



Anthropology and Development

By Emma Crewe, Richard Axelby

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In recent decades international development has grown into a world-shaping industry. But how do aid agencies work and what do they achieve? How does aid appear to the adults and children who receive it? And why has there been so little improvement in the position of the poor? Viewing aid and development from anthropological perspectives gives illuminating answers to questions such as these. This essential textbook reveals anthropologists' often surprising findings and details ethnographic case studies on the cultures of development. The authors use a fertile literature to examine the socio-political organisation of aid communities, agencies and networks, as well as the judgements they make about each other. The everyday practice of development work is about negotiating power and culture, but in vastly different ways in different contexts and for different social groups. Exploring the spaces between policy and practice, success and failure, the future and the past, this book provides a rounded understanding of development work that suggests new moral and political possibilities for an increasingly globalised world.

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Editorial Review

Review

'[A] lucid and well balanced text that brings anthropological insights to bear on development in an engaging way. It equips the reader to appreciate why bringing about the improvement of the world is no simple matter, and why the analysis of processes, powers, practices, and diverse points of view - the subject matter of anthropology - just cannot be avoided. Bravo!' Tania Li, University of Toronto

'Development is a very complex issue, and social anthropology is best suited to describe this complexity on an empirical basis: this book, by Emma Crewe and Richard Axelby, is a particularly successful and erudite attempt to argue and exemplify such a perspective. It is a remarkable work, which shows that addressing the complexity of the field of development in simple terms is possible, and that the frequent dichotomies and stereotypes of the subject can be overcome.' Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan, Research Director, CNRS

About the Author

Emma Crewe is a Visiting Reader in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology at the School of Oriental and African Studies. She has worked as an anthropologist researcher, lecturer and practitioner in international development in South Asia, East Africa and the UK. In her research she explores inequalities, governance and institutions.

Richard Axelby is a Senior Teaching Fellow in the Anthropology of Development at the School of Oriental and African Studies. Richard has worked with development and educational NGOs in South Asia and in the UK. He is a fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute.

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