New York University
Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service

Development Assistance, Accountability and Aid Effectiveness

PADM-GP 2204  
Friday, 9am-1:45 pm  
(January 26; February 9, 23;  
March 30; April 13)  
Spring 2018  
261 Global Center  
(except 2/9 Class in  
194 Mercer, Room 202)

Instructors

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Description

International development assistance has evolved considerably in the post WWII period. Although some of the early development agencies are still operating and remain influential, the way they function has evolved and important new players have entered the field. This course provides an overview of contemporary debates in international development assistance with a selective review of the major actors—multilateral, bilateral, and nongovernmental. The course explores the political economy of donor-client country relationships, the key accountability challenges that have emerged as aid has evolved, and the link between accountability and aid effectiveness. Particular emphasis is given to recent development assistance approaches and mechanism that have attempted to bridge the accountability-effectiveness divide. The course closes with consideration of the possible future shape of development assistance.

Main Learning Objectives

1) To familiarize participants with the evolution and goals of international development assistance  
2) To provide participants with an overview of the main actors involved in providing development assistance  
3) To introduce participants to the political economy dynamics surrounding development assistance, including the donor-client and donor-donor relationships  
4) To familiarize participants with issues, proposals and debates on improving aid accountability and effectiveness  
5) To help participants to think pragmatically and constructively about the future of development assistance
Prerequisites

In order to take the course, students are generally expected to have previously taken:

1) Microeconomics for Public Management, Planning and Policy Analysis (CORE-GP 1018); and
2) Introduction to Public Policy (CORE-GP 1022) or History and Theory of Urban Planning (URPL-GP 2660) or equivalent

Those without these prerequisites can only enroll in the course with the permission of the instructors. It would also be helpful if students have taken Institutions, Governance and International Development (PADM-GP 2201) and a prior course in the politics, sociology, economics, or management of development, but these are not required.

Format

The class will meet five times during the semester. The sessions are long, but there will be a break and a mixture of approaches. The format will blend lecture (with occasional guest speakers), discussion and in-class exercises. In the first two classes, we will cover two topics in each, and in the next two a single topic. Class participation is encouraged and expected.

The last session of the course will involve student presentations on a range of case studies of development assistance.

Readings

There is one book we will use for the course (Part IV, class of March 30).


You can purchase it at the NYU bookstore or online (hard or electronic version) for under $25, and it is also available at Bobst library if you do not wish to purchase it.

In addition, there is one useful book we recommend if you do not have a background in development assistance or want a refresher. It is not up to date (2009), but it is the only volume we know of that goes through the history of a range of different development agencies:


This volume is available online in both print and electronic form for $15-$25. We posted an excerpt on NYU Classes for Part I (the class of January 26). If you want to read more, you will have to buy the volume.
Required readings are provided on the NYU Classes course site or can be downloaded from website links provided in the reading list. The reading list also provides extensive supplemental (optional) readings for those who wish to consult them, but these are not posted on NYU Classes.

Course Requirements

The course has three requirements:

1) **Class Attendance and Participation** (20%)

The success of the course depends on regular attendance and active participation by all class participants. Participation begins with effective reading and listening. Class participants are expected to read and discuss the readings weekly. That means coming prepared to engage the class, with questions and/or comments with respect to the reading. You will be expected to have completed all the required readings before class to the point where you can be called on to critique or discuss the readings.

Please note that the attendance requirement is subject to NYU’s Policy on Religious Holidays (https://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/university-calendar-policy-on-religious-holidays.html)

2) **Midterm Exam** (30%)

The midterm exam (take-home) will assess your basic knowledge and ability to think critically about the material covered in the first part of the course. It will be administered after the third class meeting on February 23rd.

The exam will be distributed prior to the February 23rd class so that you can ask questions about it in class, and **it will be due on March 9th before spring break.**

3) **Case Study** (50%: 20% individual or team presentation and 30% individual paper)

The main assignment for this course requires students working individually or in teams of two to prepare a presentation (20 minutes) on a case study that analyzes the history, dynamics, and future possibilities of one of the following:

- **The relationship between one development partner (multilateral, bilateral, NGO, etc.) and one recipient country**: What is the nature of the relationship? How did it evolve and why? What are its implications for aid effectiveness? Where might it go in the future?

- **Development assistance in a particular area** (public sector reform or an aspect thereof), **a public service sector** (education, health, infrastructure, etc.), or **some dimension of governance** (civil society empowerment, justice, etc.): What is the nature of the assistance and how has it evolved? Which factors allowed change over time? How successful were the efforts and why?
• Efforts to reform a particular development partner—or one of it specific departments or programs: Which actors animated the reform efforts (insiders, outsiders, recipients, a mix)? How successful have they been? How sustainable are they likely to be? What were the political, policy, and/or management dimensions of change?

Individuals or teams must prepare a one-page abstract of their topic by March 2nd, and the topic must be discussed and finalized with the instructors by March 31st. The presentations will take place in the final class on April 13th.

In addition to the presentation, each team member will prepare an individual final paper of up to ten pages on an aspect of the case, or with permission of the instructors, another topic. An individual paper based on a presentation should go beyond/build on what is covered in the presentation. The deadline for submission is May 4th.

More details on each of the assignments will be provided in advance of when it is due.

Assignment Format and Submission:

All assignments should be written on Times New Roman size 12, doubled-spaced lines (not 1.5), with one-inch margins all around. Please submit them as a Word document via the Assignments tab on NYU Classes.

Please remember to include on all of your assignments your Wagner mailbox number (if you do not have one write “No Wagner mailbox”) at the top of the paper and use the following convention to name your submitted files: DAAAE [Last name][Assignment].docx, e.g. DAAAEAlvarezExam.docx

Grading Policy

The course follows the NYU Wagner policy guidelines on academic honesty, grading and incompletes. It is your personal responsibility to become familiar with these policies. All students are expected to pursue and meet the highest standards of academic excellence and integrity. Please see the NYU Wagner Student Portal for information on the academic code and grading policy, including incompletes (you need to be logged in to access these links).

Academic Code: https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/policies/code
Grading: https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/policies/grading
Incompletes: https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/policies/incompletes

Late Policy

Please note that extensions on assignment due dates will be granted only in an emergency of if requested in advance for well justified reasons. This policy is adopted out of respect to those who have abided by deadlines, despite having hectic and complex schedules. Assignments handed in late without approved extensions will be penalized one-third of a grade per day.
Useful Websites

Some of our readings are drawn from the large universe of development assistance related websites. Many of these regularly update information and provide data, commentary and blogs.

Additional sites that may be of interest to you include the following:

Aid Data: http://www.aiddata.org
Bank Information Center: http://www.bicusa.org/
Bretton Woods Project: http://www.brettonwoodsproject.org/
The Brookings Institution: https://www.brookings.edu/topic/global-development/
Center for Global Development: http://www.cgdev.org/
Devex: https://www.devex.com/en/
Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation: http://effectivecooperation.org
Government Accountability Project (International): http://whistleblower.org/international
International Aid Transparency Initiative: http://www.aidtransparency.net
International Initiative for Impact Evaluation: http://www.3ieimpact.org/
Managing for Development Results: http://www.mfdr.org/
Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network: http://www.modernizeaid.net/
OECD Development Cooperation Directorate: http://www.oecd.org/dac/
ONE: https://www.one.org/international/
Overseas Development Institute: http://www.odi.org.uk/
Publish What You Fund: http://www.publishwhatyoufund.org/
The Reality of Aid: http://www.realityofaid.org/

This glossary of aid effectiveness terms may also be useful:

http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/aideffectivenessglossary.htm

Additional links to specific development agencies and other development assistance actors are provided in the supplemental reading list.
PART I (January 26)

The Evolution of Development Assistance Frameworks, Priorities and Approaches
A. Overview of Development Assistance Trends, Mainstream Actors, and Key Modalities
B. The Political Economy of Development Assistance: Opportunities and Challenges

PART II (February 9)

The Changing Landscape of Development Assistance
A. New Actors and Frameworks: Private Sector, Foundations, BRICs and More
B. Responses to the New Landscape: The Paris, Busan, Addis, and 2030 Agendas and Beyond

Midterm Exam Distributed February 21, Due March 9

PART III (February 23)

A Closer Look at the Aid Effectiveness Agenda: Evaluations, Results, and Performance

PART IV: (March 30)

Country Experiences in Context: Unpacking the Donor-Recipient Relationship

PART V (April 13)

Development Assistance Reform Options and Possibilities
A. Case Presentations
B. Synthesis and Looking Forward

Final Papers due May 5
Reading List*

I: The Evolution of Development Assistance Frameworks, Priorities and Approaches (January 26)

A. Overview of Development Assistance Trends, Mainstream Actors, and Key Modalities

*Arjan de Haan. How the Aid Industry Works: An Introduction to International Development (Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press, 2009). (This is optional reading for those without much background on development assistance or who wish to review the basics).


* The readings are marked with an “*” if they are posted on NYU Classes, and “**” if they must be downloaded from the indicated website.
B. The Political Economy of Development Assistance: Opportunities and Challenges


II: The Changing Landscape of Development Assistance (February 9)

A. New Actors and New Frameworks: Private Sector, Foundations, BRICs and More


B. Responses to the New Landscape: Paris, Busan, Addis, Post-2015 Agendas and Beyond


III: A Closer Look at the Aid Effectiveness Agenda: Evaluations, Results, and Performance (February 23)


**IDInsights, Evaluations with impact: decision-focused impact evaluation as a practical policymaking tool**  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dpfBgzAHdmU&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dpfBgzAHdmU&feature=youtu.be)


IV: **Country Experiences in Context: Unpacking the Donor-Recipient Relationship** (March 30)


Background on Selected Cases (Info to be provided on focal readings in advance)


V: Synthesis and Looking Forward: Development Assistance Reform Options and Possibilities (April 13)

A. Case Presentations

Materials on student individual and cases will be posted on NYU Classes prior to the class meeting.

B. The Future of Development Assistance

The following readings are not required, but they are posted on NYU Classes and you may wish to browse some of them prior to the final class meeting or at another time.


*Andrew Rogerson. What if Development Aid were Truly Catalytic?* (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2011).
*Heiner Janus, Stephan Klingebiel, and Sebastian Paulo. "Beyond Aid" and Future Development Cooperation. (Bonn: German Development Institute, 2014).

*Ben Ramalingan, Miguel Laric and John Primrose. From Best Fit to Best Practice: Understanding and Navigating Wicked Problems in International Development. (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2014).


*David Booth and Sue Unsworth, Politically Smart, Locally Led Development (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2014).


SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS AND RESOURCES

I. General Development Assistance and Aid System Reform Readings


Helen Tilley and Heidoi Tavakoli. *Better Aid Modalities: Are We Risking Real Results?* (London, Overseas Development Institute, 2012). Focus on pp. 1-6, read more as you like.

**II. Development Assistance Modalities**


**III. Development Assistance Actors**

**A. Multilaterals: International Financial Institutions**

All of the major international finance institutions have websites. The following can be consulted for an overview of each agency:

Islamic Development Bank: [https://www.isdb-pilot.org/](https://www.isdb-pilot.org/)


**D. Bilateral Development Agencies: DAC and Emerging**

Most bilateral development agencies have websites. A few key agencies include the following:


Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC): [https://www.mcc.gov/](https://www.mcc.gov/)


**E. NGOs, Foundations, and Peer-to-Peer Assistance**

Many nongovernmental actors involved in development assistance have websites, including:

Gates Foundation: [http://www.gatesfoundation.org](http://www.gatesfoundation.org)
Bloomberg Philanthropies: [https://www.bloomberg.org/](https://www.bloomberg.org/)
Ford Foundation: [https://www.fordfoundation.org](https://www.fordfoundation.org)
Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria: http://www.theglobalfund.org
Interaction: http://www.interaction.org
Bond: http://www.bond.org.uk
Ashoka Foundation: http://www.ashoka.org


IV. Political Economy


Tony Killick, Aid and the Political Economy of Policy Change (London, Overseas Development Institute, 1998).


V. Defining and Measuring Aid Effectiveness


Alison Evans and David Booth. DAC Evaluation Network: Follow-Up to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness -- Review of Literature. (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2006).


Javier Pereira and Carlos Villota. Hitting the Target: Evaluating the Effectiveness of Results-Based Approaches to Aid (Brussels: European Network on Debt and Development, 2012).


