

How Does International Development Assistance Influence the Chances of Young People?

To understand the effects of international development cooperation on young people's opportunities, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Kenya and the Inter Region Economic Network (IREN Kenya) on Monday 26, August 2019 convened a two-day workshop in Nairobi, Kenya.

The key focus of the conference was to explore the debate on development assistance taking stock of the last 60 years, as well as discuss experiences of the youth and whether the chances they have obtained in development assistance have helped them in decision-making processes in their countries, New approaches in Development Assistance and Education, Different Approaches to Development Assistance (experiences from China, India, Gulf States) and Development assistance in Kenya today.

Key speakers who presented their views include: Prof. Wolfgang Gieler – FH Dortmund, Mr. James Shikwati (IREN Kenya), Raphael Obonyo-The Youth Congress, Natalie Mukundane – African Youth Commission, Elsie Masava –Plan International, Dr. Daniel Abala –University of Nairobi, Prof. Dietmar Pfeiffer- University of Muenster, Mr. Stephan Opitz - Head of GIZ in Kenia, Senator Abshiro Halake, Hon. Gedion Ochanda- Kenyan Member of Parliament and Ms. Terryanne Chebet –Metropol TV.



Figure 1 Prof. Gieler during his presentation

Some of the key highlights included:

- For Africa to fully benefit from its engagement with development partners, it needs to strengthen its systems to curb some of the challenges and vices such as corruption and mismanagement of development funds.
- Development assistance programs work well for a country's citizens especially where there are strong and effective political and economic structures in the utilization of the funds.
- The global system plays a key role in development assistance in Africa specifically Kenya. A lot of funds have gone into different initiatives and interventions like education, health among others and the ripple effect has been positive to the youth and the citizenry at large.

- It was also noted that corporations, partnerships and intercultural dialogue are meaningful when both parties have something to offer when seated at the table "It only exists when there is a budget".
- Challenges affecting the youth pose a challenge to the rest of the society and hence cannot be undermined.
- There are increased interests by development partners and Kenyans on the need to include young people in making decisions in view of development. It was also noted that the youth need to have one main agenda which they can invest in as Kenyan youth to be impactful in development cooperation.
- Development assistance has provided development of human capital financing in various sectors.
- There are varying interests between development partners and there is need to be aware of these interests to enable mutual beneficial cooperation.
- Other emerging issues that arose include migration, climate change, corruption.
- Misplaced priorities are a challenge when giving aid mostly influenced by what the government presents as their need.
- The role of the media in development assistance and the need to find room on how development assistance actors and beneficiaries bring the narrative into the media space.



Figure 2 Mr. Shikwati (IREN-kenya), Ms. Natalie (African Youth Commission) and Prof. Pfeiffer during a break-out session

It is expected that the proposals discussed at the conference will be used to come up with a publication and position papers to be used by KAS and IREN with a view to entrenching participation in political processes in both Kenya and Germany and implementation of the findings.