

Problems and challenges that Faiths bring to economic development

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Why secular governments and development agencies react negatively towards Faiths being involved in development?

Development agencies:

World Bank

CIDA

AusIDA

SIDA

DIDA

JIDA

Problems and challenges...

- Religion is viewed by many in the secular development world as potentially divisive and political.
- They are competing for followers, competing for resources, or contributing to conflicts within society.
- **Why reaction?** The international financial organizations are explicitly required to avoid involvement in internal political affairs of countries.

Problems and challenges...

- In the secular development world, religion has been seen as being counter to modernization and counter to the kinds of developments that are being promoted.
- They are supporting the continuation of traditional societal structures.
- They are not supporting the kind of universal rights that underpin the development world.

Problems and challenges...

- Rights of women and religious minorities
- They (Vatican and Muslims) hesitate to engage women because their view is colored by the tensions that have been generated around these specific issues involving reproductive health rights and the broader rights of women.
- They hesitate to have any engagement with other religious organizations.

Problems and challenges...

- Religion is basically defunct or not very relevant in our present society.
- Religion with modernization becomes less important.
- Religion is essentially a lower priority than other areas.

Problems and challenges...

- A further complex issue is that some people in the development world see the emphasis in faith communities on miracles and faith, in contrast to a work ethic, as a challenge for development.
- Development agencies are interested in actual work rather than waiting for miracles to happen. (Israel, Iran)

Problems and challenges...

- **According to Katherine Marshall**
‘Many in the development world have a stereotyped view of what faith means in faith organizations. They believe it is essentially about preaching and services and sometimes about the old opiate-of-the-masses-types of argument.’

(Katherine Marshall : Director, Development Dialogue on Values and Ethics, the World Bank)

Problems and challenges...

- **Development organizations are profoundly evidence-based, they are pragmatic and very much shaped by experiences and by data. Whereas the tradition within Faith communities is not to focus as much on evidence. They tend to extrapolate from a theological perspective as opposed to what is actually seen and can be demonstrated.**

Problems and challenges...

- Policy and knowledge approach are as important as money in bringing about change.
- World Bank: But the areas of major discordance are more about what it is that faith organisations are trying to do, whether there is the capacity to do it and whether there is sufficient evaluation of what has happened. Those are the major areas where action is needed more than simply trying to serve as a channel or to provide funds to specific organizations.

Thank you

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