

UAE's Humanitarian Approach to Development



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CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Poverty exists in many parts of the world. Many least developing countries need support from other countries to support their development. The World Bank, United Nations, European countries, and America have been the main actors that provide financial support, build capacity, and promote good governance. Although this has led billions of dollars being transferred from these institutions and countries to least developing countries, few countries have graduated from the least developed countries to emerging countries. More needs to be done in order to reduce poverty, increase employment, and provide a better quality of life in these countries.

NEED

Over the last four decades, the UAE has provided generously in the form of development assistance, grants and loans, contributed to the launch of hundreds of projects in a range of countries. These projects have covered various themes from the development of infrastructure, poverty alleviation, healthcare, response to natural disasters, refugees, and internally displaced people (IDPs), sustainability, and job creation.

As a result, the UAE has become a leader in the provision of humanitarian aid, being ranked first for Official Development Assistance as a percentage of the Gross National Income (ODA/GNI) by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (DAC/OECD).

IDEA

UAE as a Global Player in the International Development Process

There is a saying that when much is given to an individual or country, much is expected from that individual or country. The international donor community has long believed that helping less fortunate countries is a duty and have looked for different ways to improve the development process of the country. UAE has joined the donor community in a big way and as focused its support to African countries, which has the least developing countries. UAE support has enabled several African countries to improve the quality of life of their respective citizens.

Below are some UAE programs and projects that have had a significant impact on the least developing countries.

PROJECT AND STORY

Program Activities

Africa received the largest portion of UAE Foreign Aid with up to AED 14.68 billion (US \$4.00 billion, 2014), of which North Africa was the largest regional recipient. Egypt, Morocco, Libya, Tunisia, Sudan, and Algeria were the top recipient countries, with Egypt and Morocco being the top recipients of these countries.

East Africa was the next largest recipient, with Somalia, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Kenya as key countries. West Africa was the third largest region in Africa to receive UAE foreign aid, in which Niger, Mauritania, and Ghana were top recipient countries. In essence, due to the distribution of large sums of aid to Egypt and Morocco, North Africa was the highest regional recipients.

Asia was the next continent in terms of the allocation of UAE foreign aid (2014), receiving up to AED 5.12 billion (US \$1.39 billion). Within Asia, West Asia was the largest regional recipient, Jordan, Palestine, Yemen, and Syria were the top beneficiary, inclusive of the significant humanitarian assistance aid to Jordan for the Syrian refugees. South Asia was the second largest regional recipient, with funding for Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. The third largest regional was Southeast Asia, where the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia were the lead recipient aid countries.

UAE Water Aid (Suqia)

Dubai launched the 'UAE Suqia' initiative to provide clean water to five million people worldwide; this will be implemented through digging wells, providing water pumps and water purification equipment globally. The initiative consists of a fundraising campaign, to be held during the Holy Month of Ramadan and the formation of a water aid foundation. The UAE Suqia Campaign aims to provide clean water to five million people globally in cooperation with the UAE Emirates Red Crescent (ERC) and other charity organizations nationwide, the private sector, and the media.

Emirates Red Crescent Society

Founded in 1983, the ERCS carries out several charitable programs inside UAE and abroad in Palestine, Yemen, Somalia, Pakistan, and Kosovo.

Khalifa Foundation

Established in 2007 by President His Highness Shaikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the foundation's official mandate is to carry out welfare projects in areas of health and education locally and globally.

The Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan Charitable and Humanitarian Foundation

Founded in 1992 with an endowment of \$1 million for charitable projects inside and outside the UAE by the Shaikh Zayed, the founding father of the UAE, the organization has spent more than Dh1 billion on its aid projects.

Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation

Launched in 2007 by His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of UAE and Ruler of Dubai, its stated goal is to empower future generations to create knowledge-based societies by funding research projects and initiatives. The group's projects include the creation of the Dubai Digital Library, an online free resource containing thousands of Arabic books covering multiple ranges of topics, Dubai International Programme for Writing and Bil Arabi Program.

Al Maktoum Foundation

Launched in 1997 by Shaikh Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Dubai Deputy Ruler and Minister of Finance, the group has carried out charitable programs in more than 69 countries. Locally, the Foundation has spent more than Dh100 million.

Dar Al Ber Society

One of the first charities to be established in the UAE, Dar Al Ber, was established in 1979, and since then the charity has carried out several charitable and development programs around the world and locally.

Dubai Charity Association

Originally under the name of Al Arwa Al Wathaq in 1980, it has been undertaking projects inside and outside the UAE.

Dubai

Cares

Established by Shaikh Mohammad bin Rashid in 2007, the group currently has projects in 45 countries. Volunteers are welcomed to assist with their worldwide projects.

Noor Dubai

Established by Shaikh Mohammad bin Rashid in 2008, the organization's main target is to eliminate preventable eye diseases and has carried out several global projects reaching millions of people.

Gulf for Good

Gulf for Good was established in 2001 by Shaikh Ahmad Bin Saeed Al Maktoum, President of Dubai Civil Aviation Authority and Chief Operating Executive and Chairman of Emirates Airline and Group. The charitable organization provides charity uniquely and excitingly by raising funds through adventure challenges. The funds are donated to chosen charity groups in the country of where the adventure challenge was carried out.

IMPACT

The above programs and projects have had success in uplifting least developed countries by:

- Improving lives and reducing poverty in less fortunate.
- Promoting stability, peace, and prosperity in the region.
- Building strong relationships with other countries, both those to which the UAE gives assistance and other donor countries with which we collaborate with.
- Fostering expanded trade and investment ties and provided guidance with and to developing countries, thereby promoting economic growth in the developing world.
- Supporting partner governments and communities to achieve their development plans and their priority Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Collaborating with other donors and development organizations.
- Addressing neglected issues and under-supported communities.
- Building on the UAE's unique characteristics and capabilities.
- Utilizing sustainable approaches.
- Making aid transparent, accountable, and focused on results. International Cooperation

The UAE's agenda for international cooperation, directed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, includes four main elements.

- Effective foreign assistance that reflects UAE values and enhances the UAE's reputation.
- Technical cooperation to enhance the impact of foreign assistance
- Active participation in the work of multilateral organizations.
- International initiatives and events based in the UAE.

All the initiatives will help to provide sustainable jobs, eliminate poverty and hunger, promote healthy lives and wellbeing, increase high-quality education, build sustainable cities, build strong institutions, and revitalize global partnerships.

According to the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the UAE has maintained its ranking as one of the 10

largest donor states in the Official Development Aid (ODA) in 2015.

The UAE posted the highest ODA to Gross National Income (GNI) ratio in 2015 at 1.09 percent, with the country's ODA accounting for AED 16.1 billion and over 52 percent of the aid, administered in the form of grants. In 2016, the UAE spent AED15.23 billion worth of development assistance.

In 2014, the UAE was named as a participant member of OECD/DAC, allowing UAE to attend high-level and senior-level meetings and the meetings of the DAC subsidiary bodies; giving the UAE a seat at the table in international development forums and global recognition as a world-class donor.

The UAE's policy on foreign aid

The UAE's aid has only humanitarian objectives, and it is not governed by politics and/or specific to any geography, race, color, or religion. This is based on the UAE's principle of tolerance, a policy laid down by the founder President of the UAE, the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan; which stressed that foreign aid and assistance is one of the basic pillars of UAE foreign policy.

When formulating its approach in providing foreign aid, the UAE has adopted the principle of sustainable development and improving the welfare of all mankind.

In order to consolidate the impact of its foreign aid, the UAE Cabinet has formed the **UAE Humanitarian Committee**, which aims to channel and combine the collective expertise of UAE humanitarian response in order to facilitate, oversee and coordinate the country's humanitarian aid.

Foreign Aid and Official Development Assistance

Between 1971 and 2014, government and non-government organizations in the UAE contributed AED 173 billion in foreign aid to 178 countries globally.

The 'UAE's Foreign Aid in 2015' report issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation mentioned that the UAE provided AED 32.34 billion (USD 8.8 billion) in foreign aid. This contribution was made as foreign assistance to 155 countries through 40 donor entities. Of the 155 countries, 120 were eligible to receive Official Development Assistance (ODA).

The UAE disbursed its foreign aid on developmental projects, humanitarian and charitable aid, the majority of this aid (92 percent) was disbursed to development projects, with 6.7 percent disbursed to humanitarian aid and 1.3 percent disbursed to charitable assistance (2015).

The foreign aid targets humanitarian assistance, elimination of poverty, support for children, global sectoral programs as priority areas, such as transportation, infrastructure, government support and empowerment of women. During 2015, most humanitarian aids were allocated to refugees and IDPs affected by crises and conflicts in Syria, Yemen, and Iraq.

According to geographical distribution, countries in Africa got the largest aid of AED 25.11 billion. Asian countries received AED 6.63 billion. Countries in Europe, North and South America, Oceania and others received AED 586.94 million.

The UAE's foreign aid in 2015 was in line with the country's policy of supporting the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The UAE is currently involved in the efforts to achieve the SDGs.

All these efforts are aimed at achieving Sustainable Development Goals, especially goal 17 (Partnership for the Goals).

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