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A SAFARI TOWARDS AID EFFECTIVENESS?

**A CRITICAL LOOK AT THE PARIS DECLARATION &
THE ACCRA AGENDA FOR ACTION
AS PART OF THE NEW AID REFORM ARCHITECTURE**

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Like many other elements of the new aid architecture, the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) have become part of the stock-in-trade of the donor discourse. A nod in the direction of the Paris Declaration or the AAA has become mandatory, even when some aid donors may be continuing business-as-usual. The Paris Declaration has become a shorthand term for a whole series of proposed reforms in the aid industry, including greater country ownership, aid alignment with national policies, and more harmonisation amongst the multitude of ‘development partners’.¹ This is a particularly critical moment to see where the reform of aid has reached. Many traditional donors have a very large domestic financial crisis on their hands, whose scale dwarfs the sums they have allocated to foreign aid in the past. This global financial crisis is also a direct threat to the many promises of rich nations dramatically to increase their foreign aid. On the other hand, many so-called emerging economies, such as China, India and Brazil, are considering the ways they can use their very large foreign exchange reserves; and development assistance is one option for the strategic use of some of their resources. Currently, however, their approach to international cooperation with poorer countries seems to be proceeding on a very different trajectory to traditional donors. Finally, the aid business has come in for a serious critique from a whole range of analysts, including for example: Clark Gibson et al. *The Samaritan’s dilemma*; David Ellerman, *Helping People Help Themselves: From the World Bank to an Alternative Philosophy of Development Assistance*; William Easterly, *The White Man’s Burden*; Roger Riddell, *Does Foreign Aid Really Work?* and Dambisa Moyo, *Dead Aid*.

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¹ For a critique of the term ‘development partners’, see NN41 (Dec. 2008), www.norrag.org

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PREFACE

Kenneth King

Dambisa Moyo, who we invited of course to contribute to this special issue, is to be congratulated in doing what most academic analysts of aid don't manage in a life time – to get the debate about aid onto the centre pages of serious papers and serious blogs across the world. To Aid or Not to Aid has become a headline issue. Her short book on **aid ineffectiveness** has become more well-known than the declarations of Paris and Accra about **aid effectiveness**

We have brought together lots of very different commentators on aid – from the East and the West, the North and the South. Many of them, especially if they are currently concerned with development and area studies, may well have worked also in some way connected to aid, as a secondary school teacher, university teacher, volunteer, researcher, consultant, expert, conference participant or advisor, not to mention working directly in a development agency, whether non-governmental (international or national), bilateral, or multi-lateral. It would be fascinating to see how many different aid roles were covered by those contributing to this special issue. Many individuals will have been involved over their professional lives in multiple roles, many of them wholly or partly funded by aid.

This personal or people-to-people dimension of aid is still central to the popular perception of aid in the donor countries and is still crucially important in the recipient countries. Ordinary informed people whether in the North or the South still think of aid principally in terms of actions by people in support of others. They may also think of aid as things given, whether schools, clinics, books, computers, vehicles. By contrast the language of the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda is not about experts or technical assistance but about systems of alignment, harmonisation, ownership, accountability and public financial management.

In this special issue of Norrag News, we seek to understand some of the meanings of this Paris and Accra discourse for the delivery of day-to-day aid or international cooperation whether in Ghana itself, in the rest of Africa, Latin America, or in the countries that are thought of as traditional donors, as well as those now termed emerging donors.

Running through the special issue is the red thread of the critique of aid by Dambisa Moyo; many of our contributors engage with this, and hopefully this issue makes available a variety of interpretations of her work. At the same time, there is an attempt to explore the impact of the so-called new aid modalities and approaches for the traditional sectors in which aid has been utilised, such as higher education or skills development.

We carry also a series of different contributions to understanding China's re-emergence as a 'donor' or cooperator, especially with Africa. The other country given some special attention is Ghana, perhaps for obvious reasons, as it became the host for one of the latest of the High Level Meetings around aid effectiveness.

We should also announce in this issue that there is a new agreement to fund both NORRAG and *NORRAG NEWS* for the next four years. Swiss Development Cooperation and DFID (UK) are the agencies principally involved in continuing their support, but with support in kind coming from NUFFIC (NL). The last five years saw a dramatic rise in the formal membership of the NORRAG network, from around 400 to over 2,600. And thanks to the open access policy, there are many thousands more who can engage with the last 41 issues of *NORRAG NEWS*, even if they don't enrol as members.

Several new things will be attempted in this next four years, but one of them will be an attempt to re-engage with sister networks involved in the areas of education and training in different regions. We shall start with ERNWACA, the Education Research Network in West and Central Africa (www.ernwaca.org), and RedEtis, the network that is concerned with education, work training and inclusion in Latin America (<http://www.redetis.org.ar/>). ERNWACA has some 400 active members, and RedEtis some 2,900, including over 200 in Europe and North America. Readers of this bulletin will not need to be reminded of the politics of partnerships (see NN41). But all three networks are looking forward to exploring what this new strategic partnership could mean. Doubtless we shall understand better why there are only about 100 NORRAG members in the whole of Latin America, and why only a small number of the more than 500 members in Sub-Saharan Africa come from ERNWACA countries. Language is a key factor in the case of Latin America; there is already a complete version of NN in French; so language is not a sufficient reason for the small numbers in Francophone West Africa. Tri-lateral or triangular networking will be a new challenge for all three participating groups. But the ways forward will be mapped out at a first meeting in Geneva on June 24th 2009.

NORRAG members are encouraged to note that there is a very rich menu on offer at the biennial Oxford Conference of the United Kingdom Forum for International Education and Training (UKFIET) on the 15-17th September. There is a whole section of the conference organised by NORRAG, in conjunction with the RECOUP Consortium and with the UNESCO Centre in the University of Nottingham (<http://www.cfbt.com/ukfiet/>). Many of the contributors to that NORRAG and partners' section on The new politics of aid partnerships have given us a foretaste of the full papers in this issue of *NORRAG NEWS*. As usual there will also be a NORRAG open meeting within the Conference framework, and we shall let you know if there is a NORRAG UK Cluster meeting held on the morning of the 18th, immediately after the Conference.

We know that many of you read NN in order to get a short sharp insight into key debates, world conferences, and key published works. But we would also encourage you warmly to read the books and key papers by many of the authors represented here, including those such as Moyo and Easterly who were not able to contribute.

We also note that ERNWACA has just launched this month vol.1 no. 1 of the *Journal of Educational Research in Africa* <http://www.ernwaca.org/panaf/jera/en/>

Kenneth King, Edinburgh, Scotland, 19th June 2009

Editorial

Moyo on Aid Effectiveness and China in Africa

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As a critical commentary for more than 20 years (since 1986) on many aspects of international cooperation in education and training, *NORRAG NEWS* welcomes the recent debate about **To Aid or Not to Aid**, sparked by Dambisa Moyo. Everyone has joined in, including several of our authors in this issue. This special issue gives a sense of these debates, as well as engaging in some articles with Dambisa Moyo's critique of aid, including her appraisal of China in Africa.

Our own position has not been principally about whether aid is good or bad for the health or wealth of nations, - principally because there is no such a black and white possibility, when international cooperation in our field of education has covered such a range of activity, North-South, South-South, and East-West. It covers the new Chinese Volunteers Serving Africa, the multiplicity of university-to-university links programmes, the myriad of NGO education initiatives, both local and international, the new modalities of sector budget support, and direct budget support, as well as a whole range of journals, publications, commissions, consultancies and of course *NORRAG NEWS* itself! *NORRAG NEWS* has been supported first by Sida (Sweden) and then by DFID (UK) ever since it was launched in 1986. So even if, like me, you don't appreciate the term 'aid industry', it is a vast world-wide enterprise, and it is important to be aware of its history and development, whether in China, Japan or USA.

NORRAG NEWS, for its part, has sought to get behind the discourse of international cooperation, and clarify what this is about. We have therefore over the more than 20 years since we were established in 1986, examined much of the language and discourse of aid, such as the politics of 'development partnerships' (NN41), and the fascination with 'best practice' by donor agencies (NN39). Equally, when a new approach or a new phrase was born such as 'capacity building' (NN10) or 'sector-wide approach [SWAP]' (NN25), we have sought to dissect its strengths and weaknesses. We have looked critically at the 'targetisation of aid' (NN33), and the notion of 'education for sustainable development' (NN40). We have examined 'knowledge-for-development' (NN28) as well as the 'globalisation of development knowledge' (NN29). A good example was our special issue on the 'Language of Politics and the Politics of Language' (NN34). As much as anything, we have tried to give our readers a critical insight into the brave new world of world conferences, on 'Education for All', Higher Education (NN16), Adult Literacy (NN21), TVET (NN38), as well as the World Fora in Dakar (NN26), Jomtien (NN8, NN9), New York, Gleneagles (NN36), and Paris (NN16).

Moyo on Aid Effectiveness

So, if we turn to Moyo's *Dead Aid*, we are naturally inclined to understand some of its discourse. Our purpose, in this special issue, had been to assist readers to interrogate the aid effectiveness literature, and the rather abstruse world of the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action. Moyo's purpose, however, is to unseat the myth that aid can be made effective. Like the aid community, she is concerned to reduce poverty, and to offer economic growth to Africa, but to do so without reliance on aid. Her goal is an 'aid-free solution to development'. Why? Because, for her, the cycle of dysfunction that seems to characterise Africa, even if there current signs of promise, has its roots in aid. [We suspect that she would have enjoyed and profited from reading David Ellerman (2005) and Roger Riddell (2007), neither of whom is mentioned in her book or bibliography.]

As our concern in this special issue is with aid effectiveness, it will be useful to clarify what can be learnt from Moyo about why 'aid is not working'. So we shall look briefly at her take on aid effectiveness and also her admiration for China's approach to international cooperation. These are only, of course, two elements in her analysis.

Fortunately, she has in her book a short section on 'aid effectiveness: a micro-macro paradox' (44-47). What her paradox points to is that aid may appear to work, as a one-off, but it doesn't lead to sustainable long-term benefits. This is of course precisely the problem that many agencies have had with the so-called project approach since the 1990s – aid 'worked' at the micro-level because of the way that the projects were funded and insulated from the wider political environment; but project success did not mean wider system success. Moyo is correct to say that 'aid effectiveness should be measured against its contribution to long-term sustainable growth', and it is particularly viewed from this lens that she finds aid wanting (Moyo 2009: 44-5). She rightly contrasts the negative impact of food aid on small farmers with the buying, through aid, of food **from** African farmers and redistributing it to areas of need. Similarly, encouraging the local manufacture of mosquito nets she approves versus the sudden swamping of Africa with mosquito nets from outside. She notes that there needs to be much more of this kind of thinking – i.e. aid supporting what is already working and on the ground. From this example of effective aid, she turns quite suddenly to the history of aid from the USA to South Korea (45).

What is less clear is her view of aid effectiveness when it comes to aid from USA to South Korea. **She claims that as many US resources were poured into South Korea between 1950 and the 1980s as US gave to all the 53 African countries between 1957 and 1990.** However, it is precisely the Asian countries which she picks out as amongst the dozen or so that have 'experienced phenomenal economic growth' (29). It would be interesting to know if she thinks South Korea was an example of the 'kind of financial lift that Africa will need' – 'an equivalent of its own Marshall Plan'. A little later in the book (37-8), it turns out that South Korea along with some 21 others, such as Chile, China and Thailand, are the very ones which used to rely on aid but no longer do so. And in any case their aid flows have, she says, been **relatively small and of short duration.** But this was clearly not the case for South Korea; aid was very considerable and of long duration.

So is it possible that the problem of aid has been that, unlike South Korea, there has simply not been enough? Readers may want to recall the sheer quantity of resources that the former West Germany has been transferring to East Germany since unification. This amount – to the former East German *lander*, a single small geographical space like South Korea – has each year dwarfed the total amount that Germany has allocated to development aid, for the entire developing world!

It is a very good moment to review the idea that more aid might make a difference since the pledge of the Gleneagles Summit of 2005 to double aid to Africa by 2010 is far from being on target in June 2009; indeed only some 10% of what was pledged to Africa has actually come through, despite UK, Germany, USA and Japan being allegedly on course to meet their targets (www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/LB198537.htm). The same was true of the Monterrey pledges following 2 years on from the Millennium Summit of 2000. This conspicuous failure allows Moyo to claim that most donor pledges have gone unmet. Not that things would necessarily have been different if they had been met. People who believe that things would have been different if the pledges, targets and goals had been achieved are regarded, however, as ‘big-push’ thinkers. And Moyo is right to be critical of this tendency in the aid business, as readers of David Ellerman, in *NORRAG NEWS* (e.g. NN36) will recall.

So we have a bit of a dilemma so far in Moyo’s short section on aid effectiveness:

- Aid needs to build widely on what is there, and not just on micro-successes;
- Does aid need to be massive and sustained over time as in South Korea, or does it need to be of short duration and relatively small scale (e.g. the 22 countries that have graduated successfully from receiving aid [including S. Korea??])?
- Should there be targets such as 0.7% of GDP, the MDGs, Monterrey, and the G8? But if these were met, would that be different from the ‘Big Push’ approach?

Having raised some useful issues about micro/macro sustainability, scale, duration, pledges and targets, Moyo then switches the argument, and claims that the underlying problem of aid is its fungibility – the fact that moneys given for one thing can readily be diverted to another. In other words, aid can and does lead to corruption. Or in her own words ‘More grants mean more graft’ (46).

The last part of Moyo’s aid effectiveness section contains a whole series of large and quite serious claims – the most generalised being that the aid industry knows ‘in its heart of hearts that aid doesn’t work, hasn’t worked, and won’t work’. The second being that aid has had no appreciable impact on development. The third being that as aid to Africa has increased, growth has decreased, and hence ‘a direct consequence of the aid-driven interventions has been a dramatic descent into poverty’ (46-47). The last being that aid is not benign but malignant. It is not part of the solution; ‘it’s part of the problem – in fact aid *is* the problem’ (47).

The core reason for aid failing as a strategy, therefore, is that aid is an aide to corruption. The logic is this: that aid aids corruption; corrupt governments interfere with the rule of law, civil liberties and with transparency; this makes domestic and

foreign investment unattractive; this in turn reduces jobs and increases poverty; with growing poverty, donors give more aid.

What are we to make of Moyo's four pages on aid effectiveness? They are a powerful cocktail of some accurate assessment about what works, some estimates or guesstimates by other authorities, and personal assertion and generalisation. **Most important her comments are short, sharp, critical and eminently readable.** Which is what we ask our *NORRAG NEWS* contributors to be!

Moyo has no discussion of the Paris Declaration or the Accra Agenda for Action in her book. But can we blame her? She did talk about the importance of avoiding the excesses of the project approach, but she has in her book sought to keep clear of the complex modalities and architecture of aid. We can give an example of what she has perhaps rightly or strategically avoided.

Running alongside the shift from project to programme or sector, and even to direct budget support in certain situations, is a discourse amongst donors about the ownership of policy. Clearly, it is understood that policy should be owned by the national government, and that in situations where policies are appropriate, donors would support them through SWAPs or direct budget support. But what about situations where local policies do not accord with donor priorities? There would be **policy dialogue** to ensure that policies were, for example, pro-poor or pro-equity etc etc. There is therefore something of a contradiction in what came to be called policy-based aid, since aid is apparently also used to adjust or align policies which are not acceptable to the donor community. Yet the various declarations from donor countries such as the Paris Declaration of OECD are all about how donors (or what are now called 'development partners') should be harmonising and aligning their support with the government's policies. The government is the owner of policy, and is, in the overworked phrase, in the driver's seat.

The summation of this tendency in donor thinking is, indeed, the *Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness, ownership, harmonisation, alignment, results and mutual accountability*. To allow you to get a sense of the Paris discourse the following introductory summary gives a genuine flavour:

Scale up for more effective aid

We reaffirm the commitments made at Rome to harmonise and align aid delivery. We are encouraged that many donors and partner countries are making aid effectiveness a high priority, and we reaffirm our commitment to accelerate progress in implementation, especially in the following areas:

- i. Strengthening partner countries' national development strategies and associated operational frameworks (e.g., planning, budget, and performance assessment frameworks).
- ii. Increasing alignment of aid with partner countries' priorities, systems and procedures and helping to strengthen their capacities.
- iii. Enhancing donors' and partner countries' respective accountability to their citizens and parliaments for their development policies, strategies and performance.
- iv. Eliminating duplication of efforts and rationalising donor activities to make them as cost-effective as possible.
- v. Reforming and simplifying donor policies and procedures to encourage

collaborative behaviour and progressive alignment with partner countries' priorities, systems and procedures.

vi. Defining measures and standards of performance and accountability of partner country systems in public financial management, procurement, fiduciary safeguards and environmental assessments, in line with broadly accepted good practices and their quick and widespread application. (OECD, 2005)

It can be seen at a glance that encouraging and monitoring more effective aid is a massively complex project. But for those interested in the targetisation of development, the Paris Declaration also has targets for each of 12 key areas of assessment of progress in aid effectiveness. These would include such measures as the proportion of donors using partner country systems of public financial management. These are of course the very systems for which, in point vi above, donors are themselves 'defining measures and standards of performance and accountability'.

It is hard not to agree that Moyo was right to avoid getting into the intricacies of SWAPs, DAC and Non-DAC, Direct Budget Support, aid modalities, not to mention the Paris Declaration, and the Accra Agenda for Action. To do so, she would have to join the club and become an aid 'insider'.

But there is one other section or chapter in her book that we should examine, her chapter on the topic that the 'Chinese are our friends' (98-113). Like her, they too appear to want to stay outside the donor club.

Moyo on the 'The Chinese are our friends'

The chapter on China-in-Africa is highly relevant to this special issue (see other articles on China by Davis, Davies, Formica, Liu, Nordtveit, and King). What may be of interest is whether the Chinese are perceived to escape the Moyo criticism of being aid donors. Moyo analyses the famous Beijing Forum for China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) Summit of November 2006, and comments that it was at this summit that the Chinese government unveiled its Africa strategy. In fact, China's Africa strategy was unveiled 10 months earlier in January 2006.²

Her chapter contains a summary of the Chinese President, Hu Jintao's, speech in November 2006, which Moyo summarises as follows:

With this, he launched China's new multi-pronged assault on Africa, which would focus on trade, agricultural cooperation, debt relief, improved cultural ties, healthcare, training and, yes, even some aid (but thankfully only a small component of their strategy). (Moyo, 2009: 104)

As a matter of fact, the eight points of the FOCAC declaration of November 2006 could almost entirely be regarded as 'aid' (or ODA, official development assistance).

Here they are:

8 FOCAC TARGETS FROM THE BEIJING SUMMIT OF NOV 2006

² Moyo alleges quite wrongly that 'the Chinese had imported giraffes and elephants to make the African delegates feel more at home' (Moyo, 2009: 103).

To forge a new type of China-Africa strategic partnership and strengthen our cooperation in more areas and at a higher level, the Chinese Government will take the following eight steps:

1. Double its 2006 assistance to Africa by 2009.
2. Provide US\$3 billion of preferential loans and US\$2 billion of preferential buyer's credits to Africa in the next three years.
3. Set up a China-Africa development fund which will reach US\$5 billion to encourage Chinese companies to invest in Africa and provide support to them.
4. Build a conference centre for the African Union to support African countries in their efforts to strengthen themselves through unity and support the process of African integration.
5. Cancel debt in the form of all the interest-free government loans that matured at the end of 2005 owed by the heavily indebted poor countries and the least developed countries in Africa that have diplomatic relations with China.
6. Further open up China's market to Africa by increasing from 190 to over 440 the number of export items to China receiving zero-tariff treatment from the least developed countries in Africa having diplomatic ties with China.
7. Establish three to five trade and economic cooperation zones in Africa in the next three years.
8. Over the next three years, train 15,000 African professionals; send 100 senior agricultural experts to Africa; set up 10 special agricultural technology demonstration centres in Africa; build 30 hospitals in Africa and provide RMB 300 million of grant for providing artemisinin and building 30 malaria prevention and treatment centres to fight malaria in Africa; dispatch 300 youth volunteers to Africa; build 100 rural schools in Africa; and increase the number of Chinese government scholarships to African students from the current 2000 per year to 4000 per year by 2009. (King, 2009b)

These 8 FOCAC targets are to be achieved by 2009, three years after the Beijing Summit. In the way that they are laid out, it is difficult not to regard these as 'aid' commitments, and it is difficult to imagine that at the next Ministerial FOCAC meeting in Sharm el-Sheikh in November 2009, China will not find itself regarded as having pledged the above 8 targets to all the 49 African countries with which it has diplomatic relations. There is also little doubt that China will be able to report that it has successfully delivered on these (King, 2009a).

So we should underline the fact that although Moyo says that the aid component of these 8 items from the Beijing Summit is mercifully small, almost **all** of them are actually aid pledges, whether grant aid or concessional loans. What is important to recognise with Moyo is that China continues, despite these explicit aid commitments, to regard itself as ideally involved in South-South cooperation with Africa, not just in an aid relationship. In fact it is distinctly uneasy with the aid discourse, and shows little interest in being included in the donor clubs in most of the countries where it is operating.

Moyo makes the important point that it is Chinese foreign direct investment (FDI) that really makes a difference to the China-Africa relationship. She is correct in this. But she should perhaps note that it not just FDI, but also direct immigration of Chinese entrepreneurs into African countries that may also make a difference, along with the strong belief in people-to-people aid in its assistance projects. Moyo is very impressed at China's Africa partnership. So she concludes: 'China's African role is

wider, more sophisticated and more businesslike than any other country's at any time in the post-war period' (Moyo, 106). But she needs to acknowledge that China is combining a complex aid relationship, bundling grant aid, concessional loans and FDI along with a relatively unplanned emigration policy which is taking many thousands of Chinese citizens to Africa. It has been estimated, for example, that there are perhaps one million Chinese currently in Africa. This presence on the ground of Chinese entrepreneurs, large and small, from the Cape to Cairo, is what also makes China's aid and FDI different from any other donor. It fundamentally changes the enabling environment for some of its aid initiatives, reinforcing them, and creating a demand for items such as long and short term training aid to China, as well as Confucius Institutes, as a source of Chinese language learning (See Nordtveit in this special issue).

We would argue that Moyo's review of China in Africa would be stronger if she sought to acknowledge and position its increasing amounts of straightforward ODA. China, too, would appreciate her analysis more if she were able to justify her unfounded allegations of the coming 'Chinese domination'. Here is her summary in the final chapter called 'Making Development Happen': 'And it is in Africa that their (the Chinese) campaign for global dominance will be solidified. Economics comes first, and when they own the banks, the land and the resources across Africa, their crusade will be over. They will have won' (Moyo, 2009: 152). Even a cursory read will turn up a lot of such throw-away lines – whether about elephants and giraffes, about the role of aid in South Korea's success, or China's campaign for world domination.

It will be interesting to see if this lack of care and evidence will result in *Dead Aid* living less long, and being less influential over time than the *Lords of Poverty* by Graham Hancock, published exactly 20 years ago, in whose critical path she treads. He doesn't make it into her bibliography either!

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CHALLENGES TO THE AID BUSINESS-AS-USUAL?

Enhancing Aid Impact

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Keywords

Aid Impact; Effectiveness

Summary

This article notes that while aid is not the answer to development, if effectively used, it has the potential to put poor country economies faster on the road to sustainable development.

Extreme poverty, and the diseases and vulnerability which poverty spawn, kill far more people each year - probably as many as 16 million - than do the deaths caused by disasters and their aftermath which humanitarian aid is provided to help in part to reduce. Repeatedly over the past 30 years, political leaders of the rich countries have pledged to rid the world of poverty and to double the aid they give to help achieve this objective. Repeatedly, these leaders have failed to fulfil their pledges.

I am a strong supporter of development aid, and believe that far more is needed if the goal of eliminating poverty is to be achieved. However, simply providing more aid (important though this is) is no guarantee that the desired reduction in poverty will be hastened. This is, in part, because aid is not the answer to development, though, if used well, it has the potential to put poor country economies faster on the road to sustainable development.

Everyone recognises that aid's impact has repeatedly fallen short of its goals. In some ways this is understandable because of the central dilemma of all aid for poverty reduction- namely that the countries which need aid the most tend also to be characterised by numerous factors likely to undermine the impact of the aid they receive, such as an inhospitable climates, an underdeveloped infrastructure, weak institutions and governance structures, underdeveloped civil societies, and powerful elites able to manipulate markets, the media and parliamentary structures for their own narrow ends. Development aid works best in countries that don't need it.

However, aid impact is also reduced because of actions taken - and not taken - at the donor end. A major and continuing problem is that rich governments continue to give aid to further their own commercial and/or short-term political interests: the commercial tying of aid raises its costs to recipients by upwards of 25 percent above market prices, while the allocation of aid to further non-development objectives is a major reason why only a little over 40 percent of official aid goes to the poorest 63 countries in the world. Sometimes, individual agencies and those working provide inappropriate aid because they do not sufficiently understand the political context.

Beyond these factors, a major reason why aid's impact continues to fall well short of its potential occurs because of systemic problems directly caused by or arising from donor action or inaction. To their credit, in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness

signed in March 2005, the main donors formally acknowledged that things they do - or do not do - collectively undermine the impact of aid. This included their failure to work together more closely; their failure to provide aid insufficiently linked to the development plans of recipient countries; the increasing number of individual aid projects (up from 20,000 to over 60,000 in ten years); and the growing number of donors each recipient has to interact with (on average 25, but 30 recipients have to deal with 40 or more donors).

However effectively addressing aid's systemic problems has not yet happened for two reasons: the main aid donors have not been fulfilling their Paris Declaration pledges: "not enough" progress has been made as the final statement from the September 2008 Accra meeting held to review progress explicitly acknowledged; and some key systemic problems are still not yet on the donors' agenda.

If aid is to make an effective contribution to poverty reduction, it needs to be provided to each poor country that needs it, in a predictable and non-volatile manner within a long-term time horizon, and in sufficient quantities, with individual donors agreeing to make up for shortfalls (when one of their number fails to fulfil its aid pledge), and with aid allocations not driven and shaped by the commercial and short-term political interests of the major donor countries.

Further reading

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Reflections on the Paris Declaration and Aid Effectiveness

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Keywords

Paris Declaration; Rome; Accra

Summary

This article talks about the meetings in Paris, Rome and Accra as being "periodic anti-poverty pep rallies" that are more focused on raising publicity for the respective agencies attending, rather than being for information exchange. The author argues that, insofar as development can be effectively assisted by outside agencies at all, assistance needs to be more limited and indirect than is currently the case.

Since the start of the post-WWII era, when multilateral and bilateral official development aid essentially began, we have seen these odd gatherings of development officials in various cities to issue city-named declarations "renewing" and "strengthening" their dedication to more development aid. The meeting in Paris resulting in the Paris Declaration immediately followed the Marrakech Roundtable and the High-Level Forum in Rome and was soon followed by the High-Level Forum in Accra. These periodic anti-poverty pep rallies are perhaps best viewed from an anthropological perspective, but not being an anthropologist, I can only make a few remarks as a commentator on the philosophies and methodologies of development assistance (see Ellerman, 2005).

On the whole, the postwar official development agencies have not been a success (see Easterly, 2001, 2006; Dichter, 2003). Where development has been most successful as in East Asia, the official agencies have had little importance, and where the agencies have had the largest footprint, as in sub-Saharan Africa, development has made the least progress. Given that track record, it is something of an organizational necessity for the agencies to have periodic junkets to selected cities for pep rallies to assure each other of the necessity of their existence and the gravity of their mission.

If the purpose of these meetings was to "trade notes" and "exchange information" then one would expect to see a slackening of these physical gatherings in the age of the Internet and instant global communications. But the number of the meetings seems to be increasing rather than decreasing. Indeed, in addition to the "new" meetings, there is now the practice of having anniversary meetings of the X-plus-Ten variety. In any case, informational exchange is most useful at the level of the operational staff in the agencies, not at the "High Level" of these fora.

Another explanatory factor arises from the "advertising" activities of the agency heads in their relationships with their "principals" such as the political funding sources in the donor governments and the public at large. In terms of development impact, the funds spent on these repetitive junkets and talk-shops may be better spent in the developing countries, but such a "quiet" use of funds does not put the agencies on the "radar screen" of their funders. One needs a large showy meeting to achieve a certain critical mass to get public attention and to show the funders that the agency is actively doing something—such as to "reaffirm the commitments" by "strengthening," "increasing," and "enhancing" this or that so the use of their funds will be even more effective in the future. Since they have finally got it right, the declarations invariably call for either more money or still more money.

In addition to these organizational considerations, one might look at the philosophy of development assistance that is implicit in these meetings and their declarations. From the beginning in the post-WWII era, the explicit or implicit assumption in the development agencies is that development is like an immense "project" that is planned and implemented by the governments of the developing countries "in partnership with" (i.e., under the tutelage of) the development agencies. The crudest form of this philosophy was in the "Big Push" development plans of the 40s and 50s. The empirical results of the Big Push plans as well as the intellectual criticisms by development thinkers such as Albert O. Hirschman (1958) have discredited these plans in their crudest form.

But the general idea of development as a socially-engineered mega-project and even the big push idea (with new "escaping the poverty trap" rhetoric) is still there in the declarations of the agencies.

The key to escaping the poverty trap is to raise the economy's capital stock to the point where the downward spiral ends and self-sustaining economic growth takes over. This requires a big push of basic investments between now and 2015 in public administration, human capital (nutrition, health, education), and key infrastructure (roads, electricity, ports, water and sanitation, accessible land for affordable housing, environmental management). (UN Millennium Project, 2005: 19)

The various city-meetings function like the meetings of a top-level planning commission that will issue updated directives to guide the aid agencies and their national partners to better implement their "national development strategies."

Even for the physical infrastructure projects that could be engineered, the development agencies have now been surpassed by the private sector so the agencies have focused more on the institutional infrastructure where the project-mentality is quite out of place.

The keys to development increasingly lie in the realm of the policies, laws, and institutions of a society, and to change these requires indirect kinds of approaches—stimulating, fostering, convincing—rather than doing things directly. Why is it, then, that the majority of development assistance organizations continue to "do" things? And why do more and more come into existence every day with funding to do still more things? (Dichter, 2003: 7)

The overall point by Hirschman and other critics was that if an underdeveloped country really had the organizational capacity to implement such development mega-projects, then it would not be underdeveloped in the first place. A bigger, stronger, better funded and more harmonised and aligned push will not make such development assistance more effective, and will only increase today's massive aid dependency in the underdeveloped world. Insofar as development can be effectively assisted by outside agencies at all, that assistance needs to be more limited and indirect—"stimulating, fostering, convincing"—a message that one will not hear from the periodic confabs of the major development agencies.

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Missing the Point with Moyo

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Key words

Dambisa Moyo; Dead Aid

Summary

This article argues that we are spending too much time debating Dambisa Moyo's book, *Dead Aid*, that doesn't merit serious discussion, and too little discussing a subject that does: namely, how to increase the effectiveness of international aid in the world's poorest countries.

This is really a debate about two separate issues. The first is Dambisa Moyo's book and its claim that aid is an exercise in throwing money down the proverbial rat-hole. The second issue is touched on by William Wallis in his introduction to the blog: namely, why has *Dead Aid* generated such a heated and wide-ranging debate.

My view is that we are having the discussion on the wrong things. We are spending too much time debating a book that doesn't merit serious discussion, and too little discussing a subject that does: namely, how to increase the effectiveness of international aid in the world's poorest countries. The problem is not that Moyo is too critical of aid: in some areas, like corruption and the failure of African governments to tackle inequality, she is not critical enough. The real problem is that Moyo misses the point.

Perhaps it's worth recalling what is at stake. Half of sub-Saharan Africa's population – some 300 million people – live on less than \$1.25 a day. Most of them go to bed hungry. There are 3 million children in the region who don't live to see their fifth birthday. Most of these are killed by poverty-related infectious diseases. Around one-in-three primary school age children in the region are out of school. Those in school are often being taught in dilapidated buildings, without books and pencils, by poorly trained teachers.

In the world according to Moyo, aid not only fails to address these problems – it compounds them. If she's right, ethical responsibility and economic common sense dictate that it's time to turn off the aid taps. So is she right?

Her argument runs something like this. Africa has received 'a trillion dollars in aid' over the past half century or so (never mind the fact that the figure is wrong). Meanwhile, economic growth has stagnated and poverty has increased. The charge is essentially one of guilt by association: there's an awful lot of aid sloshing around in countries that are doing badly. Using the same logic, you could argue that fire engines are best avoided because you tend to find them clustered around burning buildings.

To be fair to Moyo she does have a shot at establishing causality. While Oxfam and Save the Children see aid as a lifeline for poverty reduction, *Dead Aid* treats it as a toxic stream that poisons political systems and distorts economies. It corrupts politics, in Moyo's account, because it relieves government of the need to develop a domestic tax base and establish accountability to their citizens. And it undermines economic growth by driving up the exchange rate, hurting small farmers in export markets – a syndrome known as 'Dutch Disease'.

If these arguments sound familiar that's because they are second-hand. Most of them are recycled fragments from aid critiques developed by William Easterly, Raghuram Rajan and others – and none of them meet even the most basic criteria for viable evidence.

Let's start with the association between aid and economic growth. This is a subject that has been subject to intense scrutiny. The best evidence suggests that development assistance has a variable but positive growth effect. The growth effect is strongest in the near-term when aid is directed towards economic infrastructure, and weakest – as you would expect – when it is directed to humanitarian emergencies. Best estimates by Steven Radelet and others at the centre for Global Development in Washington, suggest that each \$1 in aid yields about \$1.64 in creased income.

The economic growth effects are aid are far weaker than they should be. And this is a subject that merits debate. But Moyo's claim that aid undermines growth is just not backed by evidence.

What about 'Dutch Disease'? In Moyo's account this is a fatal affliction with no known antidote. Here, too, she adopts the tried and tested method of over-simplifying an important debate.

The sensible version of the Dutch Disease argument is as follows. Increased aid boosts demand for both imports and domestically produced non-tradable goods, including health care and education. When development assistance is directed through public spending, so the argument runs, the price of non-tradables must rise, pushing up the exchange rate and shifting resources away from tradable goods. Many of the same arguments have been used by Paul Collier and others to describe the economic distortions that can result from a surge in foreign exchange linked to the exploitation of oil, gas, and minerals – the so-called resource curse.

Dutch disease is a potentially serious problem for countries that are highly dependent on aid. However, the relationships are not automatic. Exchange rate distortions are likely to be strongest in countries where trade is restricted and production is at full capacity. If aid boosts supply capacity, for example by facilitating the access of small farmers to inputs, strengthening rural road systems, and building infrastructure, the macro-economic impact of aid will be more limited. This has been the case in countries such as Mozambique and Senegal. Similarly, governments can choose to sterilise the liquidity impact of aid through the sale of government securities or sterilisation bonds – an approach adopted in Uganda.

There is a more fundamental problem with Moyo's approach to Dutch Disease. In the last analysis, the macro-economic effects of aid are no different to the macro-economic effects of exploiting copper or oil. While managing the revenue streams from mineral resources poses difficult questions, no credible economists argue that countries should leave oil and copper untapped.

The point of all this is that *Dead Aid* just fails to engage with the real issues. Instead it offers grandiosely vacuous historical sweeps that point out the blindingly obvious. Take the observation that, going back over a few decades, aid has been associated with limited growth and increased poverty. Given that so much of it was distorted by Cold War priorities and pumped into the Swiss bank accounts of robber barons like Mobutu Sese Seko, Mengistu and, of more recent vintage, Daniel Arap Moi, why would you expect aid to generate growth and poverty reduction?

In some ways it seems a shame to introduce evidence into the fact free zone of the *Dead Aid* debate. But there is real evidence from the past decade that aid has made a difference. While the depth of Africa's poverty and the scale of past failures have to be acknowledged, so do the achievements. Let me mention a few:

- *Economic growth.* Up until 2008 sub-Saharan Africa's economies were experiencing growth of 5-6 per cent a year, equal to that for the developing world as a whole (excluding China and India).
- *Poverty reduction.* Improved economic performance has translated into poverty reduction. During the 1990s the incidence of extreme poverty in sub-Saharan Africa was unchanged – it started and ended the decade at around 58 per cent. With population growth, numbers in poverty increased by some 60 million. Since 2000 and before the economic downturn, poverty incidence had fallen to 51 per cent with 4 million coming out of poverty.
- *Human development.* Since 2000, sub-Saharan Africa has reduced its out-of-school population by 10 million. Primary school enrolments are growing at six times the rate of the 1990s. Countries such as Zambia, Senegal and Mozambique have been making extraordinary progress. Progress in child survival has picked up dramatically in countries like Ethiopia and Tanzania. Other indicators are also improving, including the prevalence of HIV/AIDS.

Nobody in their right mind would argue that these are 'aid success stories'. But it would be fanciful to believe that the progress achieved in poverty reduction, education, and health could have been sustained had the aid taps been turned off.

None of this is to detract from some of the real problems that have to be addressed. Moyo is right to highlight the importance of corruption. The problem is that she has nothing of note to say on the subject. Michela Wrong's superb book on Kenya, *It's our Turn to Eat*, captures the institutional malaise that feeds the problem. It should be mandatory reading for all NGOs and aid agencies, partly because it documents the way in which so many – the World Bank, DfID and others – colluded in the cover-up of practices that were asset stripping the Kenyan budget on an epic scale.

This brings us to the second point. Why is it that *Dead Aid* has tapped into such a deep well of support? It's not surprising that usual suspect aid cynics like William Easterly are leading a Greek Chorus of approval. But when Paul Kagame, prime minister of Rwanda, joins the fan club you have to ask what is going on? After all, Rwanda receives around \$30 per capita in aid – and development assistance has played a key role in supporting his country's recovery.

Part of the problem is that the debate on aid has been conducted on the 'two legs good, four legs bad' model. Aid over-enthusiasts implausibly argue that more aid means less poverty, essentially reducing poverty reduction to an exercise in plugging financing gaps. Aid cynics echo the Moyo refrain.

The upshot is that critical issues have been swept under the carpet. Corruption and the home-grown failures of poverty reduction should be more actively debated. So should the governance problems on the donor side, including weak coordination, a failure to use national systems and build national capacity, and an ongoing tendency to use aid as a lever for reform.

All of this begs the question as to why is Moyo generating so much media interest. As we are constantly reminded in the marketing blurb, she is young, female, African and an economist who has spent time in Goldman Sachs and the World Bank. If you're looking for a counterfoil to Bono, Sir Bob and Jeff Sachs and you want to have a 'two legs good four legs bad' debate on aid, what better approach than to pitch a young African woman against European rock stars and an eminent American economist.

Writing as a non-marketable, non-African, non-economist who has worked for Oxfam and the UN, two of Moyo's target groups, perhaps I should stay out of it. But perhaps participants in the debate might want to reflect on the thoughts of an eminent female economist who has also worked in the World Bank, and was the first woman to be elected as leader of an African country. This is how Sirleaf Johnson, President of Liberia, sums it up:

“Reducing aid would slow private-sector growth, stall poverty reduction, and undermine peace and stability in countries that are struggling to become part of the global economy.”

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The Commission for Africa (2005) Revisited

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Keywords

Commission for Africa; CFA

Summary

This article revisits some of the commitments and pledges that have been made with regard to education, in the context of some of the recommendations made by the Commission for Africa in 2005.

The title of this edition of NORRAG NEWS has to do with the idea of safari, of moving forward from one place to another. It is a helpful metaphor, and looking at developments affecting Africa as a journey divided into five- or ten-year stages provides a useful historical perspective.

1985 was the year in which Live Aid brought to radio and to television screens, the world over, the tragedy of famine in Ethiopia - images which continue to dominate, however unjustly, perceptions both of that country and of Africa more generally.

1990 saw the end of the Cold War period, and with it the rationale (though not, immediately, the practice) for using aid as an instrument of ideological support, where the political allegiance of a particular African regime mattered more than its governance and human rights record.

2000 was the year in which the Governments of the world committed themselves to supporting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), pledging to halve the proportion of people living in absolute poverty within fifteen years.

2005 was the year in which Africa was at the centre of the international stage, through its own efforts to make progress and through the work of the Commission for Africa (CFA), 'Make Poverty History', Live 8 and the Gleneagles Summit.

2015 is the year by which the promises of 2000 and the commitments of 2005 must be delivered. So as we move towards 2010 on our journey, it is not a bad time to take stock of what has been done and what is left to do; of thinking about whether 2010 will be remembered as the year in which the international community recommitted itself to delivering on its promises to Africa, or acknowledged that the political will to do so does not exist.

There are some encouraging signs. There is increasing recognition that (as the CFA Report stated very clearly) 'Africa must take the lead in this partnership' and that (as the June 2009 Report of the Africa Progress Panel rightly recognises) 'African leaders have succeeded in securing progress on multiple fronts over the past decade but that they cannot tackle the continent's current challenges alone'.

The global economic crisis, and the G20 Summit, have given impetus to another set of CFA recommendations, around the voice of Africa specifically and developing countries in general, in influencing decision-making bodies such as the IMF, World Bank and WTO. The G20 meeting at the beginning of April 2009 shows what can be achieved with strong leadership and political will. The question now is whether that leadership and political will can be summoned again over the coming period, culminating with the UN Summit in New York in September 2010.

There has undoubtedly been some progress on the donor front since 2005 - for example, against the CFA Recommendation that (consistent with the Paris Declaration of the same year) 'Aid should be untied, predictable, harmonised and linked to the decision-making and budget process of the country receiving it'. ONE's fourth annual DATA Report of June 2009 shows that a number of G8 countries are in fact making good progress against their development assistance commitments, with real measurable benefits on education and health outcomes, but notes that France and particularly Italy are performing poorly. A huge effort will thus be required if the goal of a doubling of official development assistance to Africa, from around \$25 billion in 2005 to \$50 billion in 2010, is to be achieved.

And of course it does not end there. The CFA recommended that the situation needed to be reviewed in 2010 and that subsequently 'a further \$25 billion per annum should be provided, building on changes in the quality of aid and improvements in governance'. The need, given the global economic downturn, is perhaps even more acute than originally anticipated. Can it be achieved? We shall see. In any event, 2010 will be a crucial year. The journey continues. *Safari njema.*

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The New Geopolitics of Educational Aid: From Cold Wars to Holy Wars?

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Keywords

Educational Aid; Geopolitics; USAID; Afghanistan

Summary

Using examples from USAID's involvement in Muslim majority countries, this piece looks at that the relationship between education aid and the new geopolitics of the war on terror.

Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s development aid to education in low-income countries was often provided on condition that recipient governments implemented a string of neo-liberal education reforms linked to structural adjustment policies and fiscal austerity. Many critics challenged the overemphasis on economics that was driving these reforms, both in the terms of the effects of fiscal austerity on already under-funded education systems and also the reliance on human capital theory to

calculate estimated rates of return to education. They argued that education was much more than 'human capital' and that the World Bank and others driving these reforms should go beyond this narrow understanding of the value of education, and recognise the positive social, political and cultural effects that education can potentially produce.

Today, that narrow focus of the major international donors and international NGOs appears to have been superseded by a much broader recognition of the role of education which recognises its central importance in the socialisation, citizenship and nation building process. While for some this may seem like a welcome return to earlier rationales, and a retreat from the harsh economism of the past, there are also dangers. One area where this switch of focus is manifestly clear is with aid to education in conflict and post-conflict countries, particularly those countries with large Islamic populations. While this might be a shift to a curriculum where peace and human rights education are emphasised, it can also lead to an increased focus on merging the security agendas of powerful bi-lateral donors and the policies and practices that they support in the field of education.

In the examples below I will focus on USAID, but many of the arguments can be extended to other key bilateral donors. During the Bush administration, education was increasingly seen as a key sector where the 'war on terror' could be waged, and while the language has changed under the Obama administration, the central thrust of linking development aid to national security objectives has remained intact. In June 2008, USAID released their new 'civil military cooperation policy' (2008), explaining their 3-D approach, incorporating Defence, Diplomacy and Development and stating that "Development is also recognized as a key element of any successful whole-of-government counterterrorism and counter-insurgency effort" (USAID, 2008:1). This whole-of-government approach is an illustration of the merging of security and development issues, leading aid agencies and the NGOs that receive funding to become embroiled more centrally in the politics of 'US national security'. While few would argue against the strengthening of basic and vocational education and training (wherever it takes place), the dangers of the politicisation of aid to education are everywhere, and many NGOs are increasingly concerned that they are becoming adjuncts and auxiliaries to the military adventures of the major Western Powers and their 'War on Terror'. International Development workers' status as 'force multipliers' (a phrase used by Colin Powell) finds its mirror image in being labelled as enemy combatants and the effects of this are reflected in the increasing number of humanitarian workers that have been killed in conflict zones, including education workers.

On August 13th, 2008, my friend Jackie Kirk was murdered by Taliban militants in Afghanistan along with three other aid workers from the International Rescue Committee (a US-based NGO working on issues of refugees and internally displaced peoples). They were attacked whilst travelling on the road to Kabul in a clearly marked 'IRC' car. Jackie was a brilliant Canadian gender, education and conflict specialist. The Taliban argued that Jackie and her colleagues were part of the 'illegal occupation forces'. She saw herself as neither 'force multiplier' nor 'enemy combatant' and her tragic death, and that of many other humanitarian workers that have died in Afghanistan and elsewhere reflect the much deeper and ongoing problem of the increased blurring of the lines between military and humanitarian operations in

contexts of war and conflict. More specifically, education itself is being hailed by the US led coalition as one of the major gains of the war in Afghanistan (and women's education in particular) and thus a clear target for those that seek to undermine the occupation. Similarly in Pakistan, aid to education has become a means to undermine 'Madrassa' type religious schooling that is blamed for fuelling anti-Western sentiment, and such aid is focused particularly on those regions where Taliban influence is strongest.

Furthermore, the relationship between education and the new geopolitics of the war on terror do not stop in the direct theatre of operations. Increasingly, as aid is being targeted at strategic locations in the post-Cold War world, education is seen as a vital mechanism in the battle of hearts and minds in the Muslim world (Indonesia, Yemen, etc). Investment in low-income education systems can also serve as a sweetener for cooperation in other domains. The increase in aid flows to Kyrgyzstan in Central Asia, and Djibouti in Africa represent examples of flows of aid to education Post 9/11 that occur in parallel with the development of US military bases used as launching pads for military activities in Afghanistan and Somalia respectively.

There is a narrative over the history of aid to education that goes something like this: During the Cold War aid to education was seen as being highly politicized, often lacking development principles at its heart, and directed instead at allies in the war against communism. The post 1990 collapse of the Soviet Union led finally to the possibility of focusing aid on poverty and of pooling resources towards those objectives. The MDGs, SWAPS and the Paris Declaration all reflect this aspiration. However there is a potential challenge/rupture to this narrative. The post 9/11 world has produced another common agenda to focus the concentration and attention of many Western powers. It remains to be seen whether the objectives of poverty eradication and counter-terror are mutually complementary, whether they will be given equal priority and focus, or whether the military and national security interests will, as in the Cold War, once again trump poverty and development objectives.

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**Does Aid Reduce Governance in Africa Where Peace and ‘Democracy’ is in
Danger?
Could we try Investing our Last Hope in Children?**

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Keywords

Aid; Governance; Africa; Moyo; Collier

Summary

This article asks questions about the impact that aid has on governance in Africa where peace and democracy are in danger. It draws on the experience from Kenya.

While trying to draft this short article, I was saddened by a tragic loss of our colleague in Pakistan. She was killed in a suicide bombing in Peshawar in the early hours of 9 June. Twenty other people were killed and many more injured in the incident. She was so sincere, warm and committed and we still have difficulties in accepting the fact that she had to perish so suddenly. It seemed absolutely unfair. We then shivered realizing that it could have been any one of us. This also made us think of hundreds more people losing their lives every day in conflicts and security incidents, and the risk of development built on fragile peace and stability. In other words this aid debate is also to be found in the lives and deaths of real people.

Moyo (2008) asserts that aid decreases self-sufficiency and governance. This widely-read and debated book asserts that foreign aid is not the answer to African development using the evidence from economic analysis. The main argument of the book is that there is a better alternative. Instead of relying on aid money, African governments should seek for investment from the international markets. This would force the governments to be transparent and prudent. She also stresses the importance and effectiveness of micro-finance at the community levels. However, this assertion leaves us wondering whether the most vulnerable would still be included in the agenda. In many countries, market-oriented policies have made the poorest more miserable. Even if AID is proven to be ineffective in governance, does this mean that withdrawal of AID would automatically promote democracy?

Paul Collier, once Moyo's teacher, published a near-sequel to his earlier well-acclaimed work *Bottom Billion* (2007). In *Wars, Guns and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places* (2009), Collier says "if democracy means little more than elections, it is damaging to the reform process." His view has strong confirmation from the violence before, during and after the elections in countries in the region, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Nigeria and more recently in Madagascar. Every time there is an election, we hold our breath and mentally prepare ourselves for the worst. His assertion that there should be more support for police and judiciary process makes sense. But, where can we start?

The post election violence in early 2008 in Kenya took many of us here in Kenya surprise. It was the worst scenario anticipated. Wrong (2009) concludes her book on

a detailed account of corruption in Kenya with the description of post-election violence she witnessed. This very skilled writer convincingly reminds us that the dire and ultimate consequence of corruption is the violence and ethnic killing triggered by the election.

Where is the answer? Should AID be stopped altogether and replaced by other alternatives as Moyo suggests? Should there be more AID for the rule of law as Collier suggests? How could we, in the Kenya situation, assure the safety and protection of the people still in the IDP (internally displaced people) camps and ensue they go back to their own multi-ethnic communities?

After the post-election conflict, primary school pupils in Nairobi were interviewed in TV news and they urged the government and opposition to meet so that they could resume schooling. They were clear, articulate and convincing - much more so than many politicians combined. Their plea was sincere. They wished the schools reopened for them and their classmates. We have seen the educational institutions harness friendship among young people with different religion and ethnic backgrounds. Young people might be more accommodating towards new ideas and they might be more idealistic. In Madagascar, in the midst of violence, a group of young people started a peace education initiative. Kenya's Ministry of Education has invested a great deal of time and resources on completing peace education modules. It might take time, but it might be worthwhile trying. After all, more than half of the population in the continent of Africa are made up of young people. We should invest in them our future and our hopes.

All views and opinions expressed in this article belong to the author herself and do not necessarily reflect UNICEF's organisational views.

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Towards A Global Fund for Education For All

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Keywords

EFA, Global Fund for EFA, FTI

Summary

This piece briefly assesses the state of the FTI and looks forward to plans to create a Global Fund for EFA.

Whoever chose the name Education For All Fast Track Initiative, popularly known as FTI, made a number of mistakes. Set up in 2002 the FTI convenes 30 bilateral and multilateral donors with a view to delivering on the promise made in Dakar in 2000 that any country with a credible plan to achieve EFA would not be allowed to fail for lack of resources.

There is no doubt that the Fast Track Initiative has played a positive role in some contexts, harmonizing donor efforts behind national education sector plans. This has reduced transaction costs for governments and in some cases improved the quality of planning. About 35 countries have now benefited from about \$1.5 billion of pooled donor funding through the Catalytic Fund of the FTI. On paper FTI now has a strong country level process, premised on local education groups which involve the government, donors and civil society. In practice however, there are a number of problems. The country level process is rarely as democratic as the ideals suggest and civil society rarely has a significant voice. The FTI has encouraged education sector plans that are overly focused on primary schooling - and whilst this is re-balancing a little with more attention to secondary schooling, the FTI has probably actively undermined investment in other areas of EFA, most notably adult literacy (the most neglected goal) and early childhood education.

There have also been serious problems with the disbursement of FTI funds, mostly owing to the World Bank imposing fiduciary and procurement conditions which sometime contradict the spirit of FTI and the principles of aid effectiveness agreed in Paris and Accra. The "fast-track" has in fact become a slow track and there is mounting anger at the World Bank's role in slowing disbursement. The Bank response is to say they have no choice as their hands are tied by their Executive Board (on which the same donor countries sit) - which requires them to attach these conditions to all Trust Funds managed by them. However, little effort seems to have been made to find creative solutions.

An additional problem is that FTI commitments are still short term. Countries desperately need predictable aid for education, not least because the biggest costs in any education system are recurrent ones - for teacher salaries. More teachers need to be trained and employed - especially in rural areas and especially in response to rising class sizes as enrolments rise. But FTI funds rarely support teachers, as governments

are reluctant to use short term funding to pay for a long term commitments. Where the money is used to pay for teachers it tends to be for a cadre of contract teachers or para teachers – which is exacerbating problems with the quality of primary schooling and de-stabilising or fragmenting the teaching profession.

Most seriously the FTI lacks the political clout and scale of ambition to seriously address the resource gaps – and so has failed to deliver on the Dakar promise. The very name FTI is elusive. It does not say what it is – so whilst the term resonates with an education policy elite it is meaningless to most politicians and potential funders. Put simply, it is bad branding. This may in part explain why it has not extended to more than 35 countries – and why 89% of children who are out of school around the world live in countries not supported by FTI. Indeed, although in some respects it is part of the design of FTI to focus resources on good performers this does leave major gaps, especially for high population countries with major education challenges and countries that are affected by conflict. Some efforts are being made to address this through a new “Transition Fund” but reforms in the FTI are slow and those around the table lack the political weight to make big decisions.

A major evaluation of FTI is now underway – taking place over more than a year. A preliminary report in April caused a major stir in the FTI meetings in Copenhagen as the tone was very critical and the donors around the table felt it was not constructive. However, the evaluation continues and will issue a final report later this year – which could be a catalyst for more rapid change ... perhaps indeed leading to a fast track reform of the fast track initiative.

One critical factor in this is the call for a Global Fund for Education for All. This has emerged over the past year, particularly from the Democrats in the US. Hillary Clinton appears supportive, having co-sponsored a bill calling for an increase in US aid to education (to \$2 to \$3 billion a year – up to a fourfold increase). President Obama also made references to a Global Fund for Education during his election campaign and some influential insiders are now working to make this happen. It is certainly a contested space, with some US NGOs calling for any new funds for education to go to USAID (so that the NGOs themselves can then gain access to large amounts of it through sub-contracting). However, there seems to be more support for the idea of putting a significant part of the new resources into a new Global Fund – not least to indicate a new multilateralism and in order to leverage other funding from other G8 countries. The problem is that large sums cannot be put into the existing FTI – as the FTI is seeking to fill a resource gap of only \$1 to \$2 billion – and it defeats the idea of leveraging others if the US fills the whole gap. As such the creation of a Global Fund – perhaps a radically re-branded FTI – gathers momentum.

One of the first papers on a Global Fund for Education was produced in December 2008 by Gene Sperling, former Clinton adviser and chair of the GCE (Global Campaign for Education) US branch. The GCE (an alliance of teacher unions, international NGOs and national education campaigns from 65 countries) then consulted its membership globally and produced a new paper in April 2009, explicitly calling for a Global Fund for Education For All. It stresses that this should not be a parallel or competitor fund to FTI and calls for the following elements of FTI to be retained:

- *A country-led process that harmonises and co-ordinates donor efforts behind a single government plan*
- *Civil society participation at country and global level governance*
- *Inclusivity of all low-income countries including fragile states*

However, there are a number of differences (or radical reforms from FTI) that are also highlighted:

- *A Global Education Fund would be an independent entity housed outside the World Bank*
- *The balance between bilateral funding and pooled funding would be 50-50. Currently FTI aims to mobilise 90% of funds bilaterally with just 10% going through pooled funds (Catalytic Fund, principally)*
- *It would address the full EFA agenda inclusive of early childhood education, adult literacy and all children, youth and adults including hardest-to-reach and discriminated-against communities*
- *It would have much higher level political representation than FTI*
- *It would have an annual pledging and review conference to ensure transparency and accountability*
- *It would offer greater predictability*

There seems a strong case for the development of Global Fund for Education for All – evolving out of FTI – to re-energise global efforts. The next year will be critical – not least as we are coming up to the final whistle if all children are to complete primary schooling by 2015. There is some hope of huge global attention to education in 2010 through the partnership of the Global Campaign for Education with FIFA, the World Football body. Billions of people should hear the call for attention to “1 GOAL: Education for All” at the World Cup in South Africa. This may add up to sufficient public pressure to persuade politicians to invest more in education both in the South and North. The target for the GCE is always both, as aid is not seen as a solution in itself. It is fundamentally important for national governments across Africa, Asia and Latin America to increase their domestic spending on education (to at least 20% of national budgets / 6% of GDP). GCE is doing growing work on challenging the macro-economic conditions imposed by the IMF that hold down domestic spending (see *Education on the Brink*, GCE 2009). But for many countries aid will play an essential role to fill resource gaps in the coming years. It is true that some aid does more damage than good – when it comes tied to conditions and imposed technical assistance or when the transaction costs for Ministries are excessive. Aid will only really be a constructive contribution if it comes in a harmonized and predictable way behind credible national plans. This is not as easy as it sounds. FTI was a first attempt. Now we need to see a second generation of global efforts to harmonise aid for education.

Aid Effectiveness: Paris and Accra in Historical Context

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Keywords

Aid Effectiveness; Paris; Accra

Summary

The language of Paris and Accra is now a well-rehearsed component of the discourse of aid. However noble the principles might be, the day-to-day realities of aid delivery and receipt insist that pragmatism, not idealism, prevails.

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (March 2005) and the consequent Accra Agenda for Action (September 2008) set ambitious objectives and standards for the entire development co-operation effort. As Kenneth King has pointed out at the very start of this special issue, the language of Paris and Accra is now a well-rehearsed component of the discourse of aid – country ownership, alignment of aid with country objectives, harmonisation of aid provision, a focus on results, and mutual accountability. Yet, as attempts mount to assess progress to date, there is growing unease. Noble as the principles might be, the day-to-day realities of aid delivery and receipt would insist that pragmatism, not idealism, prevails. Lead times and deadlines are simply too short to encourage the time and space needed to implement Paris and Accra faithfully.

Participants in development co-operation have had long exposure to the issues at the heart of Paris and Accra – a good half-century or more of reflection on aid effectiveness is evident. But much of the impulse that prompted the Paris Declaration itself stemmed directly from commitments in 2000 to the Millennium Development Goals. Time-bound, grounded in quantifiable objectives, and enjoying unprecedented levels and breadth of commitment, the MDGs demanded more than business as usual. But more than this, I would encourage a glance back at developments through the 1990s that helped shape climates of opinion in 2000 and 2005 and that might help explain some of the artificiality of Paris Declaration principles when put to the test of ‘real world’ practice. I see two key starting points here.

First, there were the attempts in the mid-1990s to achieve wholesale reform of the United Nations system. When UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali conceded that UN renewal starting with the reform of the Security Council was too difficult, his attention turned to the UN development co-operation effort. Very briefly, what was achieved was agreement that development-focussed agencies and programs across the UN system would harmonise their work at country level. A UN Development Group (UNDG) was established in New York in 1997, and ‘country co-ordinators’ were appointed to lead UN harmonisation efforts at country level. The UN Development Programme assumed lead agency and chair status for UNDG, and generally speaking it was the UNDP resident representative at country level who took local responsibility to promote harmonisation of UN aid efforts.

Second, I would point to the World Bank which, despite its official status as a UN Specialised Agency, would have none of this, refusing to join UNDG (it has agreed to observer status only). Partly at stake was the Bank's self-appointed status as global development leader, *pace* UNDP. More compelling was incoming Bank President James Wolfensohn's inaugural policy shift, summed up inside the Bank as the "challenge of inclusion," leading to Comprehensive Development Frameworks to guide the actions of Bank and borrower alike. From 1997-98, the Bank's language insisted on the principles of inclusion on two essential levels: (a) to incorporate in the development planning process at country level not only government but also local communities, non-government organisations, the private sector and even opposition parties, and (b) to reshape the Bank's working relations with bilateral agencies, other UN development agencies, regional development banks, international labour, the private sector and NGOs. Both of these were attempts to shore up the Bank's self-image of supremacy in development policy and assistance.

Thus, while UNDG was constructing – along the lines of inclusiveness – national level planning bodies to drive UN development co-ordination, the Bank set out on a parallel course, using its financial clout to ensure compliance, especially among highly-indebted countries, and claiming leadership status on a scale much wider than the UN system alone. World Bank and UNDP heads come and go, but the institutional strains remain in evidence. In this context it is instructive that it was the OECD's Development Assistance Committee that emerged – in the context of the MDGs in particular and their political reliance on a wide-ranging consensus right across the aid spectrum – as a champion of the principles of aid inclusion and effectiveness that set it apart from much of the jockeying for position evident within the UN system.

Among all the pragmatic concerns that prevent wholesale adoption of Paris and Accra principles, there is one dimension where unity seems to prevail. This involves the shift from *project-focussed* aid to *program-focussed* aid, this shift being regarded as a key driver of governance reform. As soon as donors insist at country level on good governance, policy renewal and pro-poor government policies, the inescapable need emerges for donors to speak with one voice on the content of such reforms. This has been, in my view, the most significant shift across the aid industry over the past two decades, and which lies at the heart of what Paris and Accra are all about. Individual agencies might struggle for the limelight, and the myriad of development actors might continue to find the principles of harmonisation too difficult and even irrelevant when under the pressure of tight delivery deadlines. But external donors know that prospects for post-Washington Consensus reforms in country-level governance are doomed when agencies fail to send a consistent and unambiguous message on reform agenda. That is the real lesson of Paris and Accra, one that can usefully predict those aspects that will stick and those that will quietly fade from view.

Further Reading

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A Matter of Evidence? - Reviewing *Dead Aid*

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Keywords

Dead Aid; Dambisa Moyo

Summary

The author argues that *Dead Aid* is not only one of the weakest books written in the last three decades on development assistance; it is also one of the most casual in its use of evidence.

When a Maasai uses his stick and spear to kill his neighbour's wife, nobody will argue that a stick and spear are not the right instruments for a Maasai to defend his cattle against lion. If we reuse this 'wisdom' to apply it to development assistance, it brings us to at least one conclusion: aid is and has been used in wrong ways many many times in its sixty years history and thus produced often poor results, but that doesn't say that the instrument in itself is wrong or inadequate and can not be used to bring economic and social progress. Much about the present discussion on aid and aid effectiveness can be said, but a first observation might be that in many articles, books and papers all aid is put in the same kettle and is then being boiled to a strange kind of unitary soup.

Dambisa Moyo is a young Zambian consultant with degrees in economics from Oxford and Harvard, who has worked as a consultant for the World Bank and Goldman Sachs. In her book *Dead Aid* she goes quite a step further than some of the other recent books on aid to Africa. She accuses aid of being at the root of all the ills in Africa. One quote suffices to show her conclusions and one is coming direct at the beginning of her book:

This is the vicious cycle of aid. The cycle that chokes of desperately needed investment, instils a culture of dependency, and facilitates rampant and systematic corruption, all with delirious consequences for growth However foreign aid perpetuates poverty and weakens civil society by increasing the burden of government and reducing civil freedoms Foreign aid does not strengthen the social capital it weakens it In the world of aid, there is no need or incentive to trust your neighbour, and no need for your neighbour to trust you Which is why foreign aid foments conflict. The prospect of seizing power and gaining access to unlimited aid wealth is irresistible. (Moyo, 2009: 49, 58-59)

These are strong statements, strong conclusions and the question is, are they substantiated by a flux of data and reports? Dambisa Moyo uses the 68 pages of the first part of her book to support these conclusions. They are not based on original new research, only on an overview of some of the literature on aid effectiveness. In the second part of the book (83 pages) she presents solutions for financing Africa's

development outside aid, via the international capital markets and via trade. That second part is sympathetic but not new. She fails to explain why expensive euro-bonds are a good alternative to free aid grants.³ She hails the China-Africa cooperation, which indeed is seen by many in Africa as an important alternative to the US, and rightly so. But she dismisses too easily some of the criticisms coming from Africa itself on this cooperation. She rightly observes that everyone could win from trade and points at some of the trade barriers that are still existing, but she fails to explain why only a few African countries were able to profit from the preferences that the Treaties of Lomé and Cotonou and the Everything But Arms initiatives were offering. That was not only because these preferences were rather limited, but the reasons lie in the African economies themselves and in their social development.

The most contested parts of the book and her presentation in the media are of course her conclusions and statements on aid. In her chapter three in 18 pages she is presenting her proof for the failures of aid, while in chapter four in twenty pages she argues that aid is 'a silent killer of growth'. These chapters are of course the ones where the problems start, because of the outspoken negativity and generalising nature of the statements.

The only 'proof' Dambisa Moyo has for her strong statements are some well-known regression analyses by Dollar, Burnside, Boone, Collier, Easterly, and Svensson, - all World Bank economists, and she could have quoted also some of the same type of analyses from IMF-economists. Then there are also some references to two confidential World Bank reports of 1992 and 1997. That is all. The point of course is that all these papers and regression analyses are highly contested and by many already for a long time are not seen as evidence that aid works or doesn't work.⁴ William Easterly is honest enough to conclude in a recent article: 'There is a vast and inconclusive literature on aid and growth'. He then indicates that 'virtually any result on aid and growth is possible and indeed all possible results have already been presented in the literature' (Easterly, 2008: 18).

What is important for an assessment of Dambisa Moyo's book is that she only quotes several of the papers that find negative relations between aid and growth or a positive relation between aid and corruption. In her bibliography there is the book by Finn Tarp in which Hansen and Tarp present a devastating critique on the Dollar, Burnside and Collier and a series of other papers, showing also that if they had used other statistical methods, they would have come to quite other, positive conclusions about the relations between aid and growth. This might lead to the conclusion that Dambisa Moyo is too casual in using the sources of her argument.

The same type of casualness (and carelessness)⁵ can be found in other places. One is that she puts all donors and thus all aid in the same box, while she should know that

³ It cannot only be because aid creates dependency, because Eurobonds do the same and at a far higher price (see the Latin American debt crisis of the 1980s) or the East Asia crisis of the mid 1990s.

⁴ I will not go deep into this, the argument against these regression analyses goes as far back as Roger Riddell's *Foreign Aid Reconsidered* (1988) and Robert Cassen's and others *Does Aid Work?* (1990). See also my review of Paul Collier's *The Bottom Billion* in *The European Journal of Development Research*.

⁵ There are many examples of disarray, but to quote a few: she places the Biafra war in 1971, makes UNDP one of the leading aid donors, suggests that Africa received most of the more than \$ 2 trillion in aid of the past 50 years (while quoting at the same time Kagame who states that Africa received \$ 500

not all of them propped up Mobutu with billions of dollars in aid. I quote Mobutu here, because he figures at several places in the book and nowhere does Dambisa Moyo explain why he got this support and why only from such a limited group of donors. In presenting the example of Sierra Leone in her argument that 'aid foments conflict', she indicates that the leader of the Revolutionary United Front in the peace deal wanted the chair of the board controlling diamond mining. She fails to explain that Sierra Leone in those days did not receive aid at all, and that indeed it was diamonds that fomented the civil war there, not aid.

What is more, I was able to lay my hands on the two World Bank reports she is quoting as follows: 'A World Bank study found that as much as 85 per cent of aid flows were used for purposes other than that for which they were initially intended'.⁶ Nowhere in these two reports such a statement or such a percentage can be found. It must lead to the conclusion that *Dead Aid* is not only one of the weakest books written in the last three decades on development assistance; it is also one of the most casual in its use of evidence.

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Does Aid aid?

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Keywords

Aid

Summary

The author of this piece has worked for 15 years inside major international organizations, and here offers a perspective on aid from "inside" the aid machine.

Fifteen years working for the World Bank, the ILO and the IDB certainly do not boost enough my credentials to give advice on the confusing Aid controversies. Yet, after these years, I have developed my own theories and prejudices. Here they are.

billion), thinks that the US was at the Berlin Conference in 1885, has the idea that the Marshall Plan targeted infrastructure, etc etc

⁶ *Dead Aid*, p.39.

NGOs, do-gooders, stern university professors and others rant about the evils of multilateral and bi-lateral agencies and their multitude of attempts to boost development. They denounce evil machinations, ideological bias, misdirected policies, incompetence and a myriad of other faults. I do not dismiss all or even most of their criticism.

However, in my humble opinion, these accusations miss the target. Being close or inside large organizations that try to help poor countries, I have seen thousands of well-trained staff doing their best to make a difference. In contrast, very few officers seem stupid, jaded, cynical or self-serving in what they do.

We all agree that, to a significant extent, many of these attempts fail or show results that are too modest, compared to what was spent. But the reasons for the disappointments are different.

As a collective, we just do not know how to do better. This is a far more serious matter.

Those countries that need the most are unable to deploy effectively the resources targeted to them. Surely, there is corruption. But is it powerful enough to explain the failures of Aid? The essence of the problem is that poverty and the lack of capacity to use Aid are part and parcel of the same predicament.

The efforts fail because local institutions are weak and disorganized. They are unable to transform Aid into development. This is the most vicious of the vicious circles.

The strident critics would be far more helpful if they tried to understand why honest approaches do not work and propose something better. But proposals to fix should consider legal constraints and practicalities. Even if donor governments and lending institutions could send officers with suitcases of money to wipe out poverty, there is no convincing evidence that this would produce better results.

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EMERGING CO-OPERATORS

**What Next for Aid and Development Cooperation Post Accra? - Towards
Triangular Cooperation amongst Non-DAC Development Assistance Partners,
DAC Donors and Partner Countries**

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Key words

Non-DAC development assistance providers; 3rd High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness; triangular cooperation; China-Africa-EU

Summary

The increase of development assistance from so called “non-DAC donors” brings many opportunities and challenges. China's engagement in Africa is perhaps one of the most debated examples of such growing partnerships. There is now an emerging consensus that more experience-sharing is needed between non-DAC, DAC and partner countries, as well as more inclusive dialogues on aid and development effectiveness at large.

Recent years have seen a rapid growth in funding from bilateral donors outside the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD. This group, often referred to as “non-DAC donors” for a lack of better definition, in reality consists of a very heterogeneous group of countries with diverse experiences of providing development assistance, often in the form of various South-South cooperation schemes.

While the “non-DACs” for various reasons have not been that vocal or involved in discussions on the Paris Declaration and aid effectiveness at large, it is clear that they already play a central role in delivering development assistance to, as well as engaging in broader partnerships with, developing countries.

Similarly it is clear that this increase of development assistance from so called “non-DAC donors” brings many opportunities and challenges. China's engagement in Africa is perhaps one of the most debated examples of such growing partnerships. This new dynamic is not only of relevance for the development and poverty reduction strategies of the partner countries in question, but for “traditional donor countries” and civil society organisations involved in development work. It brings to attention the need to rethink and restructure international aid and other types of cooperation and dialogues so that they are better suited to this new dynamic. This is crucial in order to ensure a common strategy for achieving fair and sustainable development.

Ahead of the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Accra in 2008, a special working group was set up which came up with recommendations on how to enhance the cooperation between non DAC, DAC and partner countries. There is now an emerging consensus that more experience sharing is needed between them, as well as more inclusive dialogues on aid and development effectiveness at large. However, while there has been a lot of talking, it is now high time to move from words to action.

One key recommendation on how to proceed which also was mentioned in the outcome document, “the Accra Agenda for Action”, is to develop triangular cooperation between non-DAC, DAC and developing countries to enhance aid and development effectiveness. This could be applied on China, Africa and EU

cooperation at different levels. The added value of such triangular approaches can easily be motivated by the fact that China, Africa and the EU are already interlinked in global trade and investment patterns which raise challenges where each could benefit from and play a different role in finding constructive solutions. It is however, important to stress that triangular cooperation should not be about EU “imposing itself” on the existing Africa – China partnership, or vice versa, and that African priorities and leadership are key.

Such triangular partnerships should be constructive and based on a genuine interest in mutual learning, focussing on solutions which contribute to fair and sustainable development. As such there is a need to move beyond the suspicion and “blame game” which at times have permeated the so called China-Africa debate. Both the western partners to Africa and China’s partnership with Africa have important positive experiences to share and both leave a lot to wish for in terms of their contributions to poverty reduction and sustainable development in Africa and elsewhere.

Secondly, such triangular partnerships should not be limited to government bodies but should include civil society organisations (CSOs). CSOs have extremely important roles to play in development in terms of identifying needs, coming up with constructive proposals, or acting as whistle blowers when things go wrong etc. Governments in Europe, Africa and China should give CSOs the space and support to be able to engage in triangular dialogues and cooperation with governments and among themselves to share experiences.

Triangular partnerships could be applied in different ongoing policy discussions such as climate change and finding solutions to unsustainable consumption and production models resulting in unsustainable resources extraction. In a post-Accra scenario for enhancing aid effectiveness, a triangular approach could be explored in discussions on the issues of policy space vs. conditionality vs. non-interference, which remain key sources of tension in aid relationships.

The non-interference principle is now enshrined in the Accra Agenda for Action in the section on South-South cooperation. However it remains unclear what it actually means and how it relates to widely agreed principles of social and environmental standards. China, and others, who practise this principle need to ensure that this does disregard the interests of poor people and the environment in partner countries. In the same way, traditional donors need to end their practices of pushing intrusive conditionalities on poor countries which override national democratic ownership. There is a need to find a common understanding beyond the limitations of both non-interference and conditionality practices in aid relationships with the objective to ensure true broad based ownership of policies in developing countries, and responsible social and environmental practices on the part of all those involved.

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The UK/China Development Partnership – Is it Relevant for other Developing Countries?

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Keywords

UK-China; DFID

Summary

DFID's partnership with China has been described as 'probably the most respected bilateral aid programme in China'. This article explains why, and asks whether this approach is relevant for other developing countries.

DFID has established a very successful development partnership with China. In a report released on 12 March 2009⁷, the International Development Committee commented that *“Over the last 10 years, the Department has built, within a unique and sometimes challenging context, what is probably the most respected bilateral aid programme in China. It has used limited resources to maximum effect, building influential relationships and highly effective aid projects from relatively small amounts of money. Central to this approach has been DFID's strategy of introducing small-scale pilot projects and, once their success has been proven, encouraging the Chinese Government to scale them up”*.

Most of the success of DFID's partnership is do with the nature of China as a development partner. China is unique amongst developing countries in its ability to draw on ideas and innovation from others (*“searching for truth from facts”*) and creatively build on them and roll them out across its vast country, pulling millions out of poverty in the process. When Deng Xiao Ping met Robert McNamara (then World Bank President) in 1978, he said: *“We are poor. We have lost touch with the world. But China is a big country. If we want to do something we can. But with the help of the World Bank, we can do it quicker and better”*. The China country programmes in both the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank are always the most

⁷ “DFID and China”, House of Commons International Development Committee, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmintdev/180/180i.pdf>

successfully performing portfolios, based on independent evaluation. This is largely because of the strong ownership and commitment of China to effective implementation of projects once they have been approved.

How could this be relevant to other developing countries? More effective state institutions seem to be one essential pre-condition. China's experience points to the importance of combining pragmatic, evidence-based, policy making with capable public institutions and a strong leadership that is committed to poverty reduction. Perhaps paradoxically, a lack of ideology could be another. Chinese policy making practices are generally based on a heavily pragmatic approach.

In general, China is committed to the global achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. One of the ways it demonstrates this is by its extensive programmes of South-South co-operation. China provides training to thousands of officials from developing countries, in various sectors, delivered by a wide range of institutions. Following the Global Poverty Conference in Shanghai in 2004, China established the International Poverty Reduction Centre in China to exchange experiences in poverty reduction. DFID and other international agencies work closely with it. DFID also works with individual line ministries in China, in particular health, water and agriculture, on supporting the exchange of experience in the relevant sectors, based on DFID's own programmes in China.

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Aid Effectiveness with Chinese Characteristics

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Keywords

Aid effectiveness; China

Summary

What role can China play as a relative new-comer to the international donor community? Looking at China's position towards the issues of aid effectiveness as stated in the Paris Declaration could provide insights into answering this question.

“A common answer to the question what aid effectiveness means for China was that Chinese aid is effective as it is concrete” (Davies, 2006)

China is one of the signatory countries of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness; however, analyzing its role in the complex paradigm of development assistance is quite controversial.

On one hand, the fact that China is itself a developing country, able to achieve an unimaginable progress in economic and social development in the last 30 years, does necessitate consideration of the country's developmental experience. On the other hand, many questions continue to be posed around the sustainability of Chinese development which has resulted in the international community taking a cautious approach towards using China's development process as an example for Africa.

The concept and subsequent debate around aid effectiveness existed long before the adoption of the Paris Declaration in 2005 but, despite more than five decades of efforts and funds towards efficacious aid plans, overall effectiveness is still far from being achieved.

What role can China play as a relative new-comer to the international donor community? Looking at China's position towards the issues of aid effectiveness as stated in the Paris Declaration could provide insights into answering this question.

The commitment to ownership and donor-recipient alignment as it is stated in the Paris Declaration could fit into China's policy on development assistance, as it is also one of the principles enshrined in China's South-South model of cooperation and its principles of mutual benefit and equality. The Forum on China Africa Co-operation (FOCAC⁸) is a platform that enables discussion and negotiation on a multilateral level amongst China, African governments and other stakeholders. The FOCAC process enables development projects in Africa to be more effectively proposed, selected and implemented. In order to leverage this, African governments need to have a strategic and coordinated negotiating position on China's Africa pledges, and to formulate

⁸ www.focac.org

policies in light of regional integration objectives and their own national agenda that is conducive to long term sustainable development.

This would lead to the conclusion that recipient countries are able to propose aid projects in line with their development strategies. A question, however, arises regarding the actors involved in the decision-making process. As China only recognizes African governments as counterparts for negotiations, it results in agreements being concluded at a very high political level, while the actors involved in the ownership principle (according to Paris Declaration and traditional donors) include civil society organizations and institutions representing a broad base of the population (parliament and other democratic institutions). An example of this high level practice could be China's decision to provide development assistance towards the creation of a Special Economic Zone in the mining sector in Zambia's Copperbelt province; however up to now very few details of the agreement have been made available to the general public.

Concerning harmonization, China's policy makers are aware that projects agreed on the basis of bilateral channels are *per se* more feasible in terms of the bureaucracy and stakeholders involved. However, China is conducting its foreign policy with the aim of being recognized as a responsible member of the international community, giving skeptical observers evidence on this point (from Sudan to North Korea). Becoming involved in harmonized practices (concerning methodologies and goals) of development assistance is part of building a sound international image for the Asian giant and it is part as well of the "peaceful development road" described in China's policy papers. An example can be drawn by the Memorandum of Understanding jointly signed by Exim Bank chairman, Mr. Li Ruogu, and World Bank Managing Director, Mr. Juan Jose Daboub, to facilitate cooperation in energy and infrastructure projects in Africa.⁹

Harmonization commitments are also a challenging task for China's development assistance system in relation to issues of accountability and transparency. The Chinese ODA system could be viewed as an inwardly accountable one, meaning that the legal and operational procedures for project implementation are formulated in a way that hold any actor (public or private) involved responsible towards Chinese and African institutions for the task it is expected to fulfil. As stated previously however, there is much less outward accountability and transparency, but this is true for Chinese as well as for African institutions. Lessons learnt can be gained through communication between the Chinese Follow up Committee (for FOCAC), its African counterparts and relevant stakeholders, on the impact of China's FOCAC commitments to Africa on economic and social level. As some development agencies have acknowledged (for example DFID China¹⁰), cooperation and dialogue with China on development assistance issues can represent a good opportunity to build understanding and communication towards the commitments of the Paris Declaration. This dialogue could bring a more holistic and comprehensive understanding of practices implemented in different systems, which represents a constructive way of working in the future.

⁹ <http://www.china.org.cn/english/BAT/211524.htm>

¹⁰ <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Where-we-work/Asia-East--Pacific/China/China-and-Africa/>

In addition, if it is true that greater effectiveness means greater pragmatism, China's development assistance procedures could help improve the practices of the international donor community; at the same time, involving China in the development of harmonized aid practices could assist in creating meaningful dialogue between it and the international community, including donor and recipient countries' stakeholders, leading to a new and more efficacious partnership over the coming years.

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New Voices in the Aid and Development Discourse: China's Growing Partnership with Africa

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Keywords

China; Africa; Cameroon

Summary

This piece looks at Chinese education aid to Africa, drawing on the example of China-Cameroon aid to this sector.

The aid and development discourse is constantly fueled with new terminology. Hence, the notion of "donors" and "beneficiaries" has recently been replaced with more egalitarian terms like "partnership" and "cooperation," often without much grounding in new practices based on a more equal relationship. At the same time, new actors in development cooperation have emerged in addition to the traditional agencies. These new actors include former developing countries such as China, which demonstrate a willingness to explore new models based on South-South cooperation, in many cases introducing a new discourse in the development and aid scene.

China has distinguished itself by being one of the world's largest recipients of aid (although the aid is going down dramatically) at the same time as one of the most rapidly growing donors. Also, China's own development has gained worldwide interest, because of the country's rapid economic growth. This interest was manifest at the 2006 Third Forum on China–Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), during which many African leaders expressed interest in the development path of China as an alternative to the Western development discourse and aid. The characteristics of Chinese aid seem to be related to the avoidance of grand discourse, and seem rather practical, often responding to recipients' specific requests. A further characteristic of the aid from China is its non-interference in the partner countries' internal politics.

Traditionally, an important part of China's aid has been in the domain of education. Key facets of Chinese educational aid to Africa can be found in the action plan deriving from FOCAC, 2006. A 2009 Forum, to take place in Egypt later this year, is said to have as its aim to consolidate aid and development cooperation initiated in 2006. In the education and training sectors, this aid covers five main areas: (i) provision of scholarships to African students; (ii) setting up of rural schools in Africa; (iii) training of African educational officials; (iv) establishing Confucius Institutes in African countries to teach the Chinese language; and (v) encouraging the teaching of African languages in relevant Chinese universities and colleges. In addition, China has a large program of capacity building for African officials in various fields. Furthermore, China has dispatched (Chinese) teachers to various African countries, has established research cooperation with a number of African universities, and has established research centers on Africa in a number of Chinese universities.

The case of Cameroon provides a good example of China's engagement with Africa. Three types of Chinese education aid to Africa will be illustrated here: (i) Confucius Institutes, which are providing language and culture-related training in host countries; (ii) longer term scholarships and short-term training for Africans in China; and (iii) stand-alone education projects.

Cameroon, with a population of 18.5 million of which 40% are under the poverty line, has modest oil resources and favorable agricultural conditions. It established diplomatic relations with China in 1971, and the education cooperation between the two countries has been becoming increasingly important since the 1990s, with the 1996 start of a Chinese Language Training Center (recently transformed into a Confucius Center) at the University of Yaoundé II. The Institute has observed a growing interest for Chinese studies, with an increasing number of enrollments every year. The same growing interest is noted in the scholarships given from China, which started to take off in 1995. Before that date scholarships were few, and correspondingly few Cameroonians were interested in pursuing their studies in China. In 2009, China emerges as the most important donor of scholarships (40 in 2009), largely because students are allowed to attend training from bachelor level and upwards, whereas most DAC donors focus on Post-Doctoral seminars and training. One reason for this difference is related to China's visa and immigration policies, which are very different from Western countries' policies. As noted by a Chinese Embassy staff, "our visa policy is not very strict as compared to France or the USA. People coming to China are not considered as illegal immigrants but as friendly ambassadors." Likewise, the training, both in the Confucius Institute in Yaoundé and in China (through scholarships given to Cameroonians), has two distinct functions: resource building and development, as well as cultural sensitizing about China ("building friendship").

In analyzing various Chinese education projects in Cameroon, it could be observed that China is a new donor – with a distinct discourse based on notions of "win-win," friendship and non-interference. Many of China's engagements were driven by FOCAC and international high-level visits, instead of being planned by an agency specialized in development cooperation. One reason for China's engagement may be linked to its international visibility and its "peaceful rise," i.e., the search to enhance a

foreign policy based on the preservation of peaceful and mutually beneficial relationships.

China's involvement in Cameroon seems to be slowly changing in nature, as the Chinese Embassy has been increasingly present and visible during education coordination meetings organized by UNESCO, the World Bank, or the Cameroonian Government. Also, the Chinese Embassy has confirmed its current information-sharing interest with DAC donors, and its willingness to coordinate with bilateral and multilateral initiatives; and even to co-finance projects. It will be interesting to see whether China in the future will keep its distinct vocabulary, based on win-win, non-interference and South-South cooperation, or if it instead gradually aligns its discourse and practices with the traditional donor groups.

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China's Cooperation with Ethiopia: is Aid Dead as a Strategy, or is it Alive with Ethiopia in the Driver's Seat?

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Keywords

China; Ethiopia

Summary

This piece briefly looks at the evidence of what China is doing in Ethiopia that might help explain in what sense China is a "donor".

We mentioned briefly in the Editorial the question about whether China could in fact be described as an aid donor even if it didn't like the donor discourse, and didn't see itself as a member of the 'donor club'. What is the evidence from what China is doing in Ethiopia, for example, that might help explain in what sense China is a "donor"? And in what sense is she engaged with the discourse of the Paris Declaration?

First some of the "aid" data in the sphere of education and training: China has sent to Ethiopia almost a hundred of its first young people to be seen as part of the Young Volunteers Serving Africa. They have been engaged in some of the same tasks as are undertaken by Japanese, US and British young volunteers in Ethiopia. China, secondly, has also just built in Addis Ababa its largest education project so far in Africa, a large Ethio-China Polytechnic College (ECPC); it is just about to start operating. Third, China has over the last 6-7 years despatched several hundred experts in technical and vocational training and in agriculture to help staff the expanding vocational and agricultural colleges. And there are others in medicine. Fourth, it has sent to China for long and short term training over the last 2-3 years some 700 Ethiopian trainees. Fifth, Ethiopia is going to have its first Confucius Institute later in

2009; it will be based at the ECPC. These are all in the human resource development sector, but what of aid elsewhere?

China is building in Addis the city's tallest building which will be the Africa Union Conference Centre. This is not of course an aid project for Ethiopia; rather it is an aid project for Africa within Ethiopia and in fact it is one of the 8 pledges of the Beijing November 2006 Summit. Even more dramatically, China is felt to have been engaged in transforming the urban landscape in Addis Ababa, as well as outside the capital. The ring road and many of the other roads cutting deeply into the old Addis Ababa are executed by the Chinese. Few people can tell which of these are commercial projects for which the Chinese have successfully bid, and which are Chinese aid. Outside the capital, China has allocated to Ethiopia one of the Special Economic Zones pledged to Africa in the Beijing Summit. So Ethiopia certainly figures prominently in the 8 pledges of that Summit.

Yet this doesn't translate into a discussion of China's aid policies and commitments to Ethiopia on the Chinese embassy in Ethiopia's website. There is an interesting speech on the website by the previous Chinese ambassador to Ethiopia, and a reference to \$800,000 US of food aid from China to Ethiopia. There is also a speech at the inauguration of the Gotera Flyover in Addis, but there is no use of photographs despite the photo opportunities provided by the huge college, the ring road, flyover etc etc. Nor is there any reference on the web site of the embassy to scholarship and training opportunities, except for a speech at the start of a bamboo training course in China for young Ethiopians. Compared to the web sites of other bilateral donors operating in Ethiopia (e.g. USAID: www.usaid.gov/locations/sub-saharan_africa/countries/ethiopia) there is little said about China's assistance to Ethiopia. The speeches emphasise much more the long-standing relationships, mutual respect and equality, as well as the new strategic partnership forged at the Beijing Summit of the Forum for China-Africa Cooperation in November 2006. They emphasise exchanges at all levels, political, cultural and economic, but they say very little that is concrete about what Ethiopia is giving to China.

As far as the Paris Declaration language is concerned, it is clear that China's projects like the Ethio-China Polytechnic College can be branded as separate or parallel Chinese aid initiatives. These are highly visible, even if they are not on the Chinese Embassy website. They are presumably negotiated separately with the Ethiopian authorities, just as other major projects like the German engineering capacity building project are. And as major projects, they are represented by separate offices in the Ministry of Education. But this doesn't mean that such projects are not 'owned' and 'aligned' with the priorities of the Ethiopian government; they certainly are high on the Government's agenda.

As to China's aid being harmonised and aligned with other donors in Ethiopia, this has not been the case until very recently, though there is some evidence that the Embassy would like to be more aware of other donors' activities. The official position in Beijing is that more collaboration with other donors is in order, according to a senior official from the Ministry of Commerce: 'He emphasised that aid delivery would benefit from collaboration between China and OECD donors, because of their comparative advantages and called for joint action in the field where mutual interests can be found' (Aid Effectiveness Seminar 2008: 6). On the other hand, it would be

interesting to know whether in some quarters in Africa, the 8 pledges to Africa from the great FOCAC Summit of 2006 in Beijing might not be almost as well known as the 8 MDGs. Presumably in Paris Declaration language, these 8 pledges from a single nation constitute a parallel process, not harmonised with other development assistance.

It may well be that for Ethiopia, China's **millennium** project of the fibre optic cables cutting across the entire country and the huge flyover in the capital, Addis Ababa, are as visible as the Millennium Development Goals. Here are the words of the Chinese Chargé d'affaires at the commencement of the Flyover:

'It is my conviction that with expertise and experience of Chinese engineers and cooperation and support of Ethiopian counterparts, the Gotera interchange will be built into a flyover of friendship and a flyover of the Millennium'.¹¹

A lot of donors talk of the crucial importance of the national government being in the Driver's Seat. China's spends more money than any other foreign countries in Africa in ensuring that there are adequate Roads for these much-discussed Drivers to use!

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The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC): What Lessons to Learn?

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Keywords

China-Africa; FOCAC

Summary

This piece looks at China-Africa cooperation, looking forward to the 4th Forum on China-African Cooperation (FOCAC), which is due to take place in November 2009.

The 4th meeting of Forum of China-African Cooperation (FOCAC) is due to take place later in 2009 in Egypt and already there has been much speculation about it. The most eager question being asked is what the Chinese government will say about the implementation of the 'eight steps' Chinese President Hu Jintao pledged to his nearly 50 African counterparts in the 3rd FOCAC meeting, which was promoted from ministerial level into summit-level; it promised that all the projects would be

¹¹ Speech at the signing of the construction contract, accessible at <http://et.chineseembassy.org/eng/zagx/t279758.htm>

implemented by the end of 2009. An associated question on the lips of keen China-watchers is this: in the aftermath of the 'eight steps', what new pledge will come out from the next FOCAC meeting?

Rather than study how much impact this newly created mechanism has so far brought to general bilateral relationships, the urgency to measure China as a new donor in a quantitative way is becoming a focus of observation. This wrongly-targeted monitoring does not happen just because of existing external intensive attention to China's engagement in Africa, especially during this world-wide crisis. As Kenneth King has pointed out, the tone that was reflected by the Chinese government in its statement of the Beijing Action Plan diverted itself from its usual orbit of promoting South-South Cooperation to presenting itself as a donor (King, 2009). This was perhaps not very smart especially given the large numbers of Chinese living below the poverty line. Chinese diplomats in each African country are now pressing ahead to finish all these FOCAC projects – the completion of which affects the diplomats' performance evaluation – but this is rather a tough task given the harsh situation in Africa. On the one hand these Chinese diplomats may feel it is too difficult to make sure their hosting countries' officials are cooperative enough to complete all these projects on time. On the other hand, African officials and diplomats resident in China complain that they lack real ownership in these projects, because they are all Chinese designed, carried out by Chinese, and often deviate from their original wishes of the Africans.¹²

In terms of aid effectiveness, just like traditional donors, China still has a long way to go; yet essentially, it has been a pursuit for at least 30 years since the Chinese government started to give up its former ideologically-orientated foreign policy. More precisely, the adjustment of China's African policy in the last 3 decades has been rather a process of exploring a feasible way of continuing with South-South Cooperation instead of becoming a donor in the traditional sense. FOCAC has only existed for ten years but needs to be understood in the context of the efforts by China over the preceding three decades to step onto the world stage, as well as with its domestic reform process. FOCAC was originally more a platform for the Chinese government to promote relations with Africa, for political, economic and cultural reasons, rather than as a mechanism for commercial relationships, let alone narrowly on aid in its traditional meaning. But it is worth noting how FOCAC can be presented as an aid relationship.

China's relationship with Africa has to balance Chinese economic demands with international demands concerning its responsibilities as a rising power; this is not easy. So it is understandable that the Chinese government sometimes shows more ambitions of its assistance to Africa as a 'responsible power'. The best thing China's aid has brought can't be found in the exact amount of its financial help, but in the opportunities for the recipient countries to share knowledge and technology coming from a similar state which was almost in the same starting point with them 50 years ago or less. For the Chinese, the greatest benefit from these assistance projects is the precious overseas experiences which have so far greatly broadened the horizon of

¹² Interviews to Chinese diplomats in Africa, African officials and African diplomats in China, since January 2009 till May 2009 in some African countries and Beijing.

Chinese enterprises on their way to “going global”.¹³ Far from being a carefully preconceived geopolitical strategy, this is just one of the cooperative points with Africa that the Chinese so far have identified in a long process of ‘crossing the river by groping the stones’.

How the Chinese government dynamically learns from its experience with development and how it objectively and calmly perceives itself on the world stage might be the most important factors for the coming meeting in Egypt. As for the deliveries to Africa via FOCAC, the mere implementation of quantitative promises *per se* is questionable, let alone the one-sided analysis. The key issue will be the **quality of** what China has offered to Africa.

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Beyond Aid: The Case of Further Education and Training in South Africa, 1994-2009

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Key words

South Africa

Summary

This piece presents the example of South Africa as a case where ODA has been far less significant than either national funding or international policy borrowing.

There is considerable attention in this issue of Norrag News to the shifting modalities of official development assistance (ODA). My focus, however, is on a case where ODA has been far less significant than either national funding or international policy borrowing.

By the early 1990s, as Apartheid was nearing its end, South Africa had a technical college system that, in its white urban form, was largely reminiscent of its English counterpart but which also had a growing component of separate facilities for African, Indian and coloured learners.

In the early discussions about a new college system, South African actors were hugely influenced by two international models in particular: the American community

¹³ “Go global” as a goal for Chinese enterprises was raised in the early 1990s, and in 1995, the Chinese government started to make all the development aid projects, involving infrastructure, to be carried out by Chinese enterprises. Many a Chinese enterprises (private, and state-owned as well) goes to Africa through aid projects.

colleges and the British further education colleges (especially as they were transformed by the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act). Indeed, it is possible to see much of the subsequent development of the South African further education and training college sector, at least in crude terms, as the victory of the British model over the American.

However, the new model did not come about as a result of DfID influence. Rather, DfID remained resolutely uninterested in the college sector throughout the period. Indeed, I can recall one education advisor in Pretoria telling me that he was happy to meet me on one research trip but that I was wasting my time if I wanted to talk to him about the college sector.

Neither did it come through the influence of the World Bank's policy work on vocational education and training in sub-Saharan Africa, which supported many of the British reforms (albeit largely implicitly). The only Bank input into the sector was a report written by Richard Johanson and myself in 2003 - which was not acted upon.

How the British influence did work is important as it points to some influences that are not accorded much importance in typical accounts of aid to Africa. First, the initial debate about policy borrowing was heavily influenced by returnees from both Britain and America. This was bolstered by a large number of study tours sponsored by either the British Council or USAID.

Indeed, it was the British Council, rather than DfID, that was the key conduit for British ideas and its mix of cultural diplomacy and trade promotion was far more important than any considerations about new aid modalities. However, I want to suggest that the Council's way of working was actually more partnership-oriented than would have been the case if this had have been an aid project. The Council did not have the money or power to impose positions nor did it use British officials and consultants to deliver its programme. Rather, led by a black South African returnee, it partnered South African government and a leading business-funded agency as a broker of ideas. Crucially, the key learning took place through a series of practitioner engagements. 88 college middle managers were taken to Britain for three-month placements at colleges, whilst visits to South Africa were arranged for British college principals and managers from key organisations such as the Learning and Skills Council and the Association of Colleges.

My intention here is not to downplay the complexities of policy learning, which I will address in a longer version of this story. Rather, it is to highlight the ways in which a different type of relationship arguably had more success in developing a locally-owned system that, nonetheless, demonstrated major international influences. At the heart of the success here was clearly having the right people in place, most importantly a British-educated, black South African at the heart of the network. Equally important was the way in which South African college managers and leaders were able to engage with counterparts from Britain in a direct exploration of what worked rather than getting this filtered through agency staff. Moreover, the recent British experience of systemic transformation was also seen as highly pertinent by many South Africans. Although the British system was clearly more advanced, it had gone through many of the same challenges in the past decade.

Of course, South Africa is not a typical African country when it comes to the aid relationship. The largest ODA intervention in the sector (by Danida) was on a similar par to the largest project funded by the national Business Trust and was dwarfed by the state-financed recapitalisation scheme. South Africa had a far stronger overall capacity than most of its neighbours and a far stronger cadre of brokers of international ideas in policy and practice, including a large returnee group.

Nonetheless, this case does illustrate some ways in which policy learning can take place in a way that may be more equal than is possible in the ODA relationship even with its new language.

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Cuba's Policy of Internationalism in Education: A Social Justice Approach to Educational Aid and Collaboration

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Keywords

Cuban education aid;

Summary

This piece notes some of the types of international educational projects in which Cuba is engaged with other developing countries, and the solidarity principles underlying this aid. The author suggests that wealthy countries could perhaps provide more effective assistance in education if they were to consider the Cuban model of internationalism, and adopt some of its practices.

While building a strong education system, Cuba has also had over four decades of experience in internationalising education by assisting other developing countries. Cuban internationalism in education is hardly known at all by people in rich countries. Yet, it is extensive, and has continued to flourish despite the difficulties caused by the 1989 collapse of its former trading partners in the Eastern bloc, and the continuing economically devastating effects of the US economic blockade.

The following list indicates the types of international educational projects in which Cuba is engaged with other developing countries

- Provision of full scholarships to tertiary level students

Between 1965 – 1995 Cuba provided 114 countries with 32,067 of these scholarships, of which 9,944 were taken up at Cuban universities and 22,123 at Cuban vocational institutes (see Hickling-Hudson 2000). From 1980 to the early 1990s, nearly a thousand teachers from Zimbabwe were trained in Maths and Science in Cuba's Isle of Youth, studying in a Pedagogical Institute affiliated with the University of Havana. In the mid 1990s the Institute was still providing scholarships not only to

Zimbabweans, but also to Angolans and Namibians (Zeigler 1995: 27). Thousands of tertiary level scholarships are still being provided, especially in the health sciences and engineering. In 2004, some 13,705 students from other countries were studying in Cuba (Unesco 2006). Most students are from modest or impoverished backgrounds in their own countries, and would be unable to go to university without this scholarship. Students are trained for tackling development problems, and many commit to offer their services mainly in the most remote and socioeconomically deprived regions of their home countries once they return. The intention of the Cuban government is to use education as a means of managing socio-economic inequalities to support the development process (see Lehr 2008).

- Provision of scholarships to young students to study in Cuban primary & secondary schools

Between 1978 and the early 1990s Cuba provided primary and secondary schooling to some 18,000 students from 37 nations. Cuban teachers taught the African students Mathematics, the Sciences, Spanish and vocational skills, while visiting African teachers paid by the Cuban government taught them their own languages and the geography, history and literature of their home countries. Cuba thus carried out its aim of helping students maintain their home cultures while at the same time benefiting from Cuba's strengths in science, mathematics and vocational teaching (see Lehr 2008a).

- Provision of requested school infrastructure (buildings, classrooms)

- Contribution to school and university teaching

Between 1973 and 1985, some 22,000 Cuban teachers went to teach abroad, mainly in African countries. Cuban teachers continue today to teach overseas in universities, colleges, and schools, including schools in several countries of the Caribbean where they are helping to fill serious gaps in Mathematics and Science (see Hickling-Hudson 2004).

- Contribution to Adult Literacy and Continuing Education campaigns

Cuban adult educators have taught overseas in adult literacy programs in many countries. The latest approach is a train-the-trainer one in which Cubans train local educators to deliver systematically a Cuban-designed literacy method in the local language. Cuba is implementing literacy programs in Venezuela, Colombia, Brazil, México, Argentina, Guatemala, Haití, Belize, Nicaragua, Ethiopia, and Cape Verde. Each program is negotiated with the country's government.

- Contributing to the education of doctors overseas.

Cuban doctors are teaching medical students overseas by means of televised classes and hands-on instruction in local polyclinics (Venezuela, currently)

- Assistance with curriculum development in Spanish speaking countries (eg. Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia)

- Sector development and collaboration in programs, e.g. Special Education, Early Childhood Education, Sports and Physical Education

- Collaboration and training in university policy development and administration (Colombia)

Solidarity principles underlying Cuba's internationalist policy

What Cubans describe as 'solidarity' principles characterise the internationalist cooperation agreements that Cuba shares with numerous countries. Some of them are very different from principles underlying aid given by rich to poorer countries, as the following list might suggest:

- Absolute respect for the national sovereignty and self-determination of the countries involved.
- No conditionalities, no 'tied' aid
- Agreements take account of the different economic levels of each country, so that countries can help each other on the basis of solidarity rather than following only the rules of the market. [In education, this means that a cost-sharing principle that includes paying local salaries to Cuban educators is worked out with countries that can afford it, while the poorest countries are given Cuban assistance for little or no cost.]
- A variety of approaches to bilateral financing are identified
- The joining of a third party is admitted if this party agrees with the general solidarity principles. [The third party could be, for example, UNESCO, UNICEF, the UNDP, or it could be another country.]
- Technologies and knowledge are transferred without 'intellectual property' cost to poor countries in need of them, on the basis that knowledge is the patrimony of humanity, and not private property for profit. [This means, for example, that the Cuban-designed adult literacy materials and approaches to medical training are shared, not sold.]

A justice-based model: tackling the educational crisis

The OECD's Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (March 2005) saw a process of collaboration between donor countries and impoverished countries receiving educational aid. They articulated goals for an improved approach to aid that would make it more effective. A recent survey (OECD 2006) has found some progress towards these goals, but far from enough to make a dent in the crippling problems of the inadequate and flawed educational models inherited from colonial times, which continue to be entrenched across the globe (see Hickling-Hudson, Corona-Gonzalez and Martin-Sabina 2006). It is this situation that makes it imperative for all nations to consider different approaches to educational assistance and exchange.

Cuba is a poor country, population 11.5 million, with a per capita income about the same as that of Jamaica (around \$3,000), yet it has the vision, political will and organisational skills to have managed since the 1960s a massive, flexible and targeted global cooperation programme in education as well as in other fields such as health and engineering. Nearly all of the international education programmes listed above continue today to benefit substantial numbers, although some are on a reduced scale compared to the past when Cuba's economy was more securely within a framework assisted by Eastern Bloc countries. The only one discontinued is the big programme of international primary and secondary schools on the Isle of Youth, which educated thousands of children, mainly from Africa, in the 1970s and 1980s. Some of the largest international cooperation programmes that Cuba currently manages are in

Venezuela. There, under the ALBA cooperation agreements negotiated in 2004 with President Hugo Chavez, Cuba is providing Venezuela the assistance of thousands of doctors, teachers, education planners, engineers and other professionals, while Venezuela provides Cuba with significant supplies of oil and advice in the development of its energy sector.

It is unfortunate that Cuba's international cooperation in education has not been comprehensively evaluated, and this needs to be done, but scores of countries, nevertheless, continue to seek Cuban collaboration. Even the limited research in this field suggests to me that wealthy countries could perhaps provide more effective assistance in education if they were to consider the Cuban model of internationalism, and adopt some of its practices. As Lehr points out (2008b) "In spite of the international development community's efforts to raise basic education levels in low-income societies, the socio-economic divide is not narrowing. It is worth examining global justice-based educational models.....that can work in conjunction with other educational measures aimed at strengthening the capacity of the most vulnerable and socially excluded segments of society".

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Donor-Aided Reform of the Lao Education System – the Role of Vietnam

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Key words

Lao; Vietnam

Summary

Using the Lao PDR as an example, this piece reminds us that aid partnerships between donors and recipients are influenced by many other factors than the two parties themselves.

This article is based on my doctoral study in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), which has investigated the discourse of educational reform between donor and government.

In the article I argue that a simple area of negotiation between two powers is governed by many more factors than are immediately apparent. The point is not that a discourse is embedded in wider discourses, but that there are a number of discourses that don't come to the partnership table and that donors may try to seek simple situations in what are in fact very complex situations.

In Lao PDR a lot has been invested in partnership. Following the model of the Paris Declaration, a Vientiane Declaration has been signed. Government/donor working groups have been set up with a series of sector groups. Donors are open about their commitment to increased transparency, democracy, and human rights; however they are also working on less well flagged-up agendas such as winning hearts and minds, establishing world financial systems and maintaining good relationships in South East Asia.

Lao PDR is a socialist state, highly centralised and run by a Politburo, with no pretension to human rights or free speech. The country has had a close relationship with their neighbour Vietnam, which has acted as a big brother for many years. 10 of the 11 members of the Politburo speak fluent Vietnamese - a measure of their long term relationship with Vietnam. It is a joke in Lao PDR that what Vietnam does today

Lao does tomorrow, but one which is taken seriously. In discussion of education reform an official told me quite seriously; 'Mother tongue teaching isn't in our plans yet, but it will be by the end of the year because Vietnam is piloting a curriculum now'.

While Lao works with bi- and multi-lateral donors to boost its economy, and raise standards of education and health care, it is also trying to avoid donor-imposed conditions for political change and transparency. Donors avoid confrontation; for example the words 'human rights' do not appear in donor/Lao documents, the word participation is used instead. At the same time, Vietnam and China are both investing heavily in Lao. A wide range of investment includes agriculture, mining, road building and dam construction for hydroelectric power; much of the work is not supported by bi- and multi-lateral donor agencies because of the likelihood of environmental damage. In the north of Lao PDR, Vietnam is covering the land with oil palm plantations. More worrying to the Lao people are the concessions of whole districts and even areas of the capital city to the Chinese. China has played the role of wicked step brother in the past but now is courting Lao. Education is an important tool for wielding influence and cultivating up and coming Lao leaders through scholarships and educational, vocational, ideological training that takes them to China. Vietnam also wields influence in education through low cost technical support, scholarships, model school building, and so on. Both China and Vietnam are listed as members of the education sub-group of donors or development partners, but their representatives have never attended. Importantly investment/aid from both China and Vietnam comes without overt pre-conditions.

Lao is subject to strong pressures from its neighbours but internal factors also give direction to development. One of these factors is 'Lao-ness', a difficult concept to quantify but one exerting influence on the shape of development. In general Lao-ness refers to a set of values that Lao people see as defining them as different from the rest of the world. Foreigners become aware of it very quickly as they are measured against their closeness to Lao-ness. A consequence is that Lao people would rather work with Asian neighbours than European and American colleagues, because they are seen to be culturally closer and are more likely to be in sympathy with Lao's situation, and by implication less likely to impose 'foreign' solutions. To illustrate this further I quote a conversation with several Lao MoE staff who have received considerable support from international technical assistance. I asked them, 'What makes good technical assistance?' Three answers were given: the first, knowledge of the Lao situation. Further probing revealed this means respect for the Lao ways of behaving. The second was the ability to communicate, meaning expressing ideas clearly and not making recipients feel stupid. Only third came good technical skills.

What can be concluded from this brief discussion? The asymmetry of partnerships between western donors and governments has been discussed in the literature of development (see for example Wohlgemuth in Norrag News 41). However, in looking closely at the dialogue between government and donors in Lao PDR we see, rather than a simple power imbalance, a number of actors whose agendas are influencing the partnership. Mason (Norrag News 41) links a shift in the theory of development cooperation from the imposition of 'best practice' by the North to the partnership mode – from a modern perspective based in universals and absolutes to plural approaches which in turn, leads to a partnership model. I would argue that partnership

in Lao PDR tries to straddle both modes of operation. Both actors are bringing their 'grand narratives' (Lyotard 1984) to a partnership mode - that is universals such as socialism, Laoness, western values.

There is a danger of trying to fit partnership into what Giddens calls 'reified mode' with the danger of 'the erasing of indeterminacy'. Effort may go into working on the partnership process as if it were an object, something that can be moulded, manipulated and perfected from within it, rather than acknowledging the many factors and actors influencing relationships between donors and governments. We may be looking for tidy solutions to development in what is in fact a very untidy situation.

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A New Role for an Old Tale: Vietnam as a Donor to Laos

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Keywords

Vietnam-Laos aid

Summary

This piece explores the 'special relationship' between Vietnam and Laos with regard to the development of Laos' education policy.

Besides the non-socialist international donors, the 'special relationship' between Vietnam and Laos has ensured that Vietnam has had an important influence on how the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) has developed its education policy and the policy for ethnic minority education. The assistance to education began during the 1930s, during the time of the Indo-Chinese Communist Party. The Vietnamese government helped the Pathet Lao (or the Lao People's Revolutionary Party [LPRP]) to establish the first Teacher Training College in Xam Neua during the 1940s. After 1975 there were a number of cooperative and exchange programs to send civil servants, experts, and children of Lao leaders and veterans to study in primary, secondary, and technical schools in Vietnam. This was a form of exchange within the 'brotherhood of Indochinese' countries, which had fought against the French, United States, and the Royal Lao Government (RLG) (in the case of Laos). It was confirmed during an interview in 2004 that Vietnam was changing its role from that of being a revolutionary advisor to Laos to that of being a donor. According to the same source, Vietnam was focusing on assisting in, mostly, education and personnel development. From 2000 to 2005 the Vietnamese government agreed to invest 35 per cent of the

total funding of 4 million US dollars given by the Vietnamese government to the Lao government in the education sector. In May 2009, the Vietnamese government granted 67.5 million US dollars for 2006-2010 periods. Again, the education sector is reported to be a priority.

There are many ways to explain why the Vietnamese government changed its international-relations term from 'revolutionary brother' to 'donor' - one being a fear of losing the dominant role that Vietnam once had, during the first decade of the LPRP. Yves Bourdet (2002) observed this change and commented that it was an international 'fungibility'. This fungibility, according to Bourdet, refers to 'the possibility given a recipient country to shift resources out of the sector (or project) that receives aid to other sectors (or projects)' (2002: 113, footnote 5). Bourdet argues that the Vietnamese manipulate international aid and funding as if it were domestic surplus resources, and that the government can freely allocate these surplus resources to any projects anywhere, including Laos. He adds that this is only done to expand the Vietnamese influence in Laos (Ibid). Certainly, this influence is not only in some educational development projects (e.g., the development of boarding schooling for ethnic minorities). Vietnam thus maintains its key role as an advisor to Laos in the more modern form of international development advisor and donor.

Laos is not technologically or economically advanced and can hardly afford mass production of printed materials to distribute to its 'educated' population - leaving aside the fact that more than half of the population can neither read nor write Lao. The government has been relying on various external assistance (i.e. from Vietnam, AusAid, ADB, World Bank, UN agencies, etc.) both in the past and in recent years. In a way, it interestingly makes Laos a case of how national political agenda (i.e., Lao education for all children to be "Lao" and/or patriots) can be supported and speeded up not only by domestic nationalists but also by external assistance equipped with both knowledge and financial resources. Placing Vietnam as a donor, the Lao national political agency seems even stronger. Once again, thanks to Vietnam's previous role of being a red brother, it is now placed as the most favourable international donor as well as *the* national advisor.

Regardless of how highly it is placed among international donors in Laos, Vietnamese aid to Laos is viewed by international donors as being driven by political objectives. Yet, ironically, international donors do also share idealistic discourses (e.g., the education for all, equality, and poverty reduction schemes). Interestingly, the Vietnamese and other international donors do so in opposing contexts: that of the capitalist world versus that of 'Marxist-Leninist' socialism. As an apprentice, Laos will continue to rely on the Vietnamese advice and assistance. At the same time, Vietnam is also modifying its advisor role to Laos, from the former red brotherhood to the modernized international donor.

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**THE NEW AID MODALITIES
REVIEWED, WITH AN
ACCRA/GHANAIAN LENS**

The impact of the Accra Agenda for Action on the Donors in Ghana

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As host of the 2008 High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, Accra's name has become linked to the aid effectiveness agenda and commitments made by donors (bilateral and multilateral) and partner countries in this respect. Development partners in Ghana recognize the important inputs made by the Government for the HLF successful outcome. Ambitious and "partnership" action-oriented document negotiated in Accra puts to test development partners in their ability to deliver on the promises and partner country to ensure better, more accountable and transparent management of aid to development.

Development effectiveness lies at the heart of the AAA. Capacity development is the key tool to strengthen country systems, implementation capacities, monitoring capabilities. The Accra Agenda for Action strongly highlighted robust capacity as a determining factor for successful development process. Even though "capacity" was given significant attention in development cooperation in Ghana in recent years, neither the government nor development partners seem to be satisfied with the outcomes. Conceptual disagreements or practical differences lead to un-coordinated actions, which make it difficult to support country's capacity meaningfully. Development partners in Ghana jointly decided to prepare to be able to handle this issue in a more comprehensive manner. To do so, it was decided to fill in information and analysis gap on capacity development issues. It was necessary to understand what different partners were doing in this area, assemble the relevant bibliography, analyze the political economy determinants of capacity in the national context and draw the useful lessons from the international experience.

Another area of focus became the quality of dialogue between the government and its development partners. In 2007 development partners prepared the Ghana Joint Assistance Strategy aiming at better alignment of aid to the government priorities and improved delivery mechanisms, focusing on harmonization, increased predictability and reliance on the programme-based approaches. This year development partners started the review of the Strategy to analyze the ways in which it can gain traction in the government and serve as an instrument of dialogue.

Furthermore, the Accra Agenda for Action served as an inspiration and gave impetus for the government's own development policy, establishing a more rational and rigorous format of donor-government interactions. The development of the policy allows strategic consideration of the role that aid should play as the country is moving towards achieving its objective of middle-income status.

As the global development finances experience turbulence, it is natural that the scepticism about aid becomes widespread. No wonder, more developing countries now give preference to the "exit row". It leaves extra space in policy negotiations and

¹⁴ The views expressed in this presentation are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of his organization, the UNDP.

encourages the government apparatus to prepare for the times when the significance of aid will diminish.

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Politics and Policy in Education: Aligning and Harmonising with what Country Priorities?

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Keywords

Ghana; EFA; harmonisation; priorities

Summary

In Ghana's education sector, the extent to which donors have been content with government policies has varied over the past decade or so. While donor and government priorities were more aligned in the mid-1980s to the end of the 1990s, since 2002 there has been divergence. This article argues that today it is not so easy for governments to pursue policies which provide the level of resources envisaged in EFA. At the same time, donors are also operating in a world where it is more difficult to influence policies.

Much of the aid provided to the education sector in Ghana comes as sector budget support or general budget support (termed Multi-Donor Budget Support in Ghana, or MDBS). For donors to provide budget support they need to be generally content with the direction of policy and implementation; for budget support only works in an atmosphere of trust and a general agreement on priorities. It depends on the ability to maintain relationships even in the light of disagreements, and confidence that progress is being made in strengthening government systems to plan, spend and account for budget support disbursements.

In the education sector in Ghana, the extent to which donors are content with government policies has varied over time, in the past decade or so. When the New Patriotic Party (NPP) came to power after the 2000 elections, it signed up to the Education For All (EFA) agenda and wrote an Education Strategic Plan (ESP), 2003 – 2015, with a strong emphasis on expanding basic education, specifically attainment by 2015 of the six EFA goals and the two MDGs relating to education. It was in line with the main donors' approach to education and formed the basis for sector support programmes of DFID, JICA, USAID, Unicef and World Bank – the 'Big Five'. It also formed the basis for Ghana's bid for additional resources under the EFA Fast Track Initiative (FTI).

But soon after taking office in 2001, President Kufuor also put in place a parallel process of policy-making in the form of the President's Committee on the Review of the Education Reforms. The report of this committee in 2002 resulted in a White

¹⁵ The views expressed are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of DFID.

Paper in 2004 which formed the basis for new reforms, eventually introduced in 2007. Donors were concerned that these were not consistent with the ESP, and expressed these concerns to the Ministry of Education in March 2005 (Taylor, 2005). Most of the key donors were concerned that Ghana was moving away from the FTI 'indicative guideline' that 50% of the education budget should be devoted to primary education. Primary education's share of the budget was roughly at this level in the mid-1990s (Kosack, 2007), but had fallen to 40% in 2003 and fell to 28% in 2006, before recovering to 35% in 2007 after consistent donor pressure to reverse this declining trend, particularly from DFID. Despite the trend, donors continued to provide support through general and sector budget support, and with discrete projects.

This raises various questions, particularly relating to accountability and conditionality. How can a host government be held accountable for delivering on its international commitments to the MDGs and EFA goals? Who decides, and how, whether a national EFA plan is 'credible' or not? Should donors still align their support with country policies and priorities that do not seem likely to achieve the globally agreed goals? Or should they impose more conditions in a new attempt to leverage change? Should donors continue to shift the balance in favour of budget support operations? Or should they pursue a new projectised approach which gives them greater control over how their money is used? If donors do not trust government systems or share their priorities, why not provide more support through civil society and the private sector?

Donors re-entered the education sector in Ghana in a big way in support of the 1987 reforms of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC). Their finance was urgently needed, as educational expenditure had declined from 6.4% of GDP in 1976 to just 1.5% in 1983 (World Bank, 2004, p.7). They liked the focus of reform, on primary education. They provided both funding and intellectual capital, in the form of policy advice and technical expertise. Donor finance was aligned to government policy.

Today, it is not so easy for governments, in Ghana or elsewhere, to pursue policies and mobilise the level of resources required to achieve the six EFA goals. There are a number of factors in Ghana which have led to them being in this position.

The first is the strong influence of the economic and political elite on both education policy and the allocation of resources. Elite occupations are increasingly represented in the executive (Luckham et al, 2004, pp.37-38). They are more able to influence education policy and to place demands on the education system, in their own interests, rather than those of the poor. There was very broad representation of elite groups on the 2002 President's Committee.

Secondly, there is a tendency of elite families to send their children to private primary schools to strengthen their chances of securing a place in publicly-funded secondary schools and tertiary education. By sending their children to private schools (and increasingly to private tertiary institutions) and making demands for more resources to be devoted to secondary and tertiary education, elite families can insulate themselves from many of the problems of the education, training and employment experienced by the majority of Ghanaians. This is contributing towards the social

structure of Ghana becoming ‘ossified’, with upward social mobility becoming more difficult to achieve (Addae-Mensah, 2000).

Thirdly, numbers in tertiary education have increased greatly since the late 1980s, partly reflecting the success in increasing primary and secondary school enrolment. Initially, the increase in numbers in tertiary education, from 10,000 in 1990 to almost 100,000 in 2004 (Adu & Orivel, 2006, p.6) was secured at a decreasing real cost per student (Kosack, 2007, p.21). Since then tertiary enrolments have increased further, reaching 140,000 in 2006/07 (MoESS 2008, p.52), but expenditure per tertiary student has stabilised. Tertiary education’s share of total public education expenditure increased from 14% in 2003 to 23% in 2007 (MoESS 2008, p.115).

In these circumstances, introducing a policy that favours the poor requires a strong drive and ability to go against the grain. Nkrumah, for instance, broke away from the leaders who had brought him back to Ghana, formed his own party and exhorted its members to traverse the country to secure the allegiance of the common man and woman. Amongst his government’s policies was a strong drive to increase resources devoted to primary education. The 1987 reforms were also brought in by a leader and a government with a strong ideology in favour of the poor. Importantly, as was increasingly the case with Nkrumah’s government, it could force through its policies as it ruled unopposed. Today, perhaps, elite families have a stronger grip on power. So, whilst they can be officially committed to EFA, the forces identified above limit the willingness and ability of a government to orientate priorities and resources towards primary education. This was reflected in the 2008 election manifestos of both main parties, which hardly mentioned primary education.

Donors are also operating in a context where it is more difficult to influence policy and resource allocations. Donor finance is now much less needed in Ghana than in the past, with only 10% of total public expenditure on education in 2007 coming from external donor sources (including MDBS). Donors’ inputs in the form of ideas and advice are also less needed. Thus, whilst donor-financed studies and papers served as an input into the 1987 reforms, their influence waned in the 1990s, and donors were entirely excluded from the 2002 President’s Committee and ensuing reform agenda.

So, why do donors stay engaged? Firstly, whilst they have their concerns, they are still generally supportive of the evident progress in education and in public sector reform in Ghana. Secondly, they are still able to discuss policies within the education sector group and in MDBS reviews, even if they sometimes have to “agree to disagree”. Finally, donor influence ebbs and flows. The new NDC government has come to power (in January 2009) at a time when there is evidence – in the 2008 Education Sector Performance Report (MoESS, 2008), and elsewhere – that the 2007 reforms are unaffordable and unsustainable, as donors were arguing in 2004 and 2005. It has also come to power during a major world economic downturn. These factors may mean that the new government will have to spend some time re-thinking, re-prioritising, and making policy trade-offs. Because donors have maintained a good relationship with the government through the years, they are in a strong position to contribute to this exercise. Their staff and consultants may once again be appreciated for their technical expertise and international experience, and the donor agencies valued as financiers of studies and evaluations, as well as of programmes and budgets.

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National and Donor Politics of Language Policies in Ghana – Who really benefits?

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Key words

Ghana; Language Policy

Summary

This article examines language policy in Ghana's education sector and the role of donors and NGOs in its development. It is an interesting example of how external assistance can go beyond government policies.

Some considerable progress has been made by Development Partners within the Ghana Joint Assistance Strategy (G-JAS) (AFRODAD, 2008). A consistent decline in the level of external debt and good improvements in harmonization of processes and alignment of assistance are also reported (OECD, 2008). Yet The Ghanaian Chronicle (2009)[1] asserts that "almost all candidates of the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE), in the Upper East Region would not write a paper in Ghanaian Language even though it is prescribed by the West Africa Examination Council" (p.

10). Mr. Fabien Belie, the Regional Director of Education, revealed to the Chronicle that the Gurine language is more widely spoken in the region than Kasem, yet Gurine is not one of the Ghana Education Service (GES) approved languages for National Literacy Acceleration Programme (NALAP)[2] implementation. This situation clearly points to some of the existing gaps in the Aid Strategy.

The current world economic crisis is likely to send a signal to Development Partners to create more room for non-traditional partners to share in the harmonization of processes and alignment of assistance at a much higher level than what is now possible. Even though the NALAP is a “GES-led literacy initiative”, which draws on experiences of others like Germany’s GTZ in the Assistance for Teacher Education Programme (ASTEP) and the Dutch supported School for Life (SFL) projects, there is no doubt that the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is the biggest funding agency.

In many ways, Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) seem to reach out to people who are marginalized socio-economically and the minority language speakers more quickly and in more cost effective ways. For example the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) International and the local partner, the Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation (GILLBT), supported by churches and the local communities, have extensive experience in language development, literacy and translation. These have pulled resources together and within 47 years, developed written versions of over 30 out of 60 to 70 local languages in Ghana and facilitated hundreds of literacy classes in these communities.[3] If Development Partners would create room for more participation, more children would be enabled to use their own languages in school. However, several of these organizations do not have equal voices with economically powerful nations like the United States of America.

The eleven approved languages selected for the NALAP implementation serve 92% of Ghana’s population. However, The Ghanaian Chronicle (2009) seems to prove that the remaining 8% of the population is still significant if Ghana is to meet the Education for All (EFA) targets. In Ghana, and as in most multilingual societies, consideration for language to use as a medium of instruction will continue to pose great challenges. There are many contributing factors, of which internal and external migration, teacher distribution and emergence of mega-cities are just a few. In the past, there might have been little movement, which might have made it possible to streamline policies affecting language as a medium of instruction in schools. Therefore, it is imperative that researchers and practitioners further discuss this issue with traditional partners of the governments. Needs assessment is necessary. It has been suggested that if the EFA targets are to be met, then business cannot go on as usual (UNESCO, 2002). The replacement of the previous “English only language policy” (Komarek, 2004) with the NALAP should therefore not be considered as the absolute solution to the problem.

The problem is more complex and it is compounded by a multiplicity of factors such as the native language of the classroom teacher, the multilingual classroom conditions, frequent moving of parents with the children and increased cosmopolitan nature of schools. The search for pragmatic solutions needs to engage the attention of researchers, practitioners, policy-makers and politicians as well as the development partners. Whereas the transition from L1 to L2, appears to be the sought-out solution,

this takes place in a monolingual environment with great success. If the child becomes central to policy formulation, the story may be different. There may be the need to locate children where they are, using the best approaches to reach them to enable them survive in monolingual as well as multilingual classrooms. A combination of interventions and creative ventures in exploring more partnerships would be necessary. This would call for investment of huge resources, but if more players are included, much more would be achieved in cost effective ways. With the NALAP approach, it appears that the 8% of the population, which constitute the minority people with greatest needs would have to find their own support, if their language has to be used in school (Malone, 2004).

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The Changing Nature of Partnerships in the Education Sector in Ghana

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Keywords

Ghana; Partnership; Aid modality; Education

Summary

This piece examines aid partnerships in Ghana's education sector and argues that very few donors have modified their approach to meet with the Government of Ghana's desire to shift towards sector wide support and MDBS aid modalities and programming.

The Government of Ghana (GOG) in its last donor consultation (2008) which tabled the new "Ghana Aid Policy" has encouraged donors across several sectors including education to shift away from the project mode of financing as new modalities for delivery are put in place through sector wide approaches and multi-donor budgetary support mechanisms (MDBS). Over the last five years Ghana has embarked on a sector wide approach in the education sector which has encouraged but not always convinced donors involved in education that there is a need to change their approach to delivering aid - away from projects towards sector support. Donor financial support for the education sector between 1998 and 2006 has fluctuated between 7.8% (in 1998) to 6.54% (in 2006) with the highest level of support reaching 8.6% in 1999 for the donor share of total education spending. Unfortunately not all donors have been convinced that sector support and multi-donor sector support is the most efficient way to deliver programming, achieve results and ensure developmental change within the sector.

Interviews with over 20 donors in the Aid Partnership strand under the Research Consortium on Education Outcomes and Poverty (RECOUP) suggest that not all donors have modified their approach to meet with the Government of Ghana's desire to shift towards sector wide support and MDBS aid modalities and programming. Some cosmetic changes have taken place where donors are able to more consciously negotiate and capture their financing through the sector Ministries' budget. Research under RECOUP suggests that eleven donors out of 13 donors to the education sector continue to use project approaches to aid delivery. Estimates suggest that up to 400 million USD has been committed to the education sector through the project aid approach compared to the 60 million USD through the sector budget support (SBS) mechanism between 2008 and 2010 (McCarthy, 2008). Only two out of Ghana's 13 education focused donors are exclusively using the new aid modalities (SBS and MDBS) with some donors continuing to identify the general areas within sub sector support where funds should be spent (e.g. basic education or post basic). This is the case even if more than ten donors subscribe in some way to MDBS.

Ghana's future course for educational development is currently riddled with the question of where to invest... should the GOG continue focusing its major investments on improving quality at the primary level to ensure the attainment of

basic literacy and numeracy outcomes which has implications for all levels—or should major investment be moved towards the heightening interest in post basic education to ensure that unemployed youth who have completed primary/basic education are provided with viable options towards skills development and higher education in order for Ghana to attain middle income status by 2015? Experience and research suggests that the technical support and policy dialogue which donors have championed during the 80s and 90s have kept Ghana's education sector on a course towards achieving universal access and quality education attainment; with less technical support and a lowering of policy dialogue by donors resulting from a focus on government-led sector wide support, the desire for harmonized financial approaches, including with donors who are still caught in the project mode of delivery, the tensions of policy alignment may be rather difficult to address.

Further information

Research Consortium on Educational Outcomes and Poverty (RECOUP)

<http://recoup.educ.cam.ac.uk/>

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**CONTRADICTIONS AMONGST
THE NEW AID MODALITIES,
PARTNERSHIP PRIORITIES,
COUNTRY OWNERSHIP AND
THE EDUCATION AND
TRAINING SUB-SECTORS**

Improving Aid Effectiveness: The Need to Use Aid Where it Has the Greatest Impact

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Keywords

Aid Effectiveness

Summary

This piece calls for greater attention to be paid to the allocative dimension of education aid effectiveness; i.e., ensuring that aid is allocated to the purposes likely to most effectively enhance education outcomes in recipient countries.

Much work has been done in recent years to enhance the *technical efficiency* of aid delivery and use by “harmonizing” aid modalities, improving coordination, and fostering better ownership by recipient countries. This work culminated in the 2005 “Paris Declaration” on aid effectiveness. However, as shown by the September 2008 “Accra Agenda for Action”, the progress towards the targets agreed for 2010 has been modest.

There are many reasons for the persistent gap between commitments made at various aid conferences and actual achievements. In addition to governance and capacity constraints in countries receiving aid, there is a lack of realism about what effective aid coordination actually takes in terms of high-level political leadership in donor countries and implementation capacity in aid agencies. There is also a tendency to gloss over that donors have different objectives for their aid, that they often have different comparative advantages (and disadvantages!) for providing certain types of aid, and that the complex democratic processes that govern aid allocation and accountability may lead to approaches that are not always easy to “harmonize”. Therefore, “partnership” and slogans such as “the recipient country is in the driver’s seat” may mean different things to different donors, especially in a context where aid accounts for 25%¹⁶ of public education budgets in recipient countries, and where there in many countries is little accountability for how aid is used, while aid agencies are accountable to their national constituencies.

The challenges facing the Fast Track Initiative illustrate well the practical difficulties of aid coordination. However, to its credit, it represents a serious process to improve the *technical efficiency* of aid. There is no such ongoing process to improve the *allocative efficiency*, i.e., to ensure that aid is allocated to the purposes likely to most effectively enhance education outcomes in recipient countries. Not much can be gained from delivering aid more efficiently if the aid has little *additionality* (see below) or is not *used strategically* where it can most effectively help countries achieve their education goals. The effectiveness of education aid must be analyzed within such a holistic framework which both considers how the aid can help

¹⁶ Median share of aid in education budgets in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2006 based on data for 40 countries.

maximize the impact of *total education spending including aid* and covers *all levels and types of education*.

One reason for the scant attention to the allocative dimension of aid effectiveness is the often perceived full *fungibility* between *aid* and *domestic funding*. It is argued that, because money is fungible, no particular attention is needed for the use of aid as compared to domestic funding. However, the two sources of funding are seldom fully fungible, and the interaction between them is quite complex. First, as argued by Ms. Moyo in her book on “Dead Aid” (Moyo, 2009), the relatively high level of aid to Africa over several decades is likely to have impacted negatively on the countries’ efforts to mobilize sustainable domestic funding for development. To what extent does aid result in *additional* resources for education rather than just *substitute for domestic funding*, thus creating aid dependency without enlarging the resource base?¹⁷ This interesting question cannot be discussed in this short note. Suffice it to say that, for the same level of aid, the level of additionality as well as dependency created depends partly on what the aid funds.

Second, *the fungibility between aid and domestic funding does not work both ways*. While aid may substitute for domestic funding, domestic funding will not necessarily replace aid, should aid not be available. There are many reasons why this is the case, especially in countries with very tight public budgets and why, therefore, aid should target certain inputs recognized from well-performing countries to be high-impact inputs that *are unlikely to be prioritized by domestic funding* (see Fredriksen, 2008). These inputs are often “soft investments” such as policy advice, analytical work, knowledge-exchange and piloting of innovations to develop evidence-based policies and programs; capacity-building of local and regional institutions; and consensus-building among education stakeholders. In the years ahead, aid will also have comparative advantage in funding post-primary education.

Third, reviewing the purposes for which aid is used is essential at this time to ensure that aid priorities over the next decade evolve to reflect emerging challenges resulting from the remarkable progress since 2000 towards universal primary education. This progress suggests shifts in aid priorities, e.g., from *access* to primary education to *equity* and *quality*; from a single-minded focus on primary education to more attention to the other five EFA goals; from countries “on-track” to reach EFA by 2015 to “off-track”/“fragile” countries; and from primary to post-primary education and skills development.

The type of aid countries need to address such challenges is becoming increasingly intensive in knowledge and technical expertise. This reflects the sharp increase in the role of knowledge as a driver of development, and the fact that a country’s capacity to harness, adapt and apply knowledge is becoming increasingly important to its development. Given the role of education in creating, adapting and transmitting knowledge, it is particularly important to ensure that education aid helps countries ensure that their education policies and programs benefit fully from the global knowledge assets.

¹⁷This substitution effect also applies to donor funding, e.g., between the FTI Catalytic Fund and IDA.

Unfortunately, this need for high-quality technical support as an increasing share of education aid comes at a time when the aid community's capacity to deliver such support is decreasing. The technical expertise in most multi- and bilateral funding agencies is declining and technical agencies (such as UNESCO), established to provide "global public education goods", are severely underfunded (perhaps also under-performing?) There is no serious action on the horizon to address these issues or, more generally, to review the distribution of aid between *financial* and *technical aid* or between country-specific investments and "global education good" functions. This is yet another set of aid allocation challenges that deserves more attention, especially at a time when the global economic downturn may again cause education aid to decline.

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Priority for Basic Education and Sector-Wide Approaches – Dual Dilemmas for Japan?

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Key words

Basic Education; Japan; Aid Architecture

Summary

Japan's emphasis on basic education is not supported by globally used statistical evidence and its endorsement of the Paris Declaration is not practised in the form of full participation in sector-wide approaches. This short piece discusses views that are commonly held in Japan which are not necessarily known to the outside world.

The general perception towards Japan's education aid is that it is not serious enough in prioritizing basic education and that it is not committed to the sector-wide approach. How much is this true and to what extent? Where is Japan's education aid heading to?

Last year when UNESCO published its annual Global Monitoring Report, officials and practitioners of Japan frowned at the statement in the report: "France, Germany and Japan have shown a relative neglect of basic education ---" (UNESCO 2008: 217). The GMR uses OECD-DAC statistics which report that Japan's official aid to basic education was just 16% of its total aid to education in 2006 (commitment basis,

OECD.Stats Extracts). Possible counter-arguments notwithstanding, it remains true that the figure is low. The statement was not welcomed because Japan in 2008 was specifically stepping up efforts to include basic education on the agenda for the G8 Summit in Hokkaido-Toyako and in the capacity of serving as one of co-chairs of EFA Fast-Track Initiative.

Statistically, it is worth underscoring that basic education has constantly been taking the largest proportion over the latest years in education sector technical cooperation by JICA¹⁸ reflecting their conscious emphasis. Equally, the biggest part of various grant aid schemes under the management of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) is dedicated to basic education. These are consistent with the emphasis given under the Basic Education for Growth Initiative launched by the government in 2002. The counterweights that give higher education the highest share of Japan's total education aid stem from two sources: one is what is called the Monkasho scholarship program that maintains a steady and hefty size which has been larger than JICA-technical cooperation for the entire education sector, and another is loan operations that have tended to finance projects in higher education.

How then does Japan interpret all this? On the one hand, Japan highly values a balanced approach to education sector support and it has been applying it trying to make the best mix by using the strength of each aid instrument of grant aid, technical cooperation and loan aid. On the other hand, Japan attaches great importance to basic education to the extent that until early 1990s it kept a sharp distance from getting involved in substantive matters of basic education out of respect for the country's ownership (see Saito, 2008, for example). It is possible that this old perception is still affecting some of policy makers and practitioners, despite the fact that Japan is fully committed to work toward achieving the MDGs and EFA goals. To sort out this ambiguity regarding Japan's priority in education assistance, it needs to prepare a clear and consistent strategic framework that covers the entire education sector recognizing the needs of the country, discussions on the new aid architecture, and the comparative strength of Japan's international assistance.

A practical issue is whether and how Japan can align its assistance to the discourse of the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action. For the new and anticipated strategy to be effective, Japan has to find breakthroughs to several difficult challenges. Japan's preference for the balanced approach seems still tied to its aid instruments rather than following the sector-wide approach - Japan's strong field-level experiences tend to favor the traditional project mode. Some of its domestic constituency asks for visibility of Japan's contribution in the outputs/outcomes, often making harmonization and full-alignment (i.e. general budget support) very difficult. Demarcation of roles between MOFA and JICA that requires the former being responsible for policy issues and the latter for implementation may be preventing more active participation in policy dialogue within the donor community and with the country government.

¹⁸ Japan's aid for total education can be classified by instrument into four categories: (i) grant aid (119), (ii) JICA-technical cooperation, (iii) Monkasho scholarship (ii+iii: 603), and (iv) loan aid (236). Amounts in brackets are on commitment basis for calendar year 2006, current US\$ million (MOFA website).

A good sign is that key aid players in Japan are fully aware of these issues and are seriously discussing the future path for achieving better outcomes on the ground. The question is how much it will be able to satisfy its global and domestic partners.

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New Modalities and Aid Effectiveness: AusAID’s Education Policy in the Asia-Pacific Region

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Keywords

Aid Effectiveness; AusAID; Asia-Pacific

Summary

This article explores AusAID’s experience in forming more effective partnerships with national governments in the Asia-Pacific region.

Debates about donor aid and its ability to impact educational development have undoubtedly intensified in recent decades. Forming more effective partnerships with national governments in the Asia-Pacific region has been an important policy focus for the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID). The international focus on aid effectiveness has influenced many bilateral programs’ agendas, and includes the discourse of partnership and donor harmonization. International commitments such as the *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness* (2005) and the *Accra Agenda for Action* (2008) have given shape to these agendas. Indeed, concepts and rhetoric emerging from these commitments carry considerable power in shaping the way that aid policies are designed and implemented.

As an organization AusAID has reframed its approach to developing aid policy in the past five years, especially as it engages with *Paris* and *Accra*. Two major shifts influence the extent of AusAID’s reframed approach. The first is at an organizational level where the process of devolution has granted AusAID overseas posts increased program discretion. This management model has enabled a more local and proactive response to policy and programming with partner governments. The second change is that AusAID is now engaging in sector-wide approaches and working through partner government systems as modalities of programming preference. At the strategic and operational levels, this policy shift is notable compared with AusAID’s deeply ingrained historical practice of using project modalities in education. At the same

time, AusAID and its partner governments interpret sector-wide approaches in various ways.

The Australian Government's most recent *White Paper* on aid affirms that a goal is to place Australia at the international forefront of aid effectiveness, and explicitly supports the *Paris Declaration* (AusAID, 2006, p. 66).¹⁹ It recommended creating an Office of Development Effectiveness (ODE), which was established in 2006 to monitor the quality and evaluate the impact of Australia's official aid program. Indeed, more considered text is devoted to elaborating how participation will happen, why it is important to encourage good governance, why poverty is a challenge in the region, and how AusAID overseas posts need to have authority devolved to them. The *White Paper* indicates that "new and sensible sectoral approaches to education" should be developed in the Pacific, as well as the Philippines and Indonesia (AusAID, 2006, p. 52). AusAID's 2007 education policy embraces the *White Paper's* endorsement of program-based approaches (AusAID, 2007). Devolution theoretically enables these "new and sensible" approaches to be implemented in partnership with governments and other donors.

The challenge, however, is that these approaches take different forms at different posts and involve various levels of commitment from donors and partner governments. By way of example, in Vanuatu the current form of a sector-wide approach is the Vanuatu Education Support Action Plan (VESAP) signed in June 2008 by AusAID, New Zealand Aid (NZ Aid), and Vanuatu's Ministries of Education and Finance. While they have significant programs, AusAID and NZ Aid are not the only donors in Vanuatu. This raises the issue of harmonization. Arguably, harmonization as envisioned in *Paris* is and will continue to be a time-consuming and challenging process, particularly because of issues involved with donor agencies and partner governments aligning financial systems. Nation-states are bound to their own laws and constitutions.

On the other hand, while various donors and government partners support the idea of a sector modality in Indonesia, the donor community there is fragmented in spite of commitments to the *Paris* and *Accra* agendas. Given the number of studies that have been commissioned to examine the feasibility of a sector-wide approach and the wide-ranging opinions about the definition of such an approach, the policy environment in Indonesia for such a modality is anything but clear. *Accra* notes that further reform and faster action are needed to achieve 2010 targets to improve aid. In principle, AusAID and other donors have taken steps to develop partnerships, encourage country ownership, and become more accountable. Indeed the most recent DAC Peer Review of Australia recognizes AusAID's efforts in the latter (OECD, 2009). However, fractured agendas in the policy environment in Indonesia set serious challenges to meet the 2010 targets.

There is no doubt that donors are beginning to operationalize their commitments to *Paris* and *Accra* through donor working groups and working through partner

¹⁹ *Australian aid: Promoting growth and stability. White Paper on the Australian Government's overseas aid program* (2006) was written during the previous Howard Liberal Government. While the late 2007 election of the Rudd Labor Government indicates a shift to a more internationalist approach to foreign policy, a successive *White Paper* has yet to be published. Indications are that the Rudd Government even more strongly supports the principles of *Paris* and *Accra*.

governments. A step in the right direction? Indeed. But at the moment, this is where the effectiveness agenda comes up short. Aid agencies are busy places, and without being trite, meetings need to be attended, reports written up, evaluations considered, and liaising engaged in. Certainly, the process of devolution in AusAID indicates it is becoming a more responsive agency. The diverse perspectives and level of agreement among donors about the best way to engage in sector-wide modalities, however, continue to raise questions about effectiveness for the end users of aid.

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Benin: a Playground for Education Reform or a Battlefield of Donor Intervention?²⁰

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Keywords

Benin

Summary

This article gives insight into aspects of educational policy making and aid effectiveness in Benin and is based on empirical data from anthropological research.

The first time that I heard someone talk about the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in Benin was in January 2008 in my second year of fieldwork. I was doing research for my PhD project on international actors in national and local arenas of formal primary education. I had asked the country representative of an international nongovernmental organisation (INGO) why his organisation was carrying out projects in some places and not in others. He told me that this was mainly a problem of financing. Now that the budget support in international development aid, i.e. the

²⁰ For an extended version of this paper see: Fichtner, Sarah 2008. A playground for educational reform or a battlefield of donor intervention? Local debates on primary education and the New Study Programmes in Benin. Working Papers of the Department of Anthropology and African Studies of the Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz Nr. 95 (<http://www.ifeas.uni-mainz.de/workingpapers/AP95.pdf>)

support going directly to the recipient country's government's budget, had become the dominant mode of financial assistance. INGOs were no longer the preferred intermediaries of international donors. National governments would rather contract local NGOs to implement projects; even though they were often lacking the right competences, in his opinion. I asked, innocently, if this trend towards budget support and the focus on local NGOs was a consequence of national Beninese preferences in development aid modalities. "National policies?" he laughed, "national policies are decided in Paris!"

The first "partnership commitment" signed in Paris as part of what was then called the Paris Declaration in March 2005 commits "partner countries [to] exercise effective leadership over their development policies and strategies"; this is defined as "ownership". What did the INGO country representative mean when he said that national Beninese policies are decided in Paris, while that what was decided in Paris was in fact a greater commitment to aid-receiving countries' leadership in internationally financed development processes? Was the talk about national ownership only empty words in Benin? The latest education reform introduced nationwide in 1999 called New Study Programmes (NSP), was according to some of my informants a Beninese initiative, financed by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), but with a sovereign team of Beninese reform architects in the driver's seat (cf. BEP 2005: 25). Others, among them Lanoue (2004) a researcher affiliated with the *Centre d'Etude d'Afrique Noire* in Bordeaux, claimed that it was not the Beninese in the driver's seat but rather the American donors who had installed something like a supra-national administration of the education system that was competing with national administrations. The truth, in my opinion, was somewhere in between. National policy making is according to Ball (1998: 126):

inevitably a process of bricolage: a matter of borrowing and copying bits and pieces of ideas from elsewhere, drawing upon and amending locally tried and tested approaches, cannibalising theories, research, trends and fashions and not infrequently flailing around for anything at all that looks as though it might work. Most policies are ramshackle, compromise, hit and miss affairs, that are reworked, tinkered with, nuanced and inflected through a complex process of influence, text production, dissemination and, ultimately, re-creation in contexts of practice.

The New Study Programmes were based on a new pedagogical approach, the competence – or learner centred – approach, introduced in a number of sub-Saharan African countries in the 1990s (cf. Chisholm and Leyendecker 2008). Its implementation in Benin was inspired by ideas from Canadian and US consultants who were sent to Benin as part of USAID's technical assistance package. Beninese reform architects emphasized in my interviews the "bricolaged" results of this consultancy: they did not apply everything the consultants advised in the reform process, but placed the competence approach, drawing on insights from socio-constructivist and cognitive pedagogical theories, into an already existing national reform framework. The competence approach puts the pupil's competency (intellectual, methodological as well as social) at the centre of the learning process, not the actual outcomes or the teacher's objectives. In Beninese classrooms, however, I observed that this concept was conflicting with so-called traditional teaching methods centred on a rather transmissive rote system, and I was told that it challenged the traditional perception of the child in major parts of Beninese society as a passive and obedient "imitator" of adults' practices. The approach stood also in contrast to

structural constraints such as an insufficient number of sufficiently trained teachers and a very high pupil-teacher ratio. The renunciation of the competence approach, claimed by teacher trade unionists during my time of research, was out of question for reform implementers. They introduced some “corrective measures” but urged most of all for efficient teacher training to adjust the teachers to the programmes rather than the programmes to the teachers. This provoked critics such as Lanoue (cited above) and the leaders of the protesting teacher trade unions to think of the Beninese education sector as a laboratory of educational reform or a playground filled with foreign toys, tested on a trial-and-error base. But, referring to Ball (cited above) this is what policy making is about! Policy making is a negotiation process.

In some instances during my research the playground metaphor was replaced by the image of a battlefield with the combatants being representatives of different donor countries. As the reform was mainly financed by USAID its opponents were said to have been spurred on by the French, Benin’s former colonial power, important economic partner and prior role model for educational policy making. This allegation that I could obviously never prove in practice but that influenced in my view the public debate on the NSP and on donor cooperation – or non-cooperation – in Benin in general, was even pronounced at the Department for Decentralisation and Cooperation belonging to the Ministry of Education. This service was eyed sceptically by a number of donor agencies because of its high turnover rate of personnel and low coordination capacity.

“There is no coordination”, said the Education Program Officer of one donor agency. “The government should be there coordinating according to the Paris Declaration, but if the government is not stable and cannot master this sector, how can it coordinate the donors? People at the Ministry are very careful in decision making because they are afraid that the donors know the education sector better than themselves.”

The principle of “harmonising” donors’ actions laid down in the Paris Declaration was thus rendered ad absurdum by actors passing the buck: government representatives blamed the donor agencies for sabotaging each other, and donor representatives blamed the government for lack of inside knowledge and coordination capacities. In addition INGO representatives and trade unionists condemned what they perceived to be the government’s external dependency as opposed to the Paris Declaration’s principle of “national ownership”. And the pupils? They experienced a mixture of different pedagogical styles depending on the teachers’ age, competencies, training, supervision and political orientation.

Of course, this is only a very brief presentation of all the entanglements, obstacles and contradictions that are part of the “bricolaged” reform process and the safari towards aid effectiveness in the Beninese education sector. To get the real picture we have to dig deeper and move beyond the policy paper and headquarters talk; nevertheless this is a good point from which to start the discussion.

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Sector Approach, Business as Usual or Change of Behaviour?

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Keywords

TVET; Aid modality; Egypt; Jordan

Summary

Drawing on examples from TVET reform in Egypt and Jordan, this piece argues that the relevance of a specific aid modality is linked with the timing of the reform.

There is a call for change in the management of development. Aid flows are unlikely to make a serious dent into global poverty if donors do not change the way they go about providing aid and developing countries do not enhance the way they currently manage it. **Business as usual** will not only erode the credibility of development assistance in the North and South, but more importantly, it will undermine the international community's ability to reach the MDGs by 2015. Disappointing results could make aid, not poverty, history!

The Paris Declaration (PD), endorsed on 2 March 2005, is an international agreement to continue to increase efforts in harmonisation, alignment and managing aid for results with a set of monitorable actions and indicators. It is trying to change behaviour in the world of aid development. In some ways, it is an attempt to regain the lost ground and restore confidence after the uneven successes of structural adjustment. The PD does not address aid modalities (project or budget support) but indicators of progress of aid effectiveness. But it mentions the strengthening of capacity by "avoiding parallel implementation structures" and the result oriented framework for the assessment of sector programmes (indicator 11). So less money for technical assistance and more for general budget support. My contention is that the relevance of aid modality is linked with the timing of the reform.

Projects or budget support are two approaches to committing finance under its “direct arrangements” with partner governments. The great hope put on the budget support after the near dismissal of the project approach, beside expected simplification of procedures through lowering of transaction cost, was to revisit key issues such as the role of ownership of reforms, capacity building and conditionalities in development management. “Budgetary support shall be contingent on the administration of public finances of the beneficiary country being sufficiently transparent, reliable and efficient, and on well-defined sectoral or macroeconomic policies approved in principle by international financing institutions having been put in place. Disbursement of budgetary support shall be conditional on satisfactory progress towards achieving the objectives in terms of impacts and results” (PD).

The trouble with projects is that they assumed too much: they assume ownership, stability in policy directions, and above all they assumed institutional capacity to meet a number preconditions. In the field of education, take the issue of school autonomy: what are the chances of a pilot project on school autonomy amidst a heavily centralised system? It would have to bypass the current system. So projects had to protect themselves from the system rather than endorse it, which makes technical assistance in a way irresponsive to country circumstances.

So budget support deals at least in theory with problems that projects brushed under the carpet: sector approach, capacity building, relevant use of technical assistance, leadership, ownership. The focus is at least in theory on a country-owned national policy and strategy (for example, a PRSP, Association Agreement, or agreed National Action Plan). Domestic political considerations must drive reform processes and “ownership” of these reforms is critical for their successful implementation. Even if a public financial management (PFM) system is regarded as weak, this does not automatically exclude a beneficiary country from receiving budget support. Indeed, one of the objectives of budget support is to support the achievement of the goals of national policy and strategy by strengthening the PFM system through which such a policy and strategy is implemented.

The question is again: here again, don’t we assume too much? Of course, in the use of budget support it is said that there are no absolute “thresholds” in the sense that certain static minimum conditions in the area of national policy and strategy, macroeconomic policy, and public financial management have to be met. Instead, the key factor is the direction and magnitude of change. Whilst a rigorous diagnostic assessment is needed, a dynamic interpretation of the eligibility criteria is required, a case-by-case approach.

Does budget support make a difference as compared with the project approach? Well, may be. It makes a difference in that it points to the right problems. Take the leadership issue: in a sector reform, you need a leader and preferably not self-proclaimed. If a sector is one ministry (e.g. education), then the process can be smooth from preparation to implementation. But when a sector is distributed across several ministries, problems start. In Egypt for example, there are 28 public VET training providers. Who is going to decide on leadership of the Employment and TVET sector? There has been no leadership so far, that is no sector, so why should things change? Though defining a sector’s contours and identifying a leader is a problem, it stays a problem which does not go away when the financing agreement is

signed. A consensus may be reached, but it may be fragile. It takes a strong political commitment to keep a sector together: in Jordan, the Ministry of Labour (MoL) is leading the sector reform but it has less training centers than the ministry of education. So the MoL needs to quickly build their institutional capacities, which is a multidimensional task: on the one hand it is about building trust with other stakeholders and especially with the ministry of finance; on the other hand it is about adding new capacities such as planning and monitoring, in a ministry whose function has so far been limited to granting work permits to foreign workers. The change is huge. Is it realistic?

When a sector is redefined for reform purpose and includes as a result several ministries, the bargaining power of the stakeholders is weaker because a sector cannot be strong right from the inception phase of the reform. The issue of bargaining power is always underplayed and brushed away under the rhetoric of partnership, long after Douglass North (1989) has emphasized that institutional development depends almost entirely on it. If their voices are to be heard, stakeholders need to increase their bargaining power both within the sector (see the case of social partners) and with the donors. In all cases, there is almost no chance of success of a turnaround outside a political opportunity. A turnaround does not just require policymakers to sign something ("stroke-of-the-pen reforms" p 114). Reforms need first determined policy makers.

Jordan provides a very good example of this political opportunity: in the wake of the new National Agenda, the leadership, strategy and action plan have been built by a determined minister of labour who knew how to draw from a pool of expertise available, and especially from the European Training Foundation. The question of when (at what stage of the reform) is technical assistance most valuable is a key question. The problem did not arise in projects, but it is vital in budget support. The perspective of aid is first an incentive. The issue of technical assistance is not that the country does not see the money; it is if external professional people are of any use. And here timing is all: "Technical assistance during the first four years of an incipient reform, and especially during the first two years has a big favourable effect on the chances that the momentum of the reform will be maintained. It also reduces the chance that the reform will collapse altogether" (Collier, 2007). Jordan is a good case: first a massive injection of technical assistance to get prepared in institutional capacity (monitoring, organisation, planning), followed by a general budget support. But without a continued political commitment there will be no reform. We trust that these examples show that translating Paris into sensible policy is by no means a straightforward business, and particularly in the skills development 'sector'.

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Higher Education in Africa: Dead Aid or Dead End?

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More than 30 hours teaching a week for professors with hundreds of students inside and outside the lecture room, very little time and means for research, students' work reflecting the quality problems stemming from the primary and secondary levels of education, exams cancelled or postponed, strong social pressure for unrestricted admission, very limited adequacy between training content and the needs of the labour markets (formal and informal), expanding brain drain... the list of the multifaceted problems which most public universities in French speaking West Africa are faced with could be much longer: are they in a dead end, as aid is dead in that sector of higher education?

The social, scientific and institutional costs of the radical changes in aid to education which have followed the structural adjustment programmes in the 80s and the Jomtien Declaration in the 90s, are being paid to day by these universities. The passing of the pendulum from supporting secondary and higher education to basic/primary education has had a dramatic and devastating effect today, which is not due to the excess of aid but to the inconsistency of some aid policies which work without the necessary knowledge and strategic base. In the case of public universities, the lack of aid, or rather the lack of some sound international cooperation objectives and instruments, is the problem.

Aid has been dead for a long time in many of these universities, a solution that Dambisa Moyo is proposing for all sectors of activity in Africa. This proposal is based, among others, on the argument that aid creates corruption. Corruption exists in universities (and schools) as J. Hallak and M. Poisson have just demonstrated (Corruption in Schools, Corruption in Universities: what to do? IIEP, 2009), but aid has almost totally disappeared from universities! If Africa has received 24 billion US\$ of ODA, in 2008 which creates corruption like in any other business, we can suppose that the 1500 billion US\$ being spent the same year in the world for arms purchases must have created much larger corruption flows. But Africa received in the same year only 7% of the world arms exports. At the same time, one can wonder whether the impact of this "limited" phenomenon on development is not as questionable as the one of aid. This discussion shows that only a comprehensive and interdisciplinary analysis of the aid industry is meaningful.

In the same way, one can question the alternative proposed by Ms Moyo to aid: trade. Trade has started replacing aid in the higher education system of many countries, thanks to the General Agreement on Trade in Services through which some non-African renowned and less renowned universities are investing, franchising, exporting into national higher education 'markets' without much consideration for the internal effects of these actions on the public universities: These are: flight of the teaching staff in favour of private tertiary education organisations with higher salaries, low quality curriculum degrading the overall knowledge capital of the population, high fees keeping less privileged students in the weakening public universities....These

problems are so crucial that the so-called international community starts to realize that something has to be done to rebalance the higher education scene in many African countries.

The next UNESCO World Conference on higher education (July 09, Paris) will talk at length of these issues. More important, IDRC West Africa is launching a research programme on the governance of research in universities, as this element is a key one for a renaissance of higher education (HE). Of a different nature is the US-Africa initiative for HE, which provides some important funding opportunities, but which might be linked with the security issues as defined by the US in that region in connection with the visible Islamisation of the student body in many countries in recent years. What is needed is not only the 'traditional aid business' with scholarships and new buildings but also some creative ways to (re)connect African universities with the international research and training agendas, to find some alternative means of funding, to diversify the objectives and structures of HE, to look to academic expatriate networks not only in terms of brain drain but also in terms of intellectual capital accumulation, circulation and remittances...

One can wonder whether these issues were included in the curriculum Ms Moyo followed while she was preparing her PhD in Economics at Oxford University or her MA in public administration at the Kennedy School of Government. One can also wonder whether the concept of aid she uses still reflects the diversification and complexity of the many kinds of cooperative and partnerships agreements which do not boil down to the old fashioned "donor" perspective? One could hypothesize that a negative answer to these questions is counterbalanced by the fact that Ms Moyo might have launched a group of alumni from her Zambian university to raise funds to support some innovative developments of the latter? And that, unless considering higher education as a non politically correct conduit to "eradicate poverty", the support she provides to some local communities through the "Rooms to read" Foundation aims at preparing a next generation of better students? We don't have any answer to the these questions, but one can hope that the lessons she has surely learned from her work (2001-2008) in the debt capital markets management at the famous Goldman Sachs Bank will lead her to propose some innovative ideas and have a fresh and critical look at the recently contested neo-liberal financial instruments she proposes as well as to the innovations that some components of the academic and "aid" communities are launching to overcome the present crisis situation in universities.

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Knowledge-based North-South Partnerships: an effective model for promoting development in higher education?

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Key Words

North-south; partnerships; Higher Education; knowledge economy

Summary

This article illustrates the perceived benefits of partnerships in Higher Education that stress capacity building in both north and south. The challenges associated with the model and the need to imbed capacity building programmes into such partnerships to enhance shared understandings of mutuality is also highlighted.

Several development agencies have recently invested large amounts of funds in facilitating north-south partnerships involving Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to build human resource capacity for poverty reduction. Agencies such as the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), the Dutch Ministry of Development Cooperation, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Irish-Aid have developed programmes that engage universities in the north and south in collaborations to tackle global issues such as ill-health, illiteracy, conflict, human rights abuse, and environmental degradation that largely affect poor nations. The overriding rationale for most such partnerships has been to address capacity gaps in the south (King 2008). The learning and building of capacity within northern counterparts has been mainly a by-product of trying to develop capacity in the south rather than a primary aim in itself. Such partnerships have been noted to have contributed significantly to research capacity building and strengthening in the south, particularly in instances where the south has had ownership in initiating and implementing the research conducted [see for example Chege 2008 and Velho 2002 and 2004]. However, it is also clear that there is considerable room for improvement as far as fostering genuine partnerships where the learning is mutual and attaining a situation where HEIs in the north and south are viewed as equal actors and contributors to the global knowledge economy.

This article draws from the analysis of views of over 300 staff in 13 HEIs participating in the Irish-African Partnership for Research Capacity Building (IAPRCB), a programme supported by Irish Aid to build capacity for development research in Irish universities and in health and education in the four partner African universities. The unique aspect of the IAPRCB is that it attempts to build research capacity both within Africa (south) and Ireland (north). A major stakeholder consultation was undertaken, between June and September 2008, to document existing capacity in all 13 institutions and to identify what the stakeholders viewed as the added-value of participating in an Irish-African research partnership. A comprehensive presentation of the findings is reported in Barrett and Nakabugo (2008).

It was agreed among African and Irish stakeholders that an Irish-African research partnership would broaden research funding opportunities. Most development research funding agencies are interested in North-South and South-South initiatives. With funding in place, it would be possible to engage in collaborative research activities. This would not only provide a cross-cultural learning dimension, but would also build the capacity of Irish and African researchers as a result of joint hands-on experience. Both Irish and African counterparts saw the Partnership as a great learning experience that would improve the quality of their staff and students in various ways. African partners hoped to benefit from resource and equipment sharing as well as accessing Masters, PhD and Postdoctoral fellowship opportunities that might exist in Irish institutions. Similarly, Irish academics considered the prospects of getting good doctoral students, sharing research samples and accessing student placements where necessary. The Irish partners also view the IAPRCB as an opportunity for them to participate actively in global development.

The above findings illustrate the perceived benefits of partnerships that stress capacity building in both north and south. On the other hand, they also highlight the challenges associated with the model. The fact that the African counterparts regarded the partnership as a means to access resources, equipment and scholarships, while the Irish saw it as a way of accessing good doctoral students, placements for their students and research samples raises an ethical issue of partnerships in terms of give and take. Given the fact that the north (Ireland) is not only the funder of the partnership but also the source of postgraduate scholarships and research equipment also raises the question of how the south would guarantee ownership of knowledge produced consistent with the core principle of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. There would be need to imbed capacity building programmes into such partnerships to enhance shared understandings of mutuality that goes beyond short-term extrinsic benefits to long-term intrinsic gains leading to own knowledge production and sharing.

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International Academic Partnerships and Aid Effectiveness

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Keywords

Aid Effectiveness; Academic Partnerships

Summary

Most linkage and partnership programmes in higher education do not follow the principles of the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action. And yet many are successful. This piece examines why.

If development donors were to strictly apply the intentions of the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action to their international cooperation programmes in higher education, they would probably have to seriously reconsider the guiding principles and administration of these programmes on a fair number of components.

Why? Most of the linkage and partnership programmes in higher education are tied aid, operate outside bilateral cooperation agreements, and are not closely harmonized with procedures and activities of other programmes. Ownership of the programme interventions is ideally speaking placed on the Southern side of the partnerships but Northern influence on the content of projects seems hard to avoid. Like many other programmes which focus on capacity development, the intention to capture the longer term effects of the projects is difficult to realize.

A hasty conclusion would be that the academic partnership programmes are out of sync with the mainstream development policies. To what extent is this true and does this make them out of date and counterproductive? The answer is nuanced.

Capacity development at tertiary education level requires a form of co-operation that exceeds the mere provision of funds, infrastructure, training and technical assistance. It is about establishing an academic culture, or a research culture, linking an organization in a developing country to international networks of knowledge and information exchange.

The cooperating partner in the North should not only be capable but also interested and motivated to work towards those aims. It entails a long-term process with strong commitment on both sides. For an institution in the North this commitment can only be sustained if the partnership is built on a clear vision regarding this relationship and if it accommodates certain strategic interests for the institution.

Donors of these partnership programmes accept mutual interests as a driving force for establishing longer term relations. At the same time they try to make sure that the co-operation responds to needs in developing countries and leads to sustainable capacity in the South.

The fact that partnership programmes are non-delegated programmes underlines their special status. This is not only a result of the capacity building objectives of the programmes but also of the broader interests that are at stake. The tertiary education institutions in the donor countries form an important source of expertise to inform (development cooperation) policies, to create relevant knowledge and to train manpower, in and for developing countries. They are instrumental in influencing public debate, implementing programmes, researching the effectiveness of interventions, nurturing diplomatic relations and building international knowledge networks. Because of these qualities the tertiary institutions in the North are important counterparts for not only institutions and governments in developing countries, but also for donor agencies and the programmes they wish to implement, as well as for politicians at home.

Does this mean that international academic partnerships jeopardize the fundamentals of aid effectiveness? That would be an exaggeration. Over the years ODA funded international academic partnership programmes have become more sensitive to, and oriented towards, the needs in developing countries in terms of knowledge as well as capacity gaps. Quite a few donor programme stipulate that the academic partnerships should involve organizations in partner countries and/or in priority sectors. In this way an attempt is made to try and link the objectives of bilateral, sectoral and capacity building programmes.

Can more synergy be achieved between these programmes? Certainly, provided that international academic partnership programmes are designed to be complementary to bilateral and sectoral development programmes. This calls for harmonization of the administration and implementation of the various programmes. Delegating the administration of academic programmes to the Embassies in developing countries could theoretically lead to more synergy but this option does not seem to be feasible. Very few Embassies have sufficient expertise on the higher education sector in the country and therefore have great difficulty in identifying priority demands and matching them with interesting partners abroad. It would also weaken the link between the donor agency and the tertiary sector in the home country, which might jeopardize the quality of development co-operation and weaken the public support for development cooperation.

Aid effectiveness is a laudable goal but should not be seen as the holy grail for successful development co-operation. There should remain room for other support modalities that – because of their particular strengths - can be complementary to and supportive of larger sectoral development programmes. International academic partnerships is one of these. It can fill in niches of high level capacity gaps, link local institutions to global knowledge networks, circulate brains, improve the quality of manpower that is required for local development, inform development policies and sustain support for development cooperation in the North. That is not a modest challenge for programmes that usually receive only a small segment of the ODA budget.

A Critical Perspective on the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in the Context of Socialist Asian Countries

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Keywords

Paris Declaration; Asia

Summary

Using the example of Aide et Action's work in socialist Asian countries, this article asks what the position of an NGO should be - vis-à-vis the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action - when government ownership does not equate with country ownership.

As an international non government organization (NGO), Aide et Action seeks to build strong partnerships with the governments of the socialist countries where it works, especially at provincial and commune levels. This partnership approach provides legitimacy to an NGO's work, and is also coherent with the Paris Declaration's principles of alignment and ownership. In the socialist countries of Vietnam, China and Laos, collaboration with the government is often unavoidable for an NGO. Within these partnerships, Aide et Action's role is that of facilitator and mediator. Aide et Action choose to collaborate with local structures and resources as a strategy to increase the effectiveness and sustainability of its projects. Rather than bringing in experts, emphasis is placed on building local skills, connecting key actors and structures, and increasing the efficiency of their collaboration.

But such NGO-government partnerships are not free from difficulties and contradictions.

Today, most northern aid organizations, including Aide et Action, follow a global strategy of fostering democratization. In Vietnam, NGOs remain somewhat problematic as opposition to the state is a central concern. Self-censorship by NGOs is frequent. The media, whose official role is to promote the Communist Party, often downplays the activities of NGOs, affecting their visibility and policy leverage. Most ordinary citizens do not understand the concept of a NGO. In China for example, Aide et Action's communication work is often devoid of an open advocacy component.

In Vietnam, pressure from citizens to expand the scope of participation is increasing. Yet the Vietnamese Government still maintains a high level of ownership on the policy-making process. It exerts pressure on NGOs to align with national policies, a principle also predicated by the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. However, national priorities are not defined through participatory, grassroots processes. The Vietnam Socio-Economic Development Plan 2006-2010, for example, should be clearer in its promotion of a Vietnamese culture inclusive of the various ethnic groups. So what should be the position of an NGO when government ownership does not equate with country ownership? For example, how can Aide et Action promote

the principle of accountability to citizens in a socialist country? How can NGOs support the development of new spaces for collaboration and consultation?

In the first place, it is critical for international NGOs to profoundly understand the management and incentive structures framing the local authorities, and community stakeholders' work. For example, in Laos, the Communist Party has an official monopoly of all associational activities. The boundary between state and civil society is often blurred. Civil society is organized into groups by the mass organizations, such as the Women's Union and the Youth League. This system allows NGOs to easily identify their interlocutors and collaborate with the community. However, the mass organizations also reinforce government control over society. The Accra Agenda for Action encourages government collaboration with civil society organizations, yet lacks an engagement for promoting conditions where these organizations can function as independent development actors.

Secondly, in many cases, in socialist systems, cooperation with the government and conformity to the political climate are definitely necessary for NGOs. But international NGOs need to be sensitive to signals of political change. For example, in China, the Communist Party proposed in 2006 a *New Social Management Pattern: Led by Party committees, Managed by Government, Coordinated by Society, and Participated in by the Public*. In 2007, the Chinese Communist Party's report emphasized the importance of *Citizenship education*, however, no clear guidelines as to the modalities of *Citizenship* were provided. Therefore, government officials, especially at local level, have been paying close attention to the best practices of NGOs, and see NGOs as potential partners for their work with civil society.

In the third place, NGOs in socialist countries must consider soft ways to push their political and development agenda. Promoting information and communication technologies, for example, can be a soft strategy for fostering civil society development. In this regard, it is crucial for NGOs to constantly question the impact of aid in developing countries. Indeed, issues of aid effectiveness are not simply questions of tools and approaches; they also are economic and political. Yet the Paris Declaration focused on process-oriented elements of governance with the objective to perpetuate political stability. The Accra Agenda for Action opened a new role for NGOs through promoting large and inclusive partnerships in order to promote better ownership. However central questions remained largely unaddressed, such as: which development model do we want to support? What are development priorities?

Alignment and ownership are the two critical principles of the Paris Declaration. But any attempt to improve country ownership and enhance government accountability depends on an educated public within developing countries. A public informed of what development policy is, and how they can shape it, is necessary. Aide et Action's mission is focused on education in order to empower citizens to participate in policy-making, and take charge of their own development. The next High Level meeting on Aid Effectiveness should take into account the essential role of dialogue and collaboration between civil society and state for real ownership, and to legitimize alignment. Furthermore, the increased role of private aid as an essential complement to Official Development Assistance calls for more reflection on the consequences and modalities of public-private partnerships, including the role of NGOs in social services delivery, especially for health and education.

New Institutional Economics and New Conditionalities?

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Keywords

Institutional economics; conditionality

Summary

This piece discusses how “transaction cost economics” can be used as an analytical tool to better understand the issue of aid conditionality.

The topic of conditionality has received considerable attention within the development literature. Typically, the literature describes the conditions attached to aid by donors in either technical terms as safeguards which facilitate the achievement of certain goals or in political terms ascribing power to one (typically the donor) agent in the aid relationship. By applying a more micro-analytic tool such as “transaction cost economics” to the issue of conditionality, we might be able to reveal certain insights not found in the other types of analyses.

The application of transaction costs analyses to the complexity of production within the development industry makes an interesting and germane topic. Indeed, transaction costs are frequently mentioned within development discourse and the reduction of transaction costs are a central feature of most broad policy statements such as the Paris Declaration. However, rather than using concepts developed by the vast body of research and literature in transaction cost economics, transaction costs are relegated to another entry in an accounting ledger. Until we accurately portray transaction costs in terms of a comparative institutional analysis and begin to apply the already well developed conceptual framework to the development industry, key aid effectiveness goals may not be met.

As part of New Institutional Economics, transaction cost economics provides a number of interesting concepts that may clarify some problems with the way in which we frequently view conditionality. Williamson (1996) defines seven features of transaction cost economics: 1) the transaction is the basic unit of analysis, 2) transactions differ by several key dimensions, 3) modes of governance differ in their dimensions, 4) modes of governance are supported by separate types of contract law, 5) transactions, which differ in attributes will align with a (mainly) transaction cost-economizing governance structure, 6) the institutional environment impacts transaction costs and 7) transaction cost economics is an exercise in comparative institutional analysis. Although the contracting or agreement to transact is central to transaction cost economics, all contracts are assumed incomplete due to a lack of complete information (bounded rationality) and the potential for ex-post opportunism (Noorderhaven, 1996).

In terms of how we might better understand aid conditionality through a transaction costs lens, two concepts prove useful: asset specificity and path dependence. Asset specificity refers to the extent to which an investment (in a transaction) is readily

redeployable for some other purpose. In a similar vein, path dependence, referring to the production process more generally, indicates that once productive technologies are created, the costs of creating new technologies to replace old ones (even if they may be inefficient) may prohibit innovation and change. Conditions placed on governments and ministries are investments which relative to other projects, organizational structures, human resources, etc. create a high level of asset specificity. The production of educational services and outcomes, for example, becomes entrenched within a path dependent production process or contingent on the organizational structure.

Although conditions may appear rational in the short run to donors, they may not be part of the preferred contractual arrangements of the country or ministry. Conditionality creates an environment where the donor may act opportunistically and establish a quasi-rent stream because once investments are made on the part of the government, additional conditions subject to the loan or grant contract may be added since there is a cost to forgoing the investments in the initial contract, to search for (and secure) alternative contracts, and to potentially lose the trust built up under the contract and thus future contracting. Although some research indicates that frequent contractual obligations unfulfilled by recipient governments are not punished, transaction cost analyses can still reveal the extent to which conditionality creates certain kinds of long term fixed costs that may impact aid effectiveness.

Within the post-Paris Declaration aid effectiveness trend and the push for cooperative and collaborative development efforts, the coordination of development initiatives has become a central component of this trend and unfortunately its Achilles heel as well. For this article, I am not as interested in major overt policy conditionality as I am in the organizational and human resource reforms that the policies imply, using several examples to support this. Not only do organizational reforms represent an externality borne by the aid recipient in the name of ownership, but they also represent an investment in the aid package (sometimes agreed upon by several donors and sometimes not). The environment/market within which countries acquire development aid (education in this case) is continually in flux. What transaction costs economics may help to unpack is the complexity of multiparty agreements (contracts) and cooperative behavior within the aid effectiveness trend.

Given little to no measurement of transaction costs, poor understanding of transaction costs analyses in the development field, and the argument that changing institutions is a costly enterprise (North, 1990), it is not surprising that conditions continue to be attached to aid contracts and that the aid effectiveness trend continues to suffer from a lack of coordination. The recent decision by the FTI to forgo costly 'harmonization' efforts is another reason why we need to conduct more applied research in transaction cost economics to the development industry.

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**REGIONAL PARTNER
NETWORKS LOOK AT PARIS
AND ACCRA**

The Paris Declaration: Myth or Reality?

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Keywords

Paris Declaration

Summary

This article asks what remains of the Paris Declaration that decision-makers of developed and developing countries addressed in unison.

The Paris Declaration for the effectiveness of aid, endorsed on March 2, 2005, created a huge hope among people living in developing countries.

Today however, what remains of this historic message that decision-makers of developed and developing countries addressed in unison to the whole world? Naturally, the negative impact of the international economic and financial crisis, which has been affecting a large number of donor countries since 2008, has perhaps thwarted the dreams of a better quality of life and a better future for millions of people living in countries which are classified among the poorest of the planet.

But first of all, what is the originality of the aid advocated by the Paris Declaration and what is its conditionality?

Before responding to this question, a brief historic recall seems to be necessary: the year 1990 marks the turn where aid to the African countries began to be made conditional on the institution of democracy (political pluralism and rule of law). This process was illustrated the very same year by the National Conference of Benin which conducted a model of smooth democratic transition, contrary to other countries like Mali where democracy was born in March 1991 in tears and blood.

With the birth of the democracy, or let's say with the very shy beginning of a multi-party democratic system, in some African States where the ordinary citizens have still difficulties in understanding the basic principles of a real democratic culture, aid has been conditioned on good governance and the struggle against corruption. Unfortunately without any significant results ...

And now?

The High-Level Forum on the effectiveness of aid, which brought together in Paris ministers from developed and from developing countries, had resolutely taken a stand for the 'increase of aid effects on the reduction of poverty and inequalities, the strengthening of economic growth, the building of capacities and the acceleration on the way to reach the MDGs on a spirit of mutual engagement.

However, what is the situation four years after the Paris Declaration and about one year after the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) of September 2008 in the Ghanaian capital city?

The Paris Declaration, followed by the High-Level Forum of Accra, has opened the way for a cooperation more oriented in the direction of the hard working people in Africa. In this approach one fact is indisputable and paradoxical: the effectiveness of aid will only reach its objectives when African States and African people will have learned to live without aid! In order to reach this goal, the donor countries must ensure that the State acts with the Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the associations of civil society working with the most underprivileged social strata in the development area in countries where the aid comes from.

What kind of major actions can be undertaken?

To guarantee sustainable development and to assure the best future for the coming generations, it is necessary to help the African educational systems to be more effective. For more than two decades, education in Africa has faced numerous difficulties and must tackle many challenges in both formal (preschool, primary, secondary, higher education) and non formal settings. These issues have one common denominator: the lack of financial means as well as the lack of expertise and technologies. Several research studies have confirmed that sustainable development cannot take place until the human resources are sufficiently well trained in terms of quality and quantity in order to be the essential vector of social progress. We need to focus on this because, despite the good will of the donors, aid to countries in development won't be eternal!

To be effective, aid must be first oriented toward the improvement of the quality of the African educational systems, because to make Africa move away from underdevelopment, it is necessary to invest in the capacity of its human resources.

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International Cooperation (IC) in Skills Development in Latin America: Tensions in Promoting National and Local Policies

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Keywords

Latin America

Summary

This piece examines aid for skills development in Latin America, noting the tensions that arise at various levels.

In the last decade, and especially since the Paris Declaration was signed in 2005, an increasing concern with the efficiency of activities on the ground as well as the arrival

of new agencies has promoted changes in IC perspectives and operations, enriched links to national policies and development agendas, as well as cooperation and coordination between agencies at the national levels. Nowadays, there is a strong intention to move away from stand-alone projects by introducing sectoral programming, supporting education and vocational training through permanent institutional provision and/or sustainable local development approaches. Even though there are obvious differences amongst the agencies' frameworks, their main objectives are similar. Agencies' agendas have emphasized the need to combine resources, know-how, large-scale programme components, etc. Even if there are some initiatives with these cooperative approaches, these proposed combined efforts are sometimes not feasible, as the agencies frequently complain of the difficulties to combine agendas, actions and procedures even amongst IC agencies that have long been present in the region.

Throughout the years, strong agency leadership in programme implementation in the region has tended to be progressively complemented by or even replaced by recipients' leadership. However, this more participative management style is not at all general and the tensions frequently deriving from an asymmetric relationship are usually still present in many externally aided components, from the activities on the ground to the fund management and evaluation. Cultural diversity, political and technical differences all tend to make dialogue with local actors more difficult. As the number of actors increases, processes and schedules become more complex. In such cases, the tension between efficient execution and linking strategies with the local authorities and other local actors becomes critical. The key dilemma is what to prioritise in order to be efficient.

The current IC agencies' perspective emphasizes their role as "promoters of local governments and national actors". Nevertheless, it may be argued that global consistency of public policies – national, provincial and local - is hard or perhaps even impossible to achieve; one of the reasons is of course that they may have different political and/or ideological orientations. Sometimes national public organizations involved in skills development have little internal coordination and linkage with other institutions, as they work on isolated objectives, interests and priorities and have never developed a long-term vision in technical and vocational education and training policies. Actually, not only are institutions lacking integration, but also they have different perspectives about skills development. The question is: what should the role of IC agencies be when there is no consensus about some issues within the country? In the end, supporting long-term development strategies while promoting sustainable development at different levels should be on the objective.

Note: for a full discussion of the issues just touched upon in this article, see *The role of international cooperation in education and training for work in Latin America*, Paper 13, Debates in Skills Development (Buenos Aires workshop May 2008), Working Group for International Cooperation in Skills Development, Geneva, accessible at <http://www.norrag.org/wg>

The RedEtis Network: numbers of RedEtis members by region

Claudia Jacinto

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Amount of redetis´s members by region

| Regions | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Mercosur | 2036 | 69,9 |
| Andean Region | 322 | 11,1 |
| Mexico, Central America and Caribbean | 320 | 11,0 |
| Europe | 169 | 5,8 |
| North America | 55 | 1,9 |
| Other Regions | 9 | 0,3 |
| Total | 2911 | 100 |

Note: Mercosur includes: Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay Paraguay, with Chile as an associate.

Andean Region covers Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Venezuela

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ERNWACA

ERNWACA is the acronym of the **Educational Research Network of West and Central Africa**. It is an apolitical non-profit-making bilingual network (French/English), founded in 1989 in Freetown (Sierra Leone) with the aim to promote educational research and African researchers in order to improve educational practice and policy.

ERNWACA brings together more than 400 active members in 16 Francophone and Anglophone countries in West and Central Africa: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Central African Republic, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo.

National networks are facilitated by coordinators and coordinating committee members, elected by their peers. They link researchers with policymakers, teachers, learners, parents and other stakeholders. The regional ERNWACA office is hosted by the government of Mali and is currently housed at the University Institute of Training and Applied Research (ISFRA) in Bamako.

National and regional scientific committees monitor the quality of research. The Board of Directors defines the Network's strategic orientation and helps generate long-term support for ERNWACA.

ERNWACA members come from a variety of national institutions, including universities, teacher training institutes, research centres, governments and NGOs.

Vision, Mission, Objectives

ERNWACA was created to improve the conditions for research in Africa and strengthen and amplify the voices of African education researchers. The ERNWACA vision is to give an African face to educational research in Africa.

Its mission is to promote African expertise and a culture of research to improve education policy and practice. The network's objectives are to:

- Build national and regional capacity in education research;
- Conduct quality research pertinent for practitioners and decision-makers; Share findings to stimulate policy and public dialogue and advocacy;
- Strengthen ERNWACA partnerships with national, regional and international institutions.

The website is: www.ernwaca.org

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NEW DEVELOPMENTS FOR NORRAG

Norrage Membership Update as of June 2009

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1. Membership changes April 2004 – June 2009

Since April 2004, registered membership of NORRAG has increased by approximately 2,200 members: from 400 to 2,600 individuals by June 2009 (Table 1). At the same time there has been a six fold increase in overall registered members, and the number of countries with members has more than doubled.

Table 1. Total membership April 2004 – June 2009

| Date | 12.04.04 | 02.06.09 |
|-------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Total membership | 415 | 2,636 |
| Members with countries | 70 | 150 |

2. NORRAG members by region

NORRAG is strongly represented in developed and developing countries; over 40% of all registered members are from developing countries.

Table 2. NORRAG membership by region (as of 2nd June 2009)²¹

| | 02.06.09 | |
|------------------------------|--------------|------|
| | n | % |
| World | 2,636 | |
| <i>of which</i> | | |
| Developed countries | 1,504 | 57.1 |
| Developing countries | 1,111 | 42.1 |
| Transition countries | 21 | 0.8 |
| Regions | | |
| Sub-Saharan Africa | 539 | 20.4 |
| Arab States | 54 | 2.0 |
| Central and E. Europe | 28 | 1.1 |
| Central Asia | 17 | 0.6 |
| East Asia | 220 | 8.3 |
| Pacific | 94 | 3.6 |
| South & West Asia | 218 | 8.3 |
| N. America & W. Europe | 1,347 | 51.1 |
| Latin America | 108 | 4.1 |
| Caribbean | 11 | 0.4 |
| Regions / World total | 2,636 | |

About a fifth of all NORRAG membership is from Sub-Saharan Africa, with a further 12% from East Asia/Pacific, 8% from South and West Asia, and 4% from Latin

²¹ United Nations Statistical Division country classification revised in 2004.

America. The largest single regional grouping is North America and Western Europe, which accounts for slightly over half of all registered NORRAG members.

3. Composition of NORRAG membership

The last NORRAG members' survey (end of 2007) produced some valuable insights on patterns of dissemination, utilisation and impact. At that time, some 11% of the membership were from development agencies, whether bilateral or multilateral, - many of them based in the developing world, such as national programme officers; some 11% from consultancies and policy research institutes; some 11% from government departments; and 11% from research students. No less than 13% of the membership were NGOs, and there were some 35% who were academic staff, both in the developing and developed country universities. NORRAG expects to conduct a second membership survey at the end of 2009.

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“Norrage Phase 2” - Website Development

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NORRAG recognises that the norrage.org website is the key dissemination mechanism for NORRAG NEWS (NN), activities and networking. In light of this, the norrage.org website is currently undergoing further development to make it a more effective platform. Below is a summary of some of the main changes made to date (during phase I of the website redevelopment 2006/07), as well as those changes expected to be completed by July/August 2009 (phase II).

Phase I of norrage.org upgrading (2006/07)

Associated with the dramatic development of access to NORRAG and NN has been the very substantial upgrading of the website. This has included a whole series of improved facilities including: the ability rapidly to survey an entire set of articles in a particular issue and to read online an individual article (instead of having to download an entire issue as a pdf – though we have, of course, maintained the option to download the entire issue); opening up all back issues of NORRAG NEWS to internet search engines so that even non-registered individuals can get access; a series of policy briefs in six different languages; and an easier login. Another new facility is the NORRAG Networking Tool, which puts a great deal of information in the hands of the membership. It can for instance be used to get the names of all the other NORRAG members in one's country or search for all the members sharing the same area of expertise (e.g. TVET).

Phase II of norrag.org upgrading (2009)

GENERAL

- The content management system is being updated so that we are able to use the most recent website tools and can write content in multiple languages, including Arabic and Chinese in addition to English, French etc.

ACCESSIBILITY

Open-access to the majority of website content

- We have decided to open access (without login) to all the online articles (except for those in the latest issue), all policy briefs (including latest issue), all NN contents pages and editorial of all NN issues (including the latest).

Password-protected areas of the site

- Login will still be required to access certain areas of the new site, including: i) all issues of NN in pdf format; ii) the latest issue of NN (including the individual read-online articles); iii) the NORRAG Networking Tool; and iv) the members' area.

REGISTRATION AND MEMBERS' DATA

- NORRAG recognises that many of its members have multiple areas of expertise! To reflect this, all new and existing NORRAG members will have the option of selecting up to three fields of expertise and up to three countries of expertise (formerly members were allowed to select one only).
- Registered members will be able to view and update their own profile online, using a password.

RESOURCES and NEW SEARCH ENGINE

- NORRAG will update its "resources" pages on the website, linking into existing sources of information.
- A new "google type" search engine (with basic and advanced search options) will replace the old (limited) search facility on the site.

EMAIL ALERTS AND RSS FEED

The email alert system will be updated and we also plan to add in an RSS feed onto the new site so that members can keep up to date with NORRAG activities and issues of NN.

SWITCH-OVER TO NEW NORRAG SITE

Closer to the launch date of the new website (planned for July/August 2009), an email will be sent to all existing members explaining changes. You will be asked to review and update the information that we currently hold on you and to set a password so you can access restricted areas on the new site.

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**NEW PUBLICATIONS &
STRATEGIES IN
CAPACITY BUILDING,
SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND
HIGHER EDUCATION**

**Skills for Work, Growth and Poverty Reduction: Challenges and Opportunities
in the Global Analysis and Monitoring of Skills – NEW REPORT OUT**

[Seminar Report Now Available](http://www.unesco.org.uk/Skills_Seminar.htm) - http://www.unesco.org.uk/Skills_Seminar.htm

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The Director General of UNESCO, in launching the 2008 Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report (GMR) in New York on 29th November 2007, cited skills training, adult literacy, teacher education and HIV/AIDS as the focal areas for UNESCO in the next few years. Furthermore, the UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education in setting out his vision for education and for UNESCO's role in promoting it, stated, 'One of the issues globalisation is raising in almost every country is: what sort of specific skills do people need, what is the balance between specific and general skills? We need to help countries come to their own answers' (UNESCO, 2007a).

Since the 2000s there has been an increasing focus by UNESCO, the World Bank and many bilateral aid agencies on technical and vocational education and training (TVET) for poverty reduction, economic growth and competitiveness in developing countries. This is due, in part, to the success of the concerted efforts of both national governments and international donors to bring millions of primary school age children into primary schools (EFA and MDG goals). However because there has not been a commensurate expansion of post-primary education and training, there is a school leaver problem for millions of primary school children who have little chance of transition to further education or training.

National governments have made a policy case for the expansion of TVET, both in the regions where it is well-established such as East Asia and Latin America but also where there has been modest commitment to TVET, such as in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Underinvestment in post-primary and post-secondary TVET for the last 30 years by many donors has left the sector under-resourced and deprived of meaningful and comprehensive programmes, curricula, material, equipment, facilities and most of all, teaching staff. Increasingly, however, government bodies in developed countries, including DFID, are being lobbied for assistance. An unintended outcome of this underinvestment in post-primary education and training is that as parents are not seeing adequate progression routes for their children; they are starting to take them out of school – leading to a reversal of the initial gains made in primary education.

The 1990 World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA) Jomtien agenda and the subsequent Dakar World Forum 2000 Goals set the framework for development assistance to education in developing countries. 'Skills' were explicitly mentioned both at Jomtien and Dakar (see below), and yet attention to skills has been somewhat over-shadowed by a strong agency focus on basic, and especially primary, education.

- ‘Other essential skills’ were an integral part of what the Jomtien World Conference on Education for All called the expanded vision of basic education.
- ‘Learning and life skills’ were included as one of Six Goals in the Dakar World Education Forum.

Meanwhile, the main reporting instrument for the education targets and goals of Jomtien and Dakar, the Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Reports (GMRs), has so far covered almost all aspects of both the 1990 WCEFA Jomtien agenda and the subsequent Dakar World Forum 2000 Goals. These GMR volumes have rapidly become essential reference works of global progress in primary education, gender parity in education, quality, adult literacy and early childhood education. But they have not, as yet, treated at any length at all the Jomtien and Dakar skills’ or life skills’ goals. The EFA Global Monitoring Team has admitted that EFA Goal 3²² has been ‘the hardest to define and monitor’ (UNESCO, 2007b). The terms ‘life skills’ and ‘skills’ are indeed difficult to define, yet the need for them to be described in a consistent and comprehensive way is urgent. In terms of what should be covered under EFA Goal 3, there appears to be a tendency emerging from GMR 2007, 2008 and 2009 to look mainly at non-formal education. But this approach would not do justice to the emerging international focus being given to TVET. And, in fact, a look at the WCEFA framework shows that all aspects of TVET are covered as a key part of the expanded vision of basic education.

On 31st October 2008, a seminar on the above topic was jointly organised by the UK National Commission for UNESCO and the British Council with the support of the Institute of Education and the National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education.

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UNESCO (2007b) *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2008. EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008. Education for All by 2015, Will we Make it?* UNESCO: Paris.

Seminar website - http://www.unesco.org.uk/Skills_Seminar.htm

The background paper by Kenneth King and Robert Palmer and the final report of the seminar are available online.

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²² Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes.

Frameworks for Africa-UK Research Collaboration in the Social Sciences and Humanities. The Nairobi Report

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Keywords

Africa-UK research; Nairobi Report

Summary

This piece examines research partnerships between African and non-African universities, and summarises some of the key messages from the recently published *Nairobi Report* which draws together the results of a 2-year process of discussion and consultation.

The last issue of NORRAG news (NN41) offered some tentative conclusions on this subject of research partnerships between African and non-African universities (specifically in the UK), and their role in strengthening research capacity in the continent's universities. *The Nairobi Report*, recently published by the British Academy and the Association of Commonwealth Universities, draws together the results of a 2-year process of discussion and consultation.

The report urges for a greater recognition of the critical importance of social sciences and humanities, points to an overwhelming need to improve capacity in these fields, and argues that the research base must be strengthened if African scholars are to genuinely be given the space and opportunities to develop African solutions to African problems (as so many reports have called for). But going beyond this, it specifically attempts to formulate ways in which this might be practically achieved, how and where collaborative initiatives might assist, and how to go about designing these.

While it is easy for a report published in the UK to charge the many challenges and responsibilities to African universities and associations, this is a reflection of the concerns and thinking of the researchers who took part. It also acknowledges that if the prospects for research and for research partnerships are to be improved, then African scholars must not always be drawn into networks centred elsewhere, but must have a firm and enduring base in their own national and regional research communities. Many rightly felt strongly it was their institutions – rather than external agencies or foreign universities – who needed to drive the change was needed, but that external partners could then offer valuable and much needed assistance as they did so.

The report turns around three core themes, reflected in 22 specific recommendations which range from grander schemes for new regional research communities to much smaller – but no less important – initiatives to encourage greater degrees of mentorship between experienced and early career researcher:

- Firstly the need to improve the structures, systems and governance of African institutions, recognising that many of the barriers to research are organisational and managerial rather than simply financial and new money for research can only be provided if there is confidence in the ability of institutions to manage it.
- Secondly, recognition that networks needs to be forged between Africa's universities and academics and that links with colleagues elsewhere must be geared to supporting research communities within the continent.
- Thirdly, emphasis on growing the next and future generations of academics, by focusing specifically on the needs of early-career researchers, ensuring that postgraduate programmes are improved and postdoctoral foundations laid. Clear roles for collaborative programmes with UK and other academics and institutions emerge here, through training and mentoring support for example.

The Nairobi Report can be accessed from www.britac.ac.uk/reports/nairobi/. Hard copies can be requested from j.harle@acu.ac.uk

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Some additional materials available in the last few months

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In the last few months there have been a series of reports or books that members might want to access.

First, there is for those interested in TVET a *Report by the director-general (UNESCO) on a draft strategy for technical and vocational education and training (TVET)* [April 2009]. This has gone through the Executive Board of UNESCO.

Second, there is a valuable report from the Danish Africa Commission: *Realising the potential of Africa's youth: Report of the Africa Commission*, May 2009. It can be accessed at www.africacommission.um.dk

Third, the book on *Higher Education and International Capacity Building* which we anticipated back in December 2008 is now out. It is a celebration of 25 years of higher education links supported by ODA/DFID and the British Council. It is edited by David Stephens. You can get access to all information about this volume on the following site: <http://www.symposium-books.co.uk/books/bookdetails.asp?bid=72>

Lastly, NORRAG is organising in late June an international conference on: *Policy transfer or policy learning. Interactions between international and national skills development approaches for policy making*. 25-26 June 2009. Ask Jean.Chamel@graduateinstitute.ch for further information.

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Development Aid: Advancing Effectively or Withdrawing Strategically?

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Keywords

Aid Effectiveness; Donors; Recipients; Development aid; Exit Strategy

Summary

This article argues that aid effectiveness might only be achieved if recipient countries devise an exit strategy out of development aid dependency. There is evidence that with such an exit plan the power balance between donors and recipients, seen as a crucial catalyst for aid effectiveness, could be realised.

There are those who applaud development aid, lay claim to the incontrovertible proof of its successes and advocate its continuance and even its increase (e.g. Sachs 2006). Most official donors and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) among others believe in aid effectiveness and emphasise that it works better now than it has done in the past (Riddell 2007, 2008). There are also documented experiences of development aid practitioners and their insights into how inclusive aid could be realized. However, while a number of these perspectives extol the virtues of aid, they are critical of its demerits (Easterly 2006). This article maintains that these demerits (lack of growth, dependency, domination, selfish interests etc.) hold sway because they undermine and outweigh the benefits. It argues that this unfortunate legacy of aid is resilient and cannot be eliminated by mere rhetoric. It further contends that the development aid process is intrinsically unequal and the manner in which it is currently structured can never ensure equity and a level playing field between donors and recipients, which are crucial for the principles of aid effectiveness to be feasible. It thus concludes that aid effectiveness, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, could only be achieved if recipient countries devise an exit strategy out of development aid dependency, for it seems that it is only through this exit plan that the balance of power between donors and recipients, seen as a crucial catalyst for aid effectiveness, could be realised. What this implies is that recipient governments have to start phasing out development aid while simultaneously searching creatively for viable alternative sources of funding to generate and boost financial reserves. This would probably make them more self-reliant, responsible and accountable to their own citizenry, which presently they are not.

Aid effectiveness, defined mainly as aid that efficiently leads to the economic growth of a developing country and alleviates poverty, has had its tenets recently re-emphasised by aid architects and recipients as: donor harmonisation, alignment with recipient governments' development strategies, recipient ownership, managing results and mutual accountability, all of which, among other things, are aimed at redressing donor-recipient power imbalance. Its real test lies in its developmental impact in terms of genuine transformation in the lives and rights of those affected by deprivation and inequality (Tujan & Tomlinson 2008).

Yet, aid effectiveness probably seems like a mirage since efforts towards it and its stated principles have not transcended their rhetorical claims. Power inequalities between foreign aid donors and recipients abound and have often been seen as a threat. The fundamental problems of power differential between donors and recipients continue to be manifest in their interactions. As a result, several attempts have been initiated over the years, mostly by the donors themselves, in order to address this issue. One effort was the Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF) launched by the World Bank in 1999 within which several countries including Bolivia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana and Uganda were designated pilot countries. The CDF, regarded as a country-led development and partnership, was a new context in which the World Bank and other donors/lenders would operate with borrowing countries. The CDF was guided by four ideals, which were to remedy past errors and failures, address power inequalities and enhance international aid delivery. They included the long-term holistic view of the needs of a country, interest in results rather than inputs, country ownership of donor support and finally, country-led partnership (World Bank 2002). This sparked a renewed interest in global partnership and networking processes to the extent that it was made the eighth goal of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

To strengthen these efforts a more recent initiative was launched, namely the High Level Forums (HLFs) of aid effectiveness. Three of these forums have already occurred in Rome, Paris and Accra in 2003, 2005 and 2008 respectively; the fourth is scheduled for 2011. At these forums aid donors and recipients declared their commitment to what they referred to as the principles of aid effectiveness delineated above. However, concerns and scepticism have already been expressed about the Paris Declaration and its aid effectiveness paradigm (Tandon 2008). An example is the dominant role of the World Bank compared to the lesser function of the United Nations (UN) brought in at the eleventh hour in order to give the process credibility, over which the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD-DAC) presided. Another concern is the insistence on compliance tests derived from the OECD-DAC and World Bank's procurement strategies but none from recipient countries' social and economic policies to assess aid effectiveness in recipient countries (*ibid.*). Furthermore, the sole use of donor procedures for harmonisation among others is another problem. A large number of the participants at the HLF Roundtable 2 on Alignment in Accra in September 2008 expressed frustration about how, even when countries with the assistance of donors have reinforced their systems, donors still ignore them (Third High Level Forum 2008). Amar Bhattacharya & Stefano Manservigi, co-chairs of the Roundtable 2 reiterate that inadequate progress has been made in the area of alignment especially in terms of the use of country systems (*ibid.*). Civil society organisations on the ground query the extent of the transformation in aid culture by identifying "weak commitments to untie aid, continued high numbers of policy conditions attached to aid, and limited use of developing country systems" (Tujan & Tomlinson 2008). While there is the call to align aid with recipient countries' strategies, anxieties over corruption and the misuse of aid resources, particularly in heavily aid-dependent African countries, have also prompted discussions in terms of the extent to which donors should supervise and manage their aid programmes (Kpodo 2008). All of this disquiet has raised fundamental questions about the feasibility of the aid effectiveness goals (Tandon 2008).

Undoubtedly, the perceived persistent lack of these principles in the reality of aid delivery has not only triggered global forums but also underpinned a number of studies that argued against aid effectiveness. Many remain suspicious of aid, perceive it as a hindrance to the progress of aid recipients and even see it as imperialistic. In their view, aid structured within the hegemonic framework of neo-liberalism with its associate globalisation undermines the social responsibility of a recipient country's government to its citizens (Hayter 1971). Therefore, aid neither improves welfare nor promotes growth and at best has only very little developmental impact on its recipients, hence a call for its reduction and even its cessation (e.g. Moyo 2009). The lack of progress, according to Easterly (2007), has led to what is called "Developmentalism", which he classifies as a failed donor-initiated ideology. An example of this is probably what many CSOs, notwithstanding their support of the Paris Declaration, have identified and criticised in the declaration as a parochial and mechanical notion of development (Tujan & Tomlinson 2008). Despite the current reservations about free market economies, the most recent powerful statement of aid ineffectiveness has been made by the Zambian born economist, Dambisa Moyo, in her book *Dead Aid* (2009). She maintains that more than US\$1 Trillion of development aid transferred to Africa over five decades has led to neither economic growth nor poverty reduction and therefore proposes neo-liberal market solutions as an alternative to development aid for African national governments. Whether an unbridled neo-liberal market approach is the substitute for aid must be a moot point. Nevertheless, it is impossible to ignore a cogent case for the termination of development aid, particularly in Africa. While efforts to tackle Africa's developmental challenges cannot simplistically adopt an "either-or" strategy, still, Moyo's book has activated a lively debate perhaps, for the evolution of a more nuanced approach.

Regardless of the efforts and goodwill of donors, recipients and other development aid actors, and their determination to render aid effective, this article argues that this goal will probably not be attained if donors and recipient countries do not plan exit strategies as far as development aid is concerned, so as to redress the continuing donor-recipient power inequalities. When recipient countries do not rely solely on development aid but ingeniously seek other sources of funding that strengthen their financial capacity sustainably and put them in control of their own development, as in the cases of China, India, Botswana, South Africa and other emerging economies, then the possibility of them relating with donors in equal partnership (symbolised by the aid effectiveness principles) may perhaps be realised. Corruption may also probably be held in check as national governments may have to be more accountable to their own people.

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