

Institution: SOAS
Unit of Assessment: 24A Anthropology and Development Studies: Social Anthropology
Title of case study: Influencing development aid policy and practice (David Mosse)
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>A theme within Professor David Mosse's anthropological research focuses on the relationship between policy, practice and effects in international development. His field-based ethnographic research challenges assumptions about policy implementation and the nature of success and failure in aid programming. His novel approach to questions of policy analysis and policy change has been widely influential on thinking among policymakers and practitioners across a range of organisations, sectors and countries. It has enhanced the capacity for adaptive self-critical understanding of the aid process among practitioners and aid organisations, while also demonstrating the importance of researcher-practitioner engagement in improving the delivery of aid and development programmes.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Mosse joined the SOAS Department of Anthropology and Sociology in 1997 with a career that combined continuing ethnographic research in India with work for DFID (Overseas Development Administration), Oxfam as Representative for South India and other international development agencies as a social development adviser.</p> <p>The research discussed herein relates specifically to Mosse's body of work on participatory development and the ethnography of aid policy and practice undertaken since the 1990s. Central to this work is the development of concepts, methods and the application of anthropological analysis to international development programming.</p> <p><i>Cultivating Development: An Ethnography of Aid Policy and Practice</i> of 2005 (output a) addresses the complex relationship between policy intention and programme practice in development aid, the often unintended outcomes and the unexpected role of development models, expertise, and evaluation processes. It also offers close examination of the practice and effects of new participatory planning approaches in development, begun in earlier research, evidenced in output b. The research was undertaken over 12 years (1991-2003, both before and during Mosse's time at SOAS) through long-term involvement in and ethnographic study of rural development programmes in western India and international policy communities. Its impact has been felt most strongly since 2007-8.</p> <p>An important (although controversial) finding of the book was that the processes that make for 'good' and successful policy are not the same as those that make its implementation possible. Rather than a prescription for effective action, policy is primarily the means to enrol political and other supporters. Mosse demonstrates how the actions of development workers are actually shaped by the exigencies of organisations and the need to maintain relationships rather than by policy; but also how development actors at all levels work hardest to maintain coherent representations of their actions as instances of authorised policy. These findings are widely applicable in terms of rethinking the 'gap' between policy and practice, agency evaluations of programme success or failure, the social-institutional effects of policy change and understanding development impacts.</p> <p>Mosse further developed the implications of this research in two volumes and a journal special issue co-edited with David Lewis (outputs c, d and e), and a more recent sole-edited volume, <i>Adventures in Aidland</i> of 2011 (output f) in which he also analyses policy knowledge processes at the World Bank based on his work as the first anthropologist to hold a visiting fellowship in the Bank's research department (2003-4). The edited volumes bring together as contributors</p>

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anthropologists with professional experience in development to demonstrate across several instances how the ethnography of development can shed light on the disjuncture between policy and practice, and the critical role of brokers and translators in development. *The Aid Effect*, in particular, demonstrates that ethnographic insights are relevant not only for discrete projects across different sectors but also for the execution of macro-level frameworks for policy reform, poverty reduction and 'good governance; and *Adventures in Aidland* shows how the effectiveness of public policy knowledge is influenced by the manner in which it is embedded in institutional relationships and interests, and by the sociality of development professionals.

As a body of work this has contributed to critical awareness of policy and institutional processes in international development, demonstrating the ease with which cross-cultural interactions and their impacts can be misconceived by development policy frameworks including those explicitly promoting participatory approaches.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- a. 2005. *Cultivating Development: An Ethnography of Aid Policy and Practice*. London & Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press. (334 pp.).
2012. 'Una Etnografía de las políticas de la ayuda en la Práctica.' In Beatriz Perez Galan (ed.) *Antropolgia y desarrollo: discurso, practicas y actores*. Madrid: Catarata (Spanish translation of extracts of *Cultivating Development*. Chapter 1: pp. 1-14, Conclusion: pp. 240-3).
- b. 2001 'People's knowledge', participation and patronage: operations and representations in rural development. In Bill Cook & Uma Kothari (eds). *Participation – The New Tyranny?* London: Zed Press. pp. 16-35.
- c. 2006 (co-editor David Lewis) *Development Brokers and Translators. The Ethnography of Aid and Agencies*. Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press (288pp.).
- d. 2005 (co-editor David Lewis) *The Aid Effect: Giving and Governing in International Development*. London: Pluto Press. (232pp.).
- e. 2006 (co-author David Lewis) 'Encountering Order and Disjuncture: Contemporary Anthropological Perspectives on the Organisation of Development.' [Introduction to Special Issue]. *Oxford Development Studies*, 34 (1): 1-13
- f. 2011 (Editor) *Adventures in Aidland: The Anthropology of Professionals in International Development*. New York; Oxford: Berghahn Press. Volume 6, Studies in Public and Applied Anthropology (250pp.).

Outputs a and d were submitted to RAE 2008. Output f is submitted to REF 2014

Grant that supported the research:

2001: DFID Innovations Fund Research Grant, "Linking policy to livelihood changes through projects" £35,000.

Mosse was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in July 2013, and is on the editorial boards of *World Development*, *American Ethnologist* and *Journal of Development Studies*.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Mosse's work has been widely read and highly cited by international development agencies, both official and NGO, and has significantly contributed to major development programme planning and policy debate among these and other stakeholders. *Cultivating Development* in particular offers the

aid sector something unprecedented: a detailed, reflective insider analysis of longer-term processes of development interventions. The book has provided an analytical approach to policy and practice across fields ranging from community health to climate change, forestry reform to microfinance (evidenced in the span of the 765 Google citations). (1) The impact is not simply dissemination of anthropological research on institutional processes, but enabling development practitioners themselves to reflect in new ways on their own professional and institutional experiences.

Early impacts of Mosse's work through World Bank and DFID learning organisation seminars in 2002 and 2003 were extended and deepened in the post-publication current REF assessment period. In 2008, on the basis of *Cultivating Development's* contributions to better understanding community-driven approaches to development, Mosse was invited by the World Bank to spend a full month reviewing the work of its extensive (part DFID sponsored) Social Development programme in Indonesia, with a view to improving the new National Programme for Community Empowerment (PNPM), which had become pivotal to the government's national programme for poverty reduction.

More recently, his critical work on participatory development contributed significantly to the 2013 World Bank Policy Research Report "Localizing Development: Does Participation Work?," which cites Mosse and most often the arguments forwarded in *Cultivating Development* no less than 29 times. (2)

Further corroboration of significant impact on the World Bank is provided in a testimonial from Scott Guggenheim, a senior social policy specialist at the World Bank before becoming a senior social specialist for the Australian government, (3) and recently being seconded back to the World Bank, who has described *Cultivating Development* as:

"A superb book, one of those rarities that can change entire ways of thinking. David Mosse is the first social scientist in a generation who can successfully take cutting-edge insights from academic anthropology and use them to explain practical problems in development."

Guggenheim has further encouraged his own staff to read the book and applied its ideas to do team-based exercises at the organisations he has worked for:

"We used Dr. Mosse's writings to do a hands-on exercise of trying to distinguish what we needed to really make programs work from what we needed so that our head office and the government could approve them. The results were striking."

Even more significantly, Guggenheim writes:

"Dr. Mosse's work has been fundamental to the analytical framework that our team has been using to guide these [two] massive programs.... The Afghanistan program – it's called National Solidarity – is far and away the largest development program produced over the course of the international period there. It reaches 30,000 communities in every part of the country, has disbursed over US\$1.1 billion, and has been a foundation program for all of the donors hoping to help Afghanistan survive its difficult transition, including both the civilian and diplomatic wings of the British government. Reaching a total population of 90 million poor people spread over three time zones, the Indonesian program is even larger – it is the president of Indonesia's flagship poverty program and has been the fulcrum for how the Indonesian government has responded to both chronic crises such as the 2004 Aceh tsunami and to the difficult challenges of transition from a military to a democratic government."

In China (at the Beijing China Agricultural University) applied social scientists have sought to use Mosse's approach to develop policy-relevant analysis of development practice within China, and Chinese aid abroad. In 2008 Mosse was invited to run a development research workshop, to review programmes in Ningxia, Chengdu and Jiangxi. In 2013, he was invited to join the 8-person International Advisory Committee of the DFID-supported China International Development

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Research Network promoting knowledge-based policy development for Chinese development aid. Membership includes three of China's most powerful institutions providing policy advice directly to government: the Department of Development Aid, Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, Ministry of Commerce; The China Center for Contemporary World Studies, International Department of Central Committee of the Communist Party of China; and the Institute for International Strategic Studies, Party School of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. (4)

Mosse's research has generated significant discussion and debate internationally, in development circles and more broadly. A particularly notable recent instance appeared in the publication of conference proceedings in a double-page spread in a leading national daily newspaper in Senegal, *Wal Fadji L'Aurore*, which has a daily print circulation of 20,000. (5) Speaking about the shift in focus of anglophone anthropological studies of development away from how policy is applied to how it comes to be formulated in the first instance by international actors, French anthropologist Jean Copans contends :

“Un chercheur symbolise, selon nous, cette nouvelle perspective, David Mosse (...) En effet D. Mosse a rédigé ce qui est probablement l'ouvrage le plus abouti en la matière, dans la mesure où il couvre l'ensemble du spectre des études connues en matière de développement (...) Il est évident que cette enquête globale est tout à fait unique en son genre mais elle peut et doit servir de modèle ou d'inspiration pour justement recadrer et reconfigurer l'étude du développement de A à Z”. (‘For us, one researcher symbolises this perspective, David Mosse (...) Indeed, Mosse has written what is probably the most complete work on the subject (*Cultivating Development*), in the sense that it covers the whole spectrum of well-known studies in the field of development (...) It's clear that this comprehensive study is entirely unique in the genre but it can and should serve as a model or an inspiration for suitably redefining and reconfiguring the study of development from start to finish).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. Citation record for *Cultivating Development*:
<http://scholar.google.co.uk/citations?user=z2JajTkAAAJ&hl=en&oi=ao> [Most recently accessed 11.11.13].
2. Mansuri, Ghazala and Vijayendra Rao. 2013. *Localizing Development: Does Participation Work?*, World Bank Policy Research Report. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.
http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTRES/Resources/469232-1321568702932/8273725-1352313091329/PRR_Localizing_Development_full.pdf [Most recently accessed 11.11.13].
3. Dr Scott Guggenheim, World Bank
4. Correspondence and a brochure relating to the China International Development Research Network can be provided on request.
5. Copans, Jean. “Que veut dire le développement vu du Nord ou à partir du Nord?.” *Walfadji L'Aurore*, June 11, 2013.