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# The Effectiveness of U.S. Development Assistance in Fostering Sustainable Development in Sub-Saharan Africa

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# The Effectiveness of U.S. Development Assistance in Fostering Sustainable Development in Sub-Saharan Africa

## **Abstract**

The Sub-Saharan region of Africa is one of the most resource-rich continents in the world, but it lacks economic growth. One of the factors contributing to its low economic development is its historical legacy of colonization, authoritarian regimes, and interstate and intrastate conflicts (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012; Bayeh, 2015). As a consequence, this sub-region, along with South Asia, has one of the world's lowest levels of per-capita income. The existing research on Sub-Saharan Africa indicates that little to no development occurs, due to how donor agencies implement aid programs. This paper examines whether U.S. development assistance has fostered sustainable growth in Sub-Saharan Africa, with a specific focus on the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In addition, this research will explore the potential and limitations of U.S. foreign policy to enable sustained development within Sub-Saharan Africa.

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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF U.S. DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE IN FOSTERING  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

By

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# **The Effectiveness of U.S. Development Assistance in Fostering Sustainable Development in Sub-Saharan Africa**

**Deborah Munganga**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The Sub-Saharan region of Africa is one of the most resource-rich continents in the world, but it lacks economic growth. One of the factors contributing to its low economic development is its historical legacy of colonization, authoritarian regimes, and interstate and intrastate conflicts (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012; Bayeh, 2015). As a consequence, this sub-region, along with South Asia, has one of the world's lowest levels of per-capita income. The existing research on Sub-Saharan Africa indicates that little to no development occurs, due to how donor agencies implement aid programs. This paper examines whether U.S. development assistance has fostered sustainable growth in Sub-Saharan Africa, with a specific focus on the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In addition, this research will explore the potential and limitations of U.S. foreign policy to enable sustained development within Sub-Saharan Africa.

## INTRODUCTION

The Sub-Saharan region of Africa is a paradox. Although it is one of the most resource-rich continents in the world, it lacks economic growth. One of the factors contributing to its low rate of economic development is the historical background of the region. The historical legacy of Sub-Saharan Africa consists of colonization, authoritarian regimes, and interstate and intrastate conflicts (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012; Bayeh, 2015). As a consequence, most governments are weak and unstable, which results in the suppression of sub-regional development. All of this contributes to a lack of means for economic development for some African countries. Sub-Saharan African countries often fall behind on the spectrum of development in the international system, and this sub-region, along with South Asia, has one of the world's lowest levels of per-capita income.

Since the beginning of European colonization, natural resources have been extracted from Sub-Saharan Africa, negatively affecting the economic prosperity of many nations (Lawson-Remer & Greenstein, 2012). The existing research on Sub-Saharan Africa indicates that little to no development occurs because of how donor agencies implement aid programs. Donor agencies use the same strategies to achieve development, with little regard to how diverse and complex African institutions can be.

Existing literature argues that Western governments offered financial assistance to developing countries to achieve certain strategic military and political goals during the Cold War (Bearce & Tirone, 2010). Jentleson (2014) claims that U.S. foreign policy was influenced by a global containment strategy to counter Communism (p. 569). During the Cold War, the U.S. focused its efforts on preventing Communist countries from gaining major military bases or control over important strategic minerals in the Sub-Saharan region

(Carson, 2004). As a result of this, present literature on U.S. foreign policy asserts that U.S. foreign aid has been used primarily to preserve U.S. global power (Milner & Tingley, 2009).

According to Oyelowo (2013), the United States increased its strategic interests in Sub-Saharan Africa after decolonization because the U.S. feared newly independent Africa countries would adopt Socialist ideas. The Congo provides a striking example of this fear; the U.S. supported General Joseph Mobutu, who later became a dictator, for more than thirty years in the (former Belgian) Congo. Mobutu seized power with the help of U.S. covert actions, which led to the assassination of Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba, who had ties with the Soviet Union and favored Socialist ideas. The U.S. had interests in the natural resources of the Congo, and was particularly concerned that the Soviet Union might gain access to uranium. During the Second World War, the atomic bombs dropped on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were created with uranium from the Congo (Oyelowo, 2013).

Current literature maintains that since the post-Cold War period, U.S. decision makers struggled to find a rationale for an active U.S. foreign policy towards Africa. This is seen most clearly during the 1994 Rwandan genocide, a Hutu and Tutsi ethnic conflict, when the U.S. delayed its response to the escalating casualties because the region was no longer a strategic priority (Walle, 2010). Though some scholars argue that the U.S. has shifted its foreign policy in Sub-Saharan African to emphasize humanitarian goals, others argue that the primary objective of U.S. foreign policy has not completely shifted towards a humanitarian objective (Lai, 2003).



Reflecting the polarized interpretations of how U.S. foreign aid reflects foreign policy priorities towards Sub-Saharan Africa, this paper will focus on the specific question of how effectively U.S. foreign aid has been able to foster sustainable development in the region. The first section of this paper will examine the historical legacy of U.S. foreign aid to provide a comparative context for current foreign policy. Next, the paper discusses the effectiveness of U.S. foreign aid in fostering sustainable development in Sub-Saharan Africa. The paper concludes with a discussion of the effectiveness of development aid in the Congo as an illustration of broader patterns of U.S. foreign aid and foreign policy towards Sub-Saharan Africa.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This section examines the literature on U.S. development assistance in Sub-Saharan Africa and provides historical background of its emergence. In addition, it presents the current state of U.S. Official Development Assistance (ODA) and explores how it continues to shape the structure of regional development. In this paper, "regional development" will refer to the generation of economic activities in two subnational regions within the Democratic Republic of Congo. This single case study helps us understand the broader issues of aid effectiveness within the Sub-Saharan region.

### **U.S. Aid During the Cold War**

Butterfield (2004) asserts that the U.S. increased aid in Africa to form alliances with newly independent African states in pursuit of political support against the Soviet Union. Fearing the proliferation of Communism, the U.S. supported African leaders who rejected Socialist ideas because they seemed less threatening to U.S. interests, regardless of whether such leaders were genuinely effective channels of development aid to their nations.

Jentleson (2013) states that the four objectives of U.S. foreign policy are 'power, peace, prosperity, and principles' (p. 8). These core objectives may be contradictory, because the U.S. has shifted its priorities over time. For example, the main priority of U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War was power. Other scholars maintain that aid serves the interests of donor countries which, in the case of the United States, include the post-WWII desire to maintain a position of global dominance. Miles (2012) states that foreign assistance has always been associated with national interests. Humanitarian sentiment is responsible for only a fraction of the rationale motivating the United States to undertake

programs of development in low-income regions, such as in Sub-Saharan Africa. The “Commitment to Development Index,” created by David Roodman of the Center for Global Development to measure the quality and effectiveness of aid, shows that the United States ranks 20<sup>th</sup> of 27 donor nations (CGD, 2016). This suggests a lack of U.S. priority on development goals, and/or ineffective aid implementation.

Riddell (2007) states that the New Direction Legislation was passed by Congress in the 1970s to ensure that allocated U.S. aid was focused on developing countries. Lancaster (2007) argues that President Kennedy emphasized development because it was intended to provide a means to contain Soviet global influence at the end of the Cold War. This, in turn, reflected Modernization Theory assumptions that as countries develop economically, they would follow social and political paths similar to those of the West and would become capitalist democracies (Inglehart & Welzel, 2009). U.S. development assistance to the Sub-Saharan region of Africa significantly increased between 1960 and 1964, from \$38 million to approximately \$220 million. Kennedy created the Peace Corps to support volunteers facilitating development projects in emerging nations. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) was also created by the U.S. State Department to increase development in developing countries. The Kennedy administration encouraged other industrialized nations to expand their own development projects in developing nations (Lancaster, 2007).

## **The Effectiveness of U.S. Aid**

Many scholars are critical of development aid, because they maintain that it demonstrates little to no results. According to Riddell (2007) there are factors that expand and restrict the effectiveness of aid (p. 225). These factors take into account how the aid is allocated, and how much of it is used towards a specific area of development. Many scholars have stated that measuring aid effectiveness can be challenging because it may be impossible to discern whether the aid directly raises the income levels and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the recipient country (Rodman, 2007). Criticism of aid continues to persist as scholars debate its long-term impact (Riddell, 2014). While some scholars argue that aid does not result in economic growth, others maintain that aid is capable of producing economic growth. Riddell (2007) emphasizes that as aid exceeds a certain threshold, it can no longer be used efficiently. When a recipient country receives large amounts of additional aid, it is unable to absorb or employ it effectively, resulting in a limit to “absorptive capacity” (p. 227).

Many scholars have criticized aid as an instrument of the geopolitical agenda of donor countries, and especially Western governments (Shah, 2014). Similarly, other scholars state that domestic interests within donor countries have a significant impact on how much and where aid is allocated. One 2004 study found that 25% of aid goes to highly paid consultants and researchers, usually from the global North. The United States has one

of the worst records for what this study calls “phantom aid” that never reaches the poor (ActionAid International, 2005). The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development’s (OECD) figures show that only 25% of aid goes to least developed countries (Shah, 2014), and much of the aid is tied to or conditioned upon purchases from corporations based in the global North. Scholars assert that the economics of aid are part of donor countries’ commercial strategy to secure larger trade benefits (Milner and Tinley, 2009). This literature suggests that aid as a whole is focused on the economic interests of the donor countries, rather than the development of the recipient country. According to Immanuel Wallenstein’s “World Systems Theory,” periphery states such as Sub-Saharan African countries provide raw minerals to “core states,” which are wealthy countries, such as the U.S. and Europe (Hobden, 2011). Core states benefit from the extraction of raw minerals from periphery states; the periphery states, however, do not benefit from this stratified world system.

## **U.S. Aid Allocations**

The international community has made some effort to promote development through financial assistance. During the 1970s, the world's richest countries, mostly Western European countries and the United States, agreed to annually give 0.7% of their Gross National Income (GNI) as official development assistance (ODA). Compared to other countries, the U.S. is the largest donor in absolute dollar terms, but ranks lowest among these countries in terms of meeting the target GNI percentage (Shah, 2014). Fleck and Kilby (2010) assert that towards the end of the Cold War, U.S. aid budgets declined, and the allocation of aid was only revitalized at the beginning of the war on terror. Since September of 2001, the U.S. has increased the dimension of development assistance, especially in poor countries with high percentages of Muslims, because these countries are perceived as potential breeding grounds for Islamist extremism (Miles, 2012). This suggests that U.S. geopolitical goals supersede development objectives.

From 2001 to 2009, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) increased its budget to more than \$5 billion, or 340% of earlier donations (Almquist, 2009). Under the Bush administration, the U.S. increased its attention to Africa as part of its "war on terrorism" strategy, because Al Qaeda networks were present both in East Africa and West Africa (Walle, 2010). As a result of this, the U.S. increased military aid and created military forces to counter potential threats from Al Qaeda groups. Unlike the preceding administrations, the Trump administration has proposed significantly reducing U.S. foreign aid and merging the State Department with USAID; Department of Defense officials fear that U.S. influence in other regions and nations will decrease because of foreign aid cuts (Harris et al., 2017).

Almquist (2009) believes U.S. foreign aid often fails to address pressing development issues because of its narrow focus and rigid directives. As stated above, U.S. foreign policy objectives emphasize power, principles, and peace. Based on trends in security aid, it appears that the U.S. has prioritized the objective of maintaining power because of the Bush administration's efforts to counter potential threats from extremist groups. The U.S. has equally used military aid as a way to counter the threats, which is reminiscent of the Cold War era. Hindery et al. (2008) suggest that U.S. foreign policy should reassess its structure, because U.S. foreign aid continues to fall short in fostering sustainable development. When U.S. foreign policy improves its aid policies to prioritize development goals, the aid could be more efficient in tackling the challenges that poor countries face such as poverty, hunger, and economic deprivation.

Ultimately, U.S. development assistance needs to revitalize its strategies towards development projects in order to promote sustained development (Almquist, 2009). Guseh and Oritsejafor (2009) assert that the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB) and United Nations (UN) allocate funds and create policies to enhance the economic state of the Sub-Saharan region of Africa. However, existing research demonstrates that the growth rate of income in the sub-region was static during the 1990s, although in 2004, its annual GDP reached roughly 3.1%. With this statistic in mind, it is important to note that the annual GDP also includes high inflation rates. In addition, Guseh and Oritsejafor (2009) state that this statistic shows the slow progress of sustained economic growth in Sub-Saharan Africa.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

In this research I will examine how U.S. foreign assistance fosters regional development in Sub-Saharan Africa by conducting a single case study of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). This paper focuses on the eastern and western region of the Congo. I will use the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)'s definition of regional development, which states that regional development is the general effort to reduce regional disparities by supporting economic activities that are balanced between regions (OECD, 2017).

I hypothesize that as foreign assistance increases, sustainable development within the subnational region of the Congo will increase. According to the Institute for Sustainable Development (2015), the Brundtland Commission Report defines sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs." For this research, I assess economic development within these regions to the present. The independent variable will be U.S. development assistance, and how its changes over time have affected development. The dependent variable will be regional development, because I will explore in what ways U.S. foreign assistance has fostered sustainable development in the DRC.

For this study, I will use both quantitative and qualitative data. The research uses statistical data from the OECD because it provides extensive information about U.S. foreign assistance in the Congo. Because the OECD publication also provides extensive data on other countries as aid donors, I will also examine the USAID's Congressional Budget Justification and World Bank data. Specifically, I will examine how much aid was allocated, and for how many years it was allocated to the Congo.



Many scholars have focused on how to measure development in a state. Economist and philosopher Amartya Sen developed the “capability approach” to argue that there are other ways to measure economic development besides aggregate economic growth. “Capability” focuses on the opportunities a person is able to actualize, allowing one to distinguish between whether a person is actually able to do the things they value (which may include non-monetary values), and whether a person has the means to pursue what they would like to do (Sen, 2005). This innovative assessment of development has contributed to a shift away from measuring development only in terms of GDP, towards the use of measures such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and Human Development Index (HDI). The HDI includes indicators such as the population’s health and education, reflecting the developing government’s priorities and policies, as well as evaluating the equality of distribution of a country’s economic resources.

## **CASE STUDY: THE CONGO**

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is the second largest country in Sub-Saharan Africa. It is also one of the poorest countries in the world. According to the UNDP Human Development Report (2016), the Congo ranks 176 of 188 countries. The DRC's current economic underdevelopment is greatly influenced by its historical legacy of colonization, dictatorship, and years of mismanagement by the Congolese government. These problems have been exacerbated by the activities of multinational corporations from the U.S. and Europe, which for decades have profited from the extraction of raw minerals from the DRC, further affecting its economic growth.

Under these conditions, the Congo has experienced ongoing instability. The Kivu province, which is in the eastern region, has been embroiled in violent upheavals since 1996, due to clashes between the Rwandan Hutu militias of the Democratic Liberation Force of Rwanda (FDLR) and the rebel Congolese Rally for Democratic (RDC). The conflict is the result of shrinking land access for the Congolese people, as rebel and government groups continue to take over the land and force the inhabitants to flee to other villages (Cox, 2012). Control over the raw minerals in the eastern region also plays a role, and the political instability of the region invites interference by other actors, such as multinational corporations (Mullins & Rothe, 2008). Rebel groups have set up illegal mining operations, often using forced child labor, and profits go to fund armed activities, undermining the possibility of using some of these resources for development purposes (Meager, 2011; Autesserre, 2012).

In the Kivu province, most families depend on subsistence farming, and were greatly impacted by ongoing war among the armed groups that preyed on the livestock

across the region. The RDC and Rwandan Forces burned the homes of some farmers, forcing many to sell livestock to rebuild their homes, thus depleting the savings they might have invested in improving their household economy. Women and teenagers are among those who primarily benefit from small-scale farming in the Kivu province by earning an income for their households, so they have been adversely affected by the conflict. The Participating Rural Appraisal (PRA) study conducted in the Kivu province illustrated that households associate a lack of livestock with absolute poverty (Vanlauwe, 2013).

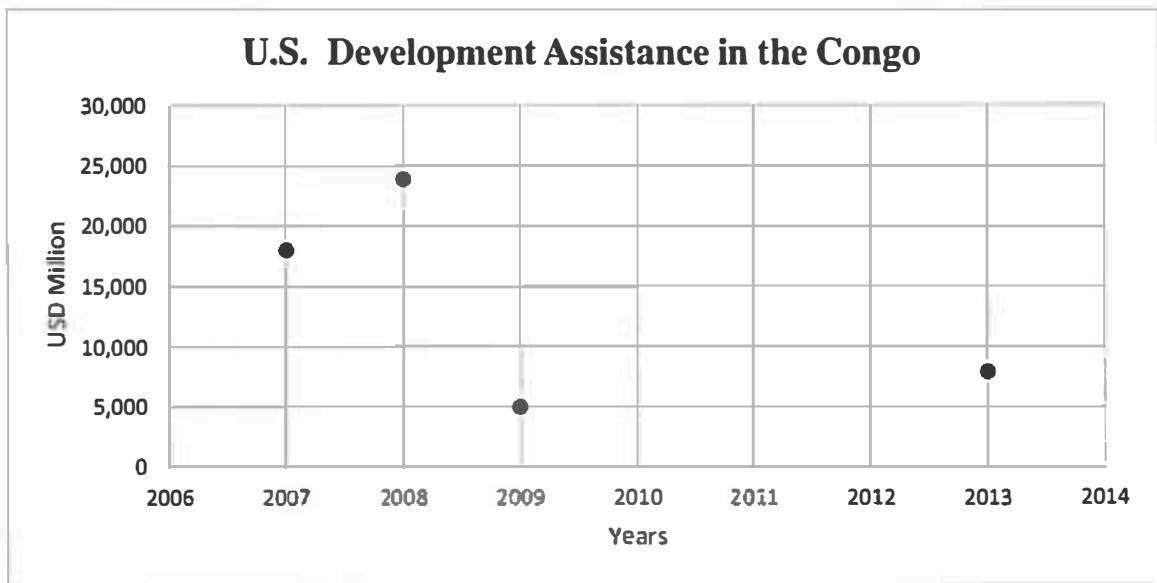
The Western region, called the Bas-Congo, has experienced less conflict, and thus has a greater potential for economic growth. The DRC capital Kinshasa is located in this region. Schure et al. (2011) state that the poverty level in Bas-Congo is 69%, whereas comparatively, the poverty rate in Kinshasa is 41.6%. Similarly, the unemployment rate in the Bas-Congo region is 73.4%, while Kinshasa's is 53.1%. Data show that the Congolese people lack job opportunities, and as a result, 77% of the population participates in the informal sector, independent of government monitoring, and engage in income-producing activities not accounted for in the GDP.

## RESULTS

This section constitutes an analysis of development aid in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in two parts. The first part is a quantitative analysis of how much and how long U.S. aid was given to the region. The statistical data used in this research is mostly derived from the OECD's annual publication of aid allocations by industrialized countries to developing nations. For this research, I examined data from 2007 to 2015. The second part of the analysis is qualitative and examines the extent to which implemented programs have generated economic activity within the region. It will also provide an analysis of how the programs contributed to and sustained development in both the eastern and western regions of the Congo. This is demonstrated by the results of specific development projects in each region.

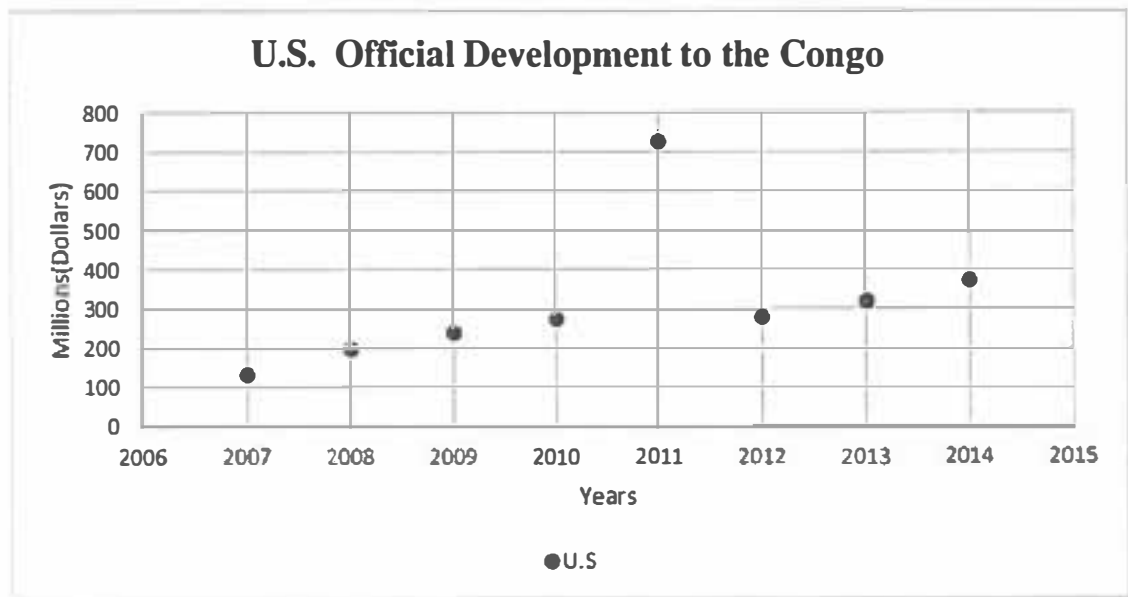
### **U.S. Aid Allocations to the Congo**

As seen in **Figure 1**, the USAID Congressional Budget Justification shows that the U.S. has consistently provided development assistance to the Congo (information about development assistance between the years 2010 to 2012, 2014, and 2015 was not available). Funding spent on foreign assistance ranged from \$5 to \$18 million annually, the years for which data are available.



**Figure 1:** U.S. Development Assistance in the Congo (CBJ).

**Figure 1** illustrates how much financial aid the Congo received from the U.S. This graph also demonstrates the overall allocated funds to the Congo. These amounts are higher in **Figure 2** because it includes all types of U.S. financial aid provided to the Congo, including Official Development Assistance (ODA), “Other Official Flows” (meaning bilateral aid from U.S. government agencies other than USAID).



**Figure 2:** U.S. Official Development to the Congo (OECD).

**Figure 2** shows specifically allocated U.S. development assistance to the DRC. The data indicate that approximately \$317.36 million were given annually between 2007-2014. In 2011, the U.S. gave \$727.8 million, which was roughly double the amount given in previous years. The OECD annual publication does not specify the reason for the increase, but it is probable that the current conflicts in the eastern DRC might have precipitated the increase in funding.

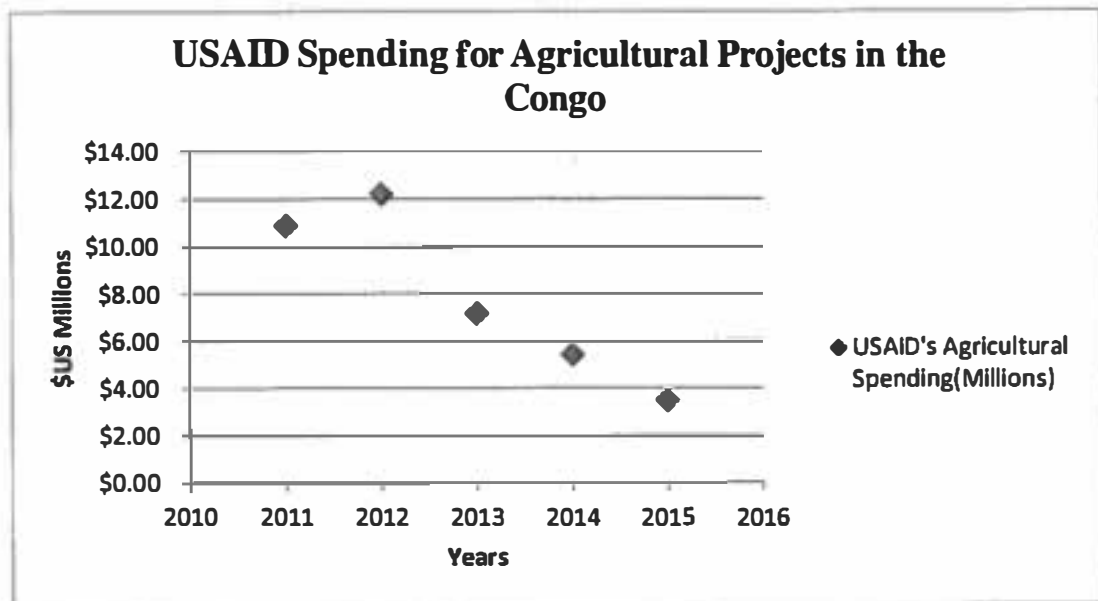
### **Development Projects**

According to OECD (2016), regional development focuses on decreasing regional disparities by promoting economic activities. Two important sources of regional aid are the USAID’s Feed the Future program and the World Bank’s Western Growth Pole program. The civilian population in the eastern DRC have experienced property loss and displacement due to the armed conflict between rebels and government forces. To mitigate this situation, USAID’s Office of Food for Peace (FFP) supports IDPs (Internally

Displaced Peoples) and refugees by purchasing food for them. USAID provides food assistance to beneficiaries with cash or food vouchers so that the people can directly access food in their local market, which helps support both displaced people and local farmers (USAID, 2017).

In addition to food aid, USAID works to increase economic growth in the agricultural sector to reduce poverty. Specifically, this program helps Congolese women in the eastern region, an area of conflict in which women control the farming, but lack income security. Literature on development aid increasingly acknowledges that the direct support of women's development and encouraging gender equality are effective steps to development. For example, women reinvest 90% of their income in their families and communities, compared to 30-40% investment by men; in Sub-Saharan Africa, agricultural activity would increase by up to 20% if women had the same access to land, seed, and fertilizer as men (OECD, 2008). The Food for Peace (FFP) and the Feed the Future (FTF) work collaboratively to aid the Congolese women who are small farmers to increase agricultural activity and improve nutrition in the region. (USAID, 2016).

As illustrated in **Figure 3**, agricultural funding decreased from \$12.2 million in 2012 to \$3.5 million in 2015, which is roughly four times less than the amount initially funded. Based on the USAID's 2015 Kivu Katanga Desk Review, current FFP projects have experienced disruptions due to civil unrest. Inter-ethnic contestation of land and other resources also reduces the potential to achieve growth in the region.



**Figure 3. USAID Spending for Agricultural Projects in the Congo (USAID).**

According to USAID’s 2015 Kivu Katanga Desk Review, another challenge that the eastern region faces is that many of the population lack access to land. To solve this problem, aid implementers tried to find ways to help farmers retain control of the land. Because of conflict in the eastern region, land ownership is rarely given and, as a result, many people contest its availability and its resources. The people who own the land are chiefs and local leaders, and they demand high taxes for land use. Farmers cannot afford to pay the taxes and, as a result, implementers of the USAID Feed the Future want to negotiate leases to ensure that chiefs lower taxes for farmers.

Accompanying these problems is the fact that the current FFP development program implementers lack communication skills to interact effectively with locals. For example, the midterm evaluation states that some project materials were written in French, but French is not widely spoken by many in the eastern region of the Congo. Many instructional tools contained unfamiliar material, and it is important for the people to understand how they can participate in the development activities. The FFP trains local



farmers to enhance their agricultural techniques and uses the farmer-to-farmer (F2F) strategy to train other farmers. For this project, farmers have to ensure that each of their peers understands the new techniques. Researchers have noted that the F2F training strategy has been effective because local farmers learn faster from each other (USAID, 2015).

In Bas-Congo, the western region of the DRC, the Western Growth Pole project is currently in operation. This project was implemented by the World Bank to promote employment and enhance productivity. To achieve this, this program focuses on agricultural growth by providing adequate resources to improve the rural infrastructure. The project also focuses on the development of the Maluka Special Economic Zone (SEZ) to provide land accessibility as a source of economic activity in the region.

One of the ways this project enhances agricultural growth is by working with research institutes to find seeds most appropriate for successful planting in the region. For example, the National Institute for Agricultural Studies (INERA) and National Seed Authority (SENASA) focus on improving seed production through research to ensure agricultural success in the area. The Western Growth Pole also aims to improve the physical infrastructure in Bas-Congo. To accomplish this, the Resettlement Action PLAN (RAP) for the Maluku SEZ improves roads, ports and power supplies, which should increase absorptive capacity for aid, a common problem. Though the Congolese government has not followed the safety requirements to ensure physical infrastructure (World Bank, 2013), this project has two more years of funding and still seeks to encourage increased employment in the region.

## ANALYSIS

My hypothesis stated that as more U.S. development assistance to the Democratic Republic of the Congo increases, more regional development would occur. However, the qualitative results of this research showed no significant amount of progress occurred in the eastern region. According to the World Bank (2012), nearly 77.1% of the Congolese population lived in poverty. Nonetheless, USAID spent about \$12.2 million on agricultural assistance to increase economic activities in the region. By examining specific projects at the regional level, my research found a number of intervening variables that are relevant to the effectiveness of aid for development. As mentioned above, the F2F faces challenges in achieving progress because of continuing regional conflict.

A recent USAID review highlights the challenges that development assistance programs face in many developing countries. In Sub-Saharan Africa, interstate and intrastate conflicts have continued to persist, which has increased the fragility of states and enhanced the likelihood of the inefficient allocation of development aid to promote growth. According to the Fragile State Index (2017), the Congo ranks 7<sup>th</sup> in the world. The USAID's review of the FFP program indicates that external factors, such as persistent conflict, continue to negatively impact development in the eastern region of the DRC. In spite of large contributions, few significant changes in levels of development have occurred in the last decade (Moyo, 2009, p. 28).

The data indicates that beyond the challenges posed by regional conflicts in the DRC, a lack of effective outreach communication also hinders development progress and creates barriers with locals. Often the people in the community cannot fully understand why they should change their farming methods, or how to use advanced tools to increase

their productivity. The Farmer to Farmer Program (F2F) is most effective because local farmers train each other, reducing cultural barriers among local farmers in the eastern region (USAID, 2015).

The data also suggest that the effects of development programs may only last a short time. Many programs operate for 3 to 5 years, and after the program is deemed complete, the local population must continue to employ the skills they have acquired. This has posed a problem in regions with poor infrastructure, few land distribution programs, and little training to overcome limited absorptive capacity (Riddell, 2014).

The USAID and other donor agencies have been ineffective in bringing about sustained development in the DRC. Donor agencies tend to follow the same rigid strategies, resulting in low levels of progress in development. Donor agencies must fully involve local populations in understanding the process of development. For example, the USAID needs to implement effective outreach initiatives that will build trust in the community. This can be begun by taking actions as simple as changing the language on teaching materials to the local dialect in order to more fully involve the community in improving its livelihood.

## CONCLUSION

The primary purpose of my research was to explore the effects of U.S. development assistance in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and to examine its impact on economic growth. This research focused on examining the relation between foreign aid and economic development. Based on collected data, the effect of U.S. development assistance in the DRC did not support my hypothesis, because there were no significant amounts of economic progress in the eastern nor western regions.

The data illustrates that while the U.S. allocates the most funds for development assistance in absolute dollars, it ranks low in aid percentage of Gross National Income (GNI) compared to other OECD countries. In 2013, the net Official Development Assistance (ODA) as a percentage of GNI illustrated that among industrial countries, Norway, Sweden and Luxembourg allocate 1% (exceeding the agreed target of 0.7 percent) of GNI to poor nations. The U.S. allocated 0.2% of GNI, which is significantly lower than other Western countries (Shah, 2014). Because of this, many scholars argue that U.S. aid in low-income countries is given only when in the U.S. national interest. In addition to this, scholars assert that the allocation of aid to recipient country is based on recipient need or the need of the donor's strategic interests. For instance, the top five recipient countries that receive U.S aid are Afghanistan, Egypt, Israel, Iraq and Jordan, which illustrates the U.S prioritizes geopolitical power more than poverty alleviation (McBride, 2017).

Some scholars, particularly those operating with the Modernization paradigm, argue that the main objective of U.S. foreign assistance is to promote democratic government and improve economic capabilities (Scott & Steele, 2011). However, other scholars claim that U.S. foreign aid was less humanitarian, and instead focused on U.S.

power considerations (which during the Cold War consisted of mainly eliminating the potential for the Soviet Union to influence newly independent countries in Sub-Saharan Africa) (Lancaster, 2007, p. 69).

During the Cold War, U.S. foreign policy emphasized countering the spread of Communism in Sub-Saharan countries and supported African leaders who upheld the U.S. national interest. In the case of the DRC, the U.S. supported Mobutu and removed Patrice Lumumba from power because Lumumba favored Socialist ideas. This led to long periods in which the government was more oriented toward extracting resources to benefit transnational corporations and a small group of local elites, rather than promoting internal development (Matti, 2010). Other scholars assert that part of the reason for U.S. involvement in the Congo was to monopolize raw minerals such as uranium for war purposes. When the Cold War ended, U.S. aid to Africa decreased, and responses to violent conflicts in Africa lacked urgency.

The literature and data from this research suggest that the U.S. re-focused its attention towards Africa after the war on terrorism began in 2001. Under the Bush administration, the U.S. increased security aid and created security forces such as AFRICOM to counter potential Islamist groups in the western and eastern regions of Africa. These actions are similar to the U.S. Cold War foreign policy of containment, as the Bush administration attempted to counter potential extremist Islamic groups in parts of Africa. It is evident that U.S. foreign policy towards Sub-Saharan Africa is focused on supporting its national interests by increasing its presence in African countries. As the Trump administration appears to be initiating a major shift away from development aid towards militarization in Africa, it remains to be seen how this might impact development.

In conclusion, this research illustrates that the effectiveness of U.S. aid in promoting economic development depends on several factors. From a holistic perspective, aid effectiveness is dependent on the priorities that the U.S. emphasizes in maintaining geopolitical power. On a micro level, an examination of aid programs can demonstrate whether they take into consideration the needs of the local people. The operational methods employed by aid programs are important because they may provide skills and knowledge that can be valuable for the people.

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