New Directions in Non-Government Action

Doubling Australian Aid Conference, February 7, 2011

Chris Roche, Oxfam Australia
What I will focus on

1. Some key Trends in Non-Governmental Aid

2. Some key challenges for the Aid sector

3. Some things that Civil Society actors have to offer in thinking about those challenges
1. Some key Trends in Non-Governmental Aid
The role of private assistance in international development

Heidi Metcalf Little (2010)
The Hudson Institute, Centre of Global Prosperity
Net ODA from DAC and non DAC donors & NGO Spend 2008

China?
2. Some key challenges for the Aid sector

• Fragmentation & coordination
Aid projects are proliferating

Source: AidData

Owen Barder (2010) The coming collapse of the development system?
2. Some key challenges for the Aid sector

• Accountability to tax-payers in donor countries, and to those that aid ultimately seeks to benefit.
Let’s spend aid here

A HOLLAND Park woman has launched a campaign to have international aid fund-
ing redirected into the re-
building of critical infra-
structure destroyed by flood-
waters across the state.
Effie Mourgos has asked
southsiders to sign an online
petition calling on Helen
Gillard to direct overseas aid back to
Australia.

If Britain is so broke...
FOREIGN
AID BILL
MUST BE
CUT TOO

Ng flooding in Queensland,
NSW, and Victoria.
However, the cost for re-
building flood-affected areas
in Queensland alone is ex-
pected to go as high as $20billion.
“I have heard stories of aid being
diverted to countries in Asia,
which is great but I think
that money needs to be re-
directed back into Quee-
land to help us rebuild the
state,” said Ms Mourgos.
“All those donations and
spends I really don’t think
are going to scratch the sur-
face of what’s needed.”
Ms Gillard told the media
last week that it was in Aus-
tralia’s interests to assist its
regional neighbours through
aid to ensure they remained
“peaceful places”.
“And I do stress, of course,
that the world has also re-
plied to help Australia
during our hour of need,”
she said.

To sign the petition, go to
petition/41768.html

Warning:
Stimulates addiction
Creates bureaucratic cancer
Reduces economic growth
Makes you uncompetitive
Costs lots of (taxpayers) money

Alternatives? www.bidnetwork.org
2. Some key challenges for the Aid sector

• Trade policy, immigration policy, defence and foreign policy and the role of the private sector are also critical and often more critical than aid. Tendency to oversell Aid.

• Growing Understanding of the critical nature of local political economies and informal institutional arrangements and their relationship with formal political structures in determining development outcomes in general and (gender) inequality in particular.
3. Some things that Civil Society actors have to offer?

1. Challenging local power relations and inequalities (gender empowerment, indigenous rights etc) as well as pushing for ‘security from below’ (Women for Kup in PNG,) the ‘We Can’ Campaign in South Asia,
3. Some things that Civil Society actors have to offer?
2. Amplifying the Voice and feedback of those aid and development processes are meant to benefit (social accountability processes) and creating more real time ‘barometers of change’ and emergencies using new technologies (Ushahidi, SMS frontline, Twaweza) which can help to call governments and aid agencies to account, and be a key part of system wide Monitoring and Evaluation.
3. Some things that Civil Society actors have to offer?

3. Developing Innovative partnerships linked to longer-term processes of social change.

Oxfam America, WFP and global reinsurer Swiss Re, and other partners, are piloting a weather linked micro-insurance program in Tigray, Ethiopia.

This has adapted ‘food-and-cash-for-work’ programs into an “insurance-for-work (IFW)” innovation.
3. Some things that Civil Society actors have to offer?

4. Pushing for **transparency** through for example Extractive Industry Transparency, Publish What You Pay and Fund initiatives, Development Bank Inspection Panels as well as exploring new forms of transparency for themselves (*Admitting Failure* website, Grievance and Redress Mechanisms, Keystone reporting),
“All my successes have been built on my failures.” – Benjamin Disraeli

The development community is failing... to learn from failure. Instead of recognizing these experiences as learning opportunities, we hide them away out of fear and embarrassment.

No more. This site is an open space for development professionals who recognize that the only "bad" failure is one that’s repeated. Those who are willing to share their missteps to ensure they don’t happen again. It is a community and a resource, all designed to establish new levels of transparency, collaboration, and innovation within the development sector.

Get involved – share failures, build knowledge and encourage others to do the same – so we all benefit, today.

Launched, January 14, Engineers Without Borders Canada (EWB)
3. Some things that Civil Society actors have to offer?

5. Developing connections which provide illustrations of how one might create shortened routes of accountability (Kiva, Global Giving) and build social and economic relations (Fair Trade, Climate Change).

These are potentially less vulnerable to fluctuating opinion than compassion, foment important discussions about changing life-styles in developing countries, and build an understanding on inter-dependence and in that in many areas ‘we are in this together’.
Kiva lets you lend to a specific entrepreneur, empowering them to lift themselves out of poverty.
6. **Drawing connections** between aid, trade, immigration, defence policies and exploring the trade-offs, contradictions and innovative solutions, as well as lobbying for more joined-up and coherent approaches where appropriate and disentanglement where not (Afghanistan, Remittance matching, Seasonal worker schemes, Refugee policies)
3. Some things that Civil Society actors have to offer?

7. Developing **trans-national relationships and campaigns** which contribute to building norms and standards which:
   • communities can use to draw down from the international sphere to hold people to account locally (**Sphere & HAP, Gender Equality, Rights Based Approaches, ICC, Extractive industry standards & Equator principles, PWYP,**),
   
   • bring local concerns to the global arena (**land-mines, blood diamonds, Access to ARVs, Darfur**),
   
   • help shift moral agendas and discourse, and subsequently policies (**Debt Relief, Robin Hood Tax, Make Poverty History**)
Conclusio

• The Aid system faces numerous challenges. Civil society groups and processes are part of the problem, but also offer important lessons and insights into addressing these, over and above the usual roles that are usually suggested for them.

Any rethinking of International Cooperation needs to recognise this.

• The push for measureable results and larger programs risks instrumentalising civil society and NGOs and ignoring small, yet transformational initiatives.