

To what extent can
international aid be
really effective?
essay sample



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One cannot help but be shocked to hear that often, medical and food supplies sent to flood victims have never reached the victims but have in fact fallen into the coffers of the officials who were to distribute the supplies to the victims. This is indeed an eye-opener and we wonder how long such activities have been going on undetected. It brings to realisation the truth that among so called humans are beasts which will take advantage of even the most miserable of their fellow humans. From this the lesson that was learnt was that international aid may not reach the persons for whom it is intended. In such cases international aid is no aid at all and a waste of time and resources for the nation that attempted to assist. How then can effective help be given?

It stands to reason that when international aid is given, steps must be taken to ensure that the aid reaches the people for whom it is intended. The way to achieve this may not be simple. Often it is the persons in authority who are corrupt. It is very difficult for a nation to give help directly to people in another nation. The United Nations Organisation, or a similar international body, could undertake to supervise the distribution of aid. Here however rises the problem of costs. Also tied with this is time. When too much time is taken for the aid to reach the intended recipients, there may well be further disaster. Perhaps the UNO could set up a body of dedicated men and women, on its own payroll, in every country who can speedily distribute aid to victims of floods and earthquakes. In such cases too, the workers need to be carefully selected and screened.

More than the help that one nation can give to another during a disaster, it would be more effective to give other forms of help during normal times. A

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common proverb says, " Give me a fish and I eat for a day, teach me to fish and I eat for a lifetime'. If we follow this wise saying, it would be appropriate to teach people from less developed nations to take care of themselves. For example, a country could share its technology with another. This could be in simple areas like agriculture or in more complex areas like medical and health care or even in building satellites.

Even a small country like Singapore is able to help less developed nations and this is being done by Singapore, rightly without any fanfare. Sometime what is taken for granted, like the setting up of a water purification plant or the administration of a school, could be useful for countries which are looking about to solve common problems. It does not cost much to share such simple things. Exchange students could be attached for a number of months or years and learn the required craft while on the site. They can then take their knowledge back to their homelands and if necessary come back from time to time to clear doubts or to update themselves. Such aid will be truly helpful and there is no chance of it being temporary or of it falling into the wrong hands.

Many countries run extensive courses in all sorts of skills. It will not cost much to include deserving foreigners in these courses. Besides giving effective help to the countries concerned, there is also the build up of friendships to consider. Giving direct help by giving materials may be effective in the short run and must continue to be given in the event of emergencies. However, in the long run what is really effective would be the sharing of knowledge.

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