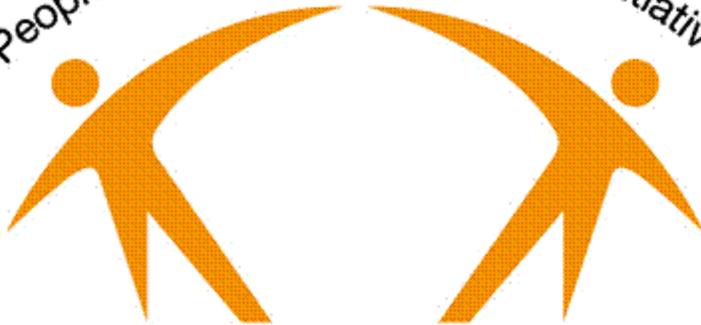


People's Open Access Education Initiative



<http://peoples-uni.org>

Submission to the Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness
By Professor Richard Heller

Based on my personal experience of international aid in the field of education for capacity building, I would like to focus on the following aspect of the Terms of Reference of your Review: *“the relative costs and benefits of the different forms of aid, including the role of non-government organisations and the appropriate balance between multilateral and bilateral aid funding arrangements.”*

1. Much education offered through the higher education sector is self-serving and boosts Australian universities through fees for overseas students. The high fee level requires scholarship support in the main, and while AusAID is to be congratulated on the scholarship support it offers, as is the higher education sector on the quality of the education, only a minority of those who might benefit from this education receive it, and the developing country institutions are not built up in the process.
2. Students who come to Australia leave their workplace to do so (and some do not return there or to their country).
3. An important mechanism for higher education, particularly in the postgraduate field, is that of distance learning – with Internet based e-learning having great potential to make a major contribution. The advantages of this are as follows:
 1. Costs to students and their institutions are much lower as travel is not necessary and the workforce is not depleted
 2. Collaboration with local institutions can help boost their capacity in the process of collaborating on the education programmes, and research partnerships are also encouraged to develop
 3. The use of the Internet for education will be enhanced over time as Internet access becomes more accessible – the reach is already substantial
1. NGOs, social enterprises and the voluntary sector can also contribute to education for capacity building, as the example of the People's Open Access Education Initiative (Peoples-uni: <http://peoples-uni.org>) testifies. Here volunteers use open educational resources to develop and deliver Certificate, Diploma and Masters level courses in Public Health to those in developing countries at very low cost. This model would be applicable much more broadly.

2. The Australian Government is encouraged to explore the potential to facilitate the development of Internet based e-learning for capacity building, through collaborative partnerships between Australia – via the higher education sector, NGOs, social enterprises, and volunteers – and developing country organisations and their higher education sector.

Professor Richard F Heller