



## Is Aid Killing Africa? Dambisa Moyo talks about “Dead Aid”

Dambisa Moyo is a Zambian-born economist and author, known for her analysis of macroeconomics and global affairs. She has written five books, including the New York Times bestsellers: *Dead Aid: Why Aid Is Not Working* and *How There Is a Better Way for Africa*. Although the book was published in 2010, its statements remain relevant and topical to this day. The following interview outlines the most important key points.



**Disclaimer:** Bitte beachte, dass das vorliegende Interview mit Dambisa Moyo nicht das Originalinterview darstellt. Aus urheberrechtlichen Gründen sowie aus didaktischen Überlegungen wurde der Text angepasst und inhaltlich zusammengefasst.

Originalinterview unter <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HIPvIQOCfAQ&t=2s>

**Interviewer:** Welcome, Ms. Moyo. Given the current humanitarian crises in countries like Zimbabwe, where healthcare has collapsed, the question arises about how we can assist the affected people. Many are eager to help, but do you believe that the traditional method of foreign aid is the right approach?

5      **Dambisa Moyo:** Thank you for having me. It's crucial to critically examine the role of aid in Africa. In my view, aid is not the solution; it is part of the problem. We must ask ourselves why Africa continues to face so many challenges despite decades of aid.

**Interviewer:** That's a provocative stance. In your book *Dead Aid*, you argue that aid actually harms African countries. Could you elaborate on that?

10     **Dambisa Moyo:** Certainly. The fundamental premise of my argument is that Africa needs less aid and more accountability. When governments are dependent on foreign donors, they lose accountability to their own citizens. This dependency creates a culture where leaders are not held responsible for their actions, which ultimately undermines governance and development.

15     **Interviewer:** You mention a “culture of accountability.” How should the relationship between African governments and their citizens be structured, in your opinion?

20     **Dambisa Moyo:** African citizens stand in the sun to elect their leaders, and it's essential that these leaders are accountable for delivering services and improving the living standards of their people. However, when leaders know they can rely on foreign aid, they may neglect their responsibilities to their citizens.

**Interviewer:** You've also criticized the aid industry as being self-perpetuating. Can you explain what you mean by that?

25     **Dambisa Moyo:** Yes, the aid industry has created vested interests among various stakeholders, including academics, NGOs, and policymakers. These groups often benefit from the status quo, which perpetuates a cycle of dependency and despair in Africa. Many critics of my work come from these quarters, as they have a vested interest in maintaining the current system.



**Interviewer:** You highlight that poverty levels in Africa have increased despite the influx of aid. What do you believe is the solution to this paradox?

30 **Dambisa Moyo:** I propose a systematic reduction of aid over a five-year period. Instead of relying on aid, African countries should focus on engaging with capital markets to attract investment. They need to learn how to pitch to international investors and explore non-traditional markets, such as China and the Middle East, for funding opportunities.

35 **Interviewer:** That's an interesting approach. But what about the immediate needs for humanitarian aid, especially in crisis situations like we see in Zimbabwe?

**Dambisa Moyo:** While I acknowledge that humanitarian aid can provide temporary relief, it is not a sustainable solution. The real challenge lies in the large-scale government-to-government aid, which often gets squandered. For instance, Zimbabwe received substantial funds from the UK and the US, yet the situation on the ground remains dire.

40 **Interviewer:** Many people would argue that the root problem is corrupt leadership rather than the aid itself. How do you respond to that?

45 **Dambisa Moyo:** I don't believe you can separate the two in the African context. The aid model can corrupt good leaders and enable bad leaders to maintain power without accountability. When aid is seen as "free money," it diminishes the incentive for effective governance.

**Interviewer:** Does it frustrate you to see the amount of money spent in Africa over the past decades with little to show for it?

50 **Dambisa Moyo:** It is indeed frustrating. We often critique capitalism after a year of problems, yet we continue to call for more aid after sixty years of an aid-dependent model. This, to me, is a form of intellectual dishonesty, especially from those who advocate for capitalism in other regions.

**Interviewer:** Do you think there's a blind spot in the way the world views aid to Africa?

55 **Dambisa Moyo:** Absolutely. The aid model often stems from pity for Africa, a perception that the continent cannot achieve growth on its own. This mindset creates incentives for African governments to continue relying on aid, perpetuating a dysfunctional system.

**Interviewer:** Are you confident that cutting off aid won't leave people without essential support, such as food and medicine?

60 **Dambisa Moyo:** I believe that those most affected would likely be the African elite rather than the broader population. They may lose their luxuries, but the average African citizen often does not see the aid that is funneled into their countries. The best-case scenario is that only a fraction of aid actually reaches those in need.

**Interviewer:** What would you say to well-meaning individuals who donate to charities and advocate for increased aid?



65      **Dambisa Moyo:** It's important for them to understand what aid can and cannot achieve. While it can provide a temporary solution, it does not lead to long-term growth that would enable Africa to stand on its own two feet.

**Interviewer:** If aid is cut off, won't that leave millions without the support they currently depend on?

70      **Dambisa Moyo:** Most Africans do not see the aid you're referring to. The aid model has not created jobs or sustainable economic growth. If we continue down this path, we will see even more Africans living in poverty in the coming years.

**Interviewer:** What vision do you have for Africa if your proposed market reforms are widely adopted?

75      **Dambisa Moyo:** I envision Africa experiencing growth rates similar to those in China and India, with increased participation from the broader society—not just economically but also politically. This would empower citizens to hold their governments accountable and ensure that services are delivered effectively.

**Interviewer:** Let's hope you're right. Thank you for sharing your insights with us today.