

## Robert Ian McAllister

Professor (semi-retired)

MA, Dip. Econ. Dev. (Oxford); MA (Cambridge), LL.D (hon)(Dalhousie)

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**Email**     [ian.mcallister@dal.ca](mailto:ian.mcallister@dal.ca)

**Phone**     (902) 494-6993 (office)

### Profile

Ian McAllister continues to combine writing, teaching, periodic government and NGO advisory roles with occasional forays as a consultant in the private sector.

### Writing

Many of Ian's professional interests are reflected in the books and articles he has written and/or edited. These include:

#### (Books)

- *Regional Development and the European Community: A Canadian Perspective*. Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1982.
- *Projects for Relief and Development*. Geneva: Henry Dunant Institute, 1991 (also in Spanish and French).
- *Management for Development*. (co-author with Tom Kent). New York: University Press of America, 1985.
- *Sustaining Relief with Development: Strategic Issues for the Red Cross and Red Crescent*. Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1993.
- *Working with Neighbours: Universities as Partners in International Development*. Ottawa: Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, 1996.
- *Through a Glass Darkly: From Disaster Relief to Modern Peacebuilding*. Cornwallis Park: Canadian Peacekeeping Press, 2002 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 2004).
- *The University as a Partner in Regional and International Development: Some Canadian Perspectives*. Pittsburg: Dorrance, 2015.
- *Projects in Search of Relief with Development*. New York: Linus Learning, 2016.

#### (Edited Books)

- *Newfoundland and Labrador: The First Fifteen Years of Confederation*. (ed.). St. John's: Dicks and Co., 1965.
- *Six International Development Projects*. (ed.), Halifax: Centre for Development Projects, Dalhousie University, 1982.
- *Windows on the World*. (ed.), Halifax: Pearson Institute, Dalhousie University, 1993 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1994).
- *Working with the Region: Universities as Partners in Regional Development*. (ed.). Halifax: Henson College, Dalhousie University, 1997.

- *The Future of Ocean Governance and Capacity Development: [Essays in Honor of Elisabeth Mann Borgese (1918 – 2002)]*, (co-editor). Leiden/Boston. Brill Nijhoff, 2018.

(As Author of Articles and Refereed Papers, including as a sample):

- “On Issues and Initiatives: The International Red Cross in Times of Duress and Ambiguity,” *The Pearson Papers* (No. 9), Canadian Peacekeeping Press, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 2004).
- “Redefining the Role of Canadian Universities in International and Regional Development” (Guest Editorial), Ottawa: AUCC, *University Affairs/Uniworld*, February 2002.
- “The Social Sciences, Disasters and Relief Aid” and “The University as a Partner in Development,” in *UNESCO, World Social Sciences Report*, Paris, 1999.
- “On Ethics and the Peacekeeping Partners,” *Canadian Journal of Peace Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 4, 1999.
- “The Red Cross and the Environment,” in *Balance del Patrimonio* (siglo XXI). Barcelona: University of Barcelona, 1991.
- “Breaking Out of the Ivory Tower,” “Re-Casting the Regions,” “Aid by Numbers,” “A New Atlantic Development Bank,” “Doors to the World,” “Better Aid,” “Regional Policy in the European Community,” “How to Re-Make DREE” – all in *Policy Options* over the period 1980-1992.
- “The Red Cross and Red Crescent: Development Challenges in the 1990s,” *Journal of Higher Education Policy*. Paris: Vol. 5, No. 1, March 1992.
- “The Role of a University in International Development: A Canadian Case,” *Journal of Canadian Public Administration*, Vol. 31, No. 4, 1988.
- “Economic Development and International Cooperation,” *Journal of Development and Administrative Studies* (Nepal), Vol. 9, No. 1, June 1987.
- “Canadian Aid for the Training of Public Servants in Ghana and Zimbabwe,” *Journal of Public Administration and Development*, (U.K.) Vol. 7, No. 3, 1987.
- “Post-War Approaches to Regional Development: Some Comparisons Between the Industrial West and Third-World Nations with Mixed Economies,” *Canadian Journal of Regional Science*, Vol. VII, No. 2, 1985.
- “Newfoundland: From Dependency to Self-Reliance,” *Journal of Canadian Public Policy*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 1982.

(Author of Chapters in Books, edited by others. Sample includes):

- “Some Economic Problems of a Federal System,” in Lawrence Officer and L.B. Smith, *Issues in Canadian Economics*. Toronto: McGraw Hill Ryerson, 1974 (pp. 396-406).
- “Regional Development Policy in Canada: Four Questions,” in Robert A. Mundell and B.E. van Snellenberg, *Policy Formation in an Open Economy*. Waterloo: University of Waterloo, 1975 (pp. 207-218).
- “Canadian Program Experiences,” in N.H. Lithwick (ed.), *Regional Economic Policy: The Canadian Experience*. Toronto: McGraw Hill Ryerson, 1978 (pp. 346-359).
- “Assessment of Development Policies,” in S.D. Clark (ed.), *Problems of Development in Atlantic Canada*. Ottawa: The Royal Society of Canada, 1975 (pp. 127-141).

- “Regional Development: Experiences from the EEC,” in T.M. Shaw and Y. Tandon, *Regional Development at the National Level*, Vol. I, New York: University Press of America, 1985 (pp. 209-234).
- “From Disaster Relief to Human Security,” in M.V. Naidu, *Perspectives on Human Security*. Brandon: CPREA, 2001.

(As Author of Book Reviews. This small sample includes):

- Derek Bok, *The Politics of Happiness*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011 (in the *Journal of Canadian Public Administration*).
- Robert L. Tignor. *W. Arthur Lewis and the Birth of Development Economics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006, and also Sebastian Mallaby. *The World’s Banker*. London, Penguin Books (in the *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. XXVII, No. 3, 2006, pp. 420-23).
- Howard C. Clark, *Growth and Governance of Canadian Universities: An Insider’s View*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003 (in the *Journal of Canadian Public Administration*, Vol. 47, No. 3, 2004, pp. 418-20).
- Michael Ignatieff, *Empire Lite*. Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2003 (in the *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. XXV, No. 3, 2004, pp. 514-15).
- Adrian Wood, Raymond Apthorpe, and John Borton (eds.), *Evaluating International Humanitarian Action*. London: Zed Books with ALNAP, 2001 (in the *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. XXIII, No. 1, 2002, pp. 171-74).
- World Bank, *Assessing Aid* (in the *Journal of Canadian Public Administration*, Vol. 42, No. 2, 1999, pp 279-82).

For a more comprehensive list,

see <http://www.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/faculty/science/economics/FacultyPapers/Papers%20on%20Reg%20and%20Intl%20Dev%20June%202011.pdf>

## Teaching

Much influenced by the mentorship of several of his own teachers while at Oxford, teaching continues to be an immensely important privilege of Ian’s – even well after “official retirement”. His main teaching commitments (as a professor of economics) began at Dalhousie University in 1971, and he has retained appointments there ever since, albeit taking substantial leaves-of-absence for other undertakings as well. Other short-term/part-time teaching roles have taken him to numerous countries, including Indonesia, Nepal, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Bangladesh, Jamaica, Costa Rica, many European nations, and universities in various other parts of Canada and the USA. Periodic administrative roles have also been hinged to his teaching, including chair of the Dalhousie Economics Department, chair of the Pearson Institute’s Board, director of Dalhousie’s (former) Centre for Development Projects, and Chair of Dalhousie’s senate committee on international development. He was responsible for designing and overseeing the evolution of Dalhousie’s MDE program, which has now generated some 275 graduates. Perhaps his most ‘pioneering’ graduate class at Dalhousie has been running since 1992, ‘From Disaster Relief to Development.’ A substantial number of student publications, theses and other initiatives have been among the offsprings. He has had the privilege of supervising to completion some 150 theses.

## **Government**

Ian's main public service activities have focused on regional development, overseas aid and several sectors (including energy, ocean governance and aspects of public finance). He has served on two Royal Commissions (as a commissioner on the Canadian Royal Commission on Seals and Sealing [1984-86] and as the secretary and economic adviser to the Royal Commission on Newfoundland's Economic Prospects [1965-67]). From 1962-65 he was the Provincial Economist, Newfoundland; from 1968-71, he headed the regional development unit of the Canadian Finance Ministry. Government advisory committee appointments have included to the Minister of External Relations on Canadian aid to Africa, a Canadian minister of industry's industrial incentives committee, a premier of Nova Scotia's board of economic advisors, a mayor of Halifax's task force on the development of HRM, as special adviser on rural electrification policy to Newfoundland's board of public utilities, and on the economics of Fundy tidal power to a Canadian Energy Minister. He has been an invited contributor to a variety of Canadian boards and commissions, as well as to the OECD and UN agencies on various policy issues discussed in his books and papers (including on the European Union and its regional policies, on the roles of universities in development, and on the effectiveness of a cross-section of particular projects and foreign aid programs).

## **Non-Governmental Organizations**

Ian's NGO experience has been dominated by his work with the Red Cross. From 1989-91 he was the (full-time) senior development adviser (and development department head) of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Geneva. He has subsequently retained a profound commitment to the work of that Movement and has written quite extensively about issues relating to the fragile links between relief and sustainable recovery. He represented the IFRC on over 30 international missions – from the Rio Earth Summit in Brazil to UN events in New York and Paris, from crisis situations in Eastern Europe, Zimbabwe, and Ethiopia, to advisory work in Bangladesh and Vietnam. Perhaps his most enduring contribution may prove to have been an outcome of the various training workshops he has designed and contributed to.

Other NGO experiences have been most substantially with Canada's erstwhile Pearson Peacekeeping Training Centre, on which he also served as a part-time faculty member (1995-2005), and for which he taught in various settings (including at the Royal Military College, Toronto, and the Romanian Military Academy, Bucharest), as well as at Cornwallis Park and Ottawa. Additional roles have been with a First Nations Development Council, the International Ocean Institute (as chair of the IOI-Canada Board 2010-13) and as a speaker for NGOs, including Olympic Aid, the Henry Dunant Institute (Geneva) and a variety of Economic Associations' conferences. Among other boards and NGO councils, he has served on those of Armbrae Academy, the Nova Scotia Red Cross, Peaceful Schools International, the Halifax YMCA, and the Nova Scotia-Gambia Association.

## Projects in Search of Relief with Development

by Ian McAllister

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This book is a sequel to *Projects for Relief and Development* (Henry Dunant Institute, Geneva 1991) that was originally written for Red Cross and Red Crescent training courses and became used by staff working in disaster relief and recovery field situations. This new work expands substantially on that earlier material and is designed for a wider audience, including officials working in foreign aid agencies, in non-governmental organizations, on military and peacekeeping assignments and in a cross-section of public development agencies. Drafts have already been modified after use in a variety of university, NGO and staff college training courses in some dozen countries. To add to its potential value for group discussion and further research purposes, each main section connects with sets of follow-up questions, in addition to a detailed 'workshop course outline' (for use by staff colleges, at NGO training courses, etc.).

The core document comprises six main chapters, incorporating a number of proven planning and management frameworks, as well as a variety of case studies and 'lessons learned' critiques. Project case experiences range from the 2015 earthquake in Nepal to challenges in Newfoundland, from a variety of African and South-East Asian settings, to case insights from North American and European Union investments.

*The introductory chapter* opens by challenging the reader to define a 'good project' and just how its potential impacts are to be assessed. So-called 'relief' and 'development' projects are explored: issues such as community strengthening, environmental sustainability and the biases of particular professional groups (be they engineers, economists, or international development bankers and medical personnel) are raised, as well as (for examples) the kinds of approaches that might be anticipated from institutions at varying levels of evolution/maturity. A critique by the International Committee of the Red Cross about Somalia experiences provides a 'reality check' annex.

*The second chapter* probes further into *the Identification and Design of Projects*. It draws initially on the World Bank's project cycle approaches and then moves into a cross section of private sector and NGO frameworks. The influence of core themes (including 'new towns' and 'national parks') on public sector initiatives are examined, with examples of some of their apparent strengths and limitations. The chapter then moves into project preparation phases (including participation issues that are so important for both relief and recovery processes). How are gender and ethnic issues responded to, not to mention corruption and rival power groups? Thence, the discussion introduces several design and feasibility frameworks and (too often neglected in relief project planning) the spelling out of coherent exit options.

"Exit strategies", the chapter's closing section notes, "are not to be viewed as 'escape mechanisms', but rather as avenues for planned capacity-building.... In many cases, the best exit strategy will incorporate a long-term partnership agreement."

## *Projects in Search of Relief with Development*

*Chapter Three* tackles aspects of the *Appraisal and Financing of Projects*. The challenges of identifying and quantifying the costs and benefits of projects are delved into – over time and taking into account alternative kinds of potential risk and insecurity scenarios. A proposed international assistance project for a West African university is used as one model, with care taken to note that donor agencies are frequently pressured by their financial units to focus too narrowly on the more readily quantifiable cost and revenue dimensions – thereby downplaying critical (but less-measurable) environmental and social costs/benefits. Chapter Three then draws on a review the author undertook on the manner Canadian Treasury Board officials had been responding to a maze of project proposals that were fraught with political and other, dubiously presented, net ‘rates of return’. Those findings, to put it mildly, were provocative.

Donor-driven relief and development projects are then discussed, as well as a cross-section of issues encountered within federal-provincial systems and also after war situations. Oxfam’s experience with the British Government’s reading of the Charity Act is referred to, as well as UNICEF’s enlightened study of some of the impacts of the IMF’s understandable, yet heavy-handed, ‘structural adjustment’ approaches in quest to reduce waste in a number of developing countries, not least targeting, sometimes corruptly managed, state corporations.

The chapter concludes with (as an annex) a follow-up framework, written immediately after the Nepalese 2015 earthquake. As important as the author argues the shorter and longer term suggestions of “What to do” might be, equally important can be the framework lists of “what not to do”. In each case, both ‘short-term’ and ‘longer range’ approaches are suggested.

*Chapter Four, on Project Implementation and Management* introduces a number of basic emergency management models (such as those designed by Erik Auf de Heide). Next, McAllister introduces the model he developed for the International Red Cross at the time of the first Gulf War, followed by critical path and decision tree models for agency intervention (the last by Mary Anderson and Peter Woodrow). From that earlier design phase, the chapter leads into project work structures, including critical approaches to project supervision. This section is followed by a discussion of monitoring and operations that includes details of three case studies: a university teaching hospital in a poverty stricken region of Africa, a cyclone shelter on the Bangladesh coast, a school in rural Canada. Among the concluding remarks to this fourth chapter is “Responsible project management builds not merely on the kinds of mechanical skills that can be routinely acquired in the engineering or business oriented programs of urban universities, but it necessarily draws heavily upon social skills, cultural understanding, and (above all) a commitment to achieving results within ethically responsible community frameworks.

*Project evaluation, follow-up and institutional memory-building is the theme of the fifth chapter.* Starting with a discussion of challenges encountered by government auditors, especially when questions of efficiency spill over into issues of effectiveness (not least on foreign aid projects), the chapter cites a number of findings from World Bank project reviews. These range from a technical paper on lessons from the Tennessee Valley Authority to audits in Bosnia/Herzegovina and Indonesia. In the last, for but one example, a physical audit of a World Bank-financed (community-driven development) program that constructs roads) found that a full quarter of expenditures were “lost to theft”, probably orchestrated by village heads who oversaw projects.

## *Projects in Search of Relief with Development*

Evaluations, the section emphasizes, can obviously vary in scale and approaches from in-house reviews to sometimes complex extended procedures on controversial projects, such as a major Olympic Games complex or international airport. An entire academic industry, now, it is also observed, appears to be evolving around measurements of “wellbeing” and the reader is referred to the thoughtful work on universities by Derek Bok, recent Harvard president.

“What happens to the findings?” is next discussed. This leads into a critique on ethical values and projects, including the findings of a review of the British Public Service, *“Just and Honest Government”*. One question that recurs, not least in peace-keeping settings, is ‘can ethical values appropriately change?’ Issues relating to media, political, business and non-governmental organizations are raised. The chapter concludes with a critique of codes of conduct and their apparent effectiveness (and otherwise) at project levels – especially in the context of large organizations under financial pressures, not least including banks.

*The sixth chapter* brings together some of the key points raised in earlier sections, under the heading ‘*The Project in a Policy Cauldron.*’ This takes the reader from issues linked to mosquito nets and malaria to a bridge project in Croatia, from changes to a school curriculum in Zimbabwe to the political re-routing of national airlines. ‘Good projects’, it is argued, may be Trojan horses for ideas that bring in societal change, but they cannot be viable substitutes for the changes themselves. The chapter is followed by an extensive annex that hinges back to the author’s early experiences, cited in the preface, in Bangladesh. Drawn from a World Bank report, the annex concludes on a cautiously optimistic note, “Bangladesh shows” (in the context of cyclone impact reductions) “how even poor countries can prevent disasters, thereby nourishing (community strengthening) institutions.”

*The closing sections* of the book comprise a select *bibliography*, a series of follow-up *discussion and research questions*, as well as the detailed *outline for a workshop* that leads directly back to (but also extends beyond) the core themes of the main book itself.

[lan.mcallister@dal.ca](mailto:lan.mcallister@dal.ca)

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