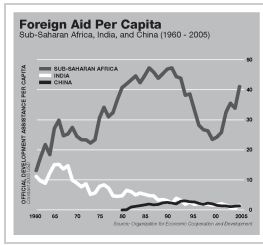


Is It Africa's Turn?

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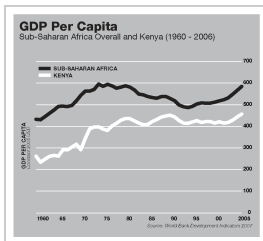
...Yet a look at the raw data on foreign aid across regions and time suggests that aid has probably played a rather small role in Africa's recent economic success.

The first instructive comparison is Africa versus the world's two other poor giants, China and India, both of which were at African per capita income levels in the

1970s. It is striking how high foreign aid to Africa currently is in per capita terms: overseas development assistance is a full order of magnitude higher in Africa than in China or India, as it was during the critical 1980–2000 period when those Asian countries moved forward economically and Africa declined. There is no doubt that foreign aid is not necessary for economic development. — Edward Miguel

Boston Review has published a [resource-rich forum on progress in Africa](#). The forum was organized and led by UC Berkeley economist Edward Miguel.

"When I visited last June, the city was experiencing an economic renaissance. Busia's first supermarkets, ATMs, Internet cafés and car rental businesses were all open, and residential suburbs had formed on the edge of town. . . Yet, barely a decade ago, poverty and desperation were pervasive there, as in all of western Kenya."



Following Miguel's essay are responses by Robert Bates, Ken Banks, Olu Ajakaiye, Rosamond Naylor, David N. Weil, Jeremy M. Weinstein, Smita Singh, Paul Collier, and Rachel Glennerster — and a final response by Miguel. Of the group, I'm most familiar with reliable source Paul Collier, Oxford University author of ["The Bottom Billion"](#). You can find Paul's essay [here](#).

"There is a process at work that does not depend on democracy and is so simple that analysts generally miss it: learning from mistakes."

Highly recommended.