Helping without Hurting: Thinking Critically About Global Poverty Alleviation

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Sarah Estelle, Department of Economics, Management and Accounting

IN CLASS DAY 1: MINI-LECTURE: Sources of Poverty

“If poverty is rooted in broken relationships, then we are all poor just in different ways” – Fikkert

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effects of the Holy</th>
<th>God</th>
<th>Power of Spiritual Authority</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. craving</td>
<td>2. losing</td>
<td>3. denying God’s existence and authority</td>
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<td>4. miscalculation</td>
<td>5. loss of sense of purpose</td>
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<td>6. materialism</td>
<td>7. materialism</td>
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<td>8. shallowness</td>
<td>9. falsifying good and spirits</td>
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IN CLASS DAY 1: Group Work
Relief and Development
1. What are they? How are they different?
2. What do they “look like” in practice?
3. When is relief appropriate? When is development preferred?
4. How is the theory/philosophy Fikkert puts forth related to the Hebrew law recounted in Lupton?

Needs Assessment vs. Asset-Based Assessment
1. What are they? How are they different?
2. What do they “look like” in practice?
3. What are the advantages of each approach?
4. Is the idea that asset assessment is more productive than needs assessment consistent with economic theory? Diversity in the Body of Christ?

IN CLASS DAY 2: Fishbowl
Students are invited to gather any reference materials – their course readings, notes from the previous class’ group work, and anything on their laptops or in their notebooks – and join a class wide discussion on the topic of “helping without hurting.”

IN CLASS DAY 2: Fishbowl
1. I then introduce the fishbowl model to the class, explaining that a smaller portion of the class will engage in a conversation in the center of the room while the rest of us actively listen. There will be an on-deck area for others to relate to in the discussion.
2. After entertaining questions, I select the first group (based on typical class participation, quality of work in previous class) to provide a response. The rest of the class is invited to question or comment about the group’s response.

PAPER ASSIGNMENT 1
1. Identify an organization that works with the materially impoverished. The organization may be a ministry, philanthropy at Hope College, through your church, or in your hometown. The organization might be secular or religious and may serve individuals, families, or communities in Holland, elsewhere in the US, or abroad. (If the organization/group you have identified operates multiple programs or ministries, choose just one for your paper.)
2. Imagine that you are employed as a paid consultant for this organization, charged with assessing its ability to “help without hurting” and relaying your observations in a formal written report. In particular, the leaders of the organization want to learn from the expertise you have acquired through the teachings of the Chalmers Center.

- **Critically analyze what you know of the program in terms of three key principles:**
  - development,
  - asset-based assessment, and
  - a participatory approach.

Challenges with Paper 1
- **West Michigan Nice – I am refiguring the assignment to make it clear that the reader/director desires the critical feedback and recognizes there is room for improvement in approaching their important goals.**
- **The Round Peg/Square Hole Dilemma – Some student papers struggle to demonstrate an understanding of the “Helping Without Hurting” philosophy, often blurring the distinctions between the three key principles.**
- **The lack of basic comprehension of the principle – e.g., see no difference between the concepts of development vs. relief vs. insufficient understanding – e.g., cannot recognize what participation looks like within a real-world organization**
- **Blindness vis à vis personal belief – e.g., not believing that every individual/community has valuable assets to contribute to a process**

Follow-up
After concluding class discussions and turning in papers, students are asked to pose questions about the material that have not been answered through our collective efforts. These nagging or burning questions become one option that students may choose for a second short paper assignment. (Other options include “The Economics of Recycling” and “Economics or Lack Thereof” in the Media.)

For more information...