

Submission to the Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness

I believe it is critical that definition and measurement of aid effectiveness gives the highest weighting to the views and experiences of the very people whom aid is seeking to benefit.

This may seem like a motherhood statement, but in practice there are many competing criteria for assessing aid effectiveness.

Furthermore the criterion that beneficiaries' own views be considered in assessing the benefits and costs of aid projects, is notoriously difficult to measure accurately.

Therefore AusAID should make the most concerted efforts to give this criterion the highest priority in the design, monitoring and evaluation of all programs and projects it funds. With sufficient resources and motivation, innovative mechanisms to accurately assess beneficiaries' views about the impacts can be devised and implemented. In particular, focus should be placed upon the views of the most marginalised and vulnerable beneficiaries in each country or community.

Ongoing AusAID funding to various countries and organisations should be strongly influenced by the extent to which beneficiaries do indeed report experiencing positive impacts as a result of the funded aid activities, without experiencing any significant negative impacts as a result of the funded aid activities.

This would provide a strong incentive to recipients of aid funding (whether organisations or governments) to make it their highest priority to deliver real benefits to beneficiaries, and to quickly respond to any concerns from beneficiaries about unmet needs or unanticipated negative impacts.

Yours sincerely,

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