Foreign Aid: Helpful or Harmful

        According to Dictionary.com, Foreign aid is defined as economic, technical, or military aid given by one nation to another for purposes of relief and rehabilitation, for economic stabilization, or for mutual defense. In 1970, the world’s richest countries agreed to give 0.7% of their Gross National Incomes to poor nations. These countries give economic, technical, and military aid to poorer nations for purposes of relief and rehabilitation, for economic stabilization, or for mutual defense. However, there is much debate over whether foreign aid really helps poorer nations to improve the living conditions of their citizens. In fact, some argue that such aid even hinders development.

Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, contributors to *The Spectator* and authors of “Why foreign aid fails—and how to really help Africa,” believe foreign aid fails to serve its purpose. They write that while… the British government spent 0.5 percent of its annual income on foreign aid in 2012, Not only British but other developed nations have been giving billions dollars for foreign aid for a long time. According to a study done by the World Bank, the number of poor people only fell by 76 million around the world. So if we don’t see any changes, where does all the money go?  Money is not the only solution to rescuing poor people. Many poor people are trapped under a powerful system and they are not able to climb up the economic ladder due to the oppression of powerful people.

Acemoglu and A. Robinson begin their argument by referring to what David Cameron, the Prime Minister of Great Britain believes. Cameron has stated that he deeply cares about the issue of poverty and that he believes the only way to eradicate it is by changing the social and political institutions of foreign aid receiving countries. This means giving women and minorities equal opportunities, encouraging freedom of speech, and eradicating corruption in government. While the authors agree with Cameron’s argument, they wisely point out that “diagnosing a problem is one thing; fixing it another.”  The phrase they chose to respond to David Cameron’s statement strengthens their argument because they are calling the Prime Minister of Great Britain a person who does not act upon his beliefs.

The authors use several rhetorical devices to fortify their argument. They use logos to show their argument’s logical appeal by stating the amount of money the British government has spent on foreign aid. The authors then state that if money alone was a solution, not only would we make poor people’s lives better, we would end poverty forever. The authors purposely state a fact that opposes their argument but then they use pathos to make their audience imagine where these poor countries would be by now if foreign aid actually worked.

In order to invoke pathos, the authors write about South African apartheid as a parallel to the problems created by foreign aid. The authors give a brief summary of apartheid to cause the audience to respond emotionally and to identify with the author’s argument.  under They state that poor people have the ambition to live a life like those in rich countries but they are blocked from basic necessities of life, such equality, health care, clean water, shelter and education. The reference to apartheid is an effective rhetorical strategy that strengthens their arguments and increases the reader’s interest as they become emotionally involved in the author’s argument due to the negative image the word “apartheid” conveys.

Finally, the authors create the poor and their supporters vs. the powerful (the government).  The authors say the only way to solve the problem of corrupt government is to place international sanctions ON WHO to pressure them into becoming democratic. Despite all the corrupt countries that keep receiving foreign aid, the government is not taking any action. The writers argue that, “Pressure needs to come from the citizens who care enough about international development.”

On the other hand, Jeffrey Sachs, a *Guardian* contributor and author of “Foreign aid works—it saves lives” argues that foreign aid has helped millions of poor people improve their lives. The number of people dying from curable diseases has fallen exponentially due to foreign aid, he writes. CAN YOU SAY MORE ABOUT HOW HE MAKES HIS ARGUMENT?

Even before one reads the article, the photograph that accompanies it invokes pathos and draws readers in. Right below the title, there is a powerful image of a mother, her head turned away from the camera, and her baby, looking right into the camera as his eyes tell so many different stories. Every reader who sees the image interprets differently.

Sachs uses several rhetorical strategies to strengthen his argument. In the first sentence, Sachs starts by saying “the critics of foreign aid are wrong.”  He uses logos to talk about how foreign aid has helped decrease the number of infant mortality in Kenya and the number of people dying from malaria in Sub-Saharan countries. Sachs uses logos throughout the article to give enough concrete evidence to provide legitimacy to his argument.

But Sachs doesn’t solely rely on logos to argue his point. He frequently refers to world class, credible organizations such as the United Nations and World Health Organization, as well as world leaders including UN secretary general Kofi Annan and Nigerian former president Olusegun Obasanjo to establish credibility not only for the facts he provides, but also his argument as a whole.   GIVE A CONCRETE EXAMPLE FROM THE TEXT OF WHERE THIS WORKS.

Finally, Sachs provides a counterargument.

Ultimately, I found Acemoglu and Robinson’s argument to be more effective than Sachs’.  Sachs’ argument was lacking pathos, which made it very difficult for me to identify with the writer’s point of view and understand what the writer wants me to feel. Acemoglu and Robinson did a great job at connecting with their audience by not only providing facts, but also telling us about the lives of the poor people and their real struggles. They had interviews from the local people in Nigeria and some other African countries. They mention apartheid, which I thought was very powerful to support their claim about why poor people stay poor. They only thing they were lacking was images. They had four images but they were not powerful enough to get any kind of reaction. Whereas Sachs’ image was very powerful and creates an emotional connection with the audience.  Sachs presenting a counter argument at the end was a great rhetorical choice. But at the end I found Acemoglu and A.Robison’s argument more effective.

First, I think this is a fascinating topic you’ve chosen to pursue: the problems of foreign aid. As you say about the first article: logic and common sense would suggest this is a great way to help those in need, however, facts and figures tell another story and this is the story that you are pursuing. I love the counter-intuitive nature of this exploration, which is also incredibly important and timely.

I also really like how you explain that it was the pathos of the first article that made you find it more convincing than the logos and ethos-focused article by Sachs. This was a great point about how and why some arguments are more effective than others.

To that end, there are still a number of edits that need to be made in order to make your essay more effective. Here are some suggestions:

1. Right now, the biggest issue is a lack of specificity. There are a lot of vague statements that don’t tell us much about these articles, what they actually say, and how they are put together. When you write “the authors make many good rhetorical choices,” you are basically writing “the authors use good words to construct their argument.” It really tells us nothing. Better to say something more specific like, “the authors rely heavily on emotional anecdotes about the real lives of those in foreign aid receiving countries. These anecdotes are powerful and convincing for showing readers exactly how…” Do you see the difference? You need to be more specific throughout. You also need to provide more specific examples from the text. For example, when you say Sachs uses statistics and facts, give us some of the statistics and facts that he uses and tell us how they are effective. You need more quotes and more specific detail from the articles throughout

2. The other problem is a lack of focus on the paragraph level. You need to be clear about what each paragraph is arguing and then stick to that point. If your paragraph is about counterarguments, then focus on those counterarguments and refrain from mentioning pathos, etc. You need to focus the point of each paragraph better.

With more specific analysis, examples, and more focused paragraphs, this essay will be excellent! Thank you for your hard work. Best, Denise