

Abstract

## **Giving to Development**

### **Investigators**

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### **Aims and objectives of the research**

Although there are substantial literatures on giving to charities, there is little systematic analysis of giving to specific causes. Not enough is known on why people give to international development charities and about the characteristics of the donors. The research will draw on various disciplines (e.g. economics, psychology and marketing) to develop hypotheses about giving to development and will then test them with quantitative data.

### **Key research questions/hypotheses and methods**

Hypotheses include that income, occupation and education level favour giving to development as opposed to giving to other causes. Other hypotheses will be developed during the research, including through focus group discussions with donors and potential donors. Theory of giving will be extended and provided with a cause-specific focus. Three underused sources of quantitative data on inter-vivos donations and bequests at death will be used to test hypotheses and to analyse patterns of giving to UK development charities. These data measure total donations and legacies to each of a large number of named charities over a 25 year period, the donations made by a large sample of individuals to different causes recorded in survey data, and the legacies left to charities in a large sample of estates of the deceased.

### **Relation to the programme**

The research will:

- build theory in relation to non-governmental public action, leading to a better understanding of the processes which explain how the growth of support for international NGOs is one important response to a changing global situation;
- generate new empirical knowledge about giving to development through qualitative research of donor motives and through analysing several different types of quantitative data;
- strengthen the co-production of knowledge. The composition of the research team and consultants will result in better links between academia and the charity sector plus its advisers. By using charities' own data on long-term trends in their donation income and on the individual bequests they receive the research will

help international development charities better understand their supporter base and how to make the most of it.

### **Relevance of this research to user groups**

Researchers from different backgrounds (e.g. economics, psychology, and marketing) will gain a new perspective on giving by cause and specifically to development. Our coverage of giving through both inter-vivos donations and bequests will create a better understanding of giving over the long-term ('giving careers'), including at death.

Development charities will gain better analysis of their income from both inter-vivos donations and bequests, enabling better prediction of donations and bequests, and better targeting of donors. The research will also inform the whole charity sector through the comparison of trends in donations to development charities with those to charities serving other needs, together with the analysis of individual donor behaviour towards different causes and bequests by cause.

The present UK government has shown significant interest in supporting charity growth through fiscal and other policies to encouraging private donations. Some of this has had a specific focus on international causes (e.g. Millenium Gift Aid that predated the general Gift Aid scheme). Our research will inform government in design of future policies to stimulate giving to development and other causes.

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September 2005