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New Zealand Church Initiatives for International Development:

A taxonomy and assessment framework

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Philosophy in International Development at Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand

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This thesis is dedicated to:

Dad.

For coming on the journey with me.

Abstract

Individuals, groups and organisations are increasingly feeling compelled to take action and become personally involved in the field of development cooperation in an attempt to alleviate poverty and improve the lives of the poor. One such do-it-yourself phenomenon that has been observed in New Zealand involves the Christian church.

A grey area has emerged where development activities are now carried out by churches which are amateurs in the field. These initiatives are run by pastors and congregation members acting on the teachings of the Christian faith but with little understanding of the complexities of poverty or development. The altruistic and often selfless intentions of those involved in such initiatives are commendable. But are these do-it-yourself solutions to complex issues of poverty and development really achieving what they say they are? If these initiatives were tested to determine their level of effectiveness, what would the results be?

Motivated by these observations and questions, this thesis seeks to explore this emerging phenomenon. It asks, what does it look like? How might it be defined? Is it effective? This thesis calls the phenomenon *Church Initiatives for International Development* ("CIID"). It argues that CIID is conducted by new development actors and situates CIID in relation to current trends within the industry: the emergence of a fourth channel of development cooperation and the role of religion in development. CIID is compared to current actors in international development, specifically citizen-led initiatives and faith-based initiatives to demonstrate its similarities and differences.

A taxonomy outlining the different types of CIID is presented which provides insight into the range of forms that CIID takes. The research also explores how the effectiveness of CIID might be understood. To achieve this, an assessment framework consisting of eight criteria was created drawing upon mainstream and alternative approaches to effectiveness. This framework was then tested through in-depth interviews with six CIID case studies from donor churches in New Zealand.

By analysing information from the in-depth interviews with donor churches, the study concludes that CIID is more effective across the criteria of *local ownership & participation, collaboration, relationship* and *partnership*, and less effective in the areas of *accountability*, *measuring success*, *holistic well-being* and *attitudes and knowledge.* The research also reveals that CIID is typically more effective when a development organisation is involved in a partnership with a church that is implementing CIID.

The findings on the emerging field of CIID that this thesis presents contribute further insight into the nature of do-it-yourself development initiatives in the fourth channel and the role that NZ churches are playing in international development.

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Abbreviations

CI	Citizen Initiative
CIID	Church Initiative for International Development
FBO	Faith-based Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PI	Private Initiative
NZ	New Zealand
RNGO	Religious Non-Governmental Organisation
The Paris Declaration	The Paris Declaration of Aid Effectiveness