

International aid projects: Boost or Handicap for Domestic Development Projects?

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Abstract : The World Bank, the American US-AID, the Canadian CIDA, the European EDF, the German GTZ to name a few, are some of the giant structures set up throughout the developed world to help the so called developing countries in their effort to improve the quality of life of their populations. After almost half a century of effort, few if any of these countries have succeeded to get rid of the developing status and join the developed circle.

Many reasons has been pointed out to explain such a poor result: the poor countries are politically unstable, their leaders are corrupt, there are cultural obstacles, etc. Here we explore the possibility of a dynamic poor performance of aid and domestic development policy. This could be verified in some countries and in some sectors. System Dynamics is the best approach for uncovering potential (and real) bad surprise from well intended policies. We use it in this research as a tool for conception, illustration and communication.

A system dynamic model is built using many sources of information including: Information gathered while we were managing a CIDA project, information received while participating in the implementation of an IDA project. Both projects are in Higher education in Guinea. Three situations are modeled : domestic project alone ; international project alone and a mix of both types of project. While the first two situations are unrealistic, we will see that a poor combination may be far more disastrous.

On the field experience and model simulation help explore many ways of making the best out of local policy and international aid in higher education in Guinea. A tentative extension of the analysis to other sectors and other countries will be also presented.