Foreign Aid Funds Corruption

I was born and raised in Ethiopia, where one party has been in power for over two decades. While our country follows a democratic government system, people don’t have basic human rights such as freedom of speech, freedom of the press, or freedom of association.. Ethiopia has also been the recipient of foreign aid for a long time, yet the number of poor people has remained unchanged. That’s because our economic system is regulated by government officials who use foreign aid to line their pockets, rather than feed the hungriest among us. If you look up the richest people in Ethiopia, most of them are government officials who happened to be very poor before they entered office. While these People are living as multi-millionaires, most of the country is struggling to pay for basic necessities, like water or medicine. Unfortunately, we’re not alone. This is the case for many foreign aid receiving countries.

According to the Central Intelligence Agency, there are countries where people earn less than $2 a day. It has been this way for an exceedingly long time, despite the fact that developed nations, like the USA and some European countries, have been aiding third world countries with about 0.7 percent of their annual income for years. The total amount of foreign aid that has flown into Africa over the last fifty years is about $1 trillion, and developed nations continue to give about $50 billion to Africa annually. However, according to the World Bank, the number of poor people has fallen by only 76 million over the last fifty years, and despite the significant expenditures, the continent hasn’t shown any economic development at all. So the question becomes: where is all the money going? In this paper, I will talk about foreign aid and its usage in aid receiving counties. I talk about corruption, which is the major problem to why foreign has not been working effectively. I also refer to South Africa Apartheid to propose a solution to solving the problem of corruption.

Daron Acemoglu and James A.Robinson state in their article for *The Spectator that*, “if money alone were the solution, not only would we reduce the number of poor people, but we would be able to eradicate poverty forever.” Unfortunately, money is not being channeled where it could make a difference in people’s lives. Most foreign aid receiving countries, like Ethiopia, have unstable governments that includes very corrupt people in power. Corruption is one of the major problems that contributes to why foreign aid fails to serve its purpose. The other problem is that foreign aid makes poor countries dependent on First World nations in a way that cripples their growth by reducing their incentive to build their own economies. So if foreign aid is not the answer, then what is the solution to eradicating poverty in Third World countries? I believe the solution is not to stop the flow of foreign aid, which still does some good, but to put sanctions on countries that have corrupt government and implement policies that will encourage these countries to become economically independent.

Apartheid in South Africa is a great example of how the system of foreign aid actually contributes to the oppression and poverty of those living in the Third World. Apartheid was a system of racial segregation that existed in South Africa from 1948 until 1994. Under this system, black South Africans, who accounted for 70 percent of the population, were not denied numerous rights. Not only were black Africans forcibly moved into segregated ghettos and prohibited from voting, but they were also forced to live under a set of economic laws that prevented them from escaping poverty. Even though black people dreamed of going to good schools, graduating and having meaningful jobs, the system’s oppressive policy wouldn’t allow it. People who had to travel or work to white communities had to have a special pass to do so. They were banned from occupying any skilled or professional jobs, and the only jobs they were allowed to take in white communities were as unskilled workers. One of the major reasons how we overcame the horrifying era of apartheid was due to sanctions. According to the blog *The African File,* pressure to eradicate apartheid came from economic sanctions, “the expulsions from international organizations, and the divestment of foreign companies.” (The African File) Tying apartheid to the issue of foreign aid and corruption, it is clear that sanction would work as a good solution to eradicating foreign aid corruption. Economic sanctions would force governments whose annual income depends on aid money to prove themselves good to get aid money back. Economic sanctions would not only consist of stopping the flow of aid but also stopping any type of international relationships with developed nations.

Foreign aid could work. Sachs, writer in T*he Guardian* He argues that foreign aid works and provides facts to support his argument.. He takes us back to in 2000, when Africa was struggling with major epidemics. AIDS was killing more than 2 million people each year. The number of people dying from malaria and tuberculosis soared because people had no access to the hospital. Then the United Nations used foreign aid money to provide drugs, health centers and reduce the death caused by epidemic diseases. Around 12 million children under the age of five died in 1990. By 2010, this number has declined to around 7.6 million. This improvement was due to a well-invested foreign aid.

I agree with Sachs’ argument about the fact that foreign aid helps, but Sachs is only focusing on the numbers. His argument doesn’t provide any perspectives from the poor people themselves. He argues strongly that foreign aid is working right and he provides data showing the improvement in health care, but, he does not talk about why most African countries have not shown any economic improvement in the last decade despite the large flow of aid. He misses the big picture which is how foreign aid helps these countries in the long run. Even though the number of people dying from epidemic diseases has fallen sharply, it does not mean the people are out of the oppressive institution. In the case of an epidemic or natural disaster, many non-government agencies and developed nations respond quickly and usually make the situation better. But once it’s over, we go back to the usual way of providing help to Africa, which aid is going straight to governments. Sachs already has presented us with a solution that works and if donor countries and NGOs use aid money to go to this county and respond by building schools, medical centers, and help the government learn how to run the country effectively so slowly the county could become free from foreign aid dependency.

Let’s help Africa become economically independent!

Writer’s Memo

 I enjoyed working on this assignment because I was able to work on an issue I care about and I was able to integrate my personal experience of living in Ethiopia in the essay. I was not sure at first where to place my “personal experience” paragraph in the essay and I decided to make it the first paragraph of the essay since it’s powerful in the sense that it makes my reader interested more than if I just start with facts and numbers. One thing I believe I am missing is a road map. I try to include my road map in the secondparagraph, butt my reviewer doesn’t think I have a road map. Another weakness in my paper is that I don’t have a well-structured essay. I believe I can work more on organizing the paragraphs better and having a clear distinction between each paragraph. Overall, I enjoyed writing the essay.