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How the Aid Industry Works: An Introduction to International Development

By Arjan de Haan



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International development is big business. Official global aid flows from North to South are over \$100 billion annually. China and India, former aid recipients, are rapidly entering the field as aid providers themselves, and international charity is being redefined with the resources of private donors like the Gates Foundation, for example, outstripping the annual budget of long-time donors like the UK, Canada or the World Health Organization.

Lacking in the literature on international development is an introductory text that provides an overview of the practices of the “business” of development. *How the Aid Industry Works* provides a basic description of what aid practices are and how they evolved. The arguments of both proponents and opponents of aid are presented and analyzed, along with real-life examples of projects and programs in context. Ideal for undergraduate and graduate students encountering the subject of development for the first time, the book also serves as an overview for development practitioners who want a handy reference covering the universe they inhabit.



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Review

"A social policy specialist with extensive academic and practitioner experience in the aid area, de Haan has a real talent for encapsulating large and complex topics in the span of a few pages and therefore manages to achieve near-comprehensive treatment within the covers of a modest-sized book. He is scrupulous in presenting all sides of an argument and succeeds in his desire to be as 'neutral' as possible on the many controversies surrounding the subject."

"In a field dominated by one-sided pro- or anti-aid polemics, Arjan de Haan adds some much-needed substance by setting out the nuts and bolts of how aid actually works. Although a practitioner himself, he summarizes the pitfalls and failures of aid as well as its successes. For any student considering a career in the aid industry, or merely writing an essay on it, this combination of literature review, analysis and hands-on experience provides an invaluable introduction."

"In a field littered with hyper-optimism and hyper-pessimism about aid as a weapon to end global poverty, this is a much welcome volume that goes beyond 'whether' aid works to help understand 'how' the aid industry works. Written by an insider, it tells us the complex realities of the development challenge and what external inputs can contribute as well as the perverse impacts they may have. These are insights that are essential to going beyond 'whether' aid works to how it can be made to work. This is a must read before anyone forms an opinion."

About the Author

Arjan de Haan has worked for the UK Department for International Development since 1998. He was social development adviser at DFID's headquarters in London, and in the programmes in India and China. During this period, he wrote on social policy and social protection, the role of migration in development, and social exclusion. During 2005-6 at the University of Guelph, he taught undergraduate courses in International Development, focusing on current aid practices. In April 2009, he joined the Institute of Social Social Studies in The Hague as Senior Lecturer, Social Policy.

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