



Submission No 28

Inquiry into Australia's aid program and its impact on human rights and security in the Pacific

Organisation: Australian Council for International Development

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**Additional information:
Supplementary to ACFID Submission to Inquiry into Australia's Aid Program in
the Pacific**

We welcomed the opportunity to present to the Committee and thank you for facilitating our appearance. Given that it was not possible to clarify several of the Committee's important queries on the day, I would be grateful if you could provide them with the following:

Anti-corruption – clarification of ACFID's position

ACFID regards anti-corruption measures in the Pacific as a vital part of the Australian aid program. We know that foreign aid cannot be effective for vulnerable countries where corruption is rife.

ACFID has been a strong proponent of transparency programs such as the Extractive Industries Transparencies Initiative (EITI). Together with Transparency International, ACFID has sought to persuade the Australian Government to become involved with EITI over the last two years. We are pleased to see that a policy commitment to join EITI was taken recently.

At a local level, Australian NGOs have been world leaders in promoting demand for improved governance. For example, World Vision has trialled a Community Based Performance Monitoring (CBPM) system in five countries, an approach that has now been adopted by the World Bank for its own programs. CBPM uses a 'scorecard' approach to provide real-time feedback on levels of satisfaction with services provided to the community. Service providers then meet face to face with the whole community to work out ways of addressing the concerns raised.

Another example of NGO leadership in the fight against corruption is the major research and reporting on PNG's large scale logging industry carried out by the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) and its local PNG partner, The Centre for Environmental Law and Community Rights (CELCoR). The authoritative nature of this original research has informed public debate in Australia. It has also reaffirmed the seriousness with which the NGO sector is pursuing anti-corruption goals.

Decrease in ODA directed through NGOs in aid budget

A Committee member asked about an apparent discrepancy between AusAID budget figures and those of ACFID in relation to NGOs. Please see the attached table which demonstrates that one component of the AusAID budget does not, in fact refer to NGOs. Funding to Austraining (a Government Business Enterprise rather than a not-for-profit NGO), for the Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development (AYAD) and Volunteering for International Development from Australia (VIDA) programs is included in these figures, thereby increasing the amount listed as ODA through NGOs.

Disability and Development

Committee members expressed some interest in our proposal for a substantial disability program to assist Pacific service providers, trainers and client support groups and utilising Australian disability and development expertise.

We referred to the emerging prominence being accorded disability in the Pacific through the creation of a position within the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat of Disability Coordination Officer and New Zealand Government support for Pacific disability services.

As part of the growing national interest in disability programs for Pacific Islands countries, ACFID and ACROD (the Australian National Industry Association for Disability Services) have formed the Australian Disability and Development Consortium (ADDC). This reflects the initiative of NGO service providers to improve and expand their work in the region. The consortium and disability and development photographic exhibition will be launched at Parliament House on Monday 26 February 2007.

Pacific Labour Mobility

The ACFID Submission recommends creation of a pilot Pacific Labour Mobility program targeting unskilled workers and linking with the Australia-Pacific Technical College.

The Committee may be interested to know of a UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) report that is currently circulating amongst Pacific civil society groups for their comment. Although not yet officially endorsed, the report indicates that the European Union may develop its own Pacific Labour Mobility scheme. The proposal "includes a strong training component including an upgrade and expansion of existing training institutions, possibly the opening of new institutions, and an expansion of apprenticeship and trade testing schemes" and would be managed at a regional level through an office established at the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. A copy of that report is attached (refer specifically p.2, pp.4-5, pp.15-16, pp.43-47). This report is an indicator of the interest by other donor countries in such a scheme.

We draw these additional matters to the attention of the Committee.

Sincerely,

Paul O'Callaghan
Executive Director