

Aid, Development, and Education

Steven J. Klees¹

University of Maryland

Our world faces pervasive poverty and inequality:

- the world's rich-poor gap has more than doubled since the 1960s;
- 1.4 billion people live on less than \$1.25/day;
- hunger affects 963 million people worldwide;
- nearly 1 billion people lack access to safe drinking water;
- one in three children in developing countries suffers from malnutrition;
- about 75 million children who should be in primary school are not; and
- every year, nearly 10 million children under the age of 5 die from preventable causes. (Bread for the World, 2009; UNESCO, 2009; Dichter, 2003, p. 1)

Hundreds of billions of dollars in international aid have been given or loaned to developing countries through bilateral and multilateral mechanisms, at least, ostensibly, in order to do something about these and other problems. Has such aid helped?

Debates around this question have been ongoing for decades, perhaps intensifying in recent years. This should not be a surprise. It is far from straightforward to even determine how to investigate the question. At first glance, a researcher might want to look before and after to observe how well indicators, such as of poverty and economic growth, improved over a specific time period, and link that to changes in aid, controlling for other factors that might affect poverty and economic growth. While some research along these lines exists, this approach is generally a non-starter, especially on a global level, but also even for specific countries. The question is just too complicated to be well-specified – for many reasons. For instance, there is a myriad of interactive factors that affect poverty and economic growth besides aid. Moreover, international aid serves many purposes other than these, such as supporting the foreign policy of rich countries, building nations, democratization, or fighting terrorism. Given that a supposedly 'scientific' approach cannot answer the question of the impact of aid, it is not surprising that the debates about it rely heavily on anecdotal and idiosyncratic evidence marshaled from particular ideological perspectives.

Periodic studies and international meetings have reviewed aid and development linkages and made recommendations for improvement. For example, the World Bank-sponsored Pearson Commission in 1970 argued that "external resources, by adding to the resources available to a developing country, has had a positive impact upon development" and merited "large and sustained expansion" (Asante, 1985, p. 249). Subsequent studies like the Brandt Commission Reports in 1980 and 1983 reinforced these conclusions. In recent years, international meetings – Monterrey in 2002, Rome in 2003, Marrakech in 2004, and Paris in 2005 – led to agreements on aid and development. The G-8 meeting in Scotland in 2005, with impetus from celebrity donors and entrepreneurial philanthropists, promised a doubling of aid to African nations. And perhaps most importantly, the Paris Declaration in 2005 lays out an international agenda to improve foreign aid

by making it more transparent, accountable, aligned, harmonized, and effective.²

Despite the fact that most of these official views of aid end up arguing that more is necessary, foreign aid has long had its critics from all sides of the political spectrum. For example, from the right, Peter Bauer, an early neoliberal economist writing before the term “neoliberal” was even coined, published in 1972 a book called *Dissent on Development* that summarized the critique he had been making for many years. He argued that rather than helping, “foreign aid...is likely to obstruct” development (p. 95) by creating dependency, distorting priorities, fostering corruption, and exacerbating market imperfections. His recommendation was to mostly eliminate foreign aid. This has also been a long-term political position of the neoconservative movement in the United States, as exemplified by the media commentator and former Presidential candidate, Patrick Buchanan (1998).

A strong critique of foreign aid has come from some on the left as well. For example, in his classic article on dependency, Frank (1967) argues that foreign aid is a form of neocolonialism. Samir Amin (1980), in his book, *Delinking: Towards a Polycentric World*, argues the need for developing countries to delink from world trade and aid systems in order to focus on internal needs. Amin does not argue that trade and aid should be eliminated, just reduced.

It is not my purpose to do a historical analysis of the state of aid and development. I do wish to give a sense of current debates on the topic and then conclude by offering some of my own views. In my review of the literature on aid and development, five recent books stood out as repeatedly discussed and referenced. I therefore examine briefly each of these works, trying to provide a sense of each author’s argument in his or her own words. The first three books mostly offer neoliberal perspectives, while the last two come from more liberal and progressive perspectives. I follow this examination with a discussion of their views and conclude with my own views on aid and development, including implications for education.³ This paper spends more time on aid and development issues than on education, in part, because I found I could not sensibly discuss education issues without first examining the debates about aid and development and their broader implications.

Current Debates

Thomas Dichter

Thomas Dichter’s 2003 book is entitled *Despite Good Intentions: Why Development Assistance to the Third World Has Failed*. As you might suspect, Dichter is a big fan of Peter Bauer, the early neoliberal economist I mentioned above. Dichter is an anthropologist who spent much of his life in the development business – as a Peace Corps volunteer and country director, a foundation officer, a think tank staff member, and a consultant for such agencies as UNDP, USAID, and the World Bank. While he recognizes that different political perspectives may want to use some of his arguments, he sees himself as taking a “pragmatic” stance (p. xi). The book is unusual in that for each analytical chapter, there is a parallel chapter that is actually a short story based on the daily lives of development workers.

Dichter’s (2003) main argument is

that aid has become a business whose main stake is its own survival – [which] begins to explain why there has been so little apparent learning or fundamental change in how things are done, despite all the evidence of failure, all the studies...

and the many expensive evaluations and retrospective looks at this half century of work, the majority of which show depressing if not always negative results. (p. 4)

For Dichter, development is “staggeringly complex” (p. 191). He elaborates:

Development is not a set of obstinate problems the way cancer is but a historical process that cannot really be engineered or controlled. In short, development is not a “challenge,” something we can deliberately “attack” the way finding a cure for cancer can be. Certainly, an industry set up to engineer change through a series of short- and medium-term direct interventions (“projects” and “programs”) is, to put it mildly, a gross mismatch of means and ends. (p. 9)

He goes on:

Development professionals continue to hedge the question of whether development assistance is about doing things. Increasingly, we know that the real keys to development are neither tangible nor involve much “doing.” They are about institutions, attitudes, laws, and human resources.... [Rather than engineering] we could instead undertake more subtle and indirect interventions, stimulating, encouraging, and cajoling. (p. 185, p. 191)

Dichter, like most of the other critics discussed below, does not deny that there are aid and development success stories:

For example, more access to primary education has resulted in more people with basic literacy and under the World Health Organization a decade-long effort to wipe out smallpox succeeded. In the 1990s for the first time we see a decline in the fertility rate of the developing countries owing to a lowering of infant mortality and a decrease in death rates. (p. 2)

But for Dichter these are the exceptions. His concluding chapter is entitled “The Case for a Radical Reduction in Development Assistance.” He elaborates:

Does this mean that we say, “Well, then, let’s leave well enough alone, let them (the poor of developing nations) be. Let the forces of the international marketplace bring on development. Let globalization reign”...Yes, it might mean that. (p. 10)

But Dichter insists his conclusion is not “gloomy” (p. 10). His sources for hope are the potential for telecommunications, the migration of the poor towards better opportunities, and the overall workings of the market and the private sector in the interests of development. While acknowledging the continued need for humanitarian assistance, he nevertheless concludes: “It is time for us to entertain the serious possibility that development assistance is not necessary for development” (p. 293).

William Easterly

The title of William Easterly’s 2006 book is *The White Man’s Burden: Why the West’s Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done so Much Ill and So Little Good*. As you might suspect, Easterly is also a big fan of Bauer. Easterly is also well-known as a critic of economic orthodoxy who was pushed out of the Bank because of his dissenting, more liberal, opinions. But in this book, Easterly the critic of

economic orthodoxy is less evident than Easterly the believer in market solutions. He offers a strong critique of international aid as a

tragedy in which the West spent \$2.3 trillion on foreign aid over the last five decades and still had not managed to get twelve-cent medicines to children to prevent half of all malaria deaths. The West spent \$2.3 trillion and still had not managed to get four-dollar bed nets to poor families....The West spent \$2.3 trillion and Amartech [an Ethiopian girl] is still carrying firewood and not going to school. (p. 4)

He also sees the failure as rooted in the inherent problems with planning and social engineering:

Let's call the advocates of the traditional approach [to foreign aid] the Planners while we call the agents for change in ...[my] alternative approach the Searchers. The short answer on why dying poor children don't get twelve-cent medicines, while healthy rich people do get Harry Potter [delivered around the world overnight], is that twelve-cent medicines are supplied by Planners while Harry Potter is supplied by Searchers.

This is not to say that everything should be turned over to the free market that produced and distributed Harry Potter. The poorest people in the world have no money to motivate market Searchers to meet their desperate need. However, the mentality of Searchers in markets is a guide to a constructive approach to foreign aid. (p. 5)

While Easterly exhibits a liberal's sensitivity to issues of equity, it is integrated in an extremely neoliberal faith in the working of markets and a corresponding belief in the problematic nature of government, as exemplified in the quotes above and in the title of the fifth chapter, "The Rich Have Markets, The Poor Have Bureaucrats."

In the end, Easterly recommends a much reduced role and scope for foreign aid. He suggests that aid be oriented towards programs that seek to have a direct and concrete impact on the poor, and away from broad goals like development and broad policies like structural adjustment policies (SAPs) and poverty reduction strategy plans (PRSPs). He concludes with principles for on-the-ground assistance:

...If you want to aid the poor, then:

1. Have aid agents individually accountable for individual, feasible areas for action that help poor people lift themselves up.
2. Let those agents search for what works, based on past experience in their area.
3. Experiment, based on the results of the search. (p. 382)

Easterly provides additional principles that focus on the need for evaluation results to govern rewards and penalties, tying these incentives to aid agent actions.

Dambisa Moyo

Dambisa Moyo's (2009) recent and hotly debated book is entitled *Dead Aid: Why Aid is Not Working and How There is a Better Way for Africa* (for some debate, see King, 2009b). Moyo is a young Zambian economist, educated at Harvard and Oxford Universities, who has spent two years

working at the World Bank and eight at Goldman Sachs. She is another Peter Bauer fan; in fact, the book is dedicated to him, and her dismal argument echoes his:

[H]as more than US \$1 trillion in development assistance over the last several decades made African people better off? No. In fact, across the globe the recipients of this aid are worse off; much worse off. Aid has helped make the poor poorer, and growth slower. Yet aid remains a centerpiece of today's development policy and one of the biggest ideas of our time.

The notion that aid can alleviate systemic poverty, and has done so, is a myth. Millions in Africa are poorer today because of aid; misery and poverty have not ended but increased. Aid has been, and continues to be, an unmitigated political, economic, and humanitarian disaster for most parts of the developing world.... [Countries get]... trapped in a vicious circle of corruption, market distortion, and further poverty – and thus the 'need' for more aid. (Moyo, 2009, p. xix)

Moyo does make clear that she is talking about official development assistance (ODA) only, not humanitarian aid. Her argument that aid is not just "innocuous" but actually "malignant" (p. 47) rests on attributing to aid a host of ills: most especially, fostering corruption, but also diminishing social capital, increasing conflict, decreasing savings and investments, increasing inflation, hurting exports, and increasing bottlenecks. The result is a culture of "aid-dependency" or "addiction" (pp. 66, 75) that is fostered by what we might call an international aid complex employing half a million people. This complex generates "pressure to lend" (p. 54) and "engenders laziness on the part of African policymakers...in remedying Africa's critical woes" (p. 66). Contrary to many researchers' calls for more democracy as part of a solution to these problems, Moyo argues:

The uncomfortable truth is that far from being a prerequisite for economic growth, democracy can hamper development as democratic regimes find it difficult to push through economically beneficial legislation....In a perfect world, what poor countries at the lowest rungs of economic development need is not a multi-party democracy, but in fact a decisive benevolent dictator to push through the reforms required to get the economy moving.... (p. 42)

The evidence Moyo uses to support her arguments are almost wholly anecdotal and correlational, and the rationale is that of a neoliberal economist convinced of the necessity of market solutions.⁴ As Moyo says:

It should come as no surprise that the Dead Aid prescriptions are market-based, since no economic ideology other than one rooted in the movement of capital and competition has succeeded in getting the greatest numbers of people out of poverty in the fastest time" (p. 145).

Moyo concludes by calling for a complete phase-out of ODA over a 5 to 10 year period. A number of market-based prescriptions are offered as ways to replace, in a more productive manner, the capital that would be lost: borrowing on international capital markets; attracting more foreign direct investment (China's activities in this sphere are praised); promoting trade; expanding microloans; facilitating remittances; incentivizing savings; and employing conditional cash transfers.

Moyo, in the end, asks, "What would happen?" if her recommendations were put into effect:

Would many more millions in Africa die from poverty and hunger? Probably not...Isn't it more likely that in a world freed of aid, economic life for the majority of Africans might actually improve, that corruption would fall, entrepreneurs would rise and Africa's growth engine would start chugging? This is the most probable outcome.... (pp. 144-145).

Roger Riddell

Roger Riddell's 2007 book, *Does Foreign Aid Really Work?*, has no subtitle, thus intentionally depriving us of the "sound-bite" (p. xvii) summary present in the other books. Riddell is an economist and development specialist who is currently International Director for Christian Aid, a major U.K. relief and development agency. Riddell has worked in the development industry for three decades, half of which was spent at Britain's Overseas Development Institute. He is the author of previous studies on foreign aid.

This book differs from the others in a number of ways. First, in addition to a focus on ODA, it also looks closely at humanitarian and emergency aid and at aid provided by NGOs. Second, it considers providing aid within a human rights framework. Third, it offers the most detailed review of foreign aid and of studies of its impact.

The degree to which aid is tied to political and commercial interests is emphasized. For example, of the roughly \$100 billion in ODA in 2005, fully 40% went for technical assistance (p. 202) and 60% was tied to spending in the donor country (p. 358). Riddell points out how much aid follows donor country political interests, as exemplified by the amount of aid devoted by the U.S. to Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. He spends time examining the Washington Consensus and loan conditionalities, and offers a trenchant critique of the concept of "country ownership" in practice:

Predominantly for the IMF and...World Bank, ownership is understood as the process whereby recipient countries come round to accepting...the respective financial institution's programmes, policies, and approaches to development, growth, and poverty reduction. (pp. 240-241)

After an exhaustive review of empirical studies, Riddell concludes with a much more balanced view than the other books examined here:

Does aid really work? Earlier parts of this book have reviewed the best available evidence to conclude that large amounts of development and emergency aid have saved lives, both directly and indirectly. They have led to tangible benefits for millions of poor people, and made some positive wider contributions to poor-country economies and societies. Some aid interventions, however, have been failures, and large amounts of development aid have not had a significant, long-term, systemic, or sustainable impact. Emergency aid has succeeded in saving many lives, but lives have been lost because of a shortage of funds. The failure to coordinate the humanitarian response effectively has meant that much aid has been wasted, while large numbers of those caught up in emergencies and disaster remain inadequately protected. (p. 355)

An earlier passage focused on ODA makes the author's position clearer, reinforcing the point I

raised at the beginning of this article:

But has most official development aid worked, or failed? The honest answer is that we still don't know – not for lack of trying, but due to the inherent difficulties of tracing its contribution. After more than five decades of aid-giving, the bulk of the most reliable and accessible information on impact relates to discrete projects, supplemented in the last decade by some assessments of the contribution made by individual donors in particular countries. Cross-country studies seeking to find the answer to the question “Does aid work?” do not provide a reliable guide on the overall and explicit contribution of aid to development and poverty reduction. They never will. (p. 254)

Towards the end of the book, Riddell summarizes the five fundamental problems he sees with the current system of aid:

1. Aid is still not provided in sufficient overall quantities to meet the different needs of poor countries....
2. The aid which is provided is not allocated in any systematic, rational, or efficient way to those who need it most....
3. The aggregate amounts of aid provided to recipient countries are volatile and unpredictable....
4. Development aid relationships are still dominated by recipients having to interact with scores, and, at the extreme, hundreds of different official donors and donor agencies... [and] many thousands of individual projects and programmes....
5. While donors regularly articulate the centrality of recipient ownership and partnership between donors and recipients as critical for aid to have a positive impact, in practice, the overall aid relationship remains extremely lopsided with donors remaining almost wholly in control. (pp. 386-7)

In his two concluding chapters, Riddell boldly proposes an overhaul of the entire aid architecture. This new structure would take a lot of the current politics out of aid distribution, using a “human rights approach to development...which gives prominence to the involvement and participation of recipients in decisions about how aid should be used....” (p. 390). For official development assistance, a new International Aid Office and Fund would be financed by compulsory contributions from rich countries and allocated by need with transparent criteria operationalized by a technical staff in each country. In the case of severely inadequate or corrupt governments, alternative distribution mechanisms would be used. For humanitarian aid, current improvements in coordination and central funding would be extended. And for NGOs, codes of conduct and other efforts would make their work more transparent and productive.

David Ellerman

David Ellerman's 2005 book, *Helping People Help Themselves: From the World Bank to an Alternative Philosophy of Development Assistance*, also critiques the 'big push' social engineering side of foreign aid and offers in its stead a model based on incrementalism and self-help. Ellerman is an ex-World Bank staffer who, before retiring from the agency, was an advisor to Joseph Stiglitz and other World Bank chief economists. Ellerman was an internal Bank critic and now has become an external one. Much of the book draws on his experiences with the Bank, mostly as examples of what not to do.

Ellerman (2005, p. xvii) highlights the general lack of debate within the Bank and describes the “usual Bank procedure of trying to give...the answers” buttressed by an intimidating barrage of one-side arguments and biased statistics.” With respect to the Bank’s attempt to be a “Knowledge Bank,” he argues that it “should take a cue from universities and other scientific institutions and not have ‘official views’ on complex questions of knowledge.” In an earlier paper (Klees, 2002), I argued that the Bank wasn’t really a Knowledge Bank but a Monopoly Opinion Bank (a.k.a., the MOB!). Ellerman seems to agree:

One might think that all the economists in positions of power in the Bank would recall their catechisms about the problem of monopoly. But it would seem that they are more attracted to the notion of “global” than they are repelled by the notion of “monopoly.” All the rhetoric about a global agency having a global role to gather global knowledge to solve global problems seems to be so much globaloney to justify the monopolistic worldwide role of the World Bank. (p. 242)

Ellerman reveals how the “thought police” in the Bank and the IMF restrict debate and promote a party line (p. xix, 153). He also warns how the ubiquitous call for “country ownership” of its policies and programs can be perverted, “turning the government into a marionette that will believe and do what it is told as long as the aid or loan is forthcoming” (p. 136).

However, the problems Ellerman (2005, p. 2) sees go far beyond the Bank: “the development of whole societies must surely be one of the most complex tasks facing humanity.” He says:

After a half century on the path of official development assistance, we find ourselves lost....Development will not yield to social engineering no matter how much aid is provided. A fundamentally different philosophy of development assistance is needed... (p. 241)

That fundamentally different philosophy for Ellerman means rethinking the relations between ‘helpers’ and ‘doers.’

Helping or assistance is a relationship between those offering assistance in some form, the helper or helpers, and those receiving the assistance, the doer or doers. The helpers could be individuals, NGOs, or official bilateral or multilateral development agencies and the doers could be individuals, organizations, or various levels of government in the developing countries. (p. 4)

Ellerman’s (pp. 253-61) different philosophy is summed up in five “do” and “don’t” principles:⁵

- First Do: Starting from Where the Doers Are...
- Second Do: Seeing Through the Doers’ Eyes...
- First Don’t: Don’t Try to Impose Change on Doers...
- Second Don’t: Don’t Give Help as Benevolence...
- Third Do: Respect Autonomy of Doers

The book closes with the following remark:

Helpers cannot and should not try “to do development.” Helpers can at best use indirect, enabling, and autonomy-respecting methods to bring doers to the

threshold. The doers have to do the rest on their own in order to make it their own. The doers acquire development only as the fruits of their own labor. (p. 252)

Discussion

So, what are we to make of all this? Clearly, all the authors offer some dismal analyses and depressing conclusions. Of course, this is not surprising given the current state of global poverty and inequality. One would have hoped that 60 years of international aid would have led to clear improvement. However, the best that anyone can say is that the situation could have been a lot worse than it is now had there been no aid. And only Riddell makes this argument explicitly.

However, these books do differ from one another. I find it useful to divide the world of political economy into three broad paradigms: neoliberal, liberal, and progressive. Neoliberalism, which predominates today, focuses on market solutions, criticizing the efficiency and equity of government interventions. A liberal perspective offers greater recognition of the inefficiencies and inequities of markets and puts more faith in government. Finally, a progressive perspective, focuses on the reproductive nature of both the market and the state under current world system structures like capitalism, patriarchy, and racism, and puts greater reliance on transformation from below through more participatory forms of democracy and collective action. It should be noted that these paradigms are more continuous and overlapping than mutually exclusive.

The predominant argument in these books – in particular, those by Dichter, Moyo and, to a large extent, Easterly – is neoliberal. Aid is seen as having been almost a complete waste at best, if not an unmitigated disaster, while the solution lies in minimizing government and maximizing free markets and trade. This is not surprising either, given that for the last three decades a neoliberal view has dominated in much of the world. As Moyo (2009, p. 67) points out, in the liberal era of the 1960s and 1970s (when government intervention enjoyed much greater legitimacy), Peter Bauer was a “lone dissenting voice,” while his views now have wider support. But, it is very interesting to note that, in practice, this support is rather ambiguous. While Dichter, Moyo, Easterly, and other neoliberal commentators on the problems of aid have received a lot of attention, it is well to remember that neoliberals have generally been in charge for the last three decades during the biggest build-up in international aid the world has ever seen. Neoliberals have been in charge while the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – perhaps the most sweeping call for aid and social engineering in history – were instituted.⁶ At least on the surface, this implies that many neoliberals have maintained some belief in the efficacy of aid – or perhaps it is a result of neoliberal guilt given the worsening of poverty and inequality caused by their policies.

Or perhaps there is something else operating here. As a progressive political economist, critical of both neoliberals and liberals, I see the neocolonial dimensions of aid in the world system, as Frank (1967) pointed out. From this perspective, international aid and the MDGs are a form of what Weiler (1984) called compensatory legitimation; more colloquially, I see it as a form of “good cop, bad cop.” International crises, shaky and poorly-performing economies, increasing poverty and inequality, widespread conflicts, and the equivalent of structural adjustment policies everywhere, all call into question the legitimacy of the neoliberal social order – this is the bad cop. To compensate for this, actors in the world system of neoliberal globalization must introduce polices such as aid and the MDGs that are aimed at ameliorating some problematic conditions and thus restoring system legitimacy – this is the good cop.

This argument does not question the good intentions of the proponents of these policies, but it does question their effects.⁷ Put simply, the existence of these policies may be sufficient for

compensatory legitimation; whether they are effective seems to be less important. All of the books I reviewed were written before the current economic crisis. This crisis changes things in that it calls into more serious question the entire neoliberal regime and poses a global challenge to its legitimacy.⁸ For the first time in three decades, whether neoliberalism will survive is not clear. If it does, however, it will probably not be a time for policymakers to heed the calls of people like Dichter, Moyo, and Easterly, as even greater compensatory legitimation will be needed. The world system must look like something is being done to improve the situation even if it is not.

I do not mean to argue that all policies are the result of systemic forces that reproduce and legitimate the unequal world order. I am a firm believer that neoliberal policies are continually challenged by individuals, organizations, social movements, and left-of-center governments. The existence of aid and the MDGs represents real gains for the world's disenfranchised, as does, for example, the more participatory processes called for in PRSPs. However, in this neoliberal era, these policies unfortunately bear little fruit.

It is interesting to note that one could make the argument that aid was more successful in the liberal era of the 1960s and 1970s than it has been in the neoliberal era that followed. Even Moyo (2009, p. 5) admits that Africa was doing much better in the 1970s than today, and it was "awash" with aid then. A big difference is that the 1980s introduced neoliberal Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) throughout Africa, cutting government and liberalizing trade. Even many neoliberal economists admitted these policies had harmful, if not devastating, consequences. Yet current-day mechanisms such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Process (PRSP) and the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) continue to produce results that look very similar to those produced by the bankrupt SAPs.

Riddell and Ellerman proceed from a predominantly liberal perspective, although both have some progressive elements. Riddell is very critical of aid and its ties to commercial and political interests, but he recognizes that much aid has had a positive impact. His conclusion for increasing aid and restructuring aid architecture offers some progressive alternatives worth considering. Ellerman also critiques the structure of aid and the ability of bilateral and multilateral aid agencies like the World Bank to socially engineer a better world. His solution, to rely more on respecting the autonomous efforts of the "doers," especially at the grassroots level, fits with a more progressive perspective.

My reading of additional literature related to aid and development indicates to me that these five books are representative of the debate. A neoliberal perspective predominates. Liberal views are reasonably represented, especially if you include works that are indirectly about aid and development (e.g., Collier, 2007; Sachs, 2005). Scarcer are works from a progressive perspective. In an excellent paper from this point of view, Samoff (2009) comes to quite different conclusions than the authors above: the aid system "is in fact working very well. Its essential role is not to achieve publicly stated objectives but rather to maintain a global political economy of inequality" (p. 24).

I agree with Samoff. But, as I am sure he would agree, this is not a call for despair. It is a call for transformation. I believe, as do many who share a progressive perspective, that that transformation will have to come from widespread collective action. Part of that action is thinking about and discussing what such transformation might entail. In what follows, I offer my own perspectives on certain key steps that need to be taken with regard to aid, development, and education.⁹

Implications for Aid, Development, and Education

Much more money is needed.

In today's world, it has become fashionable to say 'don't throw money at social problems,' 'money is not the main issue,' and 'better management and stronger accountability is what is needed to fix the problem.' This mentality has been an excuse for inaction. Of course more money is needed, much more. Total ODA per capita comes to about \$10. What kind of development do we think we can buy for \$10 per head per year?¹⁰ Rich countries spend less than 1% of their GDP on ODA. They are unwilling to even come close to the 0.7% of GDP goal that they set for themselves.¹¹ In this unfair and vastly unequal world, what kind of development do we think we can buy for less than a measly 1% of GDP?¹² In 2008, ODA to all of Africa was about \$35 billion, less than the U.S. bailout of the auto industry; Stephen Lewis calls this amount of aid "picayune and marginal" (Aurea Foundation, 2009).

It is worth noting that the Marshall Plan for reconstruction after WWII spent as much on Europe as the rich countries do on total ODA for all developing countries now (Moyo, 2009, p. 12). On a per capita basis, the Marshall Plan received about 8 times as much money as ODA receives now. And for Europe the development problem was much easier than that faced by developing countries today: Europe was already industrialized with an educated workforce; it only needed to rebuild the physical infrastructure damaged in the war. Developing countries need a much more intense effort than the Marshall Plan. The point is that we haven't been throwing money at our social problems; instead we've been miserly. In a similar vein, King (2009b, pp. 8-9) points out the huge amount of aid – perhaps more than what has gone to all of Africa – that went to transform one country, South Korea, and the great amount of resources that Germany is putting into the development of the former East Germany.

Attempts to cost what it would take to achieve the MDGs have produced estimates of at least an additional \$120 to \$190 billion a year, and that may well be an underestimation (UN Millennium Project, 2006; Moyo, 2009, p.45). It needs to be remembered and highlighted that whether you as an individual are in need of these resources is simply an accident of birth. In today's world, shouldn't we work towards making the accident of where you are born an illegitimate basis for determining your well-being? For a long time, I have thought of doing a study in the U.S. of the vast differences in the investment we make in the children of the rich versus the children of the poor. This would involve looking at family, school, and social investments – everything from pre-natal care to home environments to college. While quantifying all of that would be difficult, my guess is the results would be astounding, showing differences of 500 or 1,000 to 1. Imagine how much greater would be the disparity between the investment in a rich child in the U.S. and a poor child in Africa – perhaps as much as 10,000 to 1. Whatever the numbers, these huge differences should be seen as completely illegitimate and immoral. Much more aid is needed.

Education, like other social sectors, has been a victim of the neoliberal onslaught that has argued that schools generally do not need more money but need to spend it more wisely (Klees, 2008a). What nonsense! Of course, spending wisely is important, but more money is desperately needed. We have 75 million children of primary school age out of school (UNESCO, 2009). They need teachers, classrooms, and learning materials. Universal primary education and other EFA goals are estimated to require an additional \$16 billion per year (UNESCO, 2010). The Fast Track Initiative (FTI) has only been supplying about \$300 million per year. Moreover, we have many more millions of students receiving a very low quality primary education who need more and better educated teachers, improved facilities, and better learning materials. This does not include

the huge secondary school coverage deficit. Furthermore, the problem is not limited to developing countries. In the U.S., for example, there is a huge achievement gap between advantaged and disadvantaged children, and that is a direct result of the huge investment gap that starts at birth, as I discussed earlier.¹³

Disburse some of that money directly to the poor.

Just as she is putting the finishing touches on her argument to eliminate all aid, Moyo (2009) somewhat surprisingly suggests the idea of giving aid by direct cash transfers to the poor:

Instead of writing out a single US\$250 million cheque to a country's government, why not distribute the money equally among its population,,,[incorporating] notions of accountability and repayment....It is worth pointing out that there has been some notable success with a concept known as 'conditional cash transfers'; these are cash payments...made to give the poor an incentive to perform tasks that could help them escape poverty (for example, good school attendance, working a certain number of hours, improving test scores, seeing a doctor). The idea of conditional cash transfers has met with much success in developing countries such as Brazil, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Peru... studies show the schemes have been instrumental in decreasing malnutrition, increasing school attendance, and decreasing child labour....[W]hy has this type of programme not been rolled out aggressively across Africa? (pp. 150-151)

Conditional cash transfers are now touted by the Bank and other agencies, but they are not rolled out because donors are not willing to put up the money to do so. Riddell also concludes with a couple of pages arguing for cash transfers. He, like I, would question Moyo's argument that all money should be distributed this way and that it need be repaid (these are not microloans). Riddell (2007) contends:

For many years, humanitarian agencies have handed out goods free to those in need during emergencies, especially food. More recently, both humanitarian and other aid agencies have given food aid in return for work and, more recently, cash for work. However, very little aid has been provided for those in need simply as 'free cash' enabling people to spend it as they think fit. Though increasingly wishing to make a tangible difference to very poor people, donors have shied away from providing cash for extreme poverty. Historically a reluctance to give cash directly to poor people has often been based on the belief that they will spend it... [unwisely]...and on the linked paternalistic, and condescending, view that poor people do not know how best to use it. These beliefs sit uncomfortably alongside the increasingly mainstream view that beneficiary choice and participation are fundamental to the aid relationship. (p. 407)

Riddell goes on to review the evidence for the effectiveness of cash transfers and argues the case is "compelling" (p. 407). In the 1970s, there was a much discussed development strategy called "equity before growth," which argued that the traditional approach that relied on growth before eventually achieving greater equity was ineffective, and had it backwards: global redistribution was needed first to direct growth in different ways and especially towards the needs of the disadvantaged. Neoliberals came to power before this strategy had gained much traction, but it remains a much more sensible approach to development. Resources redistributed to the poor can

help re-direct the economy towards their needs and, when combined with job creation efforts, can help set up a self-sustaining system.¹⁴

Some of the research mentioned above praising conditional cash transfers is in education. There are small- and large-scale programs in developing countries (e.g., Brazil and Mexico) that pay poor children to go to school, conditional on attendance and passing. Given the persistence of user fees and the very large opportunity costs of child labor faced by poor parents, offering scholarships such as these on a very large scale will be the only way to achieve UPE. The costs of doing so are not included in the UPE cost estimates above, raising the amount of money needed considerably if the MDGs and EFA goals are to be taken seriously.

Real and strong participation should be the fundamental basis for governance.

Moyo (2009) comments on the “rise of glamour aid” in which actors, rock stars, and the like become very visible proponents of aid:

Scarcely does one see Africa’s (elected) officials or those African policymakers charged with the development portfolio offer an opinion on what should be done, or what might actually work to save the continent....This very important responsibility has, for all intents and purposes, and to the bewilderment and chagrin of many an African, been left to musicians who reside outside Africa. (pp. 26-27)

While I see some value to “glamour aid,” Moyo’s point is well-taken. Who or what directs and should direct the aid system? There is much talk of “country ownership.” The bilateral and multilateral aid agencies all claim that the country is in charge and that they only have an advisory role. But that is simply not true, as Riddell’s earlier quote makes clear. The aid agencies have overwhelming power in the aid relationship, specifically through the conditionalities they require and generally through the power to withhold and direct aid. This power is even greater under the currently fashionable SWAps (sector wide approaches) through which the gang of donors effectively makes country policy. For aid to be effective, we must curtail the power of aid agencies and move beyond country ownership to rely on widespread participation.

Participation in aid processes by the disadvantaged themselves and their advocates in civil society has long been discussed. Instrumental, idiosyncratic, and sporadic uses of participation have been common. But it is rare that participation takes on real and strong roles in governance.¹⁵ The rhetoric is often lofty, but the reality is weak (Edwards Jr. & Klees, forthcoming). For example, the formulation of poverty reduction strategy papers (PSRPs) that are supposed to guide all World Bank and IMF aid to a country in principle require extensive participation by civil society. In practice, consultation replaces participation, and the consultation is hurried and superficial, with civil society having hardly any say in the final product. As mentioned earlier, the final result are policies that bear strong similarities to the draconian and unsuccessful SAPs.

This call for serious participation in the governance of public policies and programs is a call for reform in rich countries as much as for reform in poor countries and global interrelationships.¹⁶ Representative democracy has had many positive features, but it has led to a system that is strongly reproductive, protecting the interests of the advantaged at the expense of the disadvantaged. Under labels of ‘participatory,’ ‘deliberative,’ and ‘strong democracy,’ there have been many calls for reform in line with what I am calling for here (Crocker, 2009; Barber, 2003).¹⁷

Neoliberalism strongly promotes privatization, including in the education sector. Calls for voucher schemes and subsidizing and strengthening private schooling have been ubiquitous. Neoliberals consider relying on the market as a form of participation. What nonsense! There was an economics textbook entitled *Participation without Politics* that was a typical microeconomic examination of a supposed free market system (Brittan, 1979). There is no participation without politics; participation is inherently political. As in all development endeavors, education needs much deeper and more widespread forms of participation. At their best, they connect with a broad approach to critical pedagogy governing the administration, content, and process of education, such as with the Citizen School movement in Brazil (Fischman & Gandin, 2007; Gandin & Apple, 2002).

Replace the World Bank and the IMF.

The Bank and the Fund are completely ideological institutions. Even insiders point to the internal “thought police” who reinforce orthodoxy and suppress dissent. For the last three decades, that ideology has been neoliberalism. Neoliberalism has been a total failure in terms of development and has resulted in the most incredible concentration of wealth the world has ever seen. It was a failure before the current economic crisis, and now that failure is even more apparent. Liberal and progressive economists have had hardly any voice in the Bank or the Fund since the 1970s.¹⁸ Neither have non-economists, civil society, or developing countries. The result has been three decades of bad, one-sided advice.

Clearly the Bank and the Fund have functions that need to be fulfilled, in particular, giving grants and loans for development and for economic crises. But we need an entirely new architecture for doing so, perhaps partly along the lines Riddell has suggested. Given the fundamental debates among economists, one school of economic thought should not dominate as it does now. Moreover, given that economic issues shade into all sorts of other social issues, economists should not be in charge. In keeping with my previous point, governance should be participatory, with developing countries and civil society having a considerable say. The Global Fund for Aids, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, even though it is housed within the Bank, offers one example of an attempt to develop a more participatory and consensus-based process.

Ideally, much of ODA would be channeled through a new aid architecture, reducing considerably the multiplicity of demands on developing countries from bilateral and multilateral aid agencies. Riddell (2007, p. 360) points out: “Each year, over 35,000 separate official aid transactions take place and, on average, each aid recipient has to deal with more than 25 different official donors” (also see Knack & Rahman, 2008). Working in developing countries, one is simply amazed by the proliferation of aid-funded projects, the contradictions between them, and the incredible demands they put on local agencies in implementation and monitoring.¹⁹

I believe future historians will shake their collective head in wonder that the world today allowed a bank to be the global leader in developing and enforcing educational policy. What nonsense! We need to get rid of the Bank and the Fund. The Fund is perhaps the biggest obstacle to Education for All (EFA) in the world today as its narrow inflation targets lead it to require developing countries to cut their teaching force as a way of scaling back government (Rowden, 2010; Marphatia, Moussie, Ainger, & Archer, 2007; Archer, 2006). The Bank’s Fast Track Initiative has been useful in getting some money to some countries to help with EFA costs, but far too little money has been allocated, the process has been cumbersome and slow and subject to endless Bank regulation, and the Bank has imposed arbitrary educational benchmarks on who should qualify for funds (Benavot, et al. 2010; Klees, Winthrop, & Adams, 2010; Cambridge Education, Mokoro Ltd., &

Oxford Policy Management, 2009). There has been a call to replace FTI with a Global Fund for Education (even endorsed at one point by President Obama) (Oxfam, 2010; Sperling, 2009). It is high time. The Bank's ideological role as global education cop must end.

There are global development priorities that might be agreed upon.

This paper is mostly about the aid process. Arguing for a much more participatory process does not mean development becomes chaotic or strictly locally-determined. There may well be some global priorities that could be agreed upon. My suggestions for some of these are as follows:

- *Impact the poor:* Clearly, we want to do a much better job of having aid reach its intended beneficiaries.
- *Emphasize gender:* The inequalities and discrimination faced by girls and women are unjust and have been a major barrier to development.
- *Go to scale:* We have had thousands of very effective pilot projects at a local level, often run by NGOs; we need to implement many of them on a large scale.
- *Consider the environment:* We are facing a global ecological crisis, and aid requires an integral examination of its impact on the environment.
- *Pay attention to issues of peace and conflict:* Over 40 countries are in a state of conflict or post-conflict, and we live in a world where aggression is ubiquitous (Fischer, n.d.).
- *Use a human rights framework:* We have many United Nations agreements about human rights, but aid agencies generally ignore them.

All of the development priorities above are as relevant to education as they are to broader development strategies. Of fundamental importance is to base education policy on the right to education. UNESCO and UNICEF have already moved in this direction, but the Bank and the Fund resist. In part, that is because such a change would wreak havoc with an instrumental human capital framework where education is only valued for its impact on earnings and economic growth, not seen as an end in itself. Also specific to education, I would add, that there is a need to bring a critical pedagogy framework to all education, one that starts where learners are, examines the history and nature of their place in the world system, and considers strategies for transformation (McLaren & Kincheloe, 2007).

More of the same research is not needed.

Most studies end with a call for further research. Doing research has been another major excuse for inaction. Unfortunately, most research offers little guidance about what to do. While all five books indicate the need for more research, a number of them, and other related works, recognize how little research has to offer. Ellerman (2005, p. 18) talks of "helpers... supplying biased information, partisan econometrics, and one-sided arguments." Riddell (2003, p. 174) argues that, given the "complexities of development...it would seem to be over-ambitious to believe it possible to quantify precisely the relationship between aid and growth, aid and development, aid and poverty reduction." Hoebink (2009, p. 35) points out that regression analyses in development research "are highly contested." In a more recent work, Easterly (2008) argues:

The literature [on aid and growth] suffers from such unrestricted specifications and endless iteration among these specifications that virtually any result on aid and growth is possible and indeed all possible results have already been presented in the literature: aid effects are conditional on good policies, they are not conditional on good policies; aid has a positive effect on growth, aid has no effect on growth;

aid has a linear effect on growth, aid has a quadratic effect on growth; only certain types of aid matters, all types of aid are equivalent.^[20] Growth regressions in general have been criticized on the grounds of data mining and specification searching... [The result is that]...the regression wars on foreign aid and growth show no sign of ending anytime soon. (p. 18)

The complete indeterminacy of this kind of quantitative research is not confined to the literature about aid and development. As I have argued elsewhere (Klees, 2008b), for quantitative research methods to yield reliable cause-effect information requires fulfilling impossible conditions. Regression analysis, the most frequently used methodology, requires three conditions: all independent variables that affect the dependent variable are in the equation, all variables are measured correctly, and the correct functional form is specified. In practice, these conditions are never fulfilled and can never be fulfilled. Regression analysis studies thus become a battleground over model specification which forms the basis for an endless debate over results in, for example, literatures on economic growth, student achievement, welfare policies, Head Start, class size, vouchers for schools or housing, and many others.

It is currently fashionable to call for an alternative to regression analysis – randomized experiments (Duflo & Kremer, 2008). In theory, well-controlled experiments are supposed to make it easy to make cause-effect inferences. In practice, real world experiments, outside the laboratory, are never well controlled. Therefore, randomization buys you little, and control groups always differ from experimental groups. Researchers acknowledge this and try to make compensatory statistical adjustments, but they are always ad hoc and easily contestable. Basically, real world experiments revert right back to the need for proper regression analysis specification to untangle cause-effect relationships, as evidenced in many of the same literatures mentioned above.

This is a major conundrum.²¹ We do need research and evaluation to help figure out what works, yet research and evaluation results are always contested and contestable. My only answer is to return to the centrality of participation.²² Participatory research and evaluation – with participation by beneficiaries and other stakeholders as well as by analysts who depart from different frameworks – may not yield clear answers, but it can put our debates on the table. Drawing on quantitative, qualitative, and critical research and evaluation methodologies (Mertens, 2004; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000), the resulting information and arguments should become part of participatory decision-making processes. When truth becomes a problematic goal, the legitimacy of political processes becomes paramount.²³

Educational research and evaluation are as biased, indeterminate, and contested as any other. Again, I do not mean this as a call to halt all research. I do mean that most of the above recommendations do not depend on further research. I also mean that when research is needed, the principal form of research that makes sense is participatory research.

In closing, Moyo's concluding thought about whether millions more would die if aid were to be stopped should be central to the consideration of the choices we face. The indicators that I began this paper with are horrendous. Right now millions are dying and dying needlessly; millions more are barely surviving at the margins. Relatively few resources are needed to change this. The market mechanism does not work for billions of people and aid is insufficient and misdirected. Transformation is possible. We can turn this around and make the 21st century the first one that is just and humane.

Endnotes

1. An earlier version of this paper was given as the keynote address at the Northeast Regional Comparative and International Education Society Conference held October 8-9, 2009, at Lehigh University, Bethlehem, PA. I am the Harold R.W. Benjamin Professor of International and Comparative Education and Director of the International Education Policy Program at the University of Maryland. I would like to thank Susanne Clawson, Mark Ginsburg, and Nelly Stromquist for comments on a draft of this paper.
2. Many in the development community seem to be enamored of the Paris Declaration, but it is both distant from reality and perhaps not even desirable: aid is very far from transparent; accountability and effectiveness are too often narrowly conceived and oriented towards the donor; and aid aligned and harmonized gives donors ever more power. The Paris Declaration also falls far short of what is needed to make aid work, as I discuss in the conclusion.
3. Aid is a hot topic in education as well as in the development literature. See Benavot, Archer, Moseley, Mundy, Phiri, Steer, and Wiking (2010) and King (2009a).
4. In a critique of Moyo's reliance on the correlation between aid and difficult development situations, Watkins (2009, p. 20) calls it "guilt by association: there's an awful lot of aid sloshing around in countries that are doing badly. Using the same logic you could argue that fire engines are best avoided because you tend to find them clustered around burning buildings."
5. Ellerman supports these principles with references to the work of thinkers across diverse fields including Hirschman, Schumacher, Alinsky, Freire, Dewey, McGregor, Rogers, and Kierkegaard.
6. One could argue that the MDGs and EFA came about as the result of liberal politics despite neoliberalism being predominant (Chan, 2006).
7. See also Samoff (2009, p. 4): "It is important to note here that a critical approach to foreign aid does not require a conspiracy theory. At issue are not the intentions or attitudes or good will of aid agency staff."
8. That is recognized by liberals (Stiglitz, 2009) as well as progressives.
9. I do not pretend that all progressives will agree on all points. For example, although I believe the need for more spending by the North on education and development in the South is essential, some progressive perspectives, such as delinking, might disagree (Amin, 1985). Relatedly, with more money comes more threats to sovereignty (Samoff, 2009).
10. Of course, since that money is targeted, it will be more per head. On the other hand, only 40% of aid is targeted to the poorest countries (Riddell, 2007, p. 358) and corruption will lessen how much reaches those in need. And the fact that much aid is tied, perhaps 60%, to technical assistance and purchases from donor countries, means a big chunk of that \$10 may not be very useful.
11. The 0.7% of GDP goal was originally set in 1970 and reaffirmed at the Monterrey Summit in 2002. Only five countries have met it: Denmark, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. In reality the share of high-income countries GDP going to ODA actually fell from 0.51% in 1960 to 0.23% in 2002 (UN Millennium Project, 2006).
12. The huge amount of resources that the U.S. and the world are spending to combat the current economic crisis belies the explanation that more resources cannot be found, as does U.S. spending on the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.
13. A recent study by UC Berkeley professor Emmanuel Saez points to a "staggering, unprecedented disparity" in U.S. income, an "all-time high" in inequality. The top 10% income earners received almost 50% of total income, the highest concentration since 1917 (Huffington Post, 2009). And, of course, inequality in wealth is much, much higher.
14. Microloans could be one part of this system, but they are no miracle cure, as has been touted.

Even if money could be found for their expansion, loans are no basis for transformation. Many people who are poor will not borrow, and small scale entrepreneurship is not going to achieve an equitable and sustainable development.

15. Waisbord (2008) offers a good analysis of three barriers to strong participation: the bureaucratic nature of aid agencies; their technical, expert-dominated model; and their pretense to be apolitical.
16. Ellerman's call for encouraging self-help and respecting autonomy is, in part, a call for greater participation.
17. From a similar perspective, there have also been calls to replace the authoritarianism of the private sector with a more participatory, democratic workplace (e.g., Hahnel, 2005; Alperowitz, 2004).
18. Liberal or progressive economists in these institutions who have been vocal have been marginalized or fired. It is not only the Fund and the Bank that have been shaped strongly by neoliberal economists but universities, think tanks, bilateral aid agencies, and governments as well. It is interesting to note that even in the liberal Obama administration, despite the serious current economic crisis, critical voices get excluded. Paul Krugman and Joseph Stiglitz, both Nobel Prize-winning economists, have not been part of White House efforts because "an entire economics perspective...a progressive-economist wing" has been excluded from policymaking (Krugman, 2009).
19. Contrary to expectations, donor coordination and harmonization through SWAps do not seem to have reduced the demands on aid recipients (Riddell, 2007).
20. The neoliberal conventional wisdom is that aid's effectiveness depends on a country following neoliberal policies that encourage free trade and foreign investment but, as above, that conventional wisdom is based on ideology, not evidence (in addition to Easterly, see Riddell, 2007; Radelet, 2006)
21. The ubiquitous call for "evidence-based decision-making" or "outcomes-based aid," while understandable in the abstract, in practice becomes a fetish, another way of privileging the research of those with power, dismissing challenges, and avoiding taking needed actions.
22. A discussion of more qualitative approaches to research is beyond the scope of this paper. While qualitative research has its problems, I certainly see it as an improvement over the dominant quantitative approaches. Nonetheless, for me the bottom line is that since all research reflects the perspectives of the researcher, all research needs to be broadened by making participation central.
23. There has been a call for "smarter aid," but this assumes that research and evaluation methods can tell you which are the best aid policies and programs. Unfortunately that is simply not possible, as decades of experience should have made clear.

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