonly accepted strengths and weaknesses of NGOs and some of this literature examines their field activities. A few studies have examined the general environment within which NGOs from specific countries operate (Lissner, 1977; Roberts, 1984; Brodhead et al., 1988). However, their findings have not been based on detailed examination of the activities of individual NGOs, so it is unclear to what extent their conclusions reflect the reality of NGO practices.

The primary aims of this research were, through study of the Australian NGO community in general and a few selected agencies in particular, to examine the influences on agency behaviour and the

extent to which the oft-cited strengths and weaknesses of NGOs (detailed in Chapter Two) are actually apparent or not in the Australian NGO community. Thus, this study has examined the extent to which the many general statements made about NGO behaviour - assumed to apply to Australian NGOs - are reflected in reality. It has presented descriptions of that reality for the Australian NGO community, detailing the general historical factors which have influenced changes in the philosophies and program orientations of Australian NGOs. In addition, five agencies were selected for study to represent a cross-section of the Australian NGO community, and their comparison has highlighted both generalities and differences in NGO policies and practices. Thus, this research has contributed to the body of knowledge about the behaviour of non-government development aid agencies, enabling generalisations to be drawn about the influences on their behaviour and the extent to which the benefits and weaknesses commonly ascribed to NGOs are attributable to these Australian agencies. Most significantly, this is the first study of NGO behaviour to base its findings on detailed comparison of the reality of the philosophy and practice of individual agencies, rather than relying on broad-based surveys and anecdotal evidence.

The relevance of all theories depends largely on the facts and assumptions upon which they are based, the methods used to obtain information and the difficulties inherent in the study of the subject matter. As outlined in Chapter Three, some agencies wished to control the research process more than others. It was therefore easier to be critical of those agencies which were prepared to reveal their shortcomings than of others. Although the problems of control of knowledge and selectivity and interpretation of information (discussed in Chapter Three) pervade qualitative research, the information which was obtained from interviews and documentary sources enabled valid generalisations to be made about the recurrence and variability of influences on agency behaviour.

Several over-riding themes emerged throughout this study. The theme of unity in diversity pervaded the whole. The agencies shared a unity of purpose. The common bases for their formation and

continued existence lay in the compassion and genuine commitment of their founders and staff to assist those living in poverty in the developing world. Despite this unity (which is implicit in the definition of an NGO, see pp. 35-36), there is great diversity in the Australian NGO community. ABM, CAA, APACE, ADRA and ACR have vastly different historical backgrounds, management structures and philosophies, and have adopted very different approaches to the distribution of aid. The case study agencies provide an important illustration of the heterogeneity of the community, although further study of more agencies is necessary to fully display the great complexity of the whole community.

Despite this diversity, it is clear that the philosophies and practices of the selected NGOs are shaped by a number of common factors. That the philosophies and development activities of Australian NGOs are influenced by such factors as powerful individuals, international institutions, and their relationship with official aid agencies, may seem to be self-evident to those familiar with their activities. Yet, as demonstrated in Chapter Two, these influences have generally not been documented or recognised in literature evaluating the activities of non-government development aid agencies as factors affecting the agency 'product'. Studies that have suggested that NGOs make choices based on factors other than the interests of the poor have based their conclusions on general overviews of a nation's NGOs, without observation of the behaviour of individual agencies (Lissner, 1977; Brodhead et al., 1988). By presenting detailed descriptions of individual agencies in Chapters Five to Nine, the present study has examined the appropriateness of such conclusions for individual Australian NGOs. This research has demonstrated that agencies are able to make choices. The extent to which they make compromises in order to achieve operational efficiency, maximise their fund-raising potential, and gain access to government funding, entails choices. Such choices, and the influences responsible for them, need to be recognised and taken into account when evaluating the in-field operations of all NGOs. A useful extension of this research would be to engage in participant observation studies of the field programs of individual NGOs,

assessing the extent to which pragmatic choices or recipient interests dictate the final form of assistance given to poor communities. So too, as previously mentioned in this text, other useful extensions of this research would be: an organisation theory-based analysis of the effect of management structures and leadership styles on agency behaviour; more detailed analysis of the impact of the theological bases of denominational churches on their denominational development agencies; and an in-depth study of the composition of agency constituencies, the reasons for constituency preferences for individual NGOs, and the influences of supporters on agency behaviour.

It has frequently been argued that, in contrast to official donors, NGOs' operations are motivated only by selfless compassion and their concern to help the poorest of the poor abroad (Streeten, 1987:92; Schneider, 1988:151; Hellinger et al., 1988:8). This research, through detailed analysis of the practices and philosophies of individual agencies, has shown this is not always the case. While these remain the raisons d'être of the agencies, reality is that their final aid product is the result of a series of compromises: pragmatic compromises resulting from a number of influences on their behaviour. As Chapter Ten demonstrated, these factors - powerful individuals, significant historical events, theological differences for church-based agencies, the fund-raising imperative, the availability of official funding, contact with other Australian non-government development aid agencies, contact with international institutions, partnership relationships with recipient communities, the input of volunteers, and agency operational structures - clearly played a significant role in shaping the philosophies and development programs of each agency. The diversity of the Australian NGO community thus reflects the variable responses of individual agencies to the mix of influences on their policies and practices.

Some Australian NGOs are clearly better able to translate their ideals into policy and practice than are others. For some of the agencies described in Chapters Five to Nine, the needs of their partners abroad seem to have had a strong role in directing their choices. For others, decision-making is not directed primarily by

an articulated development philosophy based on the needs of those they seek to serve. This is not to imply that some agencies deliberately choose not to give their partners priority. Some have, inadvertently, allowed their priorities to be moulded by their desire to access government funding; a result more of pragmatism, or of naivety and lack of forethought, than of a deliberate decision to do so. Others, like ADRA/SP have pursued courses which are, by the standards of most aid theorists, inappropriate. That such actions occur reflects the inexperience and ignorance of well-intentioned, committed individuals and also of the individuals through whom existing agency structures and linkages have caused them to work.

It is impossible when dealing with such qualitative variables to generalise about the relative significance of each type of influence on the NGO community. For example, while ABM's project approach was largely devised in reponse to the availability of AIDAB funding, theological emphases and the demands of its partners abroad have been more significant in shaping ACR's development program. Thus, some factors are obviously more important for some agencies than for others; the extent to which each factor influences agency decision-making and in-field activities is different for each agency. However, this study has illustrated that each case study agency is influenced to some extent by some or all of the factors identified in Chapter Ten. It is also clear that those agencies with an articulated development philosophy, refined in reponse to discussions with their partners, are less likely to allow pragmatism to override their developmental objectives.

Information for the case studies was collected before the end of 1990. At that time, some agencies could only provide financial and other information for the 1989 calendar year - 1990 annual reports and audited statements had not been prepared. Since then, major changes have occurred for some agencies, and for the entire NGO community. For example, APACE has received funding for institutional development from AIDAB under new funding guidelines, and has established a permanent Sydney office. Also, as previously mentioned, Community Aid Abroad has amalgamated with the Sydney-based Australian

Freedom From Hunger Campaign. Program funding of NGOs by AIDAB has been extended, completely changing the nature of AIDAB/NGO relations for those agencies eligible for program rather than project funding. Despite these changes, which mean that much of the detailed description herein is now largely an historical account, major sources of influence on the Australian NGO community remain unchanged.

Thus, the first contribution made by this research to knowledge about NGOs was to identify the significant factors which influence agency decision-making. The second involved the application of generally held 'truths' about the strengths and weaknesses of NGOs to the reality of their policies and practices. The record of Australian agencies in living up to expectations which the academic literature presents about their benefits has been uneven. Some agencies, like CAA and ACR, have tailored their programs to give expression to their ideals of assisting poor communities to participate in designing their own development strategies. Some NGOs are better able than others to offer benefits of flexibility, innovativeness and low administrative costs; opportunities for volunteers to contribute their time, skills and expertise; ability to act as independent critics of government; and commitment to educate their donor constituencies. Similarly, generalisations frequently presented in literature about the weaknesses of NGOs have variable applicability. While accusations about poor co-ordination of NGO efforts appear to be valid, other questions raised about limited sustainability of their development efforts and the inappropriateness of some projects for local socio-economic conditions have some merit for some agencies, but not for all. Similarly, accusations that agencies lack clarity about their goals and purposes are clearly pertinent for some agencies, but not for others.

One clear conclusion emerged from the discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of Australian NGOs in Chapter Nine. While much of the literature about NGOs presents a similar catalogue of their general benefits and disadvantages, it is obvious that these generalisations are not valid for all agencies. While such generalised information has value in describing the NGO community

as a whole, each agency has its own mix of strengths and weaknesses which assist or hinder it in its attempts to deliver effective assistance to the poor in the developing world.

It is possible to be critical of the activities of some Australian agencies in terms of their ability to offer the benefits popularly ascribed to NGOs. It is another thing to be realistic about the dilemmas facing aid practitioners. Personal experiences on project selection committees reinforce this. It is difficult to locate field partners who truly represent local communities, who have the expertise and administrative capacity to implement projects and who possess the ability to communicate well with funding agencies. It is not easy to refuse requests by local people for inappropriate technology, such as tractors, without appearing to be paternalistic, when the requesting communities are geographically remote so that distance and financial constraints prevent dialogue about alternatives. It is similarly difficult to influence a board consisting of well-meaning volunteers who are ignorant of trends in development thought and see no necessity to change agency philosophy and practices. ABM's current quandary illustrates some of the moral dilemmas involved in being a funding agency - whether to be prescriptive and demand accountability and control, or whether to allow partners total control over decision-making and spending. It demands significant effort on the part of the NGOs to expect them to depart from tried and trusted methods of operation. These are but a few of the dilemmas facing the aid practitioner. As Brodhead argued at the ACFOA Annual Conference in 1990:

> NGOs are still measuring their success in terms of how much money they have raised and how many projects they have supported ... They have to broaden their repertoire of responses, bring in new ideas, new people, some passion, and take a few risks .... NGOs also have to take seriously ... rhetoric about shifting power to our partners if we are to really achieve partnership, rather than 'projectship' (Brodhead, quoted in ACFOA, 1990:2).

Porter, Allen and Thompson attributed the increasing popularity of NGOs to the inability of multilateral and bilateral agencies to reach and serve the poor (1991:137; see p. 45). Yet, some Australian NGOs are clearly not innovative defenders of recipient interests

as academic literature claims they are. Although some agencies endeavour to operate as participatory organisations seeking to empower the poor, others are clearly bound by a form of professionalism which Korten argued denies the values to which development-oriented NGOs should be committed, for it favours '... standardization over diversity, the controlled over the uncontrolled, quantitative over qualitative, precise measurement over visual assessment, project blueprints over adaptive learning ... ' (Korten, 1987:154). The distinction between the programs of some NGOs and control-oriented government aid strategies is not as significant for some agencies as academic literature and agency rhetoric suggest. Particularly for those agencies who have allowed their project approach to be moulded by acceptance of AIDAB's 'professionalism', democratisation or empowerment of local communities does not direct their choices.

This study points to some practical strategies which individual agencies can pursue to assist them to make clear choices and to avoid allowing their decision-making to be led by factors which may not give priority to the interests of recipient communities:

- to clarify the agency's philosophy of development and use this as a basis for the development of relevant policy and practice;
- to develop project selection criteria which are consistent with the agency's articulated development philosophy;
- to extend direct communication with those they aim to serve, in an effort to ensure that aid projects are relevant to local commmunities;
- to be responsive to the needs and priorities of recipient communities and to local conditions;
- to educate their donor constituencies about the need for commitment to long-term development strategies which emphasise participation of beneficiary communities, development of local initiative, leadership and institutions, and empower local communities to determine their own development paths, rather than adopt program approaches because they are attractive to uninformed donors or are easily administered. Because donor constituencies change over time, this must be a long-term, continuing priority.

While some agencies already have a good track record in pursuing the courses outlined above, others need to give serious consideration to following them. Not only are their reputations among the donor public, governments and other development assistance agencies as serious, effective agents of development at stake, so too is the welfare of those they profess to serve. It is imperative that NGOs endeavour to ensure that poor communities are not the 'hapless beneficiaries' (Porter et al., 1991:xvii) of control-oriented aid strategies which ignore their needs and priorities. Decisions about well-intentioned project aid have been criticised for being divorced from the lives of supposed beneficiaries (ibid.; Millwood and Gezelius, 1985). Matzke, writing recently about Porter, Allen and Thompson's study of the failure of control-oriented development practices to assist the poor, suggested that

> For the authors, the alternative to control orientation is a vaguely defined pluralism. Pluralism acknowledges the limits on our ability to be certain. It accepts local knowledge, continually adapts to changing conditions, and sees the possibility of many alternative approaches to desirable outcomes (Matzke, 1992:241).

The uncertainty that this implies rests uneasily with NGOs who are accountable to donors and AIDAB and increasingly subjected to media scrutiny. It is much easier to be certain, to adopt a time-bound, discrete project approach with measurable aims and outcomes. However, such an approach is largely incompatible with the claims to legitimacy found in NGO rhetoric - that NGOs are best able to implement 'participatory development' and 'empower' local people to assist themselves. In 1989, during informal discussions at the ACFOA Annual Council Meeting, Dr. David Armstrong, then National Director of CAA, commented that 'the idea of empowerment is one that NGOs by and large subscribe to at conferences such as this but, in practical reality, don't. This is hardly where the tyre grips the road'. This study has shown his concerns to be true of some agencies. In order to survive, all agencies are forced to make some pragmatic choices. However, in doing so, some agencies allow their policies and practices to be moulded more by pragmatism than by the needs of the poor they aim to serve.

Theories of participatory development are the foundation upon which NGO rhetoric has been built and have contributed to the current popularity of NGOs as agents of development with governments, development theorists and the donor public (see Chapters One and Two). In concluding a study of Canadian NGOs, Brodhead et al. argued that:

> Freedom to experiment, to advocate currently unpopular views and to seek unconventional approaches, offer the best guarantee of finding some of the threads to weave a new and more effective development paradigm ... herein may lie the real 'comparative advantage' of the voluntary sector ... The uniqueness of NGOs rests ... in their potential for turning the current - and failing - model of development upside down (which is to say right side up): transferring its focus from the exclusive right of governments to set priorities and allocate resources, to that of the rights of people, individually and collectively to determine and act on their visions for the future, in short, to democratise development (Brodhead et al., 1988:155).

Korten similarly contended that 'NGOs are often amongst the most active of a society's institutions in helping the poor to achieve a voice of its own' (Korten, 1987:156) and advocated a strategic role for NGOs to work to achieve the restructuring of social institutions (ibid.). Like Chambers (1983) before him, he called for a new 'development professionalism', which is

> ... based on alternative values and offering a variety of alternative technologies, organizational forms, and management and research methods appropriate to a people-centred development ... they represent advances over normal professionalism based on a more sophisticated understanding of the nature of social and developmental processes (Korten, 1987:154).

Verghese (1981:6), Nyoni (1987:51) and Dichter (1987:26) all argued that NGOs' chief advantage lies in their ability to encourage the participation of local people in their attempts to overcome forces which hinder their development. Following a broad-based survey of the work of NGOs, Clark similarly recently concluded that NGOs should focus on

> ... structural transformation, a transition to a new order and new values predicated on the needs of the people, both today and in future generations.

> NGOs ... have a unique capacity to argue the case for this structural transformation (1991:245-256).

As theories of 'participatory development' are fashionable amongst development theorists, so it is fashionable for writers on NGOs to argue that voluntary agencies have the potential to usher in a new style of development practice.

There seems to be a consensus among commentators on NGO activity that NGOs can potentially be architects of a new and more appropriate style of development which contrasts with the control-oriented strategies which have been employed by other official and multilateral institutions. As this study has demonstrated, some agencies are clearly attempting to democratise development, encouraging participation of their partners in processes designed to give them the skills and authority to control their own futures. Yet, the consensus of commentators on NGOs seems to be inappropriate as a generalisation given the reality of the behaviour of some Australian NGOs, which are clearly not yet equal to the task set for them. It seems to be 'putting the cart before the horse' to argue that Australian NGOs can turn development practices 'up-side-down' when, as this study has revealed, some are clearly as yet uncertain about what constitutes development and what strategies to employ to foster it. Australian NGOs can do no more than pay lip-service to the vision of an alternative and effective development paradigm, when their practices do not always reflect commitment to the participation of poor communities in processes designed to assist them, and when various influences are allowed to distract them from their purposes. The committed staff of the agencies described in this study share in a belief that those with wealth should assist those suffering extremes of poverty. However, their compassion alone is insufficient as a basis for the direction of agency priorities and operations. Instead, the policies and practices of non-government agencies delivering assistance to poor communities should be moulded by responsiveness to the needs of the impoverished and oppressed rather than, as this research has shown is true for some agencies, by compromises based on pragmatism.

APPENDIX 1

FORMATION DATES OF AUSTRALIAN NON-GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE AGENCIES (In chronological order)

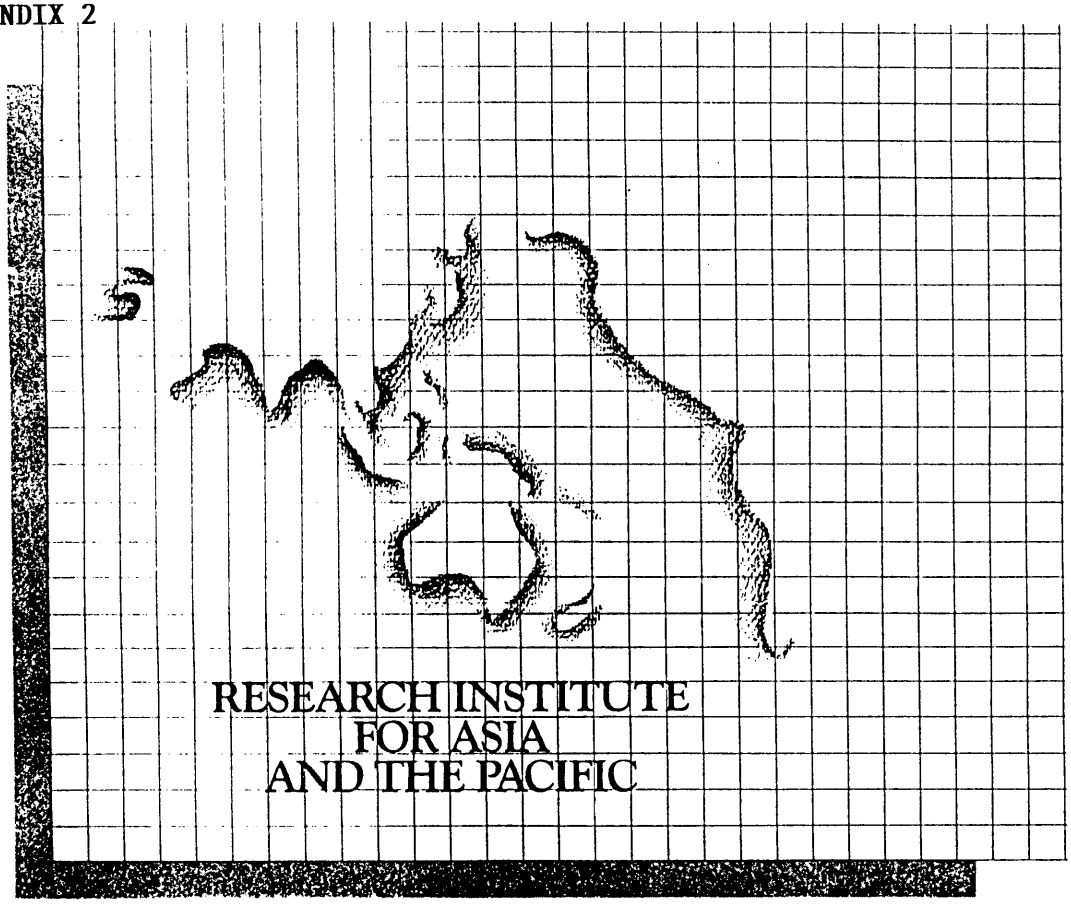
	Formation Date	Name of Agency
1.	1852	Interserve
2.	1860	YWCA of Australia
3.	1872	Australian Board of Missions
4.	1895	Society of St. Vincent de Paul, National Council of Australia
5.	1901	Australian Churches of Christ Overseas Mission Board Inc.
6.	1901	National Council of YMCAs of Australia
7.	1904	South Seas Evangelical Mission Ltd.
8.	1913	Leprosy Mission
9.	1914	Australian Red Cross Society
10.	1916	Church Missionary Society of Australia
11.	1917	Lions Club International
12.	1920	Australian Teachers Federation
13.	1927	Sudan Interior Mission Australia
14.	1931	Asia Pacific Christian Mission
15.	1946	United Nations Association of Australia
16.	1946	Australian Hospital Association
17.	1947	AFS International Exchanges
18.	1947	Federation of Australian Jewish Welfare Societies
19.	1948	Australian Council of Churches - World Christian Action
20.	1948	UNICEF Australia
21.	1949	Australian Tuberculosis & Chest Association
22.	1950	Lutheran World Service
23.	1953	Community Aid Abroad
24.	1954	Union of Australian Women Inc.
25.	1955	International Social Service - Australian Branch
26.	1959	Australian Consumers' Association
27.	1959	Australian Baptist World Aid
28.	1959	Quaker Service Australia
29.	1960	Marist Mission Centre
30.	1960	Family Planning Federation of Australia Inc.
31.	1961	Paulian Association Lay Missionary Lay Secretariate
32.	1961	Australian Freedom From Hunger Campaign
33.	1961	Overseas Service Bureau
34.	1961	Save the Children Fund Australia
35.	1962	For Those Who Have Less - Action Aid Australia
36.	1963	Wheelchair & Disabled Association of Australia

37.	1963	Australian Council for Rehabilitation of the Disabled
38.	1964	Australian Catholic Relief
39.	1964	Australian Association of Ryder-Cheshire Foundation
40.	1966	Asian Aid Organisation Ltd.
41.	1966	Australian Association of Gerontology
42.	1967	Austcare
43.	1967	Australian Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific
44.	1968	World Vision of Australia
45.	1968	Melbourne Overseas Mission Inc.
46.	1968	Project Concern Australia
47.	1970	Australian Institute of Urban Studies
48.	1971	Australian Foundation for International Credit Union Development
49.	1971	Archbishop of Sydney's Overseas Relief and Aid Fund
50.	1971	TEAR Fund Australia
51.	1971	National Association on Intellectual Disability
52.	1971	Foster Parents Plan of Australia
53.	1972	Action for World Development
54.	1972	Institute of Cultural Affairs
55.	1973	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
56.	1974	Australians Aiding Children Inc.
57.	1974	Australian Federation of Consumer Organisations
58.	1974	Campaign Against Racial Exploitation (Australia) Inc.
59.	1975	Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team
60.	1975	ASIAC - Australian Society for Inter-Country Aid Children (N.S.W.)
61.	1976	Australian Association for Buddhist Studies
62.	1976	APACE - Appropriate Technology and Community Environment
63.	1977	Association for Research and Environmental Aid
64.	1977	Uniting Church World Mission
65.	1977	Compassion
66.	1978	Royal Australian College of Obstetricians and Gyneacologists
67.	1978	Trading Partners (Australia) Ltd.
68.	1978	African Enterprises Ltd.
69.	1978	Development Education Group, S.A. Inc.
70.	1979	World Development Tea Co-operative Ltd.
71.	1980	Maranatha Trust
72.	1980	H.E. Evatt Memorial Foundation
73.	1980	Cumberland College Foundation Ltd.
74.	1980	Australian Executive Service Overseas Program
75.	1981	Refugee Council of Australia
76.	1982	Pan Pacific Foundation
77.	1982	Foresight
78.	1982	Australian Overseas Disaster Response Organisation
79.	1983	Australian Third World Health Group

80.	1983	Christian Blind Mission International Australia
81.	1983	International Christian Aid Relief Enterprises Ltd.
82.	1983	Disabled People's International
83.	1983	Interplast Australia
84.	1984	Outreach for Community Development
85.	1984	Australian People for Health, Education and Development Abroad
86.	1985	International Women's Development Agency
87.	1985	Nicaraguan Assistance Fund
88.	1985	Christian Children's Fund of Australia Ltd.
89.	1986	Results
90.	1987	Overseas Council Australia Inc.

Sources: Most of this information 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.

APPENDIX 2



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AUSTRALIAN NON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES RHETORIC AND RESEARCH

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A review of the literature about Australia's non-government development assistance organisations (NGOs) is long overdue. This article explores the three major sources of information publicly available - media reports of agency activities, the publicity and development education materials produced by the NGOs themselves, and a growing (albeit slowly) body of academic research on the operations of the organisations. Media accounts of non-government aid agency activities tend to be selective and sensationalist rather than informative. The publicity and polemic of the organisations themselves is limited, generally aimed at attracting potential donors rather than providing detailed information about agency activities. Academic research is sparse, dominated by descriptive accounts. Recently, some more critical analyses have been published, but they are brief, and few are based on systematic research. This article describes the literature available to date and offers suggestions for the direction of future research.

Popular Perceptions.

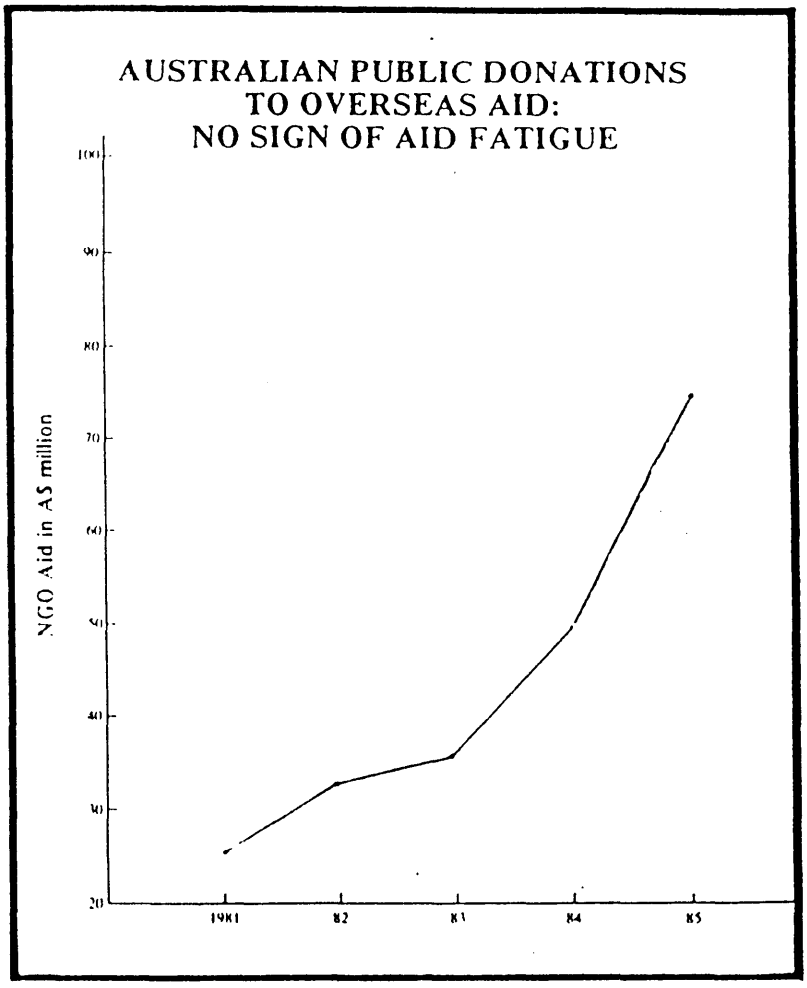
In this era of internationalism, when electronic media penetrates the vast majority of homes in the developed world, it is difficult for most Australians to ignore the harsh realities of life for those struggling to survive in much of the developing world. Large, haunting eyes of malnourished children gaze soulfully from the pages of our newspapers, daily television news presents stories of famine, starvation and tragic loss of life caused by civil unrest, wars and natural disasters. An evening's relaxation can be disrupted as the aid agencies appeal for funds, using more images of the helpless and hopeless gazing appealingly from television screens. Indeed, it has been cynically stated that

> ... we are approaching a time when half the world will sit at home in their loungerooms and watch the other half die (Anthony Burgess, cited in Millikan, 1984: 3).

Millikan's own view is that individuals are unable to watch the suffering of others without some response. Some support for this belief can be found in the fact that recent years have witnessed the proliferation of newly formed non-government aid agencies in Australia (see Table 1). In addition, increasing amounts of Australian donor dollars are being sent to the developing world each year. In 1983, $42.5 million were disbursed by Australia's non-government development agencies and by 1985 the amount distributed had reached $63 million (see Table 2). Clearly, a significant number of Australians are moved to compassion and believe that their contributions to the work of non-government development agencies will assist to alleviate the misery of the poor.

Despite growth in the number and sizes of non-government aid agencies in Australia, and in the increased volumes of public monies disbursed by them, relatively little information is readily available about their activities. Public attitudes to the developing world, to development assistance and to the agencies which administer aid are largely shaped by the media. As Remenyi stated in his report of a survey conducted on

TABLE 2



Source: ACFOA , 1987:4

the attitudes of Australians to Australia's foreign aid involvement:

> Only a tiny minority of respondents said that they got their information on foreign aid and development from sources other than television, radio and the daily newspapers (Remenyi, 1984:14).

Yet, media reports rarely emphasise positive developmental effects of aid programmes supported by Australian non-government aid agencies (see McAdam, 1986 and Deisendorf, 1987). Rather, the Australian public is confronted with stories of the failure of aid, of the corruption of Third World officials who are able to manipulate aid monies for their own personal gain, and of the inefficiency of distribution processes used by aid agencies. In recent years, reports of the delivery to developing nations of technologies inappropriate to the needs of the recipient groups have also been common. Alarmist media reports about the involvement of voluntary agencies in supporting subversive political groups in developing nations, particularly in the Philippines and East Timor, have also been published. For example, in early 1986, McAdam accused a number of Australian NGOs of supporting the communist insurgency movement in the Philippines:

> According to informed sources who have provided The Bulletin with considerable documentation, a major row is about to break over the issue of large-scale Australian church, aid agency and trade union support for the Communist Party of the Philippines and its various front organisations. A major focus of this concern is the political orientation of Australian Catholic Relief, an aid agency which also funds the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace which is closely associated with extremist left groups in Australia and communist groups in the Philippines (McAdam, 1986:46).

Continuing in the same vein, the author accused Community Aid Abroad of funding 'a whole string of communist affiliated front organisations in the Philippines' (ibid.) and claimed that in 1985 the Asia Partnership for Human Development gave more than $20,000 to three different communist front organisations.

Similarly but from a different vantage point, Deisendorf (1987) has traced a media campaign in which the Australian Council of Churches was attacked for, it was claimed, using monies collected through the Christmas Bowl Appeal for 'political rather than poverty motives' (Deisendorf, 1987:9). She argued that this media campaign was perpetrated by members of the New Right political faction who supported 'social salvation through capitalism'(1987:12) and who were determined to wage war against aid which promoted self reliance 'because it is seen to undermine US corporate capitalism in developing countries'(1987:11).

Whether such sensational reports about the activities of Australian non-government aid agencies are part of political smear campaigns is debatable (though not unlikely), but certainly the consumer mentality

of the media largely dictates the image of overseas development assistance presented to the Australian population. As Osborne wrote in her article aptly titled 'Good news is no news':

> The dedicated staff of ... aid agencies have long been despondent about media disinterest in the 'good news' they seek to publicise: literacy programs, projects for women, rural development, appropriate technology ...
> To most news editors, it's boring fare besides a gunman running rampant in the US or, perhaps more disturbingly, a disaster in the Third World' (Osborne, 1987:16).

The NGO Lobby.

Apart from the selective information available through the media, the only other major source of information about the work of Australian NGOs and development assistance is through the publicity brochures and development education materials provided by the agencies themselves.

Traditionally, the informational activities of voluntary agencies were designed largely to promote their programmes, and in particular to appeal to the funding public. Since the late 1960s, new approaches to development education have emerged. Burns (1982) has documented these changes. In general, agencies have improved the quantity and quality of material available to their constituencies, including '... the use of professional public relations officers to improve the "appeal" and "image" of agencies and ensure better media coverage of their activities' (Burns, 1982:35). Many agencies now run separate development education programmes, including the preparation of kits for use in schools, the distribution of films the establishment of resource centres, and the employment of 'education officers' to prepare educational materials such as newsletters and pamphlets. For example, in early 1980, Community Aid Abroad launched a major development education campaign, the growth and effects of which have been documented by Atkinson (1982). Some agencies formed have a purely educative role. These include solidarity groups seeking to raise awareness about issues of justice in particular countries and groups which operate comprehensive educational programmes. One agency, the World Development Tea Co-operative, markets tea in Australia primarily as a means of increasing awareness of social justice issues - in this case to build consumer resistance to the exploitative action of Western multinationals operating in the developing world (see Whelan, 1982). The Australian Council for Overseas Aid (a representative body of the majority of Australian non-government aid agencies) stresses the importance of the educative task of the NGOs:

> ACFOA has a clear responsibility and commitment to help its agencies educate. To educate is to bring about a change ... Often our immediate tasks in the agencies concern the raising of funds, the administration of programs, even the politics of our survival. It is not always easy for us to realise that our central task is an educative one (Poussard, 1982:34).

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Despite the growing concern of NGOs with the task of educating Australians about development issues, the publicity brochures and educational materials they publish are limited as a source of information about the activities of the agencies themselves. A tension exists between the need to raise money and the desire to increase public awareness of development issues (see Alliband, 1983). People are moved to compassion and to giving by the immediacy of images of suffering:

> Provided you could see the pathetic emaciation of the people ... then the job was, in large part, done. ... it had that raw sense of emergency which stirs us all to action. The terrible suffering of these people was clear, and money poured into those aid organisations who were best able to get their names in front of the public (Millikan, 1986:3).

Education about the structural causes of poverty confronts people with the knowledge that the affluent nations live at the expense of the developing world. Such education demands response. Individuals are forced to consider lifestyle changes - changes which sit uneasily with most of us. The sensitive and often political nature of these issues carries the '... risk of alienating the public whose perception of an aid agency's role has not moved beyond that of an aid delivery mechanism' (Alliband, 1983:57). In addition, if the aid donor understands the structural nature of the causes of poverty, they are likely to be left feeling that their aid dollar can have little significance in overcoming what is an entrenched global problem. So, material produced by many agencies is still dominated by the fundraising imperative - limited information is given and appeal is to the emotions of the potential contributor. For those agencies seeking to educate as well as to appeal for funds, education becomes the 'optional extra' when funding levels drop. Insecurity of funding means that educational activities are not planned on a long-term basis and '... this has led to a particular approach which focuses on an issue which is topical at the time ...' (Burns, 1982:35). Agency educational materials frequently focus on issues such as trade, the role of multinationals, and the global debt crisis, but rarely examine the operations of the agencies themselves. Until recently, many NGOs did not even publish annual financial statements or details of the projects they fund. Where given, project descriptions are brief, and tend (for the benefit of the funding public) to focus on the positive developmental impact of projects funded by the agency. Porter and Clark have suggested that:

> '... commonly, public enquiries about the effect of donations to NGOs are met with either embarrassed silences or a deluge of publicity which promotes the ideals of the NGO rather than giving detailed facts of its activities' (Porter and Clark, 1985:1).

One agency - Foster Parents Plan International - recently published a volume outlining the history of the organisation, from its inception until the present (Molumphy, 1984). The volume dwells little on the failures or shortcomings of programmes of the organisation (perhaps there were none?). However, the work does give an historical account of the formation

and growth of an international aid agency. This includes discussion of the establishment of an Australian branch and a guide to the structure and functioning of the organisation. Perhaps most interesting is Molumphy's discussion of the changes in philosophy underlying agency activities:

> In the shambles of postwar Europe the Foster Child was immediately identifiable by his new coat or sturdy shoes. Old advertisements show dark eyes in gaunt faces, or dramatic before and after photographs. 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 delapidated 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).

This change, from charitable giving to individuals to an emphasis on the social and economic development of the community as a whole, has been characteristic of many Australian non-government development assistance agencies.

Many agencies hold documents about their own organisation in the form of unpublished undergraduate theses, internal project evaluation documents, or reports arising from internal reviews. However, such material is not easily obtained by the public, and is rarely based on systematic research. Hence, information procurable from Australian's NGOs about their own activities is inadequate - short on content, and largely biased to ensure not agency fundraising efforts are not jeopardised.

If the polemic and limited educational materials of the NGOs and the selective media reports on their activities fail to satisfy, it is extremely difficult to find any substantial or informed studies on the work of Australian non-government aid agencies. Despite the fact that the work of the agencies is global in character and that significant amounts of money are sent overseas each year, they have largely been ignored as a focus of study by academics involved in development studies or in the study of organisations. Only in the last few years have there been stirrings of interest by academics in the activities of NGOs operating from developed nations. Recently, an analysis of several projects administered by Swedish NGOs (Gezelius and Millwood, 1985), a major study on the work of Canadian NGOs (Brodhead, Herbert-Copley, with Lambert, 1988) and collections of articles on the work of US voluntary aid agencies (Gorman, 1984) have been published. Several journals have devoted entire sections or issues to collections of articles about the activities of

NGOs, including Development : Seeds of Change, Courier, and an excellent supplement to the journal World Development entitled 'Development Alternatives: The Challenge for NGOs', comprising a series of papers based on those delivered at a world conference of that name held in London in March, 1987. In contrast, publications on the operations of Australia's NGOs are almost as scarce as the proverbial hen's teeth! In view of the growing world-wide interest in NGOs as a viable alternative in the promotion of development, it is timely that the limited literature about Australian NGOs be brought together and reviewed as a basis for futher research in this area.

An Academic Perspective.

Like the majority of studies so far published about the work of voluntary development agencies, most material published in Australia is fairly general and descriptive. This is a reflection of the difficulties of obtaining information from a great diversity of organisations and of the fact that research in a relatively new area must inevitably contain a large amount of descriptive material. Earlier published works tend to consist of very descriptive historical record. The first record of the activities of Australian aid agencies was published in 1964. The author, Nancy Anderson, presented information about the Australian voluntary aid agencies which was collated at a two-day seminar attended by representatives of sixteen major aid agencies and held at the Australian National University. The occasion was significant because it provided:

> ... for the first time an account of the nature and extent of Australian voluntary overseas aid activities. In addition, it stimulated the voluntary aid organisations to meet again ... It will be interesting to watch the probable evolution of co-operative action on some aspects of voluntary aid activity (Anderson, 1964:141-142).

The article briefly described the humanitarian motivations of voluntary aid programmes, the domination of the Australian NGO scene by agencies either operated by denominational churches or whose board members were peopled mainly by individuals associated with church organisations, and outlines the types of programmes run by different agencies. The activities of sixteen NGOs were outlined, with information included about their major aid activities, annual aid expenditure, main geographical areas receiving aid, major channels of operation, and some 'Problems and Observations' and 'Suggestions' given by each agency are listed. A common concern of agencies seemed to be with the effectiveness of their aid, while other expressed interests were: to lobby for tax deductibility of aid donations; to reduce competitiveness between agencies; to establish a co-ordinating body to facilitate co-operation and sharing of information and ideas amongst agencies. This first account of the Australian NGO scene is a significant historical record - in particular because it enables comparison of the major activities and preoccupations of Australian non-government aid agencies in the mid-1960s with those of today.

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In 1977, Webb published a brief account of the growth of the non-government assistance agencies in Australia. After a description of the limited pre-World War II activities of Christian missions and a handful of charities, he outlined the establishment and growth of many aid agencies as part of the effort for the relief and reconstruction of war-torn Europe. He traced the transition of Australian official and voluntary aid from a relief programme to a development effort. The formation in 1965 of the Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA) as a coordinating body for the voluntary agencies was also discussed and its mandate described. After a chronological listing of historical facts, the author tentatively concluded that:

> ... voluntary aid ... should be conducted by community organisations to strive to maximise support in the community and in government for values and ideals most appropriate to the world of tomorrow. ... should concentrate on innovative and experimental activity and attempt to express a foretaste of things to come. ... may seek to give recipients greater control over aid than is usually permitted by national donors. ... may also attempt to increase the proportion of their aid that is devoted to projects at home and abroad that will enhance awareness of the structural aspects of development and social justice (Webb, 1977 :8).

This appeal is typical of articles of the time - they stress the positive advantages of NGOs as compared to official aid donors as being 'innovative and experimental', as allowing greater recipient involvement and as having greater freedom to educate the public without political considerations influencing the content of educational material. However, such appeals usually consist of vague rhetoric (one wonders what the 'values and ideals most appropriate to tomorrow' may have been) without the inclusion of any systematic study to ascertain whether NGOs truly do possess the advantages popularly ascribed to them.

Others have outlined particular historical periods of aid agency activity. Hill (1980) described the involvement of member agencies of ACFOA in war-torn east Timor, in particular documenting the critical stand towards both the Indonesian and Australian governments adopted by the ACFOA member agencies. In a similar discussion of this historical period, Walsh (1980) recounted the programmes of the International Red Cross and US Catholic Relief Services in East Timor, and the exclusion of Australian agencies from operating in that country. Historical periods on which published articles are based tend to be those which involved some controversial activity on the part of the NGOs - usually related to the political leanings of the agencies themselves, or of the indigenous groups through which they channelled assistance. Such articles were primarily written to defend the actions of the agencies involved (Hill, 1980) or to appeal for continued agency action (Walsh, 1980). The everyday activities and operations of agencies prior to the last decade remain largely undocumented.

The first Australian study to analyse in any depth the activities of

Australian NGOs was that of Philip Eldridge, published in 1979. His work on the politics of aid in Indonesia traced the background of several of the major Australian NGOs operational in that country, including Community Aid Abroad, Australian Volunteers Abroad, Australian Council of Churches, the Freedom from Hunger Campaign, Foster Parents Plan and World Vision Australia. Eldridge's study included some discussion of the differing philosophies of the agencies. The recurrence in agency literature of themes of 'self-help' and 'self-reliance' and of the moral obligation of the wealthy in the developed world to share their material wealth with the world's poor were stressed. The author outlined the change in agency rhetoric to a 'more controversial interpretation stressing causal relationships between the wealth of developed countries and the poverty of those still underdeveloped' (1979:122). The vagueness of agency rhetoric - often deliberate, reflecting internal agency differences of opinion and a fear of alienating the funding public - was shown to make it possible to imbue it with widely disparate meanings, while the understanding of different agencies about the term 'development' was also shown to be vague. A detailed discussion of the operational style of the different Australian agencies working in Indonesia followed, revealing how activities and linkages in the field were influenced by their different philosophical stances. Rather than concentrating on the effectiveness of the agencies or of their development assistance activites, Eldridge's discussion of NGOs is subservient to his wider theme of the politics of aid and development in Indonesia. However, this study of the operations of NGOs in that nation was a valuable contribution to the body of knowledge about Australian NGOs. Contrary to the sensational reports in the media, he concluded that it would be 'wrong to regard the official aims of even the most radical NGOs as in any way revolutionary' (1979:154) and that

> Evidently NGOs have concluded, consciously or unconsciously, that there are better prospects for effecting change by working within 'the system' than by confronting it.
> The strength of the NGOs lies in the diversity of links they have established at all levels of Indonesian society, much of which remains beyond the experience and comprehension of most Australian government and business personnel. For this reason alone their long-term position is likely to remain viable, despite the tensions which they have recently experienced in their relations with the Indonesian government (1979:155).

With the early 80s came the first attempts to collect statistical data on the activities of Australian NGOs. In 1981, one study compared patterns of global distribution and the form of Australian voluntary aid with those of official development assistance (Percival, 1981). Despite the appeal of NGOs for more altruistic government policies, their own activities were shown to be influenced by factors other than recipient needs. Existing relational linkages with recipient groups, historical ties with particular countries, the availability of government funding and the relationship of the agencies with the funding public were shown to be significant in determining the direction of Australian non-government development assistance. Percival lamented the fact that detailed study of changes in the roles and activities of NGOs was prevented by 'the

paucity of records and statistical data kept by individual non-government organisations', and urged that

> The impact of foreign aid has not been subject to systematic research. ... The paucity of analysis of NGO activities should be redressed - research on functional structures and decision-making processes of individual agencies might promote greater understanding of variations in agency policies and practices (Percival, 1981:90).

A year later, Quinn published a short article on the programmes of non-government aid agencies in Australia, asking more questions than it answered, and again pointing to the lack of study of Australian NGOs or their programmes. Quinn presented a series of tables which detailed the changing volumes of NGO aid over a decade and listed the countries and regions receiving the most significant amounts of NGO assistance. The conclusions he reached were similar to those reached by Percival:

> The strongest adherents to the 'basic needs' approach are the NGOs, but here again there is little evidence that the allocation of aid on a country basis is governed by 'basic needs' ... even the best intentions of reaching the poor are not always realised. This raises questions about the sorts of projects that the NGOs support and whether they are consistent with 'basic needs' strategies (Quinn, 1982:23).

Perhaps more interesting is his suggestion that public and government acceptance of the assertion that NGOs provide a more efficient use of funds than can be achieved by bureaucracies with their high level of administrative costs is not based on adequate research:

> ...there has been no real attempt in Australia to perform any rigorous analysis of Australian NGO projects to show that they are any more effective in bringing about sustained economic and social benefit at the grass roots level in the recipient countries. It is possible that the Australian Government policy of disbursing a portion of its aid budget through the NGOs has removed any perceived need by the NGOs to prove the case for their greater effectiveness in terms of human development (Quinn, 1982:19).

While Quinn's own research was unable to support his suggestions, he did more than describe the activities of NGOs in Australia, by venturing to suggest that there may be a difference between their articles of faith and their actual operations. Like Percival he lamented the fact that 'there is little information available in terms of the number of NGOs in Australia, their expenditures on overseas aid, the recipients of this aid and the nature of the programmes being supported'(Quinn, 1982:19).

The release of the Report of the Committee to Review the Australian Overseas Aid Program (Jackson Report) in 1984 led to the publication of a spate of articles, most of which contained some reaction to the

recommendations of the Committee about the role of Australian NGOs (for example, see Eldridge, 1985; Stent, 1985; Forbes, 1985; Jackson, 1985; Vale, 1985a; and also Bysouth, 1986). Eldridge briefly traced the history of NGOs in Australia as a lobby group - they have traditionally sought to influence the volume, direction and implementation of the official aid programme. As well as confronting the government, voluntary agencies have cooperated with it, often being 'asked to operate programs considered too small, sensitive or complex to be administered by official agencies' (1985:26). Australian non-government agencies have also been ready to compete for available government funding, despite the fact that host country governments may begin to see NGO aid as 'too closely tied to Australian government influence or control' (1985:26). Eldridge also implied that the ready availability of government funding for NGO programmes may lead to an undermining of the traditional lobbying role of the agencies:

> Even radically oriented agencies will seek to accept aid funding for their less controversial programs and in order to strengthen their administrative infrastructure, thus releasing funds to expand other programs. Overall, the Report's recommendations on NGO funding seem likely to defuse, without entirely disarming the major potential source of organised opposition to official policies (1985:27).

Supporting this view, Forbes mentioned that NGOs made 'little public fuss' (1985:233) in reaction to the Jackson Report, despite its apparent greater concern for political and strategic interests than for the basic needs approach supported by the majority of NGOs. Jackson himself accepted the argument of the voluntary agencies that:

> In recent years the voluntary agencies have shown a growing professionalism. Sometimes their ability to by-pass the bureaucracies of both donor and recipient countries leads to more effective aid delivery (1985:18).

Based on these beliefs, the Jackson Report included a suggestion that NGOs should take over many smaller projects, particularly those with a basic needs bias, from the official aid programme. However, confidence in the greater effectiveness of NGOs in implementing small-scale projects is not based on any systematic study of the efficiency or efficacy of their operations

Some analyses of the impact of individual aid projects administered and funded by Australian NGOs have been undertaken. Nesbitt outlined the unprecedented change in the Solomon Islands village of Iriri from 1977 to 1983 (1986). She detailed the development and extent of the Iriri Community Development Project which was funded by the Australian Freedom from Hunger Campaign. In her evaluation of this project, Nesbitt studied the effects of the imposition of Western capitalist ideology on a people who live in a traditional, subsistence agriculture economy. In particular, she analysed the influence of the community development project on local women, concluding that women are 'victims of the economic development

associated with capitalism' (1986:11). This study was based on intensive fieldwork. It is unique amongst research on Australian voluntary aid projects for its detail about, and critical analysis of, the impact of a particular aid project. The implications of her findings are that many non-government projects which appear to be successful in agency terms, can in fact have deleterious effects on some members of the recipient community.

Reviews of non-government aid projects have also been undertaken by the Committee for Development Co-operation - a joint NGO and Australian International Development Assistance Bureau committee which operates the NGO/AIDAB co-operation programme. The purpose of these reviews is as follows:

> Project Review Visits (PRV's) are a routine part of the management of the AIDAB/NGO Co-operation Program. Their purpose is broadly to assess the effectiveness of NGO projects and to ensure that they are being implemented according to the proposals recommended for funding by the Committee for Development Co-operation (CDC) (Armstrong and Leach, 1987:19).

While some of the reviews include some critical comments and useful descriptions of many NGO projects (see for example, Gowty and Birch, 1987), they are not detailed evaluations of NGO projects. The time spent by the review at many of the project sites was very brief - frequently several projects were visited in one day - certainly not long enough to assess the effectiveness or impact of the projects. (Armstrong and Leach, 1986; Gowty and Birch, 1987; Ingevics and Birch, 1986; and Poussard and Rupasinghe, 1987). In addition, most of the reviews were produced for the use of the CDC and the NGOs whose projects have beeen the subject of the review - the reports are not readily avalable for public use.

A handful of more recent analyses have continued to add to the volume of descriptive material about Australia's non-government development assistance organisations, but have adopted a more critical stance. (Alliband, 1983; Bysouth, 1986; and Vale, 1985a). Alliband argued that there was a 'basic dualism in the role of a voluntary aid agency in the 1980s' (Alliband, 1983:54). The article is written from the internal perspective of one Australian NGO - the Australian Freedom from Hunger Campaign - yet the dualism of which he wrote seems to characterise many aid agencies. As a result of historical change two philosophical views persist within the organisation. The first is the view that poverty is endogenous, primarily caused by internal factors, through localised, cyclical activity. Accompanying this view is the belief that the cycle of poverty can be broken by the 'provision of some form of technological assistance, ... which will ... turn the cycle into an upward continuum of social and economic improvement' (54). The more recent and contrasting view regards poverty as being caused by exploitative global power relationships and any attempt to overcome it must 'entail structural changes at each of the local, national and international levels' (54). Alliband suggested that these differences in perception were enshrined in the two major roles of the voluntary aid agency - its development

assistance programme and its community education programme - and that

> This dualism between project aid and community education programs, especially the differing rationale behind them, with the potential conflict such dualism can entail, flows through a NGO's whole network of relations. These relationships are divided into three: relations with a NGO's constituency; relations with Government and relations with its aid recipients (55).

Alliband's article was the first attempt to examine the philosophical underpinnings of agency activities - the internal conflicts which permeate every aspect of agency behaviour. The article highlights the complexity of internal and external relationships and concludes with an appeal for more detailed evaluation of agency behaviour as a road to greater understanding and improved efficieny:

> Establishing an appropriate evaluation framework, which caters both for the donor agency's accountability to its donors and the recipient agency's interest in retaining its independence and integrity, while at the same time leading to a better understanding of the Development process by both parties, is probably the biggest challenge facing Australian NGOs today (Alliband, 1983:68).

In a critique of the activities of Australian NGOs, Bysouth (1986) outlined the history of government funding of the Australian non-government development assistance agencies - the first article to detail the AIDAB/NGO Co-operation Program which was initially established in 1974. Drawing on a 1983 review of government subsidised NGO projects in Papua New Guinea, she questions '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' (1986:215). Bysouth suggested that the quality of NGO projects is questionable:

> 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? (1986:215).

Bysouth's claims are not backed by any evidence of declining quality in NGO programmes, but such assertions demand attention.

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After a theoretical discussion of the benefits and disadvantages of voluntary development assistance agencies, Vale (1985a) also argued that the agencies urgently needed to review their activities in order to retain a beneficial role. He suggested that Australian NGOs are activity-oriented rather than role-oriented, and need a clearer perception of their roles in order to improve the efficiency and impact of their activities. As Vale wrote, better understanding of agency roles would achieve '... a surer correspondence between development, the roles performed to contribute to its achievement, and the activities undertaken to give practical effect to the role' (Vale, 1985a).

Rollason (1988) was the first to suggest a method for classifying Australian NGOS, based on their source of funds and the type of assistance they provide. The five categories he listed are the church based organisations; the secular, community based agencies; agencies with a special focus, such as a particular country or a particular target group; the professional organisations who provide highly specialised assistance such as medical professional organisations; and finally, the community development organisations. Rollason then outlined the 'partnership' approach to development assistance adopted by Australian NGOs. Rather than establishing their own offices within developing countries, most agencies work through international networks and counterpart organisations. Six areas of comparative advantage of NGOs were then outlined by the author, drawing on his experience of Austalian NGOs:

- NGO experience with sectors and approaches focusing on assisting the poor.
- NGO access to regions where governments are unable to assist
- NGO expertise in specific fields of activity
- NGO innovation
- NGO local experience
- NGO Cost of Effectiveness (Rollason, 1988:4).

These benefits of NGO operations have led to greater recognition of the work of voluntary agencies by governments and more recently, by international organisations. Increased recognition of NGO programmes has brought with it greater questioning of the effectiveness of their role in promoting development:

> But the pressure to restrict public expenditure that has come hand in hand with the global economic decline has also meant that governments and other donors are keen to see that aid funds are used efficiently and effectively. Western NGOs as well as Third World NGOs are being asked for greater accountibility and evidence that their aid programs are having a development impact (Rollason, 1988:8).

Demands for greater accountibility of NGOs by the funding public, the media, recipients and government, have led to increasing interest by agencies in evaluation. This interest is reflected in the extablishment by the Australian Council for Overseas Aid of a Project Appraisal and Evaluation Extension Unit and in the recent publication by ACFOA of two

papers on the subject (Porter and Clark, 1985 and Zivetz, 1988). Porter and Clark outlined the philosophy of Australian NGOs, in particular highlighting their common concerns with community, self-reliance and partnership. They detailed the problems of undertaking systematic evaluation of agency programmes - problems for both the recipient and the donor agency. Change over time in evaluation techniques used by Australian agencies is documented. The authors cogently argued the case for a form of participatory evaluation of agency programmes as being more in keeping with NGO philosophies than conventional evaluation procedures which '... stem from a wish to improve the control they exert over the activities of those they fund' (Porter and Clark, 1985:27). As an illustration, Porter and Clark discussed the experience of the Australian Freedom From Hunger Campaign as participatory evaluation was implemented in relation to one agency project. The monograph not only provided an overview of conventional evaluation practices and suggested that alternative approaches are possible, but for the first time presented a case study based on the experiences of a particular Australian voluntary development assistance agency.

Zivetz's (1988) recent article broke new ground in research on Australian NGOs. Her article is the result of 'a new effort by ACFOA and its member agencies to take a closer look at the project cycle, and specifically at how NGOs plan/appraise, monitor and evaluate projects'(1988:1). In a brief description of the Australian NGO scene, Zivetz presented two categories of Australian NGOs; one based on the types of activities in which they are engaged (emergency relief, community development, solidarity support or service delivery), the other on the links to the field through which the agency operates (the international NGO, NGO to NGO, and NGO to community). Processes of appraisal, monitoring and evaluation used by Australian NGOs are discussed. Her descriptions are based on discussions with personnel from Australian NGOs. This study is significant not only because it is based on some systematic research using interview techniques, but because it marks the first attempt to examine the internal operations of Australian non-government development assistance agencies.

One other significant piece of research, in the form of an unpublished thesis deserves mention here. Porter's major contribution lies in his application of social theory to development practice (Porter, 1985). In particular he grapples with his own role as a development practitioner and notes a tendency for development practice to have effects that are often contrary to those intended by the practitioner. As case studies a number of development projects are examined, including a fisheries project in the Philippines administered by the Australian Freedom from Hunger Campaign. Philosophies of development and their outworkings in practice are contrasted this project is compared with a number of other government funded development projects. While Porter's work is not a source of detailed information about Australian aid agencies or their operations, his work is the first to relate the practice of development assistance to social theory and highlights the dilemma of the aid practitioner in the complex struggle to achieve social transformation:

> Responsible practice is not a matter of pragmatically responding

> to the dictates of opportunities. Neither is it a matter of 'ideals' or 'morals', or of finding a middle course between them and 'opportunity'. And, given the delicate conditions required for genuine conversation and dialogue based on a willingness to listen to one's own prejudices and respect for others, it would be a distortion to imagine an entire political realm organised in this way. But if we examine what is required to seize upon these experiences, we will discover a powerful mode of practice that can orient our personal conduct (Porter, 1985:213).

Finally, a review of the literature about Australian NGOs would not be complete without mention of the few existing studies of individual aid agencies. Molumphy's recent history of Foster Parents Plan was discussed earlier. Much earlier, Donovan (1977) published a study of the Australian Red Cross Society (ARCS). In an organisational analysis of the ARCS, the relationship between the governing body, the employed staff and the volunteers working for the organisation was explored. Although this study does not deal with the processes involved in the distribution of aid to the developing world, a number of the issues identified by Donovan are relevant to all voluntary aid agencies. These include lack of clarity in goals, difficulties in relationships and communication between the governing body and employed staff, and the use of fundraising as a criterion of success. Such conclusions could usefully be employed as the basis for research into the activities of other voluntary aid agencies.

Pollard (1981) traced the formation and development of the Asia Partnership for Human Development, a funding arm of Australian Catholic Relief. This was the first study to examine in detail the growth of the development philosophy of an Australian aid organisation. Particularly significant is his exploration of the way this philosophy is expresssed in terms of the relationship between an Australian NGO and their partners in the developing world:

> Partnership ... is a system of exchange whereby one set of resources (material) are exchanged for another (educational). It is a system designed to shift the decision making process in aid allocations loser to the actual victims of poverty by using a consensus model in which agencies of the poor from the whole participating region share equally in decisions about which types of structures will be addressed in countering underdevelopment The basic aim of partnership as a model for development is firstly to empower communities to make development decisions which are consensus based, aimed at causes of underdevelopment (to ensure that the solutions are permanent) and authentic (not imposed from the outside) ... (Pollard, 1981:166).

Pollard's thesis did not attempt to explore the implementation or effectiveness of this relationship in the field. To extend such an analysis in this direction would be a useful application of Pollard's research.

16

Summary and Conclusions.

Most writings on Australian NGOs are not based on detailed analyses or attempts to systematically collect data about Australian voluntary aid agencies. Media reports are sensationalist in character and concentrate only on controversial or 'newsworthy' aid operations. The publicity and development education activities of the voluntary organisations are frequently tempered by the funding imperative. The earliest academic writings are purely descriptive, historical record. More recently, a few published articles have adopted an increasingly critical stance. Some have attempted to develop classifications, some to theorise. But, most useful studies remain in unpublished form and most are marked by their brevity. In terms of content there has been a gradual change in emphasis: from recounting of historical facts, to interest in agency philosophies; from a focus on the advantages and distinctive character of NGOs as opposed to other types of aid donors, to questioning of the effectiveness of their operations, accompanied by stress on the need for evaluation; and most recently, emphasis has been on the internal administration of agencies and the effects of internal procedures on the nature of the 'product' delivered. Although changing thematic trends in literature on Australian voluntary agencies can be observed, little of the work is based on systematic research. A common thread in recent work is the expression of frustration at the difficulties of collecting information from a wide diversity of agencies, and all have stressed the need for more comprehensive research on the operations of Australia's non-government development assistance agencies.

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APPENDIX 3

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND

ARMIDALE, N.S.W. 2351, AUSTRALIA

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY AND PLANNING

IN REPLY PLEASE QUOTE

TELEPHONE (067) 73 3333
TELEX 166050
FAX (067) 73 3122

P.O. Box 742,
CAMPBELLTOWN,
N.S.W. 2560.

Dear

I am currently studying for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy to be completed within the Department of Geography and Planning at the University of New England. It is in relation to my research that I write to you.

For some time I have been interested in the activities of voluntary aid agencies and in 1981 completed a thesis outlining the differences in geographical and sectoral allocation of Australian aid given by the Australian Development Assistance Bureau and by member organisations of the Australian Council for Overseas Aid. I hope to extend this work now, in particular studying the development and history of the Australian NGOs, their aims and their activities. To my knowledge, no comprehensive study of the operations of Australian voluntary aid agencies has ever been undertaken, although similar research has been conducted in relation to the voluntary aid agencies of other developed nations. I hope that such a study of Australian NGOs will be of benefit to the agencies, as well as providing a guide to interested persons wishing to learn more about the various non-government organisations competing for their support.

To facilitate my research, I would appreciate it if you would complete the brief questionnaire I have enclosed and return it as soon as possible in the envelope supplied. Should you wish to discuss any aspect of the questionnaire or its use, please feel free to contact me at the above address or telephone me on (02) 6035032.

Thanking you in anticipation of your co-operation,

Yours faithfully,

(Ms B.A. Rugendyke.)

AUSTRALIAN NON-GOVERNMENT AID AGENCIES - QUESTIONNAIRE.

Please print your answers or tick the box provided where appropriate.

1. What is the complete name of the agency? _____

_____

2. In what year was the agency established? _____

3. Is the agency part of, or affiliated with, an international organisation?

[ ] Yes
[ ] No

If so, does the agency operate completely independently of the parent organisation?

[ ] Yes
[ ] No

4. What means does the agency use to attract funds from the public?

[ ] television advertising
[ ] publicity through churches or community groups
[ ] newspaper/magazine advertisements
[ ] walkathons or other sponsored activities
[ ] mail order catalogues
[ ] other

If 'other', please specify other fundraising techniques used.

_____
_____
_____
_____

5. Which type/s of activity/ies are funded by your organisation?

[ ] food aid
[ ] disaster/emergency supplies
[ ] project aid
[ ] development education
[ ] volunteers working in developing countries
[ ] technical assistance
[ ] capital grants
[ ] financial loans
[ ] child support
[ ] other

If 'other', please briefly outline other forms of support given.

_____
_____
_____
_____

6. Is the agency a member organisation of the Australian Council for Overseas Aid?

[ ] Yes
[ ] No
[ ] Associate Member

.../2

If so, in what year did you join the Council? _____

7. Does the agency participate in the Project Subsidy Scheme run by the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau and the Committee for Development Co-operation?

[ ] Yes
[ ] No

8. Please list the countries the agency currently sends some form of support to. _____

NOTE: All information given will be treated as confidential and will be used in the collation of general statistics about Australian NGOs without reference to any individual agency. All respondents to this questionnaire will receive a copy of the collated survey results if requested. Please indicate below.

[ ] Yes, I would be interested to receive a copy of the tabulated results of this survey.

Thankyou for your co-operation.

APPENDIX 4

Interviews in Chronological Order

1. A. Vale, NGO Section, AIDAB, Interviewed on May 6, 1988, Canberra.

2. R. Rupasinghe, NGO Section, AIDAB, Interviewed on May 6, 1988, Canberra.

3. L. Woong, Education Officer, Australian Freedom From Hunger Campaign, Interviewed on December 25, 1988, Sydney.

4. Dr. J. Hunt, Projects Officer, Australian Freedom From Hunger Campaign, Interviewed on January 16, 1989, Sydney.

5. P. Robertson, Projects Officer, Australian Freedom From Hunger Campaign, Interviewed on January 16, 1989, Sydney.

6. The Rev. N. Ross, ACFOA Chairperson, Interviewed on March 14, 1989, Brisbane.

7. J. Hunter, The Chairperson's Secretary, ABM, Interviewed on April 3, 1989, Sydney.

8. O. Dixson, ABM Honorary Treasurer, Interviewed on April 3, 1989, Sydney.

9. The Rev. R. Cooper, ABM Regional Director, Canberra Diocese, Interviewed on April 6, 1989, Canberra.

10. P. Truscott, ADRA/SP Associate Director, Interviewed on April 12, 1989, Sydney.

11. M. Whiteley, ACR National Director and D. Tamplin, ACR Associate Director, Joint interview on April 12, 1989, Sydney.

12. M. Postma, ACR Communications Officer, C. Bleakely, ACR Education Officer, A. Harris, ACR Education Officer, D. Dorgan, ACR Information Officer, T. Thrower, ACR Promotions Officer, Joint interview on April 12, 1989, Sydney.

13. G. Laxton, ADRA/SP Executive Director, Interviewed on April 23, 1989, Sydney.

14. N. Hughes, ADRA/SP Associate Director, Interviewed on April 23, 1989, Sydney.

15. D. Tamplin, ACR Deputy Director and F. Riordan, ACR Projects Officer, Joint interview on May 10, 1989, Sydney.

16. D. Dorgan, ACR Information Officer, Interviewed on May 11, 1989.

17. Dr. P. Bryce, APACE Microhydro Electricity team, Interviewed on April 20, 1989, Sydney.

18. D. Bryce, APACE Projects Officer, Interviewed on April 30, 1989, Sydney.

19. The Rev. J. Stephenson, ABM Executive Officer, Interviewed on May 3, 1989, Sydney.

20. The Right Rev. K. Mason, ABM Chairperson, Interviewed on May 31, 1989, Sydney.

21. M. Whiteley, ACR National Director, Interviewed on July 23, 1989, Sydney.

22. Dr. R. Waddell, APACE Vice-President, Interviewed on July 28, 1989, Sydney.

23. E. Floyd, APACE Honorary Secretary, Interviewed on October 30, 1989, Sydney (by telephone).

24. J. Beavan, APACE Honorary Treasurer, Interviewed on November 1, 1989, Sydney (by telephone).

25. J. Birch, Member of CAA National Executive Committee, Interviewed on November 25, 1989, Sydney.

26. G. Taylor, Chairperson of International Disasters Emergency Committee, Interviewed on November 29, 1989, Mittagong.

27. W. Byrne, Former ACR National Director, Interviewed on December 1, 1989, Sydney.

28. D. Armstrong, CAA National Director, Interviewed on December 6, 1989; Second Interview on December 8, 1989, Melbourne.

29. W. Berry, CAA Director of Finance, Interviewed on December 6, 1989, Melbourne.

30. J. Atkinson, CAA National Education Officer, Interviewed on December 6, 1989, Melbourne.

31. J. Dammon, Executive Officer of International Development Support Services, Interviewed on December 7, 1989, Melbourne.

32. B. Jackson, CAA Media Officer, Interviewed on December 7, 1989, Melbourne.

33. K. Malhotra, CAA Overseas Aid Director, Interviewed on December 7, 1989, Melbourne.

34. D. Scott, Member of CAA National Executive, former CAA National Director, Interviewed on December 7, 1989, Melbourne.

35. B. Henry, CAA State Secretary for Victoria, Interviewed on December 7, 1989, Melbourne.

36. K. Sharpe, CAA Volunteer Worker and Local Group Leader, Interviewed on December 7, 1989, Melbourne.

37. D. Sharpe, CAA Volunteer Worker and Local Group Leader, Interviewed on December 7, 1989, Melbourne.

38. H. Gow, CAA National Chairperson, Interviewed on December 8, 1989, Melbourne.

39. K. Bysouth, Former Executive Officer of International Development Support Services, Interviewed on January 31, 1990, (by telephone); Second interview on February 6, 1990 (by telephone).

40. N. O'Sullivan, Former CAA Overseas Aid Director, Interviewed on February 12, 1990, (by telephone).

41. D. Gowty, NGO Section, AIDAB, Interviewed on May 4, 1990 (by telephone).

42. R. Rollason, Executive Director of the Australian Council for Overseas Aid, Interviewed on June 5, 1990, Canberra.

Informative informal discussions were held with ACFOA staff on several visits to ACFOA and the ACFOA library on:

April 5 - 6, 1989;
February 14 - 15, 1989;
October 10 - 11, 1989.

Informal discussions were held with representatives of ACFOA member agencies at:

ACFOA Annual Council, September 10 - 11, 1988;
Annual AIDAB/NGO Consultation, September 12, 1988;
ACFOA Annual Council, September 8 -10, 1989;
Annual AIDAB/NGO Consultation, September 11, 1989;
ACFOA Annual Council, September 7 - 9, 1990;
Annual AIDAB/NGO Consultation, September 10, 1990.

APPENDIX 5

AUSTRALIAN NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS

AND THIRD WORLD DEVELOPMENT

1. Short history of the agency

   - Date of foundation

   - Stages in the development of the agency, particularly involving changes in philosophy /area of operations /types of projects.

2. Philosophy of agency

   - Does the agency have a working definitions of development and/or a statement of its philosophy of operations?

   - What does the agency mean by partnership?

   - What does the agency believe are its own particular strengths in terms of its approach to development?

   - Does the agency believe that there are any problems associated with this particular approach?

   - In the case of church-based agencies, what is the relationship between the evangelical role and development work? Are there any tensions involved here?

   - Does the agency believe that its development role should be confined to a project by project contribution, or does it believe that development projects must be seen in a wider more "strategic" context? [i.e. we need to explore the ideas contained in the idea of "3rd generation" NGOs]

   - Does the agency have a library and other similar resources? How do staff attempt to keep up with current issues/trends?

3. Organisational structure

   - Is the agency part of an international organisation? If so, what is the nature of the relationship with the "parent" body in terms of funding, implementation, monitoring and communications? Have these links changed over time?

   - Staff structure and areas of responsibility [if possible, develop an organisation chart showing the relationship between the board, the executive director, the project staff, volunteers, parent organisation, partners etc. in terms of decisionmaking on how funds are raised and how funds are spent].

- What is the nature of the relationship between the board and the directors/staff?

- How effective are the lines of communication between various parts of the agency?

4. Staffing

- Number of staff (a) in Australia (b) in the field try to distinguish part-time/full-time employees and estimate the role of volunteers in various tasks.

- Qualifications, experience, nationality, age/sex and other relevant characteristics of their staff.

- Are there any problems in terms of recruitment, quality of staff, staff training?

- What are the needs, if any, in the availability of courses for NGO staff?

- How has the staffing situation changed in the last 15 years or so? Has the role of volunteers changed? Are consultants used more than in the past? [Obtain as many details as possible]

5. Funding

- What are the proportions of agency funds derived from different sources - sponsorship, general public donations, government etc.?

- How have these proportions changed over time?

- What "message" is used in requesting funds from the public? How has this changed? [collect brochures etc.] What advertising channels are used?

- What are the difficulties being faced in fund raising? What plans are there for changes in this area?

6. Expenditure

[Some of this material may be obtainable from other sources]

- What proportion of funds are spent on particular types of activities?

- Estimate of possible overheads/administrative expenditure vs amount spent overseas.

- How has this expenditure pattern changed over time?

- In what areas is volunteer labour used?

7. Development projects

- Countries where the agency has projects; has this changed over time? What is the rationale behind the choice of countries?
- Specific types of projects preferred; has this changed over time?
- How are projects identified/who identifies them?
- What is the vetting process and who does it? [Describe process, as there is usually more than one step] Highlight role and nature of partnership in this.
- What are the strengths of the current identification/appraisal process? What are the weaknesses?
- Does the agency have a written set of appraisal guidelines/criteria? Do partners have access to this?
- How are projects monitored? What types of reports are required and at what intervals? Is this different for govt supported projects? How often are projects visited by (a) field staff; (b) Australian agency staff:? What is the nature of the visits? (c) others: e.g. sponsors, board members etc.?
- What are the problems involved in monitoring?
- How often are projects evaluated? What process is used in the evaluation?
- What feedback or learning mechanisms exist to help in the planning of future projects? How can they be improved?
- Are there some types of projects which the agency regards are particularly successful? What types of projects have run into problems?

8. Development education/community awareness/advocacy

- What development education programmes have been implemented for various target groups - schools, community groups etc.?
- How does the agency use its educational role [in the broadest sense] in Australia?
- How does the agency see its advocacy role? What are the target groups - give details of particular campaigns/programmes?
- What is the "message" used in these education/advocacy roles? [Collect examples of materials]
- How have these roles and these messages changed over time?

- How does the agency see the link between development projects/fund raising and educational programmes? What tensions exist, if any?

9. Relations with government

- What relations exist with the Australian government in terms of funding etc.? What are the major benefits and problems involved in accepting government funding?

- Does this relationship cause problems in terms of autonomy, philosophy? Does the agency have a policy on government funding?

- Are demands for "Australian identity" in projects causing problems?

- How have relations with government changed over time?

10. Relations with other NGOs

- What co-operation agreements does the agency have with other NGOs? What are the advantages and problems involved here?

- How adequate are existing arrangements for inter-agency consultation, sharing of information, co-operation etc.?

- What involvement has the agency had over the years with ACFOA?

- What are the most beneficial things which ACFOA has contributed to the agency over the years?

- What areas would the agency like ACFOA to improve in or provide more/better services and/or linkages to the agency?

11. Future plans

- What are the short-term and longer term goals of the agency?

- What are the current issues/problems facing this agency and the NGO community in general?

APPENDIX 6

Community Aid Abroad - Project Selection Criteria

1. The project, wherever possible, should be of a developmental nature i.e. aimed at bringing about permanent, self-sustaining change, rather than merely temporary relief.

2. Even at times of disasters when emergency relief aid is supplied, this aid must, wherever possible, lead to ongoing developmental assistance.

3. The project should be in keeping with the wishes of the community being assisted, and must have the active involvement of local people or their accepted representatives.

4. The project should be aimed, as far as possible, at assisting the poorest and most exploited section of a community.

5. The project must be environmentally sustainable. Its impact on the soil, water resources, vegetation or fauna of the area, must not result in permanent degradation or destruction.

6. The project must recognise the especially oppressed position of women in most communities and should ensure that the expected benefits serve to promote, directly or indirectly, the social and economic development of women and lead to their gaining equal access to the resources of their community.

7. Leaders of the projects assisted must have sufficient ability and integrity to ensure success of the project and thereby, encouragement of the local community.

8. Projects should, as far as possible, use local personnel and local goods and services. Outside equipment and personnel should only be supplied in special circumstances.

9. Projects involving the introduction of a new technology must be relevant to the needs and capabilities of the recipient community, must be able to be sustained through local effort, and must be in harmony with the local environment and culture.

10. Projects may be assisted from time to time which are of special importance because of their technological, educational or ideological content. Such projects may qualify for support even though some normal project requirements may be otherwise lacking (CAA, 1988-89 Projects, Spring 1989:3).

Checklist for Organizations Seeking CAA Support

1. ORGANIZATION TYPE: Large, integrated programme focussed on consciousness raising
Smaller project base tackling injustice etc.
Smaller project base tackling economic development

2. VISION
i. Common Objective: To what degree does the organization share CAA's view of development
ii. Practical Strategy: Does the organization have a definite strategy to achieve its objective.
iii. Relationship with Beneficiaries: Does the organization respect the competence of the beneficiaries and will they be genuinely involved

3. GENUINENESS: Evidence of previous commitment, Reliable references, Field observation
Preparedness for dialogue with CAA

4. COMPETENCE: Motivating ability, Flexibility, Resourcefulness.

APPENDIX 7

GUIDE FOR PROJECT EVALUATION REPORT

Australian Catholic Relief suggests that, if possible, the group or community participating in/benefiting from the project discuss together the following questions and record a synthesis of the discussions, AS A REPORT, to be forwarded to ACR every six months until completion of the project, together with a Financial Statement on the attached form.

It is hoped that by thinking about and discussing these questions together, the group or community implementing the project will gain fresh insights which will make their work for development more effective.

The information provided will also offer Australian Catholic Relief a sound basis to evaluate its own contribution to integral human development.

1. Who in general and how many local people were involved in the actual implementation of the project?

2. In the course of implementing the project did the people involved review the objectives of the project, their participation, the progress made, the benefits accrued, the role of foreign funds, etc?

   If so, please note the salient points.

3. What, if any, were the attitudes to the project of people who were not involved or benefiting from the project?

4. Could you give a frank indication of the ways in which the planning of the project and its implementation has been a process of education for change, for social justice, for human dignity, for socio-economic progress, etc?

5. If the project has not yet been completed, can you see any further ways in which the project can contribute to foster any aspect as in 4 above? If the project is completed, what steps are foreseen to give continuity to these aspects?

6. What other results have been achieved by this project; what others do you expect to achieve in the future?

7. Are these answers the sole work of the person signing this report or are they the result of discussion by a larger group?

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