# Discourse, Human Rights and Efficiency

How changes in the development discourse could help the effectiveness
of international development projects?

By

Kata Páli

Submitted to

Central European University

School of Public Policy

*In fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of*

*Master of Public Policy*

Supervisor: Cameran Ashraf

*Budapest, Hungary*

2019

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# Abstract

This thesis attempts to discover how changes in the development discourse could improve the effectiveness of international development projects by creating more clarity in the terms and so, in practice. Development projects are in need of transformation, but it is challenging to find the core reason for ineffectiveness. There is an ongoing debate on what kind of programs should be financed and how to evaluate their returns. In this paper, I am looking into the discourse to find reasons for ineffectiveness and attempt to present alternative solutions that better align with the purpose of development.

I study, how the recent approach overwhelmingly based on the economics joint with uncertainties and biases in the discourse affect the fieldwork and how reckless fieldwork mixed with prejudice in language can lead to negative consequences and inefficiency. As a result of this analysis, I present some already existing practices that incorporate an alternative understanding of development based on the idea of small economics and link those to Schumacher's idea of development. I offer examples for recipient- and private sector involvement. I emphasize the necessity of a multidisciplinary approach to a new way of development that incorporates entrepreneurship, technological innovation, corporate social responsibility and social entrepreneurship. I argue that the clarification of terms and inclusion of these practices could lead to a development sector, that is more about possibilities and creativity than ineffective policies, corruption, repetition, generalization and indemonstrable effectiveness.

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# Literature Review

This paper examines why it is so difficult to make a meaningful change in development and for clues, I chose to study the development discourse. I argue that prejudice in the negatively affects efficiency by creating distortions and false narratives. Since we conceive the world through concepts that we use to describe it, it is essential to use clear terminology that is free from biases and uses clear terminology. Sometimes, the conceptual ideas we use do not correspond to social reality or they are too vague to be used effectively and that causes problems in understanding. In this paper, I attempt to connect discourse, theory and practice to reflect on the present and the future of development.

In many of his works from the early `90s, Escobar was focusing on how language changes self-perception in the development context. He argues, that the western-centric jargon was constructed to maintain the status quo between North and South (Escobar 1991). In his paper Encountering Development, he goes beyond this idea and claims that the dependency formed by early development projects recreates colonialist structures in international relations (Escobar 1995). Hannah Arendt`s argument follows similar cast of thought. In her theory The Politics of Pity she points out that despite development is presented as one of the most generous acts of humankind, it comes with a demeaning terminology that negatively affects people and societies in the recipient countries. In her work, she focuses on the hypocrisy of the development regime and the dangers of the pluralistic approach that divides the world to two groups: the developed and developing. These authors are early representatives of the dependency theory, that introduced the terms of core and periphery (Herath 2008) and shed light on the problems with today's development.

I study the scholarly literature on post-development including Ziai`s argument for abandoning the old development discourse (Ziai 2013). Post-development discourse focuses on why so many development projects achieve so little or fail. Authors like Esterly and Nustad emphasize on the problems of agencies and countries elites that execute the development projects (Esterly 2013, Nustad 2001). Others, like Wallace and Shephard, focus on the alienation of people from the programs and the need for more in-depth interdisciplinary analysis on how development programs transform people`s lives (Wallace, Shephard 1998). They, however, do not offer any detailed alternatives or solutions for these problems.

To support alternative policy directions, I use Schumacher's idea of smaller, recipient and environment-focused development from his book; Small Is Beautiful. In this book, he argues for a more humane development, that instead of numbers, puts people in the centre of development. He claims that smaller projects that rely more on the given circumstances and the inclusion of recipient society could present better results than large-scale generalised development programs. Such small-scale bottom-up approaches are supported by Chambers as well who also stresses the need for more humane development practices (Chambers 1994).

In the last chapter, I attempt to link Schumacher's argument to recent development trends that are better respond to the core values of development and are good examples for the ongoing changes in the discourse. For Schumacher, development isn't only about survival, it is rather about creating circumstances where a higher level of well-being is achievable for people (Schumacher 1973). From the 2000's the idea of well-being has spread within development and general discourse as well, as it strongly correspondents with basic human rights principles.

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Contrary to Herath's argument according to which development and the discourse have reached its maturity (Herath 2008), I firmly believe that there is a long way ahead for the discourse and practice to evolve and in this paper, I attempt to present examples that possibly hinder this progress.

# Methodology & Hypothesis

My hypothesis is, that vaguely used worn-out concepts and biases in the discourse make it difficult to effectively study and conduct development and that the clarification and abandonment of terms in the development discourse is essential to design better practices in the future. This change, however, is only possible, if we clarify what does development mean and start applying it consequently only to those practices that fit the description. The first step to this is to differentiate between activities that are carrying out development activities and those that are mainly serving humanitarian purposes. By this change in the discourse, it could be defined more precisely on what basis evaluations should be done.

I study the scholarly literature as a primer source for the analysis of the discourse. I focus on the interaction between the practice and discourse to offer a new perspective of looking at development practices that in my opinion could help to shift the focus back to what is important, thus, to help effectiveness.

Chapter 1: Using Worm Wars as a case study, I present how the economic basis for evaluation in case of a development project that covers very basic human necessities can completely shift the emphasis from the important things (people) to less important things (numbers).

Chapter 2-3: Chapter 2 focuses on the practical problems of development projects, while Chapter 3 focuses on the discourse. By linking these two, I attempt to compare and analyze the relationship between discourse and practice. I point out how the inadequacies in the discourse are reflected in the hardships and flaws of on the ground projects. I claim that one reason behind the ineffectiveness of development practices lies in the undefined, shallow terms and the biased western-centred discourse and highlight the negative impact of the primarily economic base of

evaluation. The analysis of discourse and development practices is based on scholarly literature on development projects and post-development discourse. This part of the analysis calls for recognition of the multidisciplinary development approach against the immense emphasis on econometrics.

Chapter 4: I attempt to align the changes in discourse with recent new forms of development practices and economic theories, namely the importance of small-scale development projects. I compare these alternative development practices to the problems presented in Chapter 2 and argue that these practices have the potential to correct the inadequacies of large-scale generalised development activities. In this chapter, the examples are presented as possible policy implications and recommendations.

## Introduction

After more than 60 years of development practice, it is still not easy to define how development activities are best practised. By 2019, tens of billions of dollars of foreign aid had been spent yearly on different types of development projects. Yet, hundreds of millions still live in famine and inhumane conditions.

In a postwar environment, the Truman Plan declared the Southern and Hampshire underdeveloped and allowed authoritative intervention. This modernization supported with economic growth theory, placed development on primarily economic ground. Economic development thinking and theory originates from Adam Smith that influenced international development goals and practices. Dependency and structuralist theories with the Marxist theory of the world system, shared 'economism' and the idea of linearity have also contributed to the theoretical base of development. Political economic thinking following the Keynesian economic included social welfare into the picture. In the 1970`s free trade and foreign investment – the World Bank and IMF – emerged, and forced structural adjustment policies on developing countries. These attempts were successful in some places and in some they were not, but as a result, crated dualistic economies and greater socio-economical gaps. According to the dualistic development model, economic development cannot be seen as a separated entity but a system with heavy socio-cultural and historical effects (Herath 2009).

In the 1980s as the income gap between North and South increased, critical development theory and development research divided into two streams of criticism: one was focusing on correcting and improving the understanding of development to create a more people-centred discourse and practice. The other called for revolutionary changes in the strategies and execution of development

and emphasized the problems of agencies and countries elites who disregarded the social impact on the lives of recipients.

In the past decades, countless programs have been pursued to help poor people with better housing, nutrition, health care, products and services, to reach an overall improved quality of life. These programs were mostly executed by large, bureaucratic organizations and governments, and resulted in great disappointment as they did not deliver sufficiently in terms of sustained poverty reduction (Bloom 2009). This was the first time when the idea of smaller, more entrepreneurial poverty alleviation programs arose (Bornstein 2004; Dees 2007).

In 2000, at the Millennium Summit, the UN established 8 basic development goals, the Millennium Development Goals, that should have been achieved by 2015.



Four out of these eight goals are in case of unsuccessful execution can result in the people`s death or serious illness, that is I believe more of a humanitarian matter, especially, because these goals cover such basic human rights that should be protected irrespectively of where people live.

In 2015 General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with an even more ambitious agenda.

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The achievement of these goals requires a radical change in development as their feasibility heavily depends on technological innovation and private sector involvement. However even among these very broad terms, we can discover that many of these areas the portion of aid is not a choice but an obligation if we follow basic human rights principles.

In this paper, I argue, that projects that cover a basic need that can be considered as basic human right, such as basic healthcare provision, should not be called development, as they serve rather a humanitarian purpose. I also argue that a division of projects to humanitarian support and real development would ease the overall emphasis on economic approaches in development and could create new standards for evaluation and practices for a more human development.

# 1. Case study: The `Worm Wars` the debate on deworming

In this chapter, I present the paper of Edward Miguel and Michael Kramer, *Worms: Identifying Impacts on Education and Health in the Presence of treatment externalities* and the debate called the `Worm Wars that has followed this paper and its results.

This study is one of the earliest evaluations of deworming programs and their effectiveness. They evaluated the Primary School Deworming Project (PSDP), a school-based mass treatment in Kenya. During the program, they treated about 30.000 children in seventy-five rural primary schools between the age of 6 and 18 and looked at the effect of the treatment on school participation, health and cognitive development. The cost of treatment they determined in 3.5 dollar per child made PSDP one of the most cost-effective treatments including the externality benefits. They claimed that reason behind the unsuccessfulness of previous similar programs that were proved by earlier studies (Dickson 2002) was mainly that the externalities of treatment were not calculated in the results.

They randomly created 3 groups in each school that received the treatment in 1998, 1999 and 2001. Prior to the treatment children were selected from each grade and school and took a parasitological survey conducted by the Kenya Ministry of Health. This showed that ninety-two percent of pupils had at least one helminth infection and thirty-seven percent of them had serious or recurring infections. They claimed that heavily infected children were more likely to be absent from school. According to Miguel and Kremer, seventy-two percent of pupils received some medical treatment, however, the number was slightly lower among girls.

In their paper, Miguel and Kremer used school participation and grades as indicators and argued that deworming programs increased participation in treatment schools by at least 7% points, which equals to ¼ reduction in school absenteeism even amongst untreated children. Their results showed

increased capacity or concentration, which could have resulted in making school attendance more worthwhile than other activities as a form of labour or staying home. They claim that these health impacts have created externalities across schools and increased school participation by 0.14 years, which supports the microeconomic claim that the existence of tropical diseases negatively affects later income levels which makes subsidizing such medical treatment effective in developing countries. They also claim that calculations that do not consider externalities are likely to underestimate the actual effects of treatment. Their results were claimed to be statistically significant 99% confidence. They also found statistically significant positive differences in test score performance, based on the assumption that a higher total amount of time spent in school would raise test scores as well. At the end of the paper, they discuss cost-effectiveness and welfare analysis and suggest if deworming should be a public policy priority.

After the paper was published in 2004 it has quickly become one of the most popular examples to justify school-based mass deworming programs. Prof Tim Allen from LSE in his lecture in 2016 called it the pioneering paper to bring randomized control trials into economics.

In 2015 Alexander M. Aiken and Calum Davey from the London School of Tropical Hygiene and Medicine replicated the regressions of Miguel and Kremer and found that the econometrics was wrong in the paper, regarding regressions and the applied criteria as well, and the data does not indicate any significant effect of deworming programs. Their results were later confirmed by Macartan Humphreys in his article called *What has been Learned from the Deworming Replications: A Nonpartisan view* in 2016. These results fuelled the academic debate on this topic. As a response, Miguel and Kremer published a new study called *Worms at Work: Long-run impacts of a Child health Investment*, where they argued that children who had been dewormed do

17% more work than untreated ones, therefore the treatment has a positive effects on economics overtime. In this paper similar or even more significant failures was discovered regarding the details of the treatment and the econometrics as well.

Allen in his paper *Deworming delusions? Mass drug administration in East African schools* (2016) through the examples of their research warned that without looking at other factors, analysis based on econometrics are very unlikely to be able to prove whether these programs have any real effect on treated children. As external factors, he mentioned inconsistent methodology caused by the inconsistency of the programs as a main reason for failure. He mentioned the problems of difficult or baffled of distribution, reinfection, the results` dependence of sanitation, education and the ethical problems of the lack of information provided to parents about the treatments and questions the hegemonic purchase of evidence of random control trials.  In the end, he raises a very important question: whether running these programs under the same conditions would be accepted in other parts of the world.

Allen`s lecture and his paper can be wrapped around one statement: It`s not what you do is how you do it. Allen himself is an anthropologist, therefore looks at the questions of development through different lenses and stresses the importance of a multidisciplinary approach in development. This is important, because development projects often run in the most complex environments where social, economic, political and environmental factors have to be addressed which a solely economic approach cannot achieve.

I choose this case study, because in my opinion the debate around the problems with the paper of Miguel and Kremer presents very well of what is wrong with today's development discourse and practices.

First, as development is mainly run by economists their method of focusing on measurable outcomes disregards the importance of a more comprehensive qualitative examination that can be only achieved through a multidisciplinary approach. The claim is that a solely economic analysys will result in asking the wrong questions and therefore will result in flawed evaluation and outcomes. I argue that the economic analysis in the case of basic healthcare programs such as deworming is impractical and unnecessary, because of the type od aid they provide. I believe that the reason why the effectiveness of these programs shall be measured lies in the biases in the discourse and reality, because as Allan mentions, it would be unimaginable in any western societies to evaluate such treatments or any basic healthcare programs based on school performance. In my opinion, this biased treatment is only possible, because development practices and discourse are supporting this kind of division and paternalistic approach, that set up different measurements for the developing countries. I argue that if these programs would be called as humanitarian aid and would be provided as a basic human right, the entire approach would change as the emphasis from the effectiveness would shift to the more effective methodology conduction which according to Allen should start with more effective biosocial research and evaluation of the programs.

In this paper, I argue that based on human rights principles many of the present large-scale projects should not be included in the development category as they are covering essential needs that according to human rights principles people regardless of where they live are entitled to. Such projects are indeed necessary and very important parts of foreign aid, but I believe it is hypocritic to call them as development which is only possible because of the double standards the West have towards the 'developing' countries. When analysing the reasons of ineffectiveness, I focus on these

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biases in the discourse to present that these can have a very huge effect on the outcomes of development activities.

If we accept that the main goal of development is the fulfilment of human potential, I argue that the discourse has to change, and these programs should not be considered as development.

The shift that has happened in the understanding of development is best represented by the difference in merit between the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals.

In this paper I offer alternatives that align better with a definition of development that is more ambitious and puts people in the centre and for this, incorporates innovation cooperation and evolution.

# 2. Development

In this chapter, I look at some of the main reasons for ineffectiveness and problems of development programs and attempt to find some common structural problems behind them. In Chapter 3 I attempt to establish a link between these groups and the biases that are embedded in the discourse. In the following, I classify these problems in development practices into four groups, power imbalances, homogenization and alienation effectiveness and outsider knowledge examine them. Development has become a term that is so widely used across disciplines and has been through so many transformations it has become somewhat redundant. Nevertheless, in practice since the `70s development has seemingly welded with the concept of economic growth. This economic approach however in practice often results in evaluations where indicators set up by economist fall very far from the reality of recipients.

## 2.1 Reasons of failure in development

The most common critiques of development emphasize on its western-centric nature that creates a paternalistic approach towards traditional societies to justify intervention.

Since the post-development era, plenty of articles studied problems with current development activities but few of them addressing these comprehensively. I use the list that was put together by Youker from evaluation reports submitted to the World Bank every year (Youker 1999) and are mainly applicable to generalized large-scale projects.

- Corruption, lack of adequate resources
- Lack of detailed, realistic, and current project plans
- Lack of accountability
- Lack of stakeholder involvement

- No adequate measures to evaluate quality

- Weakness of local connections

- Slow delivery and delays Poor or no analysis of major risk factors

- Unclear lines of authority and responsibility Lack of commitment to the project by the team, management and stakeholders

In the following, I talk about the underlying issues of development practices behind these problems and in Chapter 4 reflect on how the alternative development practices could facilitate the elimination of these issues.

## 2.2 Power imbalances

Power imbalances are the source of many problems in international development activities. They interlace language, fieldwork, business and mentality as well. This dualistic understanding and view create a paternalistic approach that separates the people into fortunate and capable and unfortunate and uncapable who need active tutoring and support in order to maintain themselves. Development is described and presented as a recipient driven operation, but in reality, most projects are planned and realized by donors, therefore, are more likely to reflect on their perceptions than the actual needs of recipients. Long points out, that as development activities are often practised allowing donor countries to pursue their agenda and interests (Long 2001), while Escobar takes on a more vigorous approach and describes traditional development practices as a form of cognitive and social domination that authorize the management of the developing countries (Escobar 1991).

Asymmetries of power and the international system of patriarchy were to be reduced by the introduction of non-governmental development organizations. These organizations as independent

intermediaries were supposed to reduce dependency and financial malpractice (Eade 1997). This, however, can only be partially successful, in a regime where tied aid and bilateral contracts are still very common practice. Long when studying development encounters illustrates power imbalances, by measuring how much possibilities each actors in development have in order to validate their agenda and found that most practices are deeply an actor-oriented (Long 1992) ensuring that development agendas a dominated by the expectations and perceptions of donors rather than the needs of recipients. These power imbalances and dependency fosters harmful tendencies where the requests of donors, and the compliance to their budget plans, receive higher priority than the actual results of programs.

Power imbalances interweave development practices in every level from project planning through execution, budgeting, human resources and language as well by reassuring the status quo between developed and developing countries. These relations are manifested in knowledge as well as the idea of linear development and foreign knowledge is considered to be superior (Blaikie 2000). It means that donors often believe that the only way of development is the path that their countries have taken, therefore create development plans that reflect this linearity. This approach however often results in the denial of the experiences and needs of people living in developing countries while inauthentic western ideas of development and well-being are often forced on them.

## 2.3   Homogenization and alienation

Homogenization is another manifestation of the western-centered approach of development. This, in one aspect is a form of generalization that divides the citizens of developed countries from the rest of the World, that is a catalyst to the alienation of people. In another aspect, it extends the generalization and the status to all developing countries and their populations and by this, it supports the justification of needed intervention.

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Homogenization can manifest in ideas such as best practices. Best practices are supposed to help the scaling of projects, but they are based on the false expectation that if certain interventions work in one place those would work in similar conditions as well. This in reality, is a misleading assumption that leads to significant failures. The homogenization of people and places are only possible because the western perspective that is applied on them. It also doesn't take into account that it is very hard to objectively determine what is best, when the criteria we apply might also be already distorted by our biases (Cornwall 2007). According to Adelman and Morris, such one-measure fits all approaches discount individual historical trajectory, relative strength and interplay of forces in other societies. They argue that instead of trying to find solutions that are easily applicable in different locations, donors should focus on local peculiarities when selecting policies and interventions (Adleman, Morris 1997).

This approach holds on partially because it is helpful for organizations in case of planning. With relatively less effort, organizations can report higher performance in budget and easier for them to provide evaluations of projects as well, if practices are similar. Yet, top-down approaches, are often focused on the perceived circumstances which are set by donors and fail to address local concerns or knowledge and often unsuccessful in identifying indicators of the problems that could reshape the solutions that could be offered (Herath 2008).

Homogenization in development is inefficient because countries take different paths in how they adapt to changes. Instead of a generally linear pattern of development, countries are often able to skip entire stages of for example technological development. This is what's called leapfrogging in development.

## 2.4   Foreign knowledge

Another very important manifestation of power imbalance is how much knowledge is valued. The reality of development is that most projects are still panned outside of the recipient countries, they are led by foreign experts and impose foreign ideas on recipients. As knowledge is considered to be the most important asset of our century, by dominating information and practices as well Escobar doesn't exaggerate when he calls development as the continuation of colonization (Escobar 1984). According to him, the main issue with this external information and knowledge is that is portrayed as neutral about a certain object (which is seldom the case) and therefore applies a seemingly valid narrative.

This approach in practice excludes of alternative ways of understanding and sand explanations (Escobar 1995), therefore it also blocks the way of creating new solutions as well.

Development practices as such prioritize the opinion and understanding of practitioner and experts while the experiences, reactions and knowledge of recipients are often neglected (Sachs,1995). The higher acceptance rate of foreign knowledge in development means that if a program from the beginning is built on false assumption because of the lack of understanding of local circumstances, it can easily fail. Or, on the other hand as all measurements and indicators applied are just as flawed as well, it could still be proven to be effective, which is equally misleading and dangerous. This can happen because as Long suggests, evaluations mostly disregard such measures as acceptance rate and perceived usefulness of recipients and rather focus on the pre-set target numbers (Long 2001) and indicators applied by the donors.

## 2.5   Effectiveness

Effectiveness is of the most important myths or *buzzword* of post-development that is also strongly relies on economic measures at evaluation (Cornwall 2007). The wish to know whether and to what degree certain activities are effective is a very reasonable claim, if it becomes the only aspect

of evaluation the reliability of its results are quite limited. There are two common mistakes in determining effectiveness. First, when main indicators of effectiveness are not well set up and the second, when proving economic effectiveness overweights the significance of real value created in the life of the recipients (Nustad 2008).

The problem is, that transformation of social values and other results are mostly impossible to quantify (Deacon, 2003) and changes are very slow, so under the pressure of proving results to demonstrate some economic effectiveness is easier and more palatable. Fowler also mentions that development agendas are contaminated with non-development related foreign policy as well and like in the case of tied aid that overcomes the necessity of real results (Fowler 2000).

Likewise, Naylor argues that the high-volume of reporting and planning create a demand of evaluations that cannot be applied to unmeasurable social changes.  Yet, this method is prevailing as the World Bank largely indicates evaluation models and presents its objectives and achievements in terms of macro- and microeconomic indicators (Naylor 2011).

One negative outcome if this is that despite projects often visibly do not deliver as much as they promised, under the pressure effectiveness organizations are prone to create positive self-evaluations even at the of deliberate misinterpretations, while only 15 % poverty-oriented interactions prove to be sustainable (Cox, Haeley 1998).

The question is: in the case of basic health care and human rights programs, when the withdrawal of certain programs would cause immediate harms to the people how adequate is to look for economic validation.

# 3. `Words make Worlds`

In this chapter I provide and insight into the progress of development discourse of the past few decades. I am looking for examples that suggest how biases in the discourse and in terminology can translate to practice and how does it affect people's mindset and self-cognition to show why it is an obstacle to design effective development programs.

Power resides in words and discourse as they primary tools to understand and study the world around us. I attempt to present how existing power relations transmit to development situations and jargon where they become reinsured and so constructs a negative circle that withholds effective understanding and planning in development.

By analyzing the discourse, I aim to shed light on why the change in discourse is inevitable for more effective and targeted development. I also present recent changes could be realized by new forms of development strategies that I present in chapter 4.

## 3.1 Development discourse

According to Foucault, discourse can be studied over time to analyze changes in the structure and terminology. According to Weldes, discourse is a negotiated and is intersubjective social act that defines and constitutes a subject or an object in the world (Weldes,Saco 1996). As we analyse the subjects of discourse, we can create knowledge about a certain topic (Biccum 2009).

Similarly to the practice, the development discourse adopted a western-centric approach too, as it is created and dominated by the perceptions of the western donors. Controversially, the discourse is mostly applied and describes the issues of global south (Madureno 2018). This aspect of the development discourse has not changed much in the past 60 years. It is still characterised by its dichotomy that divides the world developed and the developing. It is crucial to keep this in mind

when new concepts are being introduced to the discourse as this approach already has on impact on how we perceive certain terms and concepts, which makes understanding and clarification difficult.

Cornwall claim that, it is very important not to talk only about development, but to consider all the related terms to tackle the change that is been ongoing. She states that most terms in development discourse just as the term development itself has not ever really been specified and analysed in depths people started using them in the jargon. She argues that concepts should be contested before entering a discourse (Cornwall 2007) in order to ensure detailed understanding. This step however because of the dynamism of the new sectors in development often remains forgotten.

Up until today, it is debated whether there is just one dominant or multiply development discourses. Naylor argues that however there is one main discourse, in different times and places, certain narratives can evolve within the discourse and dominate it (Naylor 2011). Others like Gilbert have more radical point of views. He suggests that the term development is outdated and shall be left out altogether, as it has never really been able to achieve its goal of creating a better world (Gilbert 1997).

**Buzzwords of development**

Over the past decades as development discourse people started using words and referring to terminologies that were not necessarily consciously developed, neither argued nor contested in depths, but become widely used quickly that Cornwall calls as the buzzwords in development She suggests, that these buzzwords are necessary to be reviewed and studied from different perspectives, so that all their meanings can be clarified and better understood therefore these words

can be used more directly or rehabilitated in the discourse. She argues that these words are very good indicators to present how development discourse have been changing in the past few decades and what is the direction development is taking recently. She calls for the analysis of the meaning of words in certain social practices. She looks at them as normative pieces that are shaping and providing direction of the future development works. As well she argues that these so good indicators of the donor-centeredness in development, given words in the development debate and literature are `loan-words` that are closely associated with the external agencies that make proposals and programs, policies, strategies, reports (Cornwall, 2007).

In the followings I present some of the main buzzwords of recent development discourse that are already pointing or describing a new more friendly and cooperative, equality promoter approach direction of development practices while I also mentions words that for the basis of the development discourse since decades.


*Poverty* is one of the basic terms used in development which presents that it is the most prevalent problem on the field. Poverty has changed from poverty reduction to poverty alleviation in the past decade, which not only present a more positive approach to poverty but indicates the new direction of solutions as well. *Empowerment* is one jargon that was introduced to the discourse deliberately fueled with positive connotation however, during the last decade it kept losing from its shine. *Rights-based* approach and reasoning have emerged to provide more legitimacy for development and to strengthen the sense of responsibility of donor countries. This strongly correlates to my argument on whether or not programs that deliver basic essential services should be called as development since under the human rights umbrella, they have the rights to receive help and assistance.

The introduction of *social capital* highlights the importance recipients as individuals and the potentials that resides in every human being and therefore promotes equality. Words like *partnership*, *community, civil* society refer to the wholeness and interconnectedness of development infrastructure that relies on cooperation and multidisciplinary approaches. *Donor–coordination* that represents tendencies where donor countries imply their agendas on the recipient countries slowly shifting towards the term *harmonization* are that promotes equality as harmonization indicates, both parties need to adjust and not only recipients. The idea of harmonization brings *good governance* to the picture which is however is rather a one-sided approach but is still based on the idea of inclusion of citizens into governance. Country ownership is also one of those buzzwords that emphasize inclusion and cooperation and equality for future programs. *Aid effectiveness* entered the discourse in the early 200's with the purpose of helping the evaluation of development programs and to draw attention to the context sensitivity of development (Madureno 2018) Aid effectiveness is a good example for those terms that become misused in practice now causes more harm than good .

## 3.2   Duality in the discourse – power imbalances

On the first place, the concept of development has been criticized for its implication of normative practical and methodological assumptions that according to Ziai are eurocentric, depoliticizing and authoritarian (Ziai 2013). According to Escobar what in practice appears as a form of social domination, in the language it is rather to cognitive domination, focusing on the understanding of problems and communities (Escobar 1991). Constructivists study power relations in the development discourse. Roxanne Doty points out the primary manifestation of power relations between actors resides such terms as "developed world" and "developing world' (Doty 1993).

Asymmetries are reside also between the actors in development, like who has the power to create and influence the discourse and decides about the nature of the problems and their possible solutions. Similarly to practice, discourse is dominated by mostly international actors or as well giving very few chances to any other stakeholders to actively contribute to the formulation of the discourse.

Narratives such as *developing* countries according to western standards and its ideal self-determination, indicate that developing countries cannot raise up to western standards. Such terminologies are determinative and create an overall image based on one or two characteristics. Countries in development are widely referred as to be *unstable*, *insecure* which actively reinforce power relations between actors, without regardless of the actual situation or previous history of certain countries.

These narratives, however, serve donor countries and agencies well, since by suggesting that the recipient countries are *fragile and vulnerable*, they justify their patriarchal approaches and interventions. While upholding these narratives in the discourse they can say claim that their interventions are for everyone's benefit.

## 3.3   Providers and recipients – homogenization

Such division in the language according to Arendt is prerequisite to create a hierarchy between the actors and between the fortunate and the unfortunate. This terminology mirrors the geographical division as they reinforce the narrative of *us* and *them*. She describes power relations being transmitted by the words between, providers and recipients. She argues that power relations reproduce identities and abilities as well and creates a reality that is driven by those (Arendt 1965). Arendt`s argues that there are two main motors of development: compassion and pity which in no circumstances should be used interchangeably. She argues that when development activities are

driven by pity, it conceives the hierarchy between the recipients and donors. She argues that pity has two important attributes: generalization and distance which is the physical presentation of the dualism in language, where generalization helps alienation. This terminology ensures a picture of the unfortunate people who suffer in distance which justifies foreign intervention to alleviate the subject's suffering (Arendt 1965).

This differentiation according to Naylor however automatically translates into a new characterization, where recipients are expected to have a low capacity for leadership, knowledge, management or policies and strategies (Naylor 2011) which again justifies intervention to help them with these activities (Aradau 2004). Cornwall also argues that by using such terms, we create some sort of differentiation and alienation that suggest, people in recipient countries are fundamentally different from the ones in the donor countries (Cornwall 2007), therefore, she also calls for the correction of misused used terminology that determinates the debate.

According to Escobar, Third World reality is described by discourses and practices of economists, planners, nutritionist, demographers and development experts (Escobar 1995). These experts according to Boltanski objectify and quantify the people who are given a number and are translated into measurements and statistics. He argues that even the term recipients incorporate objectification (Boltanski 1991) while creating a higher version of economic development discourse that replaces people with numbers.

## 3.4   Effect on recipient countries and individuals- foreign knowledge

The problem of foreign knowledge arises in different ways in the discourse. As development activities are mostly planned based on foreign expertise and they use a terminology that is often alien to the local communities, development project easily can become undesirable for local recipients. However, there is also another aspect of the hegemony of foreign knowledge:

development practices regularly include the establishment and renewal of institutions, which is often one of the most difficult projects in development. For certain projects however the creation of such institutions and institutional systems are necessary to have a long-term effects. These institutions, however, can face difficulties adapting to the knowledge and reality of the recipient country. Naude suggests is that institutions, in general, are very much country-specific and the formation of theoretical institutions becomes almost impossible (Naude 2010). Institutions created by development programs are often alien to the local reality as they representations of the realities and expectations of donor countries.

New trends in the discourse emphasizes the importance of authenticity, local involvement and knowledge as of the complete adaptation of entirely new discourse in recipient countries almost impossible partially because of the above-mentioned objectification.

Another less obvious aspect of the negative effect of foreign knowledge and requirements imposed in developing countries is the effect that such measures have on recipients and citizens. Naylor points out that people from developing countries are often likely to internalize the perceptions of them into their identities. This is similar to the internalization of subject roles in the weakening of self-perception of people (Naylor 2011). This approach is unique in the sense that it draws attention to the differences between individuals and contrary to the generalized approach that development adapted. It further emphasizes the necessity of the incorporation of multidisciplinary approaches into the development discourse and practice, to overcome the hegemony of economic discourse.

Lastly, Cornwall also points out the problem that despite discourse and reality affluence each other, still there is a little or no overlap between the people who are creating the discourse and the ones doing the development work or experiencing results. For this reason, there is often disagreement

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and misunderstandings of what certain term means or should mean in real life situation (Cornwall 2007).

## 3.5   Effectiveness

Aid effectiveness is one of the most important buzzwords (Cornwall 2007) in development that might have caused immense harm to development projects. The trend of strengthening aid effectiveness in motivating donors to set up new measurements for the projects that are implemented, regardless of the nature and purpose of those projects. The results of aid effectiveness highly depend on the measurements, indicators and criteria and how carefully these have been set up. Against the approach of small economics about how if at all evaluations should be conducted.

Problems with the discourse on effectiveness range across the problems mentioned previously. The discourse on effectiveness that focuses on economics because cannot incorporate complex social values dehumanize people at the recipient end. It is a very common mistake that in case of effectiveness purpose and perspective are not well distinguished.  Talking about the effectiveness of programs where people's lives are at stake just seem to be unjust, however, this is often the case of basic healthcare interventions. The general economic-based understanding of aid effectiveness completely ignores the duality of structural and productive powers as it cannot really understand the value of productive power that incentivize social forces that through systems of knowledge and discursive practices create sustainable outcomes (Barnett, Duval 2005).

# 4. Alternative development policy recommendations

In this chapter, I would try to introduce how innovation, entrepreneurship and other forms of alternative development practices and cooperation could give a new direction for development activities. Based on the analysis in the previous chapters, I suggest that these practices are capable to incorporate the changes and the multidisciplinary approach that is needed to reach higher efficiency in development.

I argue that these practices better respond to the idea of development implemented in the Sustainable Development Goals, therefore they should be encouraged to take the weight down from large-scale projects which rather serve only humanitarian than development purposes. This doesn't mean that development projects cannot be ambitious and large scale, but I suggest that the evaluation of projects should depend on their purposes which by the clarification of the terminology could be better defined.

Policies for establishing and alternative development framework could be implemented. According to Fowler, alternative development paradigm that delivers on two fronts. It promotes civic values and legitimacy and encourages to look for alternatives to the prevailing development model and its financing (Fowler 2000).

Entrepreneurship and innovation or social entrepreneurship are the amongst the trendiest most buzzing word in recent the recent development discourse (Cornwell 2007), that appear in almost every discipline from governance to technology and education. The main idea that entrepreneurs bring new ideas in action in certain fields which is called conceptualized entrepreneurship (Swedberg 2000) which suggest that there is a conscious selection of projects behind. Nevertheless, neither innovation or entrepreneurship can provide solutions for all the problems in development, but in an era where knowledge is one of the most important common good, I argue that these practices could contribute to a more humane and more efficient development.

## 4.1 Small is beautiful, the possibilities of small-scale projects

As the consideration of economics in development are unavoidable, I choose to apply Schumacher`s book Small Is Beautiful as a theoretical basis to argue for new ways of small-scale development practices that I present in this chapter.

In this book, Schumacher lays down the idea of small-scale bottom-up development projects that as he argues, could better respond to local needs and circumstances than enormous top-down approaches. Schumacher describes the aim of development as a way to enhance people`s potential and improve their lives. In his argument, he incorporates ethical reasons in development in terms of the distribution of resources amongst rich and poor countries and attempts to present a model, which could lead to long term sustainable growth with the inclusion of new technologies, despite he rejects the idea that technological innovation could provide a solutions to all problems in every area.

In his argument, he touches upon the idea of alternative development paths and questions the general economic approach that applies measurements and evaluations. He argues that this qualitative approach is rather a barrier and not catalyst of understanding development and argues that, if this is taken out of the equation, the way would open up to more innovative solutions and practices. He argues that since the emphasis on economic measurement is the main cause of failures in development we cannot search for solutions within the same method.

He argues against the economics of scale and the tendency of giantism and offers the approach small-scale economics with some nostalgy to earlier periods of history. He emphasizes the importance of education, which here I translate to the access of information in creating sustainable solutions. When talking about the social consequences of economic decisions, he touches upon the

idea of directed scientific research which serves the common good in society while argues for the creation of more creative and practical forms of employment. For the more efficient flow of information, he argues that the organization of communication and the creation of an intellectual infrastructure is inevitable in development to eliminate dependency between rich and poor countries. Likewise, also discusses the idea of a decentralized approach of development where he sees the role of supranational agencies as actors who connect, synthesize and develop knowledge and experience.

Why I am choosing his book is because his ideas I believe align with the new tendencies in development I present and because at the heart of his argument is his belief of a necessary change in development from an economic, to a more human approach.

## 4.2    Innovation and technology

Despite I acknowledge the limitations of technology and its ability to solve provide creative and sustainable solutions for long standing problems, following the logic of Schumacher I argue that smaller alternative project can better reflect local needs ad can result in higher local ownership in development practices by cooperating with recipients.

The third wave of development is led by the Sustainable Development Goals that are inseparable from innovation and knowledge sharing and in my opinion that is what should be called as development.

**Responsible innovation**

Innovation is at the core of human nature and has always been a prerequisite for the development and survival of our species. Human history is full of examples of the transformative power of technology conditions created by advancing healthcare and other innovations were essential for

the birth of human rights. In the 21st century innovation of technologies boost in an unimaginable speed and promise solutions for many of the long-standing problems of humanity but introduces unexplored categories of threats as well. In the past decades, we have been witnessing the transformative power of innovations in our societies and world affairs as well (Danziger, 2015).

The idea of responsible innovation grew out of the needed to have some control over innovation and direct it towards social responsibility. This is an approach, that values human rights and social values over the economic benefits, or at least tries to create balance, which is the main idea of Schumacher`s work, therefore contributes greatly to a new approach of development.

In the European Commission policy context responsible research and innovation appeared about 2 years ago and attempts to respond to ethically ambiguous areas in science. The effort, however, is going global as the UN Special rapporteur on behalf of the UN Secretary-General is working on developing proposals and incentivize discussions on the challenges of rapid technological innovation using a Human Rights perspective. This is very important from the perspective of this paper because it addresses global human rights and therefore shifts the discussion towards humanitarian and development practices as well.

This idea manifests the tradeoff of scientific freedom to socially beneficial impacts. The idea of 'right impacts' is enhanced in the Innovation Union initiative, which in many ways follows the part of the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN. The idea of responsible research and innovation is that research and innovation must respond to the needs and ambitions of society, (Georghean-Quinn, 2012). This means, that RRI is trying to recognize the public value of science and innovation and open-up opportunities for establishing some directions, which are ethically acceptable, socially desirable, safe and sustainable as well that highly correlates with Schumacher's concept of development.

**Emerging technology**

This idea of responsible innovation gets meaning by the term of emerging technology. The term `emerging technology` refers to a radically new and rapid flow of innovations in all areas of our lives and in science. Innovations explode from medicine, energy industry, education, warfare or information technologies (Acemgolu 2008). The biggest question for governments, international actors and policymakers is: How to enhance the positive effects and possibilities in innovation, and minimize the harms, which is the core question in development too.

With industrialization, innovation stopped being a privilege of governments as innovation moved under the umbrella of corporations, but by the latest tendency of flourishing entrepreneurship and knowledge sharing, innovation is moving to the hands of the people. This is called the non-institutionalization on innovation (Gupta, 2005) that has lots of potential for example in development settings as it allows alternative ways for innovation like entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship and or corporate social responsibility. Innovations now easily move across borders (Stewart, Evanoff 2018) which is also very important in development.

This way, outsourced and deinstitutionalized innovation can be created in an environment which exceeds focus on equality and cooperation of the partners. In development, it is becoming clear that innovation often happens locally when people respond to the needs of their own communities. As entrepreneurship is quite high in developing countries, these efforts could be assisted and supported in the framework of development.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 expressed his commitment to developing a strategy for the UN to leverage new technologies as one of his 5 main principles for 2019: the protection and promotion of values embodied in the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, protection of global values, to incentivize

work in partnership across governments, the private sector, and civil society to build knowledge and share ideas, foster inclusion and transparency for all stakeholders.

## 4.3 Entrepreneurship

The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor indicates that entrepreneurship is high in developing countries and developing societies are usually very responsive to entrepreneurial ideas, however, this is highly different by education and culture (Pinillos, MJ, Reyes L. 2011). However, there is relatively little is known about the relationship between entrepreneurship and economic growth in developing countries (Nyström 2008) there is a great potential in it as an alternative to traditional development (Anokhin 2008).

Schumpeter refers to innovation in entrepreneurship as the way of creating new, innovative and various responses to certain things. According to Gawell, this flexibility and proactivity within a certain context can be seen the essence of knowledge transition and empowerment (Gawell 2013). He explains this flexibility as the freedom of entrepreneurs as they do not have to consider common understandings of problems but can act upon what they perceive important.

This flexibility can be very useful in case of specific situations where more insight is needed or to act on behalf of specific groups that otherwise would not be considered by the government or other donors. This approach aligns with the Solow- Swan model, where human capital and technological changes are vital for long-run economic growth. Naude argues that entrepreneurship is a way of empowerment that helps people in developing countries to create sustainable welfare for themselves (Naude 2008). Nevertheless, yet entrepreneurship is also one of the buzzwords of development that needs further clarification to become more effective (Cornwell 2007).

## 4.4    Social entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship can be understood as another step taken towards higher local ownership as besides the economic value created it is focused even more to the needs, knowledge and values of local people and society.

Social entrepreneurship means the creation of social value for a common good that often includes innovation. Social entrepreneurs are perceived as change agents who are creating social and economic value as well (Martin, Osberg 2007) but their emphasis remains on the social surplus and not profits (Dees, 2007).  This type of entrepreneurship that primarily addresses social issues address possibilities for development in society. But just as entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship is in the progress of fragmented theoretical development, which is important regarding the future of the development discourse and practice as well, because these concepts are already widely used in the discourse without a clarified meaning that would help future application. Bloom warns that development and entrepreneurship specifically often believes that poverty alleviation can be achieved by providing capital to the poor or for small businesses that employ and serve the poor, and expect recipient will automatically be able to create sustainable organizations (Bloom, 2009). As these types of programs create solely economic capita they are most often prove to be incapable to maintain result.  Therefore, I am highlighting the importance of the multidisciplinary approach when social entrepreneurship in developing societies supports transparency and flexibility of and includes locals and entrepreneurs from all disciplines to tackle long-standing social problems. According to Gawell only in this way will social entrepreneurship able to create better responses to local challenges (Gawell 2013). These better practices often prove to be scalable and motivate entrepreneurs to aim for an ever-higher social return. This idea of

"scaling impact" is, however, incorporates the danger of moving the emphasis towards profits as economic gains are not completely removed from these projects (Bloom, 2009).

According to Fowler, the most important things is to identify social and economic innovations that are in harmony with local capabilities, therefore organizers can seek validation of the programs from locals. By this, they aim for a more inclusive development that is emphasizing sustainable organic growth of social relations (Fowler 2000). Dacin considers the ability of social entrepreneurship to create a network system that supports accountability and transparency as its biggest advantage over old development forms. He also highlights the possibilities for deeper understanding of social contexts from a cultural anthropological view that he calls a value-added approach. Dacin approaches scalability from a different point of view. According to him, social entrepreneurship and network settings scaling in forms of spillover effects where technology remains constant but remains flexible in any other aspects (Dacin 2010).

## 4.5 Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate Social Responsibility is a fairly new approach in development that is expanding rapidly. Corporations by taking on certain social approaches, usually still keep their activities completely separated from their business, for example they can create NGOs that are mainly independent from the mother company.

These practices emerge partially because corporations have an interest in discovering new markets but also due to the headway of responsible innovation. As innovation and capital travelled to the corporations, private sector involvement become crucial to tackle long-standing social problems. Corporate social responsibility can be exercised in different ways in development settings. One is through NGOs of certain corporations another is to include certain approaches within corporations

that acknowledges and sustains corporate social intrapreneurs as integral to the process of corporate social entrepreneurship (Austin, Reficco 2005). This means that they integrate social values within organizations while generating social value through partnerships with other organizations. This option is beneficial for companies in the development sector because while discovering new markets they can also acquire new ideas and solutions. This can also answer the problem of scaling because through the diffusion of ideas they are creating a natural spillover effect in numerous occasions.

Corporate social responsibility in development presents a partially economic driven but collaborative approach that reduces paternalism by exchanging information, practices and experience with local communities.

## 4.6   Civic innovation

Civic innovation differs from the alternatives mentioned above, as it is almost completely separating between business and innovation and social value.

Above all, civic innovation is the most inclusive form that prioritizes social value creation, but with occasionally completely disregarding economic interest. Civic innovations focus on the people and look at them as inspiration and resources as well. Unlike other forms of cooperative practices civic innovation creates and maintains new civic institutions and patterns of social relations (Fowler 2000) that ensure the sustainability of results.

Civic innovation looks at innovation as a core characteristic of human nature, therefore, expects all citizens to be involved as it presumes that everyone has capacity to contribute to innovation. In the arena of solutionism, civic innovation develops innovations with the people, for the people while working with experts in various disciplines and develops listening mechanisms to obtain the

most detailed information possible about a problem. Civic innovation, therefore, thinks about

innovation in a collective manner, where action and solutions evolve organically (Freire 2017).


**Multi-stakeholder partnerships**

Development has always been a multi-stakeholder process, where the five main actors usually

were the donor (states), recipients, NGOs, financial institutions and governments.  The practices

mentioned above are highly collaborative forms of intervention therefore usually involve many

different stakeholders into the process on purpose, with which they exceed the old forms of

stakeholder relationships that were developed to assist development activities. Also, their higher

demand for transparency and knowledge-sharing provide space and incentivize the establishment

of multi-stakeholder partnerships.

According to Fowler, the idea of partnerships is very attractive in development setting as they

can push to system change without any obvious direct influence on participants (Fowler 2000).

In this type of partnership, information is the main asset. Technological innovation sustainability

and independence are core principles of the process and that allows developing countries to step

out of the shadow and ideas of western development regime and create more adjusted solutions

for their own challenges.

Without an excessive explanation I would like to turn back to the problems of recent development

programs and how those could be solved by these cooperative practices. As these entrepreneurial

practices are known to be more inclusive and innovative ad flexible, they are more likely to create

higher stakeholder involvement and to establish better local connections and faster delivery of

creative solutions. With the incorporated multidisciplinary approaches and also by higher local

ownership they are more likely to be able to create detailed, realistic project plans, risk

management plans and to set up adequate measures to evaluate quality if evaluation is needed. Corruption and stakeholder involvement can be tackled by the creation of multistakeholder partnerships and authority could be shared between stakeholders and participants since smallest projects make it easier to divide tasks and responsibilities.

## 5. Conclusion

My aim with this paper was to draw attention to the negative impact and inevitable importance of an updated discourse and terms in international development. In doing so, I have collected the most common reasons of failure and ineffectiveness in development and attempted to link it to the long-standing problems in the discourse. After presenting recent tendencies in the discourse I also offered policy alternatives that I could lead to more efficient and primarily sustainable outcomes in international development.

With the case study, the debate on mass deworming programs, I aimed to draw attention to the harms that the economic-based approach of efficiency can cause when indicators of success not set up correctly and used in occasions where regarding the outcome of the program they are not that relevant. Through this example I attempted to present how the overall importance of economics can fuel academic debate is driven by greed but has no effect whatsoever on the success of a program from the recipient's point of view.

The Kenyan case study and the debate around its evaluation and success, I believe also illustrates to illustrates precisely the how distorted and western-centric development discourse is. I believe that the evaluation of such projects based on indicators and school performance is unnecessary and

is only possible, because these programs run in developing countries which clearly illustrates the double-standards applied on recipients by donors.

In this paper I argue that if large-scale project providing services that serve basic needs those should not be categorized as development, because by that they fall under examinations that tell little about the actual effectiveness of the programs. In my opinion programs providing services related to basic human rights, such as basic healthcare, clean water programs, reduction of child mortality, nutrition programs disease prevention should not be evaluated on economic grounds. That doesn`t mean these programs should not be evaluated at all, but the evaluation of these programs should incorporate a multidisciplinary approach, that allows to measure social benefits as well. They should rather focus on the improvement of practices and social value and not on the economic benefits. In other words, programs providing basic necessities that cannot be withdrawn on humanitarian basis should be considered as humanitarian aid and not development therefore they could escape the pressure of efficiency and target numbers and could focus on the real benefits of such programs. In my opinion to receive those services is a fulfilment of human rights and not development, to which every person should have access irrespective of where they live.

At the end of this paper I offered alternative ways to conduct development projects and argued that on the long run smaller, more focused projects could reduce the most common problems of recent development therefore with technological support could offer better solutions for problems of societies that align more with the idea of development.

**Conclusions summarised**

1 Project and interventions which are taken away can cause the death of illness to the recipients should not be called as development

2 Therefore, they should not be put under the economic evaluations

3 Evaluations should remain in the realm of academic/theoretical research and donors should focus on cost-effectiveness, not on the existence of the projects.

4 Prior to this, development discourse has to be cleared from biases that allow donor to apply different measures on recipients than on themselves

Despite all the conclusion are important and also interdependent, the main argument of this paper relates to the discourse. I argue that development discourse has to be cleared from the biases and the economic emphasis of evaluation in order to give space for new practices that could better fit development purposes. One crucial and primary point of this transformation has to be therefore to define what kind of programs and activities are we referring to when we talk about international development.

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