

Final Project Proposal: Development Aid Dashboard

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Introduction

Now is a probably better time than any to discuss to the issue of development aid and their impacts on both the recipient the donor country. This is especially true in the context of the Western Hemisphere, where the United States of America made cuts to the budget of its long standing [USAID](#), the world's leading international development agency. The debates on whether international aid really help these developing countries and whether countries should donate their own money for the benefits of the citizens of other countries could go on forever. Recently, President Donald Trump has [threatened](#) to cut foreign aid to Central American countries (Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador) from which migrant caravans travel to the US to seek entry. People react differently to these realities based on past experiences, fear, and beliefs, but how much of these reactions are based on data? How many US and European citizens know just how much of their tax dollars goes towards aid in Central America and other developing countries? How many of the Central Americans and citizens of other developing countries actually know the magnitude of the aid given to them by other countries. Obviously the concept of foreign aid is a very complex and delicate matter, but knowing these figures could empower the citizens of these poor developing nations and the more prosperous donor nations to demand accountability on the part their leaders. It is in this light that I am proposing to build a dashboard where information on the disbursements of development aid across the globe can be easily accessible. Obviously, these data do not stand on their own. One must have an appreciation for past and recent world history to fully understand the issue of development aid and its possible ties to international chain migration.

Visualizations & Technologies

I am proposing to build a dynamic and interactive dashboard that will be hosted on the web. This dashboard will be powered by Python using the Flask package, and by JavaScript using *Bootstrap.js* and Plotly's *plotly.js*. The following visualizations will be made:

- Plots showing the distribution of aid by each donor to recipient countries. This will allow citizens of donor countries to see how much funding and is being disbursed as aid and in what ratios.
- Maps showing the distribution of aid by each donor to recipient countries. This will provide a worldwide view of the disbursement of aid.
- Plots showing the distribution of aid given to each recipient country. This will allow a citizen from a developing country to see which countries donate to them and it also provides an easy means to compare the quantity of their contributions.

- Plot showing the aid disbursed to recipient countries in relation to their GDP. This will provide a facility to view aid received as a percentage of GDP. Note that this is not implying that aid is counted toward GDP.
- Map showing the aid disbursed to recipient countries in relation to their GDP. This simply provides an easier way to grasp the information above from a geographical perspective.

The project will not be limited by only the above visualizations. More features and visuals will be created if time allows. The user interface of the application will provide dropdown boxes to select important variables such as donor country, recipient country, and year to facilitate updating the graphics dynamically.

Data Sources

The funding data will be sourced from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) [iLibrary](#). Specifically, I will be using their Official Development Assistance (ODA) detailed aid statistics that provides comprehensive data on the volume, origin, and types of foreign aid and other resource flows from donor countries to recipient countries. The ODA data are provided by OECD members of the Development Assistance Committee ([DAC](#)). More information may be found on their website at <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org>. A link to the data can be found at [here](#). The data is freely accessible to the public and more information on the terms and conditions may be found [here](#). The data will be cited as specified on their website. And an email indicating my intentions to use their data will be sent to them.

The GDP data will be sourced from the [World Bank's Open Data](#) portal. This is also a publicly available data set and will be cited as specified. More information on the terms and conditions of the usage of their data sets can be found [here](#). The data set can be found [here](#).