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## Abstract

The question of long term and short term development has been a cause for great debate among the development world with many taking an 'either or' stance. Does long term development aid foster dependency or does it seek to meet long term solutions? This essay sought to look at the various aspects of both and also considered how development agencies can ensure that they do not create a dependency situation. In addition the essay offered some background thoughts on the question of 'time' when development is in question. The essay asks whether chronological time is even a proper measurement of development work, it argues that Kairos time ought to be used because it measures quality of experience and impact rather than length of engagement. The essay also brought up the question of whether or not long term aid has encouraged corruption in developing countries and how countries can reduce the instances of corruption when donor or government funds are in question. An important aspect that the essay has explored is the Samaritans dilemma, which is an argument that has been brought up to discourage long-term assistance in the recent past because it has become an 'enabler' such that it has encouraged developing countries and their citizens to prefer aid over self efforts. It also takes a look at the role that the 'indigenous' people can and should play in development taking into consideration historical occurrences that have formed the basis of 'handout' mindset and how the overhaul of such mindsets should be used to improve self-help efforts. Listing examples such as competitions at community and national levels as a way to encourage self-help efforts in development framework and the idea of donors and development agencies funding existing successful social or business enterprise, the essay has discussed the idea of problem and solution ownership. The essay concludes that development efforts should seek home grown solutions rather than 'foreign' solutions so that the people to benefit own both the problem and the solution so that dependency is curtailed. It also concludes that neither long term nor short term assistance is superior or of more benefit than the other but rather the context of development project implementation and the strategies employed are the factors that ought to be used to determine success or failure. A bulk of the essay assumptions and examples are taken out an African context although overall themes are relevant to any developing country.

An old African folktale:

Once upon a time, in a land far, far away there lived a monkey who lived on an island. One day there was torrential rains that never seemed to end and the island began to flood. The rain and the waters kept coming and coming until one day, the monkey was left with only a little bit of land and one tree. As he was sitting up in his tree, he noticed another animal in the water that was moving back and forth. The monkey was so worried about the little animal and wanted to rescue it. So, the monkey risked its own life to go out to the end of the branch and snatch the animal out of the water to prevent it from drowning. He put the animal on the ground to dry out under the sun and get warm. The animal flopped around and the monkey thought he looked so happy and was jumping around in excitement. Then, the animal was lying perfectly still and the monkey thought it looked so peaceful. Of course, the animal was a fish... and it had just died prematurely.

When I consider the effects of development on the African continent this story comes to mind. Well meaning efforts to help and assist the African continent has resulted in the death of the very continent. Well meaning efforts without the proper understanding of the African people, their past and their way of life has brought us to the this point where development aid is considered to have failed in its objectives. The problem is not that aid was a bad idea, seeing that it worked on some of the European countries; the problem is that aid was a bad idea for Africa. The same way in the story pulling the fish out of the water would have been the best option for any other animal; it just was not the best course of action for the fish.

### **Kairos Vs Chronos paradigms**

When considering the question of development assistance there are two ways we can look at it to determine whether long-term assistance is required or short-term for any specific issue and the effect of either of the two. Ancient Greek used these two words when referring to time and the same can be used to give a better understanding on the question of long-term Vs short- term aid.

Chronos refers to time as we know it and as we still use it, hours and days, days and months, months and years. It is where the words chronology, chronological came from. In referring long-term development assistance, development experts and development workers often refer to time in a chronological perspective. Measuring the period of time spent in a particular project in months and years regardless of how much has been accomplished in that period of time.

Kairos on the other hand is more qualitative in its nature, it's a luminal point in time when something monumental happens that is events based and not time based. Considering this and the question of development the idea is that development agencies have been asking the wrong question- how long have we been here? The questions that

need to be asked are, how much have we been able to accomplish? What milestone have we covered? This argument simply deals with the issue time which may not be agreeable, so in addition development agencies must also consider whether what has been accomplished is sustainable and whether the beneficiaries will benefit from it for an indefinite period of time.

To argue against long - term assistance let us take a look at some theories that have been brought forward.

### **The Inverted U- curve**

The inverted u curve theory was first discussed by Simon Kuznet in which a natural cycle for economic inequality occurs where the inequality levels are first increased steadily before an average is gained then the inequality levels go down. This theory has undergone quite a number of refinements and has been used to argue for and against a number of issues in the global society. I would like to use the inverted U curve to consider the effects of increased (long-term) development assistance to the developing world especially in Africa.

One of the basic interpretations of the inverted U-curve states that any good thing will undergo three levels of satisfaction. The first is that there will be an obvious benefit to the consumer that is positive at first consumption, secondly when the consumption increases the benefit ceases to increase but rather it plateaus, thirdly when used excessively or in an increasing manner it will slowly start having negative effects on the consumer. This can be used to explain simple and common consumption like food; food is a basic need and requirement for all human beings. This same food when taken excessively leads to obesity and other medical complications. The African continent is now reaping the benefits of the over-extended development assistance that has come overly in the form of financial assistance. For fifty years Africa has been the beneficiary of aid that has seen it come to a poorer state than it was fifty years back. If the effect of more aid on our continent is to take us five decades back, is it really what we need?

### **Samaritans dilemma; to help or not to help**

Coined by James Buchanan over twenty five years ago the Samaritans dilemma has since come to be used and applied in many circumstances. The basic argument is that whenever you are faced with a situation that requires assistance of any kind the result of the aid offered can have two effects. The beneficiary is brought out of 'problem' and becomes self sustaining or the beneficiary becomes dependent on that assistance and therefore fails to find a self-sustaining solution. This argument has since been used to propagate against continued development aid to the global south and has drawn many supporters. Developing countries have found themselves in this dilemma time and again and it has gone on for such a long time that bringing people out of the dependency mentality has become difficult and requires us to go back to the drawing board. Right

now the problem is not helping countries and communities out of a problem but rather reframing the thought process of these people. There is need for a renewal of the mind, a transformation of the solution provision problem so that the economic growth is owned by a countries government and its citizens.

It is however difficult when you are constantly bombarded with pictures of war and famine, people dying, children going without food to sit back and do nothing. The human being is a compassionate being and will always want to do something to help the situation. Don't get me wrong, there is definitely a place for humanitarian aid and government assistance. There are certain social problems that even the 'entrepreneurial' institutions cannot be in a position to make a significant impact in such as healthcare for the poor, vaccination against preventable diseases, which are done at such huge magnitudes that only bodies with the financial backbone can be in a position to make a difference. Earthquakes and tsunamis that bring so much havoc and everyone is affected need quick and effective responses and humanitarian aid is definitely needed in such situations .Aid and government assistance are both very good at tackling the issues and meeting the needs that are not being tackled by the market but aid is not the key for long term assistance.

The problem is that this has now become a money making venture. NGO's are popping left right and center like popcorn in a microwave. It has become a much lucrative business to learn how to seek grants, to write a grant proposal rather than a business proposal. So, there are always images being thrown to the developed countries that do not represent the actual picture on the ground in order to tag to the compassionate and sympathetic nature of human beings. This needs to stop. James Mwangi, Global Managing Partner of Dalberg Global Development Advisors so aptly put it by saying that the African problem is a mindset issue, Africans need to stop chasing the next billion dollar grant and instead think about how we can impact the economy, to start having bigger expectations of ourselves.

### **Fueling corruption**

The longer the development project, the higher the chances that the donor funds will not be used for the project and the funds will be misused. Long term development assistance foster corruption more so if the project is being overseen by government agencies; Case in point is what was seen in Sierra Leone early Last year, the country's top health officials found themselves indicted by its anti-corruption agency on charges of misappropriating a half-million dollars in grants from a global vaccine provider GAVI Alliance that was started by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. While such large projects are generally considered only possible with the help of development aid and philanthropic foundations it is necessary then to have the proper structure for accountability in place so that what was meant to be of benefit to those in need does not end up being siphoned into the pockets of greedy persons. It is the fact that the distribution and provision of vaccine to

district hospitals is the kind of project that can take years to implement and measure impact and this is what caused this to be a lucrative opportunity for those charged with the responsibility of administration. The length of the project provides for time to consider the various loopholes that could be available and use them to pocket donor funds.

Already mentioned earlier is the fact that long term development aid does have its major advantages and areas where there has been significant change experienced that would have otherwise not been experienced in issues such as land reclamation. Something that ought to be taken into account is that long-term aid is sometimes not started out with the intention of actually making the assistance long term. But rather what happens is that development workers involved in a particular project find that withdrawal might turn out to be premature especially if the country's national policies do not meet the needs of the indigenous people. Development agencies may then feel the need to continue the project because not doing so will lead to an even worse situation than was originally there. So in essence poor policies and policy implementation actually necessitates long term assistance from development agencies. Perhaps what ought to be considered is for development workers to think about what policies are in place concerning any project that they may be planning. If the policies in place are such that they support the project and the beneficiaries then it's easy to plan for the exit strategy and no harm done. If the policies are dismal and ineffective then maybe the best way to go about it is to engage the government officials in that discussion. This in itself is likely to take a long time especially if the structures in place are dismal or ineffective.

Another advantage of long term development assistance is that it gives the development agents and NGO's enough time to implement a worthwhile, sustainable development need. The trap that many development agencies have fallen into is the need to give a good report of the work that has been achieved and how the assistance given has been able to move the beneficiaries from point A to B to the respective donors or governments. The need to provide a progress report has endeared many to opt for the short term project whose effects can be experienced immediately and reported. However this happens at the expense of other projects e.g. infrastructural overhaul or land reclamation that will give an outcome that will be enjoyed by generations to come as opposed to the current and immediate beneficiaries. Long term projects even allow for the development workers to provide technical training to the beneficiaries on how to carry on whatever project that has been started so that it does not fall off when they have exited.

After all is said and done whether assistance is offered for the long-term or short-term it is important that the indigenous people or beneficiaries own the solutions to their problems. Aid is not necessarily the issue, the issue is that overtime the past half a century there has been an over reliance on it with very little self-help efforts from amongst the beneficiaries themselves. There is therefore need to foster a self-help

mentality as well as have projects include the plans to have it run and owned by the beneficiaries.

One of the arguments that have been brought out by development agencies is to drop development assistance of any kind to developing countries. Cessation of development activities funded by first world countries may seem like a drastic and unnecessary measure but might just be what the doctor ordered. A story is told about a rat that was trapped in a bowl of milk and could not figure out a way to get off the bowl so it continuously beat its legs against the milk as it struggled to get out. For about 48 hours this went on and before it realized it the rat had churned a whole bowl of cheese. The moral of the story is that many times, struggle is a good thing; however many people are so afraid of a little bit of struggle that they never get to realize the benefits of it. If developing countries are left to fend for themselves, they might experience some struggles for a while but eventually may end up with creative home grown solutions that may have not been discovered otherwise. So Africa and other developing countries ought to embrace some struggle in order to push themselves beyond the current limits. Struggle at personal individual levels has been known to bring out the best out of people who develop a survival mentality and which more often than not develops into a thriving mentality so how much more for an entire community? How much more for an entire country? It necessary to consider what methods can and ought to be put in place to encourage self-efforts among the developing countries.

### **Bottom - up approach to development efforts**

A major reason why development efforts seem to have failed so much over the past fifty years is that most of the efforts were imposed on people and were not tailor made for the developing country's needs. A major assumption that was made is that '...if it worked in this place then why don't we also try it out here...' Development aid through the Marshall plan worked a great deal among the European countries after World War II mainly because these countries had the proper structures in place. To assume that the same plan would work in other countries was a major flaw of the early development strategies and Africa bears the failure of the efforts. The best way to move forward as many have already started to do is to use the bottom up approach such that whatever development efforts are undertaken begin at the bottom (among the beneficiaries) and built upwards such that what the local people consider to be solutions to their own problems is what is the donor will fund.

A simple method that can be employed by governments or private donors to encourage the rise of home grown solutions and self-efforts is to use Innovation and creativity awards to encourage members of a community or the citizens of a country to come up with practical ideas that can be used to improve the lives of community members or even the entire country. The awards can be used to entice thought and participation in the development process. Award winners can then win personal awards and have the

innovations patented by donors or award participants who will then take the necessary steps to implement winning innovations. This system encourages ownership of development efforts so that it does not seem like foreigners have come in to bring foreign ideologies that are often ill construed and almost doomed to fail because of the lack of local community support and goodwill.

Another way to approach this is to fund the expansion of what is already working in a certain community. This is seen best with what World Vision did in Latin America where the infant mortality rate had grown so fast and yet some mothers had not been affected, their babies continued to grow up well and healthy past the fragile ages. This was a wonder, how is it that people living in the same place under the same conditions have such varying experiences? World Vision then set up a program such that these 'successful' mothers shared with the rest of the mothers what they were doing to ensure that their children were not dies of malnutrition. World Vision then funded and facilitated the various training programs so that best practice was shared amongst the mothers and ensured children were being fed well thus safeguarding their future. Funding or sponsoring something that is already working in a community brings a relatable aspect to development such that the idea being introduced is not 'foreign' and so it encourages the community to own the solution to a problem that they are facing.

In his book *Why Africa is poor* Greg Mills places the blame squarely on the shoulders of African leaders. Greg Mills controversially shows that the main reason why Africa's people are poor is because their leaders have made this choice. How can we show that our leaders have decided that we should be poor? At the top of my head I can think of one reason, African leaders are still being held back by the bitterness of colonization. The crop of African leaders has changed very little in the period of time that African countries have been independent. These are leaders who experienced first-hand colonial rule or their parents did and passed down a mindset that can explain why Africa is where it is now. These are leaders who think that because of what western countries did to Africa, Africa is entitled to some sort of restitution and what does that restitution look like? Aid. This is the reason why self effort is not seen or is very minimal in the African context, very little is being done by African leaders to improve their own peoples lives because the colonialists 'owe' it to us to bring us out of this rut.

Mills compares the general attitude between Africans and Asians concerning the question of colonization and concludes that the East Asian countries would much rather talk about what can be done to improve their countries economic status rather than dwell on the oppression of the colonial rule. He argues that African leaders behave in the exact opposite. A mind that is stuck on the atrocities of the past (valid as they are) cannot lead people to the place where they can and ought to be. The African leadership scene is in dire need of an overhaul. Its mindset is old, non-progressive and that which is obsolete and outdated must soon disappear.



The lack of goodwill from government officials to implement policy proposals' concerning poverty reduction is one of the reasons why there is very little self help efforts to be seen among developing countries. It is one thing to put policies on paper and quite another to actively enforce the policy recommendations. This can be likened to a man who looks at himself in the mirror at the face with which he was born; his true, genuine, native face; in distinction from any counterfeit one, or from the face of his mind: he looks at his own corporeal face and sees the lineaments of his face. After which he goes away and he forgets his spots, blemishes, and imperfections; the features of his face, be they comely or not. This is what has characterized the African nations, countries see themselves in policy recommendations, see what is working and what is not and how to make it work plainly written and then immediately after reading they put it aside, move on think no more of the issues and forget what it is exactly they saw about themselves that ought to be corrected or enhanced. We need to bridge the gap between recommended policy and implementation of the recommendations in order to see actual change on the ground

### **Wit craft; Africa's next best option**

Defined as the art or skill of the mind; contrivance, invention and wit. It is also referred to as the art of reasoning, logical reasoning. Human beings have discovered that controlling how people think can be achieved by shaping opinions and driving and pushing ideologies This process is akin to what Billig, in his book *Arguing and Thinking*, called Wit craft, and it is the ability to shape human thought and to craft social identities.

“If witcraft is a basic form of thought, then we can expect private thinking to be modelled upon public argument. In consequence, it should possess a dialogic, rather than monologic, character. Thought, then, would not be seen as a process which is inevitably locked within the recesses of the brain and which is only dimly reflected in our words. Instead, the structure of the way we argue reveals the structure of our thoughts. To put the matter in a paradox, which should not be interpreted too literally: Humans do not converse because they have inner thoughts to express, but they have thoughts because they are able to converse” (Billig, 1996, p. 141).

Following this train of thought would then mean that there is a way to handle the African problem that is a mentality problem. We need the masses to get out of the poverty mentality that states the only way our lives will improve is if we receive more handouts in form of aid or government assistance. Billig argues that private personal thinking, i.e. how an ordinary person chooses to think can be formed and directed by public arguments. So on this note I suggest that one of the ways to get African mentality out of aid and into self reliance is to continue drumming this argument in whatever platform we can access. If we can get the minds of the African people thinking more on commercial and social

entrepreneurship as the means to meet our development needs then we are more likely to achieve and meet long-term development whose effects will trickle down to the ordinary citizens.

## Conclusion

There is a place for both long term and short term development efforts; however the question by development workers ought not to be how long shall we be involved with this? But rather what strategies shall we apply to ensure maximum impact? From policy making and implementation to supporting structures, from project planning to project funding the end game for development agencies should be to come up with projects that can be sustained beyond their specific involvement and that can be owned by the beneficiaries of the aid.