



# **Cultivating Development: An Ethnography of Aid Policy and Practice (Anthropology, Culture and Society)**

*David Mosse*

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'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. ... For anyone interested in development, "Cultivating Development" is a do-not-miss experience.' Scott Guggenheim, Lead Social Scientist, The World Bank

'[Mosse's] provocative thesis challenges the received wisdom of that world and compels us to examine afresh the politics and ethics of engaging with development. Amid the profusion of literature in this field, this book stands apart as an insider's account that is consistently critical yet steadfast in respecting its subjects. Highly recommended.' Amita Baviskar, Visiting Professor, Department of Cultural and Social Anthropology, Stanford University

Development agencies and researchers are preoccupied with policy; with exerting influence over policy, linking research to policy and with implementing policy around the world.

But what if development practice is not driven by policy? Suppose that the things that make for 'good policy' - policy that legitimises and mobilises political support - in reality make it impossible to implement?

By focusing in detail on the unfolding activities of a development project in western India over more than ten years, as it falls under different policy regimes, this book takes a close look at the relationship between policy and practice in development.

David Mosse shows how the actions of development workers are shaped by the exigencies of organisations and the need to maintain relationships rather than by policy; but also that development actors work hardest of all to maintain coherent representations of their actions as instances of authorised policy. Raising unfamiliar questions, Mosse provides a rare self-critical reflection on practice, while refusing to endorse current post-modern dismissal of development.

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