

Roger Hay (1940–2010)

In this issue, we publish posthumously an article jointly authored by Roger Hay. Roger Hay was a dedicated development practitioner, institutional entrepreneur and scholar. His career was driven by his humanity, his enquiring mind, and his determination to act practically in the interests of the most vulnerable people. Born in New Zealand, he started his professional career as a medical doctor (FRCS, MB, ChB), working in Biafra as a surgeon in the late 1960s. After a brief period in England, Roger returned to Africa to work at the Medical Research Council's research unit in Kampala, Uganda, researching the causes and treatment of malnutrition. Kicked out of Uganda along with the Asian and other European communities by Idi Amin, Roger returned to England to work at the Dunn Human Nutrition Unit at the University of Cambridge. By the mid-1970s, he was once again in Africa, this time in Ethiopia, which was in the grip of famine. While there he assisted, with considerable success, the government's food policy programme.

These experiences led him to switch attention from medicine to a search for the causes of hunger and appropriate institutional and policy responses. In 1979, he therefore founded the Food Supply Analysis Group (later the Food Studies Group) at Queen Elizabeth House in Oxford to research and consult on the causes of hunger and poverty. This led to the formation of Oxford Policy Management (OPM) in 1996, of which he was the first managing director. Its mix of innovative thinking and practical experience, as well as Roger's consensual and inspirational leadership, won OPM a growing reputation among governments, mainly in Africa and Asia, as well as development agencies. In the years since its foundation, it has become a highly respected international consultancy with offices in India, Pakistan and South Africa.

But there was a second part to Roger's vision: the founding of Oxford Policy Institute (OPI) as a not-for-profit organisation working in the public domain on public services. It was to OPI that Roger's seemingly inexhaustible energy had mostly been directed in recent years. His work on public, and in particular health, institutions brought together the various strands of his career, as he focused on managing health systems in resource-scarce environments, on health sector regulation, on public service workforce incentives, and on private sector contributions to public sector performance. In addition to his many development activities, Roger was also a talented pianist.

Alex Duncan, Martin Evans, Simon Hunt & Frances Stewart