

8 Non-governmental organisations in the Netherlands

From private funding to governmental support

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Introduction

In 1949, the Dutch government made a modest start with development cooperation contributing 1.5 million guilders to the technical assistance programme of the United Nations and deploying experts to developing countries. The government's decision to grant subsidies to non-commercial private organisations, from 1965 onward, was the next step in the evolution of Dutch development assistance policy. In the first year, the state secretary responsible for aid to less developed countries, Izaak Diepenhorst, made 5 million guilders available, about 2 per cent of the budget for development aid. In 2004, more than 450 million EUR was set aside for co-financing private organisations, about 11.8 per cent of the total budget for development cooperation. After forty years, private development organisations have become indispensable in Dutch development policy.

In this contribution, I shall concentrate on the rise and expansion of private development aid in the Netherlands and the long road to recognition, subsidies and being an important player within Dutch development policy.

The start of private aid: the Netherlands Organisation for International Assistance

Before 1945, catholic and protestant missionaries traveled the world with the intention to civilise and convert colonial peoples in Africa, Asia and Latin America. While Dutch protestant missionary organisations were active only in the Dutch colonies, catholic missionaries were active in other areas as well,¹ the main reason being the settlement in the Netherlands of international missionary congregations that operated abroad. Dutch members of these congregations worked together with their foreign *confrères* on missionary posts that were entrusted to their religious congregation.²

Although the main purpose of the missionary organisations was the foundation of the church as an institute, development activities also played a role. In many developing countries, missionaries established education and health care systems and contributed to the development of agriculture. The home front was involved with their work through missionary societies, which published reports about their activities in missionary journals and organised fund raising campaigns.

After the Second World War, governments and non-confessional private organisations competed with the missions in giving aid to less developed countries. Taking their lead from American president Harry Truman who – in his inaugural address of 20 January 1949 – announced a ‘bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas’,³ the Dutch government decided to contribute 1.5 million guilders to the Expanded Technical Assistance Programme of the United Nations (EPTA). In the starting years of Dutch development, cooperation policy was not based

¹ Th. van den End, ‘Zending vanuit Nederland’, in *De heiden moest eraan geloven. Geschiedenis van zending, missie en ontwikkelingssamenwerking* (Utrecht 1983), pp. 6–18.

² J. M. Hogema, ‘De missiebeweging van katholiek Nederland’, in *De heiden moest eraan geloven. Geschiedenis van zending, missie en ontwikkelingssamenwerking* (Utrecht 1983), p. 22.

³ Cited in M. L. J. Dierikx, et al. (eds), *Nederlandse ontwikkelingssamenwerking, Bronnenuitgave* (The Hague 2002), vol. 1, 1945–1963, p. xxii.

on idealism, but reflected the interests of Dutch trade and industry, the restoration of international prestige, the potential to 'get back into' the former colony Indonesia through the aid programme of the United Nations, and to offer employment to tropical experts who risked losing their jobs as a result of decolonisation.⁴ In 1956, Minister of Foreign Affairs Joseph Luns added another motive: anti-communism.⁵

Meanwhile, development aid drew growing public interest. On 7 March 1953, the general editor of the widely read weekly *Vrij Nederland*, Johan Winkler, drew a comparison between the Marshall Aid the Dutch had received from the United States and Dutch aid to a world that called for solidarity. This appeal was answered by Reverend J.B.Th. Hugenholtz who, together with Winkler, established a committee for the formation of an emergency relief plan. At the same time, Saturday sermons on the square were held by Father Simon Jelsma in front of the stairs of the Dutch High Court in The Hague. These sermons pointed to the poverty and injustice in the world and the need to act to provide relief. Consequently, Jelsma's followers organised themselves as group dubbed the 'Square Group'.

The initiatives of Reverend Hugenholtz and Father Jelsma converged in the establishment, on 23 March 1956, of the Netherlands Organisation for International Assistance, better known as NOVIB. The goal NOVIB pursued was to inform the Dutch population about the needs of other peoples and population groups in the world.⁶ Set up as a national organisation, NOVIB was intended by its founders to embrace all social groups, political affiliations and religious persuasions. The board of NOVIB included leading figures from both the catholic and the protestant communities, such as Theo Bot, who became the Netherlands first minister for Development Cooperation in 1965. Thus it was one of the few organisations in the 1950s that ignored the Dutch pillarised society; this

⁴ J. A. Nekkers and P. A. M. Malcontent (eds), *Fifty years of Dutch Development Cooperation, 1949–1999* (The Hague 2000), pp. 12–13; See also: NOS-I, p. 68.

⁵ Nekkers et al., *Fifty years*, p. 13.

⁶ Letter from H. Oosterhuis (Novib) to Prime Minister W. Drees (16 July 1957), in Dierikx et al., *Nederlandse ontwikkelingssamenwerking*, vol. 1, p. 437.

was at a time when it was still very common to mainly join organisations within one's own religious community.

When NOVIB prepared itself for its first great fund-raising campaign in the autumn of 1957, not everybody was enthusiastic. The government issued a financial guarantee in case the benefits of the campaign would fall short,⁷ but also feared the possible financial and diplomatic consequences that the hopes NOVIB had aroused among the governments of possible recipient countries.⁸ Catholic spokesmen emphasised that the goal of NOVIB could better and more functionally be reached by supporting 'our 8000 in the mission, without selfishness, working priests, monks and nuns', so Catholics did not need to waste their energies 'by supporting neutral plans of modernists'.⁹ A catholic professor in sociology, Gerard Zeegers, decided to leave the board of NOVIB because of competition with the work of the mission. In the Dutch catholic newspaper *De Maasbode* he declared it was his impression that NOVIB originated from a socialist environment which had a special attraction to Roman Catholics.¹⁰ Another incidental circumstance was that the fund-raising campaign of NOVIB on 24 October 1957 (the Day of the United Nations) coincided with the week of the catholic 'Mission Sunday'.

The co-financing program

The idea of government subsidies for supporting development activities of missionary organisations was born in the Federal Republic of Germany. At a Christmas reception in 1960, the German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer declared to journalists that missionaries could play a role in bilateral

⁷ Dierikx et al., *Nederlandse ontwikkelingssamenwerking*, vol. 1, p. 439, note 7.

⁸ Memorandum S. J. van Tuyll van Serooskerken to state secretary E. H. van der Beugel (3 Sep. 1957), in Dierikx et al., *Nederlandse ontwikkelingssamenwerking*, vol. 1, pp. 442–443.

⁹ *De Tijd*, 14 Aug. 1957; Cited by J. M. Hogema, 'De missiebeweging', p. 27, and idem, 'De rechtvaardiging van het medefinancieringsprogramma. Een plaats voor het partikulier initiatief', in J. Simmers (ed.), *Wisselwerking tussen Derde Wereld en Nederland* (Utrecht 1980), p. 19.

¹⁰ *De Maasbode*, 18 Sep. 1957.

government aid to less developed countries: 'our missionaries are our best development workers'.¹¹ These words were not lost on Germany's Catholic Church, which saw them as recognition of its development activities, and decided to ask the government for subsidies. The Catholic Church invited protestant churches to join in lobby activities. However, the protestant churches were reluctant to do so. They were afraid of new forms of colonialism and feared becoming dependent on subsidies. The German Evangelical Church decided to ask the World Council of Churches for advice. After fierce discussions, the Council came to the conclusion that subsidies could be accepted subject to a number of strict conditions.¹² Government subsidies could only be used for 'certain specified projects that aimed to serve country and people in a development area, not missionary activities in the narrow sense, namely those dedicated to the spread of the gospel'.¹³ As a result, German protestant churches decided to join the Catholic Church in applying for subsidies.

In 1961, the German government started to subsidise development activities that private organisations could better carry out than the government itself.¹⁴ The subsidies contained a contribution towards the costs of specific projects, for which the government of a recipient country had given its approval. The government subsidies were awarded to administration offices – the Protestant and the Catholic Centre for Development Aid – which functioned as a link between the federal government and the private organisations that applied

¹¹ Cited by J. Bos and G. H. A. Prince, 'Partners in development. Development work by church and other non-governmental organisations: the early days', in Nekkers et al., *Fifty years*, p. 159.

¹² Bos et al., 'Partners in development', p. 160.

¹³ Guidelines of the World Council of Churches, cited in: Dierikx et al., *Nederlandse ontwikkelingssamenwerking*, vol. 2, p. 65, note 46.

¹⁴ During the Copenhagen Conference on the History of Development Aid (27–30 Apr. 2006) Heide-Irene Schmidt told me that, around 1960, missionaries were the only Germans present in developing countries. The possibilities for the German government to give development aid were still limited.

for project funding.¹⁵ Forms of government support for private development aid also existed in the Scandinavian countries and in Switzerland.¹⁶

Following the German example, Dutch catholic missionary organisations started lobbying for government subsidies. First they called for the assistance of the Catholic People's Party. In October 1962, the party published a report pleading in favour of financial support to private organisations, like missionary churches. These organisations were said to be particularly well equipped to relieve the needs in developing countries and to make use of financial support in the best possible way.¹⁷ A few weeks later in a parliamentary debate on the government policy document *Aid to Less Developed Countries* (1962)¹⁸, the catholic Member of Parliament Pieter Blaisse drew attention to the various missionary and aid organisations, which did 'extraordinary work' saying the state should support them.¹⁹ Although his fellow party member Foreign Minister Luns declared that he sympathised with the idea of subsidising,²⁰ he also voiced reservations. He did not want to give the impression that Christianity was an export commodity. According to Luns, a strong bond between the government and the missions might give the wrong impression.²¹ Governmental support for the development activities of missionary organisations was still a bridge too far.

For the Catholic mission it was now clear that the case had reached deadlock, unless an understanding could be reached with the protestant mission. At the beginning of 1963, the Catholic Central Mission Commissioner's office (CMC) asked the protestant Dutch Mission Council to join in with applying for government funding to finance 'pure development work, like the establishment of schools, small

¹⁵ 'Rapport inzake de subsidiëring van ontwikkelingsprojecten in minder ontwikkelde landen, ondernomen door Nederlandse particuliere organisaties' (16 June 1964), in Dierikx et al., *Nederlandse ontwikkelingsamenwerking*, vol. 2, p. 61.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 61-62.

¹⁷ Cited by Hogema, 'De rechtvaardiging', p. 23.

¹⁸ *Handelingen der Staten-Generaal, 1961-1962*, 2. Kamer, Annex 6817.

¹⁹ *Handelingen der Staten-Generaal, 1962-1963*, 2. Kamer, 2 Nov. 1962, p. 169.

²⁰ Ibid., 6 Nov. 1962, p. 197.

²¹ Ibid., 6 Nov. 1962, p. 210.

hospitals and all the other activities that missionaries do at their own expense'.²² This request led to negotiations led by the general secretary of the Mission Council, Jo Verkuyt, to get the protestant churches and missionary organisations behind a joint catholic-protestant initiative. One of the protestant participants in these talks, S. C. Graaf van Randwijck, later talked about the different stages of enthusiasm. While enthusiasm prevailed among the Catholics, the Protestants had their reservations.²³ They were afraid that the young churches in the Third World would come under the influence of post-colonial Western governments. For Orthodox Calvinists, governmental support would mean the violation of their doctrine of sovereignty in one's own domain, which prescribed a strict separation of church and state.²⁴

On 25 September 1963, the Catholic CMC and the Protestant Missionary Council sent the government a joint open letter requesting financial support for non-governmental development work.²⁵ In this letter, the Catholic and Protestant missionary organisations mentioned a number of conditions – derived from the criteria of the World Council of Churches – which applicants must satisfy to qualify for funding. They accepted the principle that no public funds could be used to support the evangelical activities of churches in the Third World. In addition, grant applications must come from organisations in a developing country and must have the approval of the local government. The government subsidies ought to be used only for expenditures of goods. The execution and the work force of projects would be covered from their own means.

Although the governing confessional parties supported the missionary organisations, all opposition was not yet removed. On 15 November 1963, the government decided to form a committee in order to study the pros and cons

²² Letter G. van Rijsbergen to S. C. Graaf van Randwijck (8 Feb. 1963), in Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Hague (MFA), code 6, 1955–1964, 610.300, no. 2299.

²³ Bos et al., 'Partners in development', p. 161.

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 160–161.

²⁵ Dierikx et al., *Nederlandse ontwikkelingssamenwerking*, vol. 1, pp. 898–900.

of government subsidies.²⁶ This committee, chaired by the new director-general for International Cooperation of the ministry of Foreign Affairs Jan Meijer, organised hearings with all the different social and aid organisations of religious and non-religious origin. In June 1964, the Meijer committee concluded that if the government wanted to support development activities of private organisations it should earmark these subsidies to a contribution to cover the costs of concrete projects in developing countries. For this purpose, a sum of 5 million guilders could be placed on the budget for 1965. For supporting private development activities, the committee introduced the term 'co-financing', which would include a government contribution to capital investments in private development projects. Private organisations still had to contribute 25 per cent of the total costs. It was understood, at the same time, that a decision could be made at a later point regarding the revision or expansion of the grant scheme.²⁷

The government was divided over the Meijer report. According to the liberal ministers within the liberal-confessional Marijnen Cabinet (1963–1965) it would be difficult to distinguish development activities of the missionary organisations from evangelical work. The Catholic and Protestant ministers were in favour of subsidising. Prime Minister Victor Marijnen concluded that it was not yet possible to make a decision, so he asked the State Secretary for Development Aid Izaak Diepenhorst to write an additional note about the fundamental aspects of the issue.²⁸ In this note, Diepenhorst wrote that supporting activities of private organisations had been an accepted practice in the Netherlands for a long time. These subsidies aimed at making it possible to develop activities which would serve the public interest. As examples, Diepenhorst mentioned denominational education, denominational libraries, church building and the spiritual assistance to soldiers and prisoners. He also mentioned that other

²⁶ Cabinet Minutes, 15 Nov. 1963, point 4, in National Archives, The Hague (NA), 2.02.04.02.

²⁷ 'Rapport inzake de subsidiëring', in Dierikx et al., *Nederlandse ontwikkelingssamenwerking*, vol. 2, pp. 76–77.

²⁸ Cabinet Minutes, 18 Sep. 1964, in Dierikx et al., *Nederlandse ontwikkelingssamenwerking*, vol. 2, pp. 105–111.

countries had already started supporting private development activities. Furthermore, in 1963 the General Assembly of the United Nations had made an appeal to non-governmental organisations to make efforts to combat hunger, illness and ignorance. Diepenhorst was not afraid of mixing development activities with the gospel, since the missionary organisations themselves had expressly excluded subsidising evangelisation and emphasised that the subsidies were meant only for development work in general.²⁹

On 23 October 1964, when the Cabinet again discussed the issue, the fundamental question had already been answered. On 8 October, the parliament had voted in favour of a motion of Jan Smallenbroek of the protestant Anti-Revolutionary Party, requesting that the government increase the aid budget for non-governmental development agencies.³⁰ After a short discussion, the Marijnen Cabinet decided to henceforth support private development projects, provided that such projects would be in accordance with the development plans of the recipient countries.³¹ Now, there was no longer any reason for Diepenhorst to resign, as he had intended to do in the event of a negative decision.³²

In the first years of the co-financing program, all organisations and persons could apply for support at the Technical Assistance Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A special office was given the authority to decide upon subsidies for private development projects. The question whether channeling the requests for subsidies via central agencies would be necessary, could be answered as soon as this office had gained enough experience in handling these requests.³³ In practice, Catholic organisations had a reservoir of project proposals, whereas Protestant organisations – for which the

²⁹ Note by I. N. Th. Diepenhorst, 20 Oct. 1964, in Dierikx et al., *Nederlandse ontwikkelingssamenwerking*, vol. 2, pp. 115–119.

³⁰ *Handelingen der Staten-Generaal, 1964–1965*, 2. Kamer, 8 Oct. 1964, pp. 227 and 236–237.

³¹ Cabinet Minutes, 23 Oct. 1964, in Dierikx et al., *Nederlandse ontwikkelingssamenwerking*, vol. 2, pp. 121–124.

³² Diary note I. N. Th. Diepenhorst (21 Oct. 1964), in Dierikx et al., *Nederlandse ontwikkelingssamenwerking*, vol. 2, p. 121.

³³ Memorandum A. A. J. Warmenhoven to J. Meijer (29 Jan. 1965), in MFA, DTH-Medefinanciering, no. 498.

newly established Interchurch Coordination Committee for Development Aid (ICCO) functioned as a central agency – and non-religious organisations suffered from a shortage of proposals. Consequently, about 60 to 70 per cent of the budget for co-financing went to catholic projects in the first years.³⁴ By 1968, catholic and protestant applicants were submitting too many projects in relation to the available funds and the Technical Assistance Department now had to choose and reject certain projects. Director-General Jan Meijer, who was afraid of the political uproar this might cause, proposed in February 1968 that the co-financing organisations should be responsible for deciding which projects would have priority. Henceforth all catholic applications would be referred to CMC and all protestant applications to ICCO.³⁵ The available funds would be divided according to the formula 40 per cent for the Catholic mission, 40 per cent for the Protestant mission and 20 per cent for non-confessional projects.³⁶ At the suggestion of ICCO's chairman, Verkuyl, all non-confessional projects would be transferred to NOVIB, which then became the third co-financing organisation.³⁷

Although the co-financing programme had taken on a definite form, the controversy over the criteria and the responsibilities of the 'partners in development' did not end there. Within the Technical Assistance Department, civil servants complained that the co-financing programme did not comply with the aims of Dutch development policy. By transferring the establishment of priorities to private organisations, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was unable to monitor the quality of the co-financing program.³⁸ Another point of criticism was that the co-financing organisations would further recede from modern viewpoints of development cooperation.³⁹

³⁴ Hogema, 'De rechtvaardiging', p. 33.

³⁵ Meeting at DGIS with CMC and ICCO (20 Feb. 1968), in Dierikx et al., *Nederlandse ontwikkelingssamenwerking*, vol. 3, p. 161.

³⁶ Memorandum minister B. J. Udink to J. Meijer (30 May 1968), in Dierikx et al., *Nederlandse ontwikkelingssamenwerking*, vol. 3, p. 195, note 2.

³⁷ Bos et al., 'Partners in development', pp. 163–164.

³⁸ Memorandum H. van der Kloet to F. van Dam (12 Dec. 1969), in MFA, DTH-Medefinanciering, no. 486.

³⁹ Memorandum F. van Dam to J. Meijer (2 Jan. 1970), in MFA, DTH-Medefinanciering, no. 486.

Another drawback was the fact that the co-financing programme did not square with the policy of concentrating development aid to a limited number of developing countries. According to the head of the Technical Assistance Department, A. A. J. Warmenhoven, this led to considerable confusion among governments of non-concentration countries. Once, a Brazilian civil servant asked: 'Why was the Dutch government not prepared to execute projects in demand by the Brazilian government, whereas the Netherlands supported projects of Dutch fathers Brazil didn't even ask for?'⁴⁰

The Dutch government disregarded the complaining civil servants. At the end of 1969, Minister Berend Udink promised in parliament that the funds for co-financing would grow faster than the total aid budget. At the same time, private organisations were striving to widen the criteria for co-financing. This was accomplished during a joint conference in 1972 between the government and the three organisations: ICCO, NOVIB and CEBEMO (the Catholic Central Agency for Joint Financing and Development which took over the role of the CMC in 1969). They established their own priorities and gained compensation for administrative costs.

When the socialist Jan Pronk took office as minister of development cooperation in 1973, the co-financing organisations faced new challenges. According to Pronk, the missions were system-endorsing traditional institutions, which didn't strive for the sort of structural changes in society that made up the core of his policy. Pronk's priority was to combat poverty and inequality, rather than the traditional concern with the transfer of knowledge. The co-financing organisations reacted by declaring that this line of policy was theirs also. Within the development process, economic and social growth had to be in the service of social justice and self-reliance. Not simply economic growth, but the total well-being of man in his social context had to be the criterion that would testify to the value of development work. The co-financing organisations toed the line and as such they would also draw special

⁴⁰ Memorandum A. A. J. Warmenhoven to minister B. J. Udink (20 Nov. 1968), in Dierikx et al., *Nederlandse ontwikkelingssamenwerking*, vol. 3, p. 293.

attention to the self-fulfilment of people in the Third World through human investment, special attention to the very poorest, initiatives by the local population and the development of local leadership.⁴¹

This 'chairman's declaration' of the co-financing organisations was the first step to a new understanding with Jan Pronk in November 1974; this included relaxation of procedures, further widening of criteria and extension of the mandate of the co-financing organisations.⁴² Pronk's re-evaluation of the work of private organisations was also influenced by the possibility of giving private aid to Chile. The military coup of 1973 had brought an end to a special relationship between the Netherlands and the socialist government of Salvador Allende.

Pronk's policy document on bilateral development cooperation, published in 1976, reflected better relationships between the government and the private organisations: 'It is as a result of their distinctive nature and motivation that these organisations frequently extend such offers to further and complete the work they have undertaken. Often they are better able to identify with group aspirations at a fundamental level than a government.'⁴³ Although the agreement of 1974 meant more room for manoeuvre and greater responsibility for the co-financing organisations, Pronk still wanted to control the entire field of Dutch development policy, including private aid. During a second conference with Pronk in April 1977, the co-financing organisations pleaded in vain for a subsidy method that would give them the right to decide over separate projects. Within this proposed block-grant subsidy, model subsidies would be granted for packages of projects. This would mean that the government could only exercise

⁴¹ 'Uitgangspunten voor het Medefinancieringsprogramma' (25 Oct. 1973), in Dierikx et al., *Nederlandse ontwikkelingssamenwerking*, vol. 4, pp. 89-90.

⁴² Bos et al., 'Partners in development', p. 168.

⁴³ J. P. Pronk, Bilateral development cooperation concerning the quality of Netherlands aid: note presented to Parliament in September 1976 (Gravenhage 1977), p. 51.

control afterwards. For Pronk, this was out of the question. He wanted to maintain direct influence.⁴⁴

Pronk's successor, the Christian democrat Jan de Koning had more of an ear for the wishes of the co-financing organisations. As part of his endeavour was to raise the quality of bilateral aid and to reduce the work pressure on his ministry, he was in favour of granting more independence to private development organisations. As a result, he introduced a programme financing scheme on 1 January 1980. Money would be made available directly as a grant, without the government having to approve disbursements in advance. Cebemo, ICCO, Novib and the Humanist Institute for Development Cooperation (HIVOS), admitted in 1978 as a fourth co-financing organisation, were now fully responsible for the entire project cycle. De Koning's main condition in agreeing to this was that the private organisations should embrace a target group policy, directed towards the realisation of socio-political, economic and cultural rights of mankind, the promotion of active participation of groups and individuals in the development of their society, so that they could take an independent step within their community and contribute to the building of an authentic social order. Moreover, co-financing projects had to make it possible for groups and individuals who lived predominantly in poverty to make arrangements to provide for their own necessities of life in the long run. Furthermore, the co-financing organisations had to stay away from activities that could undermine the political independence of a state or were designed to bring down a lawful government by unlawful means.⁴⁵

The joint evaluation of the subsidy model in 1983 by the government and the co-financing organisations led to the conclusion that in general the arrangements of the 1980 scheme were met. Therefore the Dutch government reconfirmed the arrangements. Although discussions about the objectives of the co-financing programme continued, the subsidy model

⁴⁴ L. van Beek, 'Ontwikkelingshulp tussen overheid en particulier initiatief. Het medefinancieringsprogramma 1965-1985', in *Internationale Spectator*, vol. 39, 12, 1985, p. 755.

⁴⁵ Letter minister J. de Koning to the co-financing organisations (19 May 1980), in *Handelingen der Staten-Generaal*, 2. Kamer, 1980-1981, 16400, V, no. 17, annex I.

and the separated responsibilities of the state and private organisations has remained one of the pillars of development policy in the Netherlands.

Equal rights for private development workers

Apart from supporting private development projects, the missions were increasingly involved with sending experts to developing countries. In the 1960's a growing number of professional medical personnel took the place of brothers and sisters of the congregation within mission hospitals. Unlike their religious predecessors, these professionals asked for remuneration on a level equal to doctors sent out by the Dutch state. The latter worked under a contract with the local authorities and received a supplement to their local salary from the Dutch state. Doctors working in mission hospitals did not receive such a supplement.

In 1965, the catholic organisation, *Medicus Mundi Holland*, pointed out this injustice in a letter to the minister for Development Cooperation Theo Bot.⁴⁶ One year later, another catholic medical aid organisation, *Memisa*, did the same thing. According to *Memisa*, the growing lack of mission doctors was due to insufficient salaries.

Within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there was strong resistance against subsidies requests by missionary organisations. The head of the Technical Assistance Department, Warmenhoven, described the attitude among private organisations as 'give us our subsidies and stay out of this!' According to Warmenhoven, these organisations were convinced that the state was less well equipped to handle certain tasks. He expected that these organisations would use government support to indulge in 'hobbies', which would open up development aid to sectarian and private interests, instead of being an instrument for promoting economic development. Warmenhoven concluded that the government did not have to yield to the pressures of the new foundations to roll back

⁴⁶ Letter F. A. C. M. Mol to minister Th. H. Bot (received 5 July 1965), in MFA, DTH-Medefinanciering, 1965-1974, no. 476.

the involvement of the state. Instead the government should work 'in close cooperation with private parties concerned'.⁴⁷

An assistant of Warmenhoven, H. W. te Winkel, was strongly opposed to subsidising missionary organisations. In his eyes, *caritas* of catholic and protestant organisations could never be seen in isolation. 'Education, social and medical work originating with these organisations always include an element of mission, although it was done as an expression of christian relief. This is legitimate, as far as the government doesn't have to finance the costs of its personnel. The technical assistance of the government had to be separate from church activities, even if they are hidden behind private organisations.'⁴⁸ According to Te Winkel, co-financing the costs of personnel would implicate transplanting a typical Dutch situation. 'Do we in time have to subsidise the activities of Protestants, Catholics and neutrals in fixed proportions, because this would fit in with the Dutch political set-up? What do the developing countries have to do with our pillarisation? To my mind, such a development would be contrary to policy.'⁴⁹

A year later, Te Winkel stressed that the authorities of developing countries had to determine the priorities of aid and that private organisations like Memisa – whose rationale in Te Winkel's opinion was charity and not development – inclined to turn the order of priorities upside down. Development assistance should aim at structural changes and not at maintaining the work of missionaries.⁵⁰ Although Warmenhoven had more sympathy for the difficult position of Memisa, he shared Te Winkel's opinion and concluded that Memisa had to solve its own problems by better payments for its personnel, if necessary in combination with reducing its number of doctors.

Memisa decided to put pressure on politicians. During a conversation with the new minister for Development

⁴⁷ Memorandum A. A. J. Warmenhoven to J. Meijer (19 Oct. 1965), in Dierikx et al., *Nederlandse ontwikkelingssamenwerking*, vol. 2, p. 259.

⁴⁸ Memorandum H. W. Te Winkel to A. A. J. Warmenhoven (23 July 1965), in Dierikx et al., *Nederlandse ontwikkelingssamenwerking*, vol. 2, p. 246.

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 247.

⁵⁰ Memorandum H. W. Te Winkel to A. A. J. Warmenhoven (20 Dec. 1966), in MFA, code 6, 1965–1974, nr. 481.

Cooperation, Berend Udink, on 19 June 1967, Memisa Secretary A. M. van Straaten related that on repeated occasions doctors and nurses who had initially appealed to Memisa were eventually sent out by the Technical Assistance Department. Considering the salaries Memisa paid, these youngsters were right. As a result, the workforce of the missionary hospitals had declined offers and missionaries themselves had returned to 'playing doctor'.⁵¹ Three days later, the catholic Member of Parliament, Joep Mommersteeg, urged the minister to neutralise the differences between the state and private initiative 'for reasons of fairness and to avoid the annoying atmosphere of competition'.⁵² Udink promised to study the question of fringe benefits.

Medicus Mundi wanted more than just improvement of fringe benefits. Its goal was to supplement salaries to the level of the doctors sent out by the Technical Assistance Department. Udink did not want to go so far.⁵³ Medicus Mundi secretary F. Mol contacted members of parliament, after which the parliamentary commission for development assistance organised a hearing. The commission drew the conclusion that doctors who were sent out by private organisations should enjoy a salary equal to doctors sent out by the Technical Assistance Department.⁵⁴ Only after pressure from parliament did Udink agree on 10 December 1970 to grant supplements for 15 to 20 doctors sent out by private organisations. The main condition was that private organisations should establish an umbrella organisation which would serve as a conversation partner of the government and would distribute the supplements.⁵⁵ For this purpose, the Organisation of Private Initiative Tropical Doctors (OPIT) was established in 1971. Within a few years the number of supplements reserved for private organisations grew from

⁵¹ Letter A. van Straaten to minister B. J. Udink (19 June 1967), in Dierikx et al., *Nederlandse ontwikkelingssamenwerking*, vol. 3, p. 35.

⁵² *Handelingen der Staten-Generaal*, 1967, 2. Kamer, 22 June 1967, p. 544.

⁵³ J. Willemsen, *Van tentoonstelling tot wereldorganisatie. De geschiedenis van de stichtingen Memisa en Medicus Mundi Nederland, 1925-1995* (Nijmegen 1996), p. 217.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 219.

⁵⁵ *Handelingen der Staten-Generaal*, 1970-1971, 2. Kamer, 10 Dec. 1970, p. 1767.

20 to 50. While the period in the field lasted three years, OPIT had, as a rule, 150 tropical doctors working abroad.⁵⁶

Until 1978, applications for salary supplements for private doctors had to be submitted to the government. On January 1st of that year, the government handed over the supplement regulation to OPIT. OPIT obtained the right to decide on projects and applications of member organisations before presenting them to the government for review. The conditions of work would be the same as those for doctors sent out by the Technical Assistance Department, namely a supplement to local salaries.⁵⁷

In the same year, a supplement regulation was made for yet another category of aid workers: private volunteers. This ended the cooperation between the government and private organisations in the sending out of volunteers, which had started in 1965.

Pursuant to the establishment of the American Peace Corps in 1961, in 1963 the Dutch government started a program, sending out young volunteers to developing countries: the Young Volunteers Program.⁵⁸ Shortly before, private organisations of different denominational origins had come together in the Young Volunteers Corps (JVC) also with the intention of sending volunteers to developing countries. In 1965, the government and private organisations decided to cooperate within the Organisation of Netherlands Volunteers (ONV/SNV). After twelve years of a 'marriage of convenience' this cooperation between the government and the private sector broke down, at the end of 1977. The JVC, which was revived after a long period of being a sleeping organisation, wanted to become independent once more and asked the government to open a separate subsidy channel for private volunteers, alongside the state organisation SNV.

⁵⁶ Willemsen, *Van tentoonstelling tot wereldorganisatie*, p. 220.

⁵⁷ Note concerning supply programmes (23 Nov. 1981), in MFA, DPO, 1975-1984, no. 202.

⁵⁸ Note minister J. M. A. H. Luns to prime minister J. E. De Quay (1 Feb. 1963), in Dierikx et al., *Nederlandse ontwikkelingssamenwerking*, vol. 1, pp. 851-856.

On 25 May 1978 minister Jan de Koning recognised JVC as a separate channel for sending out private volunteers.⁵⁹

Conclusions

Government support to Dutch private aid organisations originated in the work of the catholic and protestant missions. From an international perspective, this was not unique. The co-financing programme that the Dutch government introduced in 1965 was based on the model which was introduced in the Federal Republic of Germany three years earlier. In imitation of Germany, the same model was also introduced in other countries, such as Canada and Belgium. What is special about the Dutch case is the fact that the granting of subsidies to aid organisations was based on the religious diversity of Dutch society. Similar to other public sectors, the private aid budget became equally divided between Catholics and Protestants, with a smaller part reserved for non-religious organisations.

Although the quest for subsidies was originally also intended to strengthen the position of the missions in developing countries, the effect was a professionalisation of the development activities of the missions and a shift from religious to pure development activities. 'Mission is out and development is in', was a widely heard phrase within confessional development aid organisations in the 1970s.

Prior to the decision to grant subsidies to private organisations, the mood among civil servants of the Dutch ministry of Foreign Affairs and many politicians was negative or at the very least reserved. In the 1970s and 1980s, the Dutch non-governmental organisations proved to be a vital channel to combat poverty in developing countries. They made it clear that their aims corresponded with the government policy and proved to be reliable 'partners in development'.

⁵⁹ Note concerning supply programs (23 Nov. 1981), in MFA, DPO, 1975-1984, no. 202.