Laudable Relations

Some Reflections on Working with International NGOs

Patrick Kilby

Abstract: Non-governmental organisations (NGOs), being values-based organisations pose a particular set of issues for academic researchers when working with them. NGOs often engage with universities to provide academic credibility to evaluate the effectiveness of their fieldwork. At the same time, they are nervous about two things: that the evaluation will shatter their belief, they are doing good work, rather than the outcome will always be lauded by some, loathed by others. The second fear is that the NGO being held accountable to donors for activities which are long term and slow in showing sustainable change. This article will draw on the literature as well as my own experiences to explore these issues. My key finding is that the farther away (geographically) from the work an NGO is, the greater in the self-belief of their work. The closer to the local communities NGOs are, they tend to have a tempered view of their work. The article will conclude with some reflections on how a more fruitful dialogue can occur between the two.

Keywords: consultancy, divergent expectations, evaluation, laudable parties, NGOs, research engagements

Having spent 20 years working with an international development non-governmental organisation (INGO) and another 20 years researching mostly the work of NGOs, two questions frequently occupy my mind. The first is the question Pontius Pilate asked of Jesus: '*Quid est veritas?*' (what is truth?), which has occupied philosopher minds since Plato and Aristotle. The second question is, what is the possible harm people if a more negative view was promoted through research? For example, a finding that approaches were not very effective and thus funding was wasted and future funding compromised: what research ethics call 'beneficence', that is, 'do no harm'. These two problems do not have easy answers, as they depend very much on the 'eye of the beholder' and (my favourite overused phrase) 'it depends' on the context. Related to this is the additional question of 'not rocking the boat' and framing the research into the expectations of those commissioning it for fear of not being invited back by the NGO and thus losing research contracts. This is a regular problem for research consultants, but increasingly so for those at universities as their research funding expands to sources outside the formal official government funding earmarked for universities. We see this on a daily basis in terms of government 'independent' reports into all sorts of policy matters. But these same pressures and expectations are across the board and are increasingly affecting universities as well.

This article will explore these problems and how they pan out in practice using examples from the author's own experiences, suitably anonymised to avoid identifying the agencies involved. One issue, which affects both of my dilemmas, is the 'gaps' between the various actors: local recipient communities; local NGOs; INGOs; as well as the various governments involved, both local and foreign. These 'gaps' can be geographic of course but also include

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gender, class, caste (in the case of India), and religion, among other things. This leads to information being interpreted through the lens of the researchers' and interlocutors' own worldviews, what Lissner, in relation to NGOs, calls their *weltanschauung* (Lissner 1977: 13). A simple and straightforward example is the term 'slum', which is usually perceived in a pejorative way as a place of poverty and even despair but never in the frame of low-cost housing. This inadequate interpretation of slums hides the vibrant economies in these living spaces, and both the range of occupations (white collar to blue collar, and more) and incomes that slum dwellers have. The idea of the 'peasant' also elicits certain views as to what the 'model' or modern rural person and family might look like and what their way of life should be. One can also see children as beggars in the same way and victims with little agency. I recall walking through a leafy well-off area of Mumbai and stopping to watch children playing cricket and laughing in the street. When they saw me, a white foreigner, they instantly transformed themselves into the most pathetic, crippled beggars: they were on lunch break! While I laughed at the time, it made me think about the stereotype of beggars. Most beggars are certainly exploited, and begging has a troubling dark side[1], but they are also what would now be called workers in the gig economy. The issue may be about occupational health and safety and worker rights rather than the occupation itself. The point is that the researcher and the NGO, or commissioning agency, and the local community, may have quite different views or even worldviews of the context, let alone the problems to be addressed. This is important as it throws up a series of questions about the nature of laudable relations between NGOs and academia. The next section will explore the literature on these questions and then look at a few case studies.

NGOs in Development

NGOs are a major focus of research in development, mainly because they are accessible for researchers more so than government and most international organisations (see Banks et al. 2015). This makes them a source of important case studies to highlight the issues that arise from these 'laudable relations' that NGOs develop with academia. By way of an overview for this article, NGOs in this context are a small subset of the vast array of the voluntary organisations that inhabit the community space in most places. They are those that are involved in development activities both local and international. India is said to have three million NGOs, or roughly three NGOs for every village (Deo 2019). A quick chat with most village leaders on what associations or societies are present in their village will lead you to believe that the three million often cited may be an understatement: there are religious groups, cultural groups, social groups, sporting groups (even the most remote villages in India seem to have a cricket team), and they can qualify as being an NGO as they are registered as an association, so they can have a bank account to take their small membership fees and pay what bills they have.

The development space is a subset of these registered associations or, for the very large ones, are registered as a not-for-profit company. Development NGOs both national and international are involved in the socio-economic advancement of a community or a broader population. Of course such a definition hides a vast complexity, which I won't go into here. National development NGOs are probably no more than one or two percent of the broader NGO cohort in a country, but their advantage is that they can mobilise far greater levels of resources, either locally from government or internationally (from government or private sources), than their village counterparts. It is these development NGOs that this article is concerned with as well as, the very real issue of who pays the piper calls the tune and the gaps this creates with local communities (Wendel 2018). As Banks found, 'the ability of NGOs to meet their long-term transformative goals remains undermined by their weak roots in civil society and by a rising tide of technocracy and professionalization that has swept through the world of foreign aid' (2021: 675). This 'rising tide' reaches down to even very local NGOs.

Researching NGOs in Development

NGOs are a favourite topic in research into global development, but like any research, access is key, and this access is through or via NGO gatekeepers in much the same way that corporations limit access to company secrets. Alvesalo and White's paper on researching the powerful resonates in much the same way with NGOs (2018). Even when access might be available, the next questions are, what sort of access, and how fickle it might be? I remember some years ago researching an INGO on gender policy and interviewing staff at a number of INGOs. One such NGO was probably less than careful in managing the access, and upon reading the report of what a staff person said, made threatening noises if their case study was not withdrawn. Only after reassurances that nothing particularly damaging would be published, anything quoted would not be identified if they did not want to be, and not being in the research may be worse than if they were, did they relent (Kilby and Crawford 2011).

In a major piece of research on this phenomenon, Brass, Longhofer, Robinson, and Schnable took three thousand research papers on NGOs over the last 35 years and had a close look at a 10 per cent random sample (three hundred papers) to assess not so much the role:

> NGOs have had (or not had) on development, [but] calling attention instead to their dependency on donors, fragile roots in civil society, and technocratic approaches to complex developmental challenges. (Brass et al. 2018: 137)

A couple of observations from Brass and her colleagues stand out: the first is that around one-third of second or third authors of these academic articles were employees or were directly funded by the NGO being studied, and one-third were not academics (ibid.: 140). Of course, this latter point is not a problem if the authors were from the communities being researched, but more likely these authors were consultants who were undertaking the research as part of other work for the NGO, such as an evaluation, which begs the question of impartiality. The second stand out from this research is the knowledge gap, where papers from authors from institutions in the Global South were poorly represented, suggesting a privileging of the Northern view of development in the Global South:

> These articles demonstrates the ways that NGOs reinforce or reify existing power imbalances at the local, national or international level, and in that way, somewhat mitigate the findings about positive effects of NGOs on target populations. (Brass et al. 2018:143)

As the editor of a journal that favours papers from the Global South, it is clear to me that these authors often face institutional barriers in terms of access to resources libraries and more, and additional time is required to support them to bring their papers up to a publishable standard, something most journals will not invest in. What emerges from these accounts is that the story is not being told from the perspective of those most affected, the recipient community, but rather intermediaries whose livelihoods may depend on the positive impression being given. Even if the local communities' voices are notionally included, invariably there are power differences, which privilege some voices and even some locations. Robert Chambers refers to the 'main road biases', where more accessible communities and people are accessed, rather than those from more marginal and remote areas (Chambers 1983). There are fewer studies from poorer and more remote areas. English-language speaking respondents will likewise be privileged, and larger NGOs are invariably chosen (e.g. BRAC Bangladesh and SEWA India), rather than smaller local NGOs (see Kilby 2011). 'Research has a tendency to be based on small samples of (typically the largest) NGOs, within one country or internationally. Within such an approach, we lack knowledge on diversity and scale within the sector' (Banks 2021: 672), and any access will have implicit and explicit contracts not to be too critical of their work.

The other issue also along the same lines is the privileging that Northern NGOs have in advocacy over their Southern counterparts. They often act as an intermediary to filter the story to Northern donors or policymakers, who then feed it back to their in-country counterparts in a weird circle.

> Given that such partners are typically Northern NGOs, this is particularly problematic: by defining transnational advocacy as advocacy using international partners, scholars risk perpetuating or reinforcing the belief that Southern empowerment requires Northern altruism. (Pallas and Nguyen 2018: 163)

In the Pallas and Nguyen case, the Northern NGOs let the Southern, in this case, local Vietnamese NGO take the lead, mainly because they were more afraid of sanctions from the Vietnamese government, rather than following the principle of Southern voices leading.

The other question worth asking is whether there is something inherent in an NGO that makes them effective. Usmani, Jeuland, and Pattanayak argue that generally, this is not so, noting that an NGO may be very effective in one area, but when the work is applied or moved to a 'new settings in which their stock of social capital is low' is less effective (2018: 4). They found that it is the exposure to NGOs over time that leads to behaviour change, not necessarily because it is an NGO programme. When trust is established, the transactional costs in persuading a local community of the merits of a programme are much lower than that of an outsider coming in to do the persuading. A government programme with the same sort of long-term engagement that an NGO has would probably come up with the same results.

There is also a power hierarchy that confounds those seeking more open reporting and accountability (Yang 2022). As van Zyl and Claeyé point out as, 'the donor has power over the NGO through asymmetries in resources, so the NGO has power over its beneficiaries' (2019: 611). On top of this, in many countries NGOs are major employers within communities, so there is a clear disincentive along ladder of institutional hierarchy (donor, to NGO, to community) not to rock the boat, with too much 'open and honest' reporting. As Banks puts it: 'these influences—both from donor governments and governments in countries of operation—vastly restrict the ability of NGOs to seek more radical, political action and change (2021: 677). The other issue is that the power hierarchy means NGO staff tend not to engage with the community on its needs as much as they probably should (Kilby 2011). Rather they spend time on routine tasks, such as collecting microfinance repayments, distributing grant items, and so on. When I once suggested that local staff should enquire about community needs and issues, they said they did not have time for such in-depth conversations. When I suggested they have these conversations at the beginning of the meeting and do the routine tasks at the end, they were quite dismissive. The priority was not to listen, despite being well versed in the rhetoric of participation, as listening probably involves more work for the staff, and they are being accountable, albeit in a small way.

For NGOs the period since the 1970s has been described by some as a boon for them, fuelled by newly emerging (from colonialism) Southern states and their own civil society groups, and a strong reaction to the fundamental injustices that were inherent in decolonisation, where in many, if not most, cases full independence was a mirage. Marberg explains it as:

> the inability of western states meet growing social welfare costs; the effects of the oil crisis in early 1970s and economic recession in the early 1980s on developing countries; increased environmental concerns; and the failure of socialism that was evidenced economic regression in the mid-technological advances in communication and an economic boom in the 1960s and early 1970s that created middle class leadership in developing countries that would help establish non-profit organizations in their countries. (Marberg et al. 2016: 2742)

This has also led to a 'taken-for-granted-ness' as NGOs immersed themselves in a community's psyche, and so 'when an organization reaches taken-for-grantedness it is less likely for scrutiny on its right to exists' (ibid.: 2738). The level of taken-for-grantedness comes down to the time these NGOs spend in the community. This can even expand at times to a national and international level. The Red Cross at a global level is generally seen as beyond reproach even when, from time to time, it sacrifices reporting atrocities for access and so does not tell the world about important events (Bradley 2020; Steinacher 2017).

In Bangladesh, the NGO BRAC (originally the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee), by some measures the world's largest NGO with tens of thousands of staff, and nationwide health, credit, and education programmes aimed at the poor, has a taken-for-grantedness that makes it largely immune to criticism. What critiques there are range from the high levels of control over women they engage with that is more empowering than disempowering to doing cosy deals with governments both domestic and international (Haque 2020; Nazneen 2007).

Some Case Studies

In this next section, I will explore with some case studies the dilemmas of working with NGOs and the differing expectations. The first case is from what I will call a small semi-arid African country[2] and relates to an over-zealous junior donor government official on their first visit to Africa, where impressions, expectations, and their self-perceived authority, can distort views, and what information emerges, meditated along the power hierarchies (donor to, NGO, to partner, etc.) outlined earlier.

Semi-Arid Agriculture in an HIV/AIDS Context

In this case, it was an HIV support project to engage people living with HIV to be economically active in micro-scale irrigation from small soaks of water from springs on the land from which they could garden. But first some context: the project was one of those projects responding to the HIV/AIDS crisis in the early 2000s by targeting vulnerable households, in this case, female-headed households; grandparent-headed households; households with orphans or vulnerable children; and people living with HIV so they can be economically active. At the time it was hard to directly target people living with AIDS, as many were unwilling to disclose their HIV status due to stigma and related privacy issues, and the prevalence of anti-retroviral drugs meant that few people were exhibiting symptoms, despite being HIV positive.

I became involved in the project after a report from the aforementioned donor government official, following a two-hour visit to the project, where he asserted in a brief report that the project was not meeting its aims and mistargeting the intended beneficiaries. I was commissioned to do an evaluation of the project on the basis of the 'issues' the donor government had with the project, which alarmed the head office of the INGO, responsible to its local partner for its implementation. The local partner staff, who thought the project had been going very well, were not consulted about the report, and were fairly defensive about what had happened and the perceived failings on their part.

Over a three-year period, the project provided material support and advice on growing vegetables to supplement the maize crop and also to provide higher-yielding varieties of maize to expand production for vulnerable communities. At the time of the evaluation, there were few cases of AIDS, and our visit followed a bad year in which many crops failed. The evaluation was designed to be comprehensive, so I and a senior staff from the INGO head office headed off for a two-week close examination of the project. After a lukewarm reception by the local partner in the country's capital, we reassured them that we were not there to 'do a job' on them, after which they were cooperative, and in the end, the evaluation was more comprehensive than originally planned. After a couple of days of getting a full background on the project, we headed to the field site, around a couple of hours from the capital mostly on poor roads, and spent four days training a 25-strong volunteer survey team who surveyed over three hundred households, being 40 per cent of the recipient population. In addition, we also had a focus group discussion with nine support groups for the over one hundred people living with HIV across two district wards. These groups covered community AIDS prevention, people living with AIDS, and volunteer agricultural support and extension groups.

What become clear from the survey was that the issue in this area was not land per se but labour and inputs to be able to eke out a living in this marginal area, which is what the project provided. This misunderstanding by the donor official that this key issue was probably the basis of their earlier criticism. This project provided scarce inputs that yielded quite quick results over the few years it was being implemented. The evaluation team came to the view that the perceived mistargeting in which wealthier households received inputs was based on a quick conversation with the donor official that could be better explained by people using the increased income the project delivered to improve their living conditions. Of course, this begs the question as to whether the donor official was expecting to see a failure and was surprised with seeing success. In another example, the official's report criticised households with AIDS orphans not otherwise fitting the criteria as being poorer. As I noted at the time, orphans tend to be treated worse than other family members, including not sending them to school in favour of herding cattle if they are boys and other domestic duties if they are girls. My report noted: 'If their households receive no benefits there is a real danger of them being more marginalised within the household'. This is an example of where strict adherence to guidelines can lead to perverse and more harmful outcomes.

The other piece of advice from the donor and supported by the INGO head office was to suggest that the community be encouraged to move away from maize as a staple, given the marginal environment in which it was grown. As I noted in my report, moving away from established food staples is a fraught process in any society and has little if any record of success anywhere (Ekpa 2018; Kilby 2019). Local communities are best placed to determine the best food crops for their particular context, and the focus of external support should be to improve existing systems, a lesson that aid donors across the board seem to have trouble learning (Gliessman 2020). Another piece of advice that seemed to be following government ideology was a suggestion of a fully private supplier of agricultural inputs, the basis of the failed African Green Revolution is unrealistic (Kilby 2019). In remote areas, the transport costs and relatively small markets work against anybody wishing to set up shop, and such a supplier would have to be heavily subsidised. The whole idea of private suppliers in the agriculture sector across Africa and elsewhere is unworkable, and having resource transfers from urban wealthy to poor rural areas is a necessary reality if food security is to be achieved and rural–urban migration slowed.

In the end, the INGO at head office was conflicted: on the one hand, it had to accept the evidence we presented, given their own staff were on the team, but on the other hand, it was loath to publicise it as it contradicted the narrative put about by the donor that seemed to suggest these sorts of projects are doomed to failure and the work was somehow manipulated to create a good impression. What was at issue was that the solution lies in local processes, which foreign donors don't like to hear. Donors prefer a private or technological fix, which as the evidence suggests, generally do not work as poor and marginalised people cannot afford such technology on a sustainable basis, and national governments are discouraged from subsidising agriculture and food security, despite such subsidies being a norm in the United States and Europe.

In terms of laudable relations, this case study reflected the issue of the researcher (myself) wishing to support the agency against the tensions between the INGO head office and the local partner. The evidence found that the project was quite successful, but that partner was rightfully aggrieved by some ill-thought through and possibly intemperate observation by a junior government official on a two-hour visit. There was an exercise of power going on here, but in the end what suffered was the relationships between the head office of the INGO and its local partner. The idea that relationships with the donor must be preserved at all costs and our report probably did not help. There is also a certain acquiescence to the funder's view regardless of how misguided it may be.

Family Violence and Religion in Small Island States

My second case study is about the use of religion and religious texts to reduce family violence in the Solomon Islands. The project involved a training programme for religious leaders to teach their congregations about the scriptural basis for opposing family violence and how they can be involved not only in their preaching but also in the pastoral role they have (Rotunda et al. 2004). This is a more complicated proposition, as locally, the religious leaders have been preaching gendered norms and expectations of men and women with an emphasis on obedience of the wife to her husband. Most religions are based on patriarchal relations often enforced by the threat of violence (hellfire) in the afterlife if not in the present. So for many, preaching against the basis for patriarchal control goes against the grain. Dabby and Poore (2007) have linked this back to the patriarchy and the argument that it is up to the various religions to actively address this.

> This defence of the culture of a place, country, religion, etc., is in fact a defence of the culture of patriarchy in that country, religion, identity; and the culture of violence everywhere. (Dabby and Poore 2007: 4)

Nason-Clarke (2020) goes on to argue that family violence and religion is a specific case, given the depth of trust in religions that preach ideals such as obedience and family values, such that the options for women in terms of leaving or seeking help outside of the pastoral context is quite limited, as it would imply a breach of trust in the religion itself.

The idea of religious leaders providing a path to social and behavioural change is seen as an important opportunity, and it has even been referred to as Channels of Hope, originally conceived as a response to the HIV/AIDS crisis in Africa and later adapted to deal with family violence (Landman 2014). The two central issues, however, which this project ran into, is that behavioural change is a slow process and not suited to the three- or five-year time frame of a development project; and the second, was that many if not most, church leaders and pastors do not see family violence as an issue in their parishes or particularly their concern (Williams and Jenkins 2019). Similarly, women parishioners are reluctant to raise issues with their pastors, as they feel it may damage the myth of the church and 'happy families' and bring shame to themselves and their church. There still is a widespread under-reporting of family violence cases, and the excuse from pastors that they need training doesn't hold up, when in fact they may be just avoiding the issue or, dare I say, condoning it (McMullin 2013). Fowley, Faulkner, Learman, and Runnels (2011) found that as few as four per cent of Christian Church congregations in the United States provide gender-based violence (GBV) services.

This brings me to the case at hand. Some years ago, a colleague and I were invited by an INGO to undertake a piece of academic research for a 'before and after' study of a multi-year training programme on GBV in the Solomon Islands. The plan was that we would do a baseline study in a handful of communities and then return three years later after a training programme to pastors and priests to do a follow-up survey and look at the changes that occurred as a result of the training. At the time we pointed out that behavioural change is unlikely to show any discernible difference in behaviours in that short period of time, which resulted in tension emerging and suggestions that we had consulted the 'wrong' literature. Nevertheless, we went ahead and did a baseline survey across a number of communities overseen by junior staff members from the INGO and made a baseline report. Pointing to our scepticism of the methodology chosen and the short time frame of the project to achieve results, the INGO, probably being fearful we would not produce a positive report, sacked us from the project, and from what I understood, the second phase from the head office did not go ahead.

We were therefore quite surprised when a couple of years later the Solomon Islands local partner of the

INGO contacted us and asked if we could do the part two follow up. Naturally, we were still sceptical of the purpose of this renewed interest in the research but were assured that the local NGO was less interested in seeing a tangible change and more interested in having an understanding of the response to the training and whether it made an impact with those trained. They also asked if we could suggest a way forward, towards some more tangible longer-term outcomes of the training and an improved basis for an expansion of the programme.

The follow-up research went well with a household survey, focus groups, and key informant interviews being conducted over a couple of weeks. Following a similar model to the previously discussed African case study, we jointly developed a questionnaire with the team. In this case, it also included an innovative way for obtaining a random sample of three hundred households that were located in informal or peri-urban settlements. The research found that while the incidence of family violence had not appreciably changed, since the training three years earlier, what had happened was that the level of awareness of the issue around family violence such as understanding women's rights, the nature of 'obedience' and the like, the majority of the participants had a greater knowledge of these issues: a first step to behavioural change. The research also found that religious leaders had to improve on their messaging on what to do when cases come to them: whether to forgive the perpetrator and go back to the violent family member, or to seek further support and other options (Kilby and Wu 2017; World Vision Solomon Islands 2015). In line with the US research (e.g. Fowler et al. 2011), this messaging was quite variable and the biggest challenge the project faced across the various churches.

Like the African case in this article, the Solomon Islands NGO had an almost different world view to that of the Northern INGO partner. While addressing the issue of family violence is an important issue, and one that was taken up by the INGO, there was a view by the INGO that 'success' was important and that critical approaches to get to the bottom of the issue and unpack the complexity would only complicate the story. Their focus was on the training model and an almost ingrained belief that it would work, so any healthy scepticism was not part of the story. The other key element was that the training was a one-off (often to junior staff and pastors) with limited if any follow-up.

The local NGO, on the other hand, also wanted to show success, but they also knew that would only come through a continued ongoing relationship with the community, including the religious community in addressing these issues. The issue of family violence was also front and centre for the government and other NGOs in the country. Unlike the earlier case, there was no discussion between the INGO and the local partner and, to all intents and purposes, acted quite independently of each other. In both cases, however, there may have been an almost unconscious desire of the INGO to become involved, but in both cases, it was not successful even if they may not have seen it that way at the time. But it was clear that the work was more effective when the interventions were field-driven from the local NGO partners.

Some Reflection on Laudable Relations

These two case studies raise an interesting distinction between NGO research and the inherent 'laudable relations'. Here I reflect on a different and perhaps less common aspect of academics doing research work for NGOs. In this case, it is not evaluation work given the increased credibility of having university or university researchers undertaking it and the ethical dilemmas inherent in that, but in this case, the academic researcher was directly or indirectly asked to mediate tensions between partner NGO, and their head offices on how have not navigated fickle and capricious donors. Wyeth noted the following:

> Despite the laudable commitments made since 2005, a recent independent evaluation of the Paris Declaration concluded that partner governments have come further in implementing the Paris commitments than donors, with the least progress made on managing for development results and mutual accountability. (2012: 11)

Wyeth could have been talking about NGOs as much as governments. Where the local NGO seems to be engaged far more in the principles of good development practice than the INGO its 'senior' partner. The issue of 'diverting time and energy away from their members in order to satisfy back-donor demands and interests' (Vlaminck and Huyse 2022: 158) was certainly the issue in both case studies discussed in this article. In the African case, to protect the reputation of the INGO, and in the Solomon Island case, for the local partner to access further resources: 'when this aid is channelled through partners with a mission agenda, it can in praxis be hard to distinguish between a humanitarian agent and a missionary of faith' (Tønnessen 2007: 339). In the Solomon Islands case, while the 'missionary of faith' was a clear consideration, it was rationalised as being aimed at the majority community and could hardly be said to be about a particular religious aim. Nevertheless it may have been seen by secular NGOs as being part of broader religious agenda. In this case, these can be irreconcilable worldviews, just like if I go to India and am asked about my religion, the answer of having 'no religion' is seen as an absurd answer, much like saying the earth is flat.

Dr. Patrick Kilby is an associate professor and editor in chief of the journal *Development in Practice*. His research interests are: NGOs and NGO accountability; gender and development; managing international development programmes; and women's labour migration. He has published four sole-authored books on NGOs one dealing with women's empowerment and Indian NGOs (2011), a history of the Australian Council for International Development (2015), gender and the Green Revolution (2019), and the role of Philanthropic Foundations in Development (2021). In 2018, he took up a Fulbright Senior Scholars Fellowship at Kansas State University looking at the history of the Green Revolution and also to advise K-State on how to improve women's engagement in their agriculture research in developing countries. In 2019 he examined the role of philanthropic foundations, such as those of Rockefeller, Ford, and Gates, in the foreign aid space, in 2020 UN agencies such as UNCTAD and others, and in 2021 and 2022 is part of a British Aid project with IFPRI looking at women migration from Bangladesh and Nepal to Lebanon and Jordan. He also works with ACIAR looking at gender analysis in their agricultural research portfolio. In 2022 he was elected as secretary of the Development Studies Association of Australia.

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Notes

1. For a picture of the dark side of begging and slum life, see the Mira Nair 1988 film *Salaam Bombay* (child prostitution) and Loveleen Tandan and Danny Boyles' 2008 film *Slumdog Millionaire* (child mutilation). The Mira Nair's 2016 film *Queen of Katwe* is a more positive view on slum life in Kampala.
2. I will keep this intentionally vague to avoid identifying the NGOs concerned.