

# I/O Psychology and Poverty Reduction: Putting Ideas into Practice

By Ishbel McWha

School of Psychology  
Massey University  
Auckland, New Zealand  
<http://poverty.massey.ac.nz>  
[ishbel@mcwha.org](mailto:ishbel@mcwha.org)

Poverty Research Group 



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# Presentation Overview



- Two avenues for getting involved in development:
  - I/O in the field:
    - India
    - Cambodia
    - The organisations, my roles, how I/O fitted
  - I/O in poverty research:
    - Project ADDUP
    - My PhD research
- Both avenues valuable and both necessary





- The organisation:
  - A small NGO running mainly on the goodwill of volunteers
  - Receiving project funding from local government and Unicef
- My role: ‘Programme Officer’
  - **Create and implement** new projects (including budgets, and recruitment and training of staff) and **monitor and evaluate** current projects
  - Identify sources of funding, and **write proposals** to obtain it
  - Facilitate **organisational networks** with donor agencies, local and international NGOs, government, the local business community, and local community members
  - Raise the profile of the organisation through various **marketing** techniques

# How did I/O fit?



- Within organisation:
  - Performance evaluation, job analysis, recruitment/selection, training, organisational development, marketing
- Within community:
  - Training needs analysis
- In general:
  - Negotiating, networking (relationship management), report writing

# Cambodia



- The organisation:
  - Approx 60 staff
  - Four sites across country, plus head office in Phnom Penh
  - Funded by numerous major international NGOs
  - Recent localisation experience, no expats left
  - Staff had the skills but lacked the confidence
- My role: 'Programme Advisor'
  - Strengthen the capacity of the Programme Team by advising on, and assisting with, **programme design, implementation, evaluation and management.**
  - Provide advice to the Executive Director on **strategic planning and policy** issues.
  - Advise on methods for improving **workplace practices and communication.**
  - Provide formal and informal programme management **training.**
  - **Liaise** with current and potential international donors.

# How did I/O fit?



- Within organisation:
  - Staff training/mentoring on programme management – formal and informal (capacity development)
  - Organisational Development (strategic planning/policy development)
  - Improving workplace practices and communication (both internally and with donors)
  - Change management/organisational climate (post localisation)
- Within community:
  - Training needs analysis
- In general:
  - Implications of being ‘Advisor’ – support not control or manage

# But... how do you find these types of development positions?



- Volunteering is a good option
  - Various sending organisations (country specific)
  - AIESEC for students ([www.aiesec.org](http://www.aiesec.org))
- You won't find an ad for a volunteer I/O Psychologist
  - try management advisor/assistant, programme advisor/assistant, some HR positions
- Understand how I/O tools could potentially contribute before you start, but always remain flexible to the needs of the organisation

# Second Avenue: Research/Academia



- Very different to working in-country
  - Distant relationship to end-users
  - Reliance on technology
  - Difficult to fully grasp country context
- Two roles:
  - Project ADDUP
  - PhD





- Are Development Discrepancies Undermining Performance?
- What is the impact of pay diversity on the performance of aid workers?
- Interdisciplinary, but I/O psychology lead
- A research team across 10 countries, with six sites
  - Oceania: Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands
  - Africa: Malawi, Uganda
  - Asia: India, China
- Government, business, education and aid organisations ( $N=1290$ )



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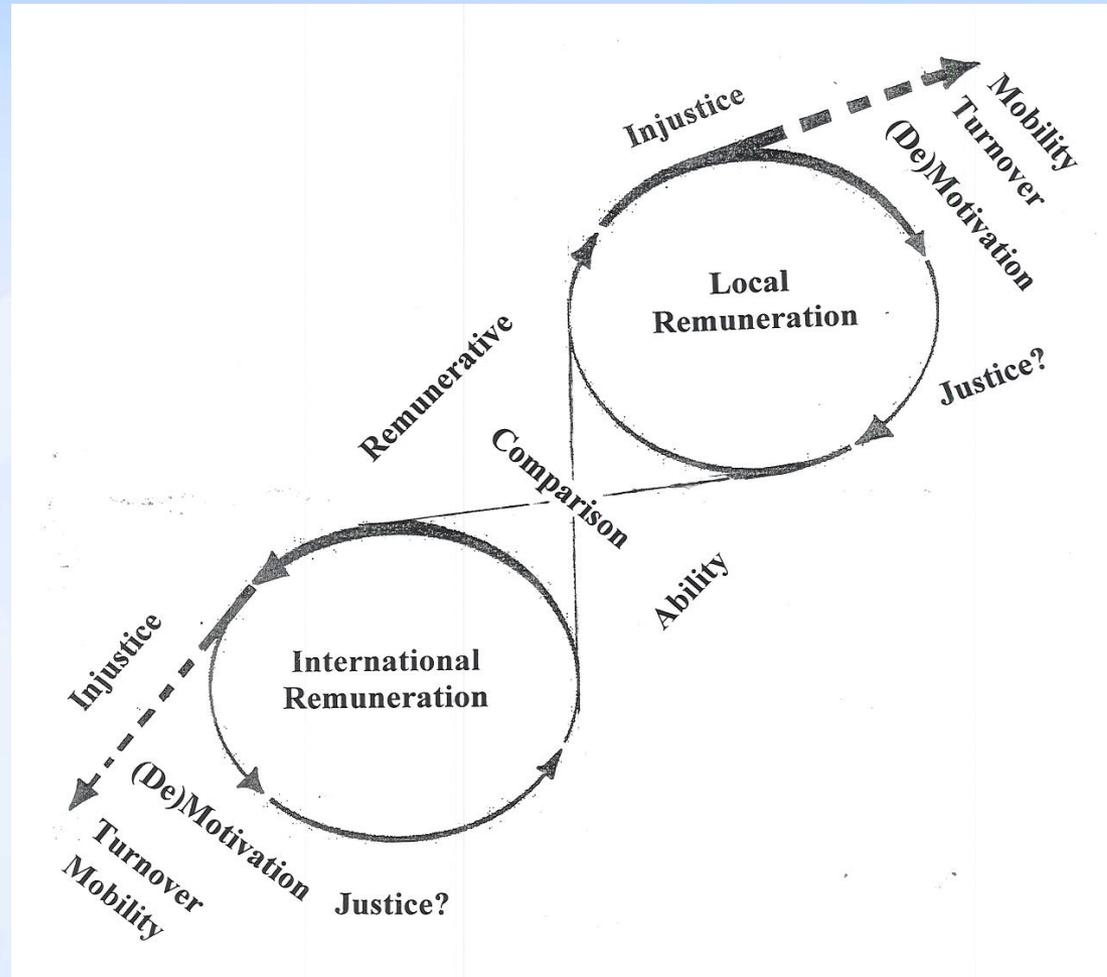
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# Project ADDUP: Variables



- Self-reported pay and benefits
- Self-assessed ability
- Pay comparison
- Feelings of pay justice
- Pay de-motivation
- Thinking about turnover
- Thinking about international mobility
- Job satisfaction/Work engagement
- Covariates: culture shock, cultural values, social desirability, personality, education, sex

# Model of Double Demotivation



Source: adapted and modified from MacLachlan, M., & Carr, S.C. (2005). The human dynamics of aid. *OECD Policy Insights*, 10.

# Project ADDUP: Findings



- Pay disparities exist
  - Overall pay ratio: 4:1 (ranged from 10:1 in SI and 8.5:1 in PNG to 2:1 in China)
  - Some difference in pay was tolerated (2-3:1) but actual ratio exceeded this
  - Pay sufficient to meet everyday needs?
    - Local workers: 80% said No (Oceania and Africa, 29% in Asia)
    - Expat workers: 81% said Yes

# Impact on Variables?



- Local workers:
  - Undertook more pay comparison
  - Experienced feelings of injustice
  - Were de-motivated by pay differences
- International workers were largely unaware of the impact of their higher pay on their colleagues
- Neither were thinking about turnover or mobility, though international workers were more emphatically not thinking about it
- Organisation plays a moderating role (climate)

# An extension: Relationships



- My PhD:
  - How do pay disparities impact on relationships between aid workers?
- Brief findings:
  - Good relationships essential for development
  - Relationships correlated with job satisfaction, pay justice, motivation and learning
  - Workers were positioned into categories, informed by pay and underpinned by power
  - Categorisation (and thus pay) creates barriers between groups, impeding relationships

# Summary



- Pay differences are prevalent
- Workers (especially locals) compare their pay and ability with colleagues
- Pay disparities lead to feelings of injustice and de-motivation amongst local workers
- Pay disparities may impede relationships
- In all, pay disparities have the potential to undermine poverty reduction initiatives within development organisations themselves, before they even reach the community



Research like this helps understand the dynamics within aid organisations, informs theory, and potentially improves the effectiveness of aid organisations...

...using I/O psychology!



# Thank you – any questions?



- Contact me: [ishbel@mcwha.org](mailto:ishbel@mcwha.org)

- Useful links:

- <http://poverty.massey.ac.nz>
- [www.aiesec.org](http://www.aiesec.org)

- Papers:

- Carr, S.C., McWha, I., MacLachlan, M., & Furnham, A. (Eds.). (2010). *International Journal of Psychology: Special Section on Psychology and Poverty Reduction*, in press. (A section of 6 papers about Project ADDUP)
- McWha, I. (2010). The roles of, and relationships between, expatriates, volunteers, and local development workers. *Development in Practice*, in press.
- MacLachlan, M., & Carr, S.C. (2005). The human dynamics of aid. *OECD Policy Insights*, 10

