

Lucinda-Callie Wingert

Mr. Hennessey

Camden Conference

May 5, 2016

Aid Corruption in Underdeveloped Africa

In response to the countless problems that plague Africa today, a logical place to start is to ask significant questions. What is it that Africa really needs from the outside world? How do we address the phenomenon of government corruption? Are international aids and outside entities really helping or hurting Africa? How can Africa take control of its own destiny? To a third world continent which has so many needs, solutions will be a combination of outside dollars and inside control.

African history has been riddled with outside influences for centuries. It all began with slavery for a worldwide market. African tribes and Chiefs had often participated in the slavery market. Colonization by countries from other parts of the world had long lasting effects on Africa's social, economical, and geographical development. Post colonial influences from the West and Europe continued; offering "effective guidance", which proved to be ineffective for a continent trying to redefine itself, Africa has ultimately, been strangled repeatedly with a tight grasp by many outside influences. All foreign entities offering "help", but expecting benefits in the form of resources, money, or power; which ever they can get their hands on first. Even today

new economic opportunities offered by countries such as the U.S. and China are vying for control of Africa's natural resources.

Historically, many people all over the world have been motivated by the idea of helping Africa rise, by providing international aid for the country. However, help in any form never comes to Africa without strings of steel attached. Most of the money from organizations, that strive to lend that helping hand to Africa, usually are transported from government to government and all too often lands directly in the hands of a dictator, not the people that are suffering. Corruption cripples Africa on many levels. In Wong and Gomes' article, "Corruption in Modern-Day Africa: A Possible Remedy", they state, "Corruption is not inherently endemic in any particular society. Corruption has often been cited to be a major cause of stalled social and economic advancement in Africa." They also suggest, in this article, that corruption takes two forms, grand corruption and petty corruption. Grand corruption deals with power and wealth, while petty corruption is the result of basic economic need at a lower level (Wong). In order put the slightest dent into the misuse of international aid, something big has to change.

The question still remains; how do we ultimately help Africa? Though there is no real solid or correct answer for this, even people who are very interested and active in helping Africa, are struggling to come up with solutions. Long history of undue influence has crippled Africa from the very beginning of colonization. In many ways Africa would benefit from being cut off of the international aid they seek so often. Though

organizations like UNICEF, World Relief, and World Health Organization do lend a helping hand in many cases. One very important starting point would be to get the help that is needed to the actual suffering people of Africa. Instead of their governments, who use most of the money for their own luxurious lifestyles. In learning that most government parties or dictatorships in Africa are corrupt, one would realize going through the government is not the way to go. As President Cameroon of Nigeria confirmed; Africa is fantastically corrupt (CNN).

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have recently been trying to take their services directly to the people of Africa. UNICEF's mission is to, "provide help in 190 countries and territories to help children reach their full potential" (UNICEF). World Relief's mission is to, "stand with the vulnerable, partnering with local churches to end the cycle of suffering, transforming lives and building sustainable communities" (World Relief). World's Health Organization aims to, "provide every child, woman, and man with the best chance to lead a healthier, longer, life" (WHO). NGOs have the best intentions worldwide and have made a firm footprint in Africa for many years. The continent of Africa has unique problems for some of these NGO's like The Red Cross, Doctors Without Borders, and The Human Rights Watch. "NGOs working in Africa are presented with rare challenges not seen in other parts of the world: Lawlessness, widespread famine and disease, military coups where the safety of civilians is not even

an afterthought, a lack of fresh water – the list is almost endless. Even though international supporters provide upwards of \$50 billion each year, evidence exists that African poor continue to get poorer."(NGO) Africa is facing a double edged sword. On one side of the blade is, how desperately they need help. On the other side, accepting this help is undermining their authority. A foremost African economist, Dambisa Moyo said, "Money from rich countries has trapped many African nations in a cycle of corruption, slower economic growth, and poverty. Cutting off the flow would be far more beneficial." But would it really?

“You give a poor man a fish and you feed him for a day. You teach him to fish and you give him an occupation that will feed him for a lifetime.”(quote investigator) An old Chinese proverb on foreign aid. This quote gives the meaning of understanding towards the solution that every foreign aid entity needs to be striving towards. Africa and its people have longed for the opportunity to take charge of their own country and economy. Most aid from foreign countries give money, but always with hidden motives lurking behind. Most "aid" that Africa receives is from countries that want Africa's rich resources in return. Africans will need to learn how to efficiently grow food, dig effective wells for clean water, make sustainable homes and keep up sanitation all on their own instead of becoming dependent on organizations such as UNICEF and other outside aid agencies.

Citations

"Nigeria 'not Demanding' Corruption Apology." CNN. Cable News Network. Web. 12 May 2016.

Moyo, Dambisa. "Why Foreign Aid Is Hurting Africa." The Wall Street Journal. Web. 21 Mar. 2009.

"Quote Investigator." Quote Investigator. Web. 19 May 2016.

Wong, Alfred. "Corruption in Modern-Day Africa: A Possible Remedy." Maine State Virtual Library. Journal of Pan African Studies, Sept. 2014. Web. 19 May 2016.

"Search Results." UNICEF USA. Web. 19 May 2016.

"Serving the Vulnerable Across the World | World Relief." RSS. Web. 19 May 2016.

"Africa to Intensify Cancer Control through Cancer Registries." WHO. Web. 19 May 2016.

"Non-Governmental Organizations." NonGovernmental Organizations. Web. 19 May 2016.