AID TO AFRICA: SOME HARD QUESTIONS

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Category: Africa

Africa Expat Wife has written a long and thoughtful piece on the issue of British Aid to Africa in a time of recession. It makes far from comfortable reading, but it asks the sorts of hard questions which need to be faced up to.

> *I read over Christmas that the UK Government will have to find another Â£76 billion of public spending cuts over the next 8 years if it is to reduce its record Â£178 billion borrowing â€“ (according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies) which equates to Â£2,400 for every family in Britain. (Sunday Times â€“ Money â€“ 13.12.09. Kathryn Cooper)*
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> *I also read that UK public workers may be facing pay freeze. Many teachers, doctors, nurses, civil servants, local government workers face pay caps, higher pension costs and increases in National Insurance payments. (thanks very much to my mother-in-law for regularly sending out a selection of UK Sunday supplements!).*
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> *Whilst cuts can possibly be made within Britain in the civil service etc. from my point of view, as a Brit living in Kenya, I might suggest cutting overseas aid budgets to bolster some of the UKâ€™s national debt? I do not profess to be an expert but I do have had some limited experience within DFID and other international aid organisations so feel itâ€™s OK to get on my soap box today.*
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> *What people in UK may not know is that right here, in East Africa and Nairobi, within the lucrative world of â€˜aid to Africaâ€™, given shape by huge organisations such as the UN, the World Bank, USAID, DFID etc. the world has gone officially crazy for the past ten years. Well staffed aid organisations with numerous highly qualified and trained staff running hundreds of programs routinely farm out work to external consultants, who then hire more consultants to organise their conferences, write reports, run their workshops and roll out their aid programs and schemes. It is what is known as the gravy train.*

Even more uncomfortable, from the point of view of missions work is one of the comments on the blog post.

> *We most certainly don't need all this expatriates running around the country pretending to help and we most certainly don't need AID money from the UK.I think we should treat expatriates with the same hospitality they show us in their countries.*

You can read the whole article here. I wouldn't want to draw too many firm conclusions from one blog post, but it is important to recognise that things are often far more complex than they appear on the surface.