

To the panel of the Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness.

As an Australian who has spent most of my professional life working in public education in PNG and Nigeria I am aware of the issues facing developing countries.

My main recommendation to the review would be that our aid concentrate on grass roots assistance to the poorest in whatever country irrespective of its proximity to Australia or to Australia's "national interests". We must be concerned with the interests of those beyond our national boundaries - as a rich country with a booming economy which draws much from the rest of the world we have an obligation to all humanity not just to Australians. Related to this we should ensure that in our trade negotiations we advocate policies which favour the poor rather than those which favour us and other rich countries as is now often the case.

One way to increase the effectiveness of Australian aid to the poorest is to operate to a much greater extent through Australian international development NGOs rather than commercial contractors. Many NGOs have a proven record in serving the needs of the poorest and are much more cost efficient than contractors. Indeed even better is to identify NGOs in aid recipient countries with the capacity to manage aid programs in their own country and to work to build the capacity of such agencies. This would mean that the transition to countries being responsible for their own development would be more effective.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr Michael Wilson