



The case for aid

When properly targeted and administered, aid can help (and has helped) those most in need by providing emergency assistance as well as help with long-term development in areas such as health, education human rights etc. Thus, ***aid saves and improves lives today and helps prevent them being lost in the future.***

Aid can help developing country governments to provide vital development infrastructure, finance and planning e.g. roads, water and sanitation, planning services and education. It can also provide key inputs into the development process e.g. teachers and community groups etc. In this way, ***aid can act as a 'pump primer' in getting development underway.*** Aid can help overcome 'bottlenecks' to economic development in a country where local savings are small or where there is a lack of foreign exchange.

Aid acts as an expression of humanitarian concern and human solidarity and provides people in the developed world with a channel through which to direct that concern.

Aid acts as a limited but effective means of redistributing global wealth.

Aid can help establish practical links between countries and thus foster international understanding and, ultimately, peace.

Aid is a mechanism whereby the experience and expertise of the better off parts of the world, are made available to the poorer parts.

Aid is a means through which countries and governments can pursue their own interests (both as donors and recipients), thus giving practical expression to the term 'interdependence'.

The case against aid

Aid from government to government only favours the rich of the world and has little effect on the poor. Aid has been used by authoritarian governments to consolidate their power or to enrich themselves.

Aid is used to divert attention from other more important issues such as trade, debt and the role of transnational companies which have much greater (and often negative) impact. We should not waste time arguing about aid when trade, investment and pricing are the real issues.

Aid creates dependency by making weaker governments/countries dependent on stronger ones, thus putting them at a disadvantage in economic or political discussions.

Aid is frequently 'tied' – its terms dictate that recipients buy goods or services from the donor country; it is thus a hidden subsidy to the professions or to industry in the industrialised world.

Aid distorts the free market - the most important engine of growth as has been shown in the past history of the now 'developed' world.

Since we are the givers and they are the receivers, ***aid can promote attitudes of superiority and can reinforce those associated with racism.*** Aid advertising and fundraising (and the ideas that underpin them – sometimes referred to as 'poverty pornography') regularly reinforces inaccurate images of others and of ourselves.

Aid is currently used for economic, political and strategic reasons and is thus ***aimed at maintaining the current character of world inequality,*** rather than challenging it.