

To whom it may concern

I have been involved in conceiving of, developing in collaboration with developing Governments, financing and successfully implementing some of the worlds largest development projects using solar energy as the enabling technology. More than US\$80million funded mainly from Spain but also by AusAID and jointly by AusAID and EFFIC.

These projects were targeting the poorest of the poor in very remote communities. They were fully integrated projects where social preparation and community development were a Critical and significant component of the project. These projects started in 1988 and the last one was commenced in 2001/2. They were focused on southern Asia and South East Asia. There were 4 generations of projects over those 15 years with the lessons learned from previous projects incorporated into the later projects.

The first Project in 1988 was targeting households with an impact on about 6,000 people (1,000 families).

The second Project targeted remote community infrastructure (schools, hospitals, doctors houses, health clinics and potable water supplies) targeting around 50,000 people.

The third Project targeted remote community infrastructure with increased emphasis on strengthening local governance (village halls, municipal buildings, government infrastructure, and again health clinics, hospitals, schools, potable water supply and communal facilities) this project impacted on more than 1 million people.

The fourth Project targeted remote rural agrarian cooperatives to increase their effectiveness at improving their income generation largely by improving their efficiency. This project impacted on more than 600 rural communities.

Unfortunately despite their proven sustainability, which I defined as > 70% of the project (plant and equipment and community development) still working effectively 10 years later, this type of fully integrated project has never been repeated by AusAID despite the enormous amount of knowledge Australians had learned over the 15 year period. I had always hoped that these projects would have been seen as a pilot for even bigger interventions. But years of witnessing many AusAID projects in the field convinced me that amateurs were running the mad house!

In 1996 AusAID engaged me as consultant to travel around the Pacific visiting 6 countries to see what could be done to increase a regional focus on renewable energy. I found the trip extremely interesting not just because some one paid me to visit beautiful and exotic locations or for the opportunity to meet extremely interesting people but by the naivety of AusAID in its complete lack of knowledge of how things worked in the region. Not at the AusAID field level but at the Political and senior management of the organisation. In that trip I witnessed every conceivable mistake that could be made by donor countries in trying to improve the lot of remote island communities. All these badly designed and poorly implemented projects had done

was to have raised expectations, dashed hopes, diverted scarce resources and wasted considerable amounts of money.

On one Island where AusAID were pushing an airstrip onto the community, a highly educated and sophisticated community elder approached me and begged me to intervene with Canberra to stop the project on the grounds that such a large project would divert scarce resources not just during its construction but more importantly for its Operation and Maintenance for years to come. I have no idea what the outcome was and I had to explain to this person that that was not my brief (I did report the conversation).

What I witnessed was R&D experiments funded by Donor Countries taking place in the most remote locations. Clearly a recipe for failure from the start - which they all turned out to be. Complete lack of understanding of how these societies actually work. No understanding of what works and what doesn't. No calling on the expertise and experience of Proven and Successful projects (few and far between) and repeating the same old mistakes year after year after year.

Within the ranks of the Australian Government and AusAID grew the concept that Development Aid could be outsourced to NGO's. The thought that Private Enterprise would make a profit on AID projects was an anathema to the NGO's and AusAID. Despite the fact that if one wants to determine how much profit an organisation is making is to ask for after sales service - no profit no service the bigger the profit the bigger the after sales service! Hence once projects were implemented by NGO's and others there was absolutely no "after sales service" hence the issues about sustainability which in those days only happened to be about developing countries and not about Developed Countries (when was the last time did we ask is the electricity supply to our house sustainable?????).

For those in the AID world IF THEY WOULD CARE TO INFORM THEMSELVES can view a professional video I made in 1999 of one of the projects in the PHILIPPINES you can view it in two parts on YouTube under Solar Projects MSIP (1 and 2) it is in total about 28 minutes. It was made by BP but unfortunately BP never decided to distribute it because, I was told that they did not like the accent of the Narrator????? I will let you decide!

I hope that this review of Aid effectiveness can lead to better outcomes not for the Tax Payers of Australia but for all those remote communities that such interventions bring hope for a better future!

http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=solar+projects+MSIP&aq=f

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