

Aid and Development Report

Top down development is usually consists of large scale projects which are carried out by the government, international organisations and 'experts'. It is done by people outside the area and is imposed upon the area or people by outside organisations. More often than not, it is well funded and can respond quickly to natural disasters. The local people aren't involved in the decision-making process.

Bottom down is usually a small scale project which involves local communities and local people. It is quite labour intensive and usually there is limited funding available. The local people are involved in the decision making process and it is run by the locals, for the locals.

The Aswan Dam



A major example of a top down project is the building of the Aswan Dam. It is built nearly 4 miles south from the old dam which is called the Low Dam. It took eleven years to build, from 1960 to 1971 and it cost \$1 billion to make. The Soviet Union helped the Egyptian government to build the dam.

The Aswan High Dam was built to control the flow of the River Nile. Before the dam was built, the river used to flood the surrounding land for 2 to 3 months each year, covering it in silt. This created fertile farmland across the desert. However, for the rest of the year, there wasn't enough water, and in some years the flooding was very severe, causing damage to villages. The Egyptian government built the Aswan Dam to ensure a

reliable water supply throughout the year. A lot of the water was used to irrigation to help the farmers grow more crops; however, although the dam solved some problems, it created many new ones.

Advantages

The advantages of building this dam is that now, many more people in Egypt get plenty of fresh and clean drinking water which they get from the Lake Nasser. The water from the Lake Nasser is pumped into people's homes all over Egypt and it is used for washing, drinking, cooking and in machines e.g. washing machines. Factories also use the water for cooling. The farmers use the water from the River Nile to irrigate their crops. Before the dam was built, the River Nile used to flood seldom every year but no-one knew exactly when the flood would occur. Now that the dams have been built, the government can flood the land whenever they want to. Another advantage of the scheme is that the dam keeps the depth of the water in the Nile at the same level throughout the year. There are gates in the dam and they can be opened to let more water from the Lake



Nasser into the Nile if the level of water is low. If the level of water is high in the Nile, then some of the gates can be shut so that the water can return to normal. Bigger boats can travel down the River Nile. These boats carry cargo and people who are on cruises. This is good because that part of Egypt can have more trade with other countries as boats can travel down the Nile. The Aswan High Dam has made the Nile more navigable.

This means that boats can use the river for sailing. Finally, the advantage of building the Aswan dam is that it is also a hydro-electric power station. It has 12 turbines which produces 10 billion kilowatts of electricity every year. The water from the Nile turns the turbines and this makes electricity. The electricity is then taken from the dam by cables and is used in factories and homes all over Egypt. People use the electricity for cooking,, lighting, watching TV and many other activities.

Disadvantages

However, despite all the advantages of the dam, there are as many disadvantages! One of the problems of building the dam was that the land of Nubia had to be flooded to create the reservoir called Lake Nasser which is 310 miles in size. Under the Lake Nasser are religious buildings, homes and cemeteries. These have all been lost. The temples of Abu Simbel had to be moved because they used to stand where Lake Nasser is. The temples took a long time to move because each stone had to be removed individually. 10,000 people had to move from their homes in Nubia to other places in Egypt. Some of these people didn't want to move house. Building the dam was very tiresome work. 30,000 people laboured day and night to construct it. The Aswan high dam sometimes

gets blocked by silt and mud. Therefore, it has to be cleaned regularly which is very expensive. This blocked silt and mud can create diseases in the Lake Nasser. The water has to be cleaned before it is suitable to drink because if people drink dirty water they become ill. Due to this problem, more and more people are suffering from the disease 'bilharzia'. Another disadvantage of the building of the dam is that about 15% of the water is lost. This is because some of the water leaks through the dam and the rest is then lost through evaporation. This is a large waste of water. Finally, a major problem is that the Nile delta is getting smaller and smaller. This is because the River Nile doesn't carry any sediment and pebbles downstream from the dam. The pebbles and sediment get stuck behind the dam. Wildlife is losing its home around the delta because the delta is shrinking in size and the wildlife animals are losing their homes.

UNICEF

An example of a bottom up organisation is UNICEF. The project I am going to be reporting on is what UNICEF has done on the school sanitation and hygiene in Malawi. To carry out this project, it had cost £1.45 million. The purpose of this UNICEF project in Malawi is to develop and institute national standards for sanitation facilities and hygiene promotion in primary schools. These standards are then expected to lay the groundwork for other approaches that can then be applied more extensively. According to the Health Survey, only one out of 10 households in Malawi had an improved latrine or flush toilet. In many of the schools surveyed during the 2001 national sanitation review, the ratio was more than 100 children to one latrine. These latrines were



often poorly constructed, unsafe, vandalized and unhygienic. UNICEF itself is implementing the scheme. The people in charge of the scheme and the local people in whom this project will effect will be the decision makers and they will decide where and what to do.

Advantages

Although the project hasn't been completed yet, these points are what UNICEF thinks the advantages of this project are.

- UNICEF is going to develop a range of options for sanitation facilities – latrines, urinals and hand-washing tanks – suited to different conditions and levels of funding.
- Strengthen national and district capacity to develop and implement guidelines.
- Develop a gender-sensitive life-skills curriculum for health and hygiene education in primary schools.
- Provide water and sanitation for 100 schools and introduce the new hygiene education curriculum.
- Extend sanitation and hygiene promotion to the students' families.
- Due to this, less people will fall ill and die from water-borne infections and diseases.

Disadvantages

According to what has been completed in this project, these are the disadvantages of the scheme.

- The labour costs for family latrines can outweigh the materials costs, especially for women heads of household who have to pay labourers. Many households also lack the funds for a suitable superstructure (walls, door and roof of the latrine).
- Many improved pits have gone unused because the household cannot afford to build a new superstructure. We need more communication to encourage households to close off old unsanitary pits and use old superstructures on a new pit.
- The main constraint for school committees is finding the funds to purchase materials durable enough for their large number of latrine users.
- Girls warrant needs special attention since they may spend up to three hours a day cleaning latrines and fetching water. Girls who currently fetch water from Lake Malawi are exposed to schistosomiasis, which the Ministry of Health estimates infects up to four out of five children in lakeshore districts.

Conclusion

After looking at these two different types of aid in poor countries, I have come to a conclusion. I think that building the Aswan High Dam was very good because now, many more people get to use and drink safe and clean water, which they know will not harm them or cause any diseases. Also, it is good because it brings in more money for the

country as it is now big enough for boats to pass. This means that Aswan can have more trade with other countries and that tourists can take cruises on that part of the Nile. The project that UNICEF undertook was an excellent one too because it means that the hygiene and sanitary facilities will be more developed. Many more people living in Malawi will have access to clean and safe 'latrines' and children's hygiene in schools and households will be very much improved. I think that in both projects, they have been successful and have improved life for the local people. However, I think that the building of the Aswan High Dam would have caused more disruption within the local people than the project undertaken by UNICEF. The local people weren't really involved in the decision making of the dam, nor were they involved in anything to do with the dam. I think that the top down development was more unfair with the way they built the dam because many local people were made to move out of their houses and leave to go to another place. I think this is very unfair because whether they wanted the dam or not, they HAD to move out! However, despite this, the project was very successful. The project in Malawi was more easily going and the local people were involved in what was going on. The way UNICEF went about was much more fair and nicely. They didn't chuck anyone of their houses to build a very large scale, modern object, they just built normal toilets!!! Also, I think that UNICEF was very good because they taught the local people about the importance of hygiene and clean latrines. Therefore, people would understand why they are building them and appreciate the fact that they will have a toilet.

Overall, I think the building of the Aswan High Dam was better than the building of latrine in Malawi because although it had quite a few down sides, it improved the lives of the people living in Egypt significantly by providing them safe drinking water. Thousands of people are dieing due to lack of clean water, and this dam has helped to overcome the problem.