



Implementation of the US Government's Prosperous Africa Program in the Economic Sector as an Effort to Overcome Poverty in Nigeria

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Abstract

Nigeria, a country in Africa, is a country that is quite famous for its large economy. However, behind the country's large economy, there is an ongoing problem of poverty. The problem of poverty is caused by several aspects, such as high unemployment and corruption. This also has an impact on community welfare and the emergence of significant societal disparities. Several efforts have been made by the Nigerian government to overcome the country's poverty problem. However, the steps that have been taken are still not enough to stabilize welfare and the disparities that have occurred. To further overcome this problem, the United States launched a program called "The Prosperous Africa Program" in the economic sector to help Nigeria overcome poverty in her country. This article will discuss the implementation of the American Government's "The Prosperous Africa Program" in the economic sector as an effort to overcome poverty in Nigeria. The analysis of this paper will use descriptive qualitative research methods and the theoretical framework of Foreign Aid.

Key Words: Nigeria, Economic Sector, US, Prosperous Africa

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INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is one of the largest economies in Africa, but it also has a high poverty rate. Most people lack access to basic amenities including clean water, adequate housing, healthcare and education and live below the poverty line. People in the country are affected by the multifaceted effects of poverty, making it difficult for them to prosper and contribute positively to the country's development. Nigeria's economy and social fabric are severely threatened by unemployment and underemployment, especially among the country's rapidly growing youth. Due to lack of employment opportunities and rapid population growth, there is a mismatch between the skills required by employers and the talents of job seekers. (Alemu, 2019) Therefore, many young Nigerians find it difficult to secure permanent and satisfying employment, increasing their vulnerability to poverty and social marginalization.

Nigeria has abundant oil reserves and is a country rich in natural resources, but its high poverty rate is due to a variety of problems, including corruption, mismanagement of resources, and lack of infrastructure. In Nigeria, where only a few people have a disproportionate amount of money and the majority of the population has difficulty making a living, income inequality is a serious problem. The gap between the upper and lower middle classes is exacerbated by corruption, ineffective governance, and limited access to resources. (Alemu, 2019) This keeps many Nigerians trapped in a cycle of poverty that lasts for generations, making it difficult for them to improve their socio-economic situation. More than 40% of Nigerians, as measured by the World Bank, were assessed as living below the poverty line in 2019-that is, earning less than \$1.90 per day. Due to lack of access to basic amenities, healthcare, and education, poverty is more prevalent in rural areas. (World Bank, 2023)

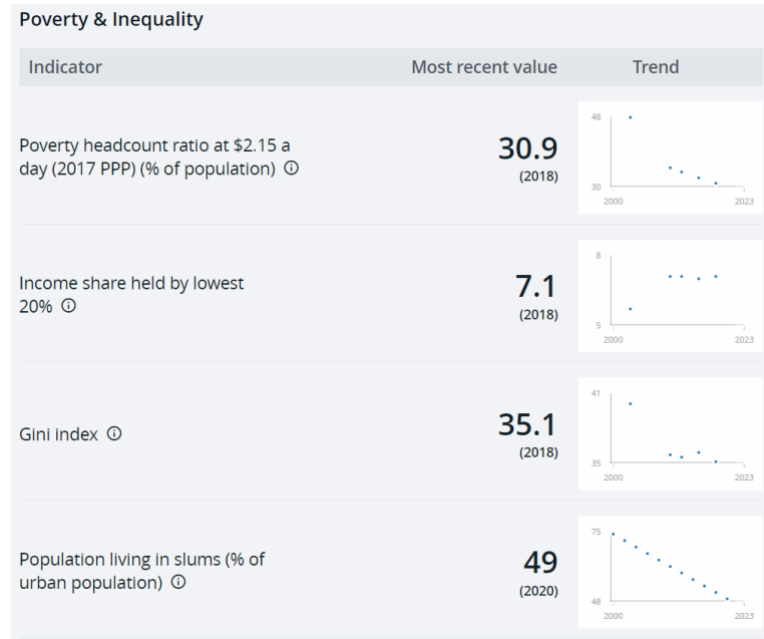


Figure 1. Poverty and inequality levels in Nigeria

The Nigerian government has taken a number of steps to fight poverty and improve the welfare of its people. Launched in 2016, the National Social Investment Program (NSIP) is one such noteworthy effort. One of the many parts of the NSIP is the N-Power program, which trains and develops unemployed youth to give them access to job prospects. (Shehu Kura et al., 2019) In addition, to help disadvantaged households escape poverty and improve their living conditions, the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) program offers them a monthly stipend. Another element, the Government Entrepreneurship and Empowerment Program (GEEP), encourages the growth of small businesses at the local level by providing financial assistance and giving entrepreneurs access to loans.

In order to increase production and provide employment, the Nigerian government also gives top priority to infrastructure and agriculture. Aiming to increase crop yields and improve food security, programs such as the Presidential Fertilizer Initiative (PFI) provide farmers with access to high-quality and reasonably priced fertilizers, thus revitalizing the agricultural industry. (Shehu Kura et al., 2019) In addition, by enabling trade, attracting investment, and improving the living standards of the population, infrastructure projects targeted at improving transportation networks, energy availability, and water supply all aid economic development and poverty alleviation. However, these efforts cannot fully alleviate the poverty problem in Nigeria. Assistance from other actors is also needed to

address the problem. In this context, the United States is one of the actors helping Nigeria to address the problem.

Diplomatic relations between Nigeria and the United States are complex and multidimensional, and have changed over time. The two countries have maintained diplomatic contacts since Nigeria's independence from British colonial domination in 1960, although the level of participation and collaboration has differed. Economic cooperation is an important aspect of US-Nigeria relations. (Garba & Akuva, 2021a) Nigeria is one of the largest economies in Africa, and trade with the US is very important. Trade between the two countries covers a number of industries, including finance, technology, agriculture, and oil and gas. In addition, foreign direct investment from the United States has been a major factor in Nigeria's economic development and expansion. Nigeria's development and poverty alleviation is supported by the US due to a number of factors, including common principles, economic interests, security concerns, and humanitarian concerns.

To address the underlying causes of poverty, foster resilience, and enable people and communities to improve their socioeconomic circumstances, the United States has helped Nigeria address its poverty problems through various programs. An example of such a program is The Prosperous Africa Program which was launched to assist Nigeria in the economic field. This paper will discuss the Implementation of the US Government's "The Prosperous Africa Program" in the Economic Sector as an Effort to Overcome Poverty in Nigeria using descriptive qualitative research methods and the Foreign Aid theoretical framework.

Literature Review and statement of art

There are similarities in a journal article entitled Constructivist Perspective on Japan's Foreign Aid in the Case of Jakarta's Wastewater Infrastructure written by Lalu Radi Myarta, et al and this journal article both discuss foreign aid which is actually given by donors, namely developed or high-income countries to developing or low-income countries, such as Japan to Indonesia and the United States to Nigeria where the aid focuses on the economic sector to achieve prosperity in the country receiving the aid. This assistance can certainly increase economic growth and prosperity among low-income countries. The differences that can be seen from the two journal articles are that the objects of assistance are different, for example from Japan which focuses more on developing Wastewater Infrastructure, but it is different from America which provides assistance in the form of funds and

education in processing resources in Nigeria so that it can have an impact on achieving economic growth, which is more advanced. This journal article can be used to complement previous research which only explains aid that focuses on one sector only, namely Wastewater Infrastructure, this is different from this research which also looks at the foreign policies of the two countries, both the United States and Nigeria and explains what aid is available. provided and the long-term impact obtained after the assistance is in the form of economic progress.

There are several gaps in the journal written by the author with an article entitled "Implementation of The Prosperous Africa Programme United States Government Foreign Assistance In Africa", which in this article shows that although there are many foreign aid programmes that have been implemented by the US government in Africa, there is still a lack of research that specifically evaluates the impact and effectiveness of the Prosperous Africa Programme. And in line with this, the journal that will be written by the author will also provide some of the US interests in initiating the programme which in the article entitled "Implementation of The Prosperous Africa Programme United States Government Foreign Assistance In Africa" has not been explained.

The journal article entitled "Analysis of Non-Strategic Motives of Japan's Foreign Aid In The Yamuna Action Plan" explains the two obstacles experienced by the Indian government, namely in processing community and industrial waste as well as administrative constraints which have worsened the sanitation conditions in the Yamuna River. The aim of this research is to answer why Japan provided foreign aid in the Yamuna Action Plan program apart from the reasons for its strategic location by using the concept of foreign aid as a foreign policy. Journal articles are analyzed based on historical relationships and assistance initiatives for the development of recipient countries. The results of this research show that the foreign aid intended for India from Japan was only to deal with the Yamuna river sanitation problem because historically the two countries had historically good relations based on two motives, namely religion and trade relations. This journal article and the research journal support each other because they discuss the receipt of foreign aid to increase the development of recipient countries, thus reflecting the foreign aid motives that have been put forward by Roger C. Riddell. By getting assistance in the form of funding through non-government and government actors to increase development.

METHOD

Within the framework of The Prosperous Africa Program, research focuses on the influence of foreign aid from the United States to Nigeria. The descriptive qualitative method proposed by the experts involves a careful and in-depth approach to understanding how aid affects various aspects of life in Nigeria. Experts explain that this method includes collecting primary and secondary data related to foreign aid, as well as applying qualitative descriptive content analysis techniques to understand the implications of this aid. The research will involve steps such as data collection, in-depth description, and holistic analysis to detail, describe, and explain the impact of such foreign aid on individuals, groups, or events in Nigeria. This method also emphasizes the role of the researcher as a key instrument in collecting and interpreting data, with a focus on understanding the meaning of the data collected rather than simply generalizing.

The descriptive qualitative research method, according to a number of experts, is an approach that relies on the philosophy of postpositivism which is used to investigate the natural conditions of an object. This approach aims to provide a more detailed picture of the problem to be studied by studying individuals, groups or events as far as possible. According to Bogdan and Taylor (in Moleong 2000: 3), qualitative research is a procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behavior. In qualitative research, the researcher acts as the main instrument, using data collection techniques such as triangulation, interviews, direct observation, and document analysis. The research results focus on understanding meaning rather than generalization. The required data comes from the interview process and document analysis. Conclusions from qualitative research are new findings that may not have existed before, such as a clearer description or understanding of an object.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The Prosper Africa Program, also known as Prosper Africa, is an initiative launched by the United States government. The main objective of Prosper Africa is to integrate and strengthen the US government's efforts to support trade and investment between the United States and Africa. The program aims to create jobs and promote economic growth through increased trade and investment. In addition, the program also aims to support broader policy reforms in Africa, increase transparency, and strengthen bilateral economic relations between the US and African countries. The initiative combines resources and services from multiple

US government agencies to empower businesses and investors with market insights, transaction support, and financing opportunities. Prosperous Africa integrates the efforts of 17 US government agencies to connect US and African businesses with new buyers, suppliers, and investment opportunities. The initiative makes it easy for US companies to access US government export tools and investment support. Conversely, African companies can find opportunities to export to the US and attract investment. In support of Prosper Africa, the US Government has helped close hundreds of deals, generating billions in new exports and investment. There were 1852 deals struck between the United States and African countries \$86 billion estimated in exports and investments in 49 countries where the US Government supported the completion of deals (Prosper Africa, n.d.)

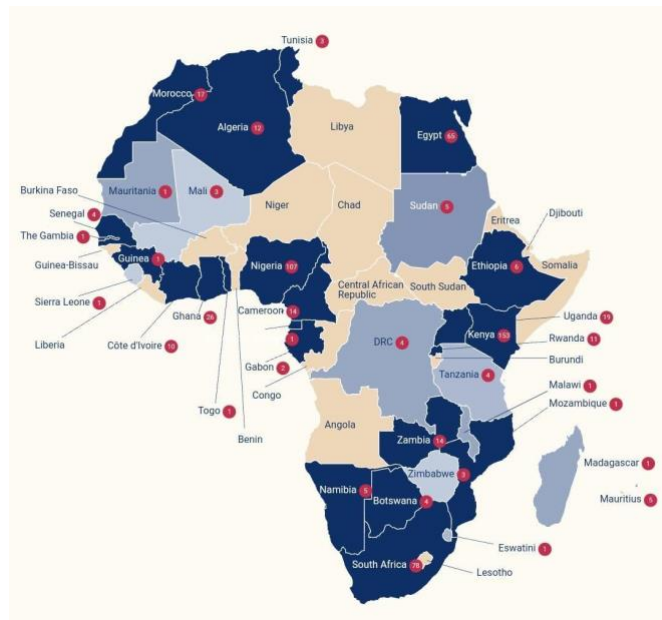


Figure 2. U.S. private sector is investing

United States Interests in Initiating The Prosper Africa Program

After World War II, the United States signaled its interest in the African continent, where it began to involve itself through policies aimed at preventing other countries, such as the Soviet Union, from influencing the African region (Owusu & Carmody, 2020). During the Donald Trump administration, the United States government launched the Prosper Africa initiative, a development program carried out by the United States in Africa, namely Nigeria and Kenya through existing sectors, such as

the agricultural sector. The program was officially launched in 2019 at the US Corporate Council on Africa's US-Africa Business Summit in Mozambique (Cook & Williams, 2020). But of course, the usual development assistance carried out by large countries is not solely because humanitarian assistance is based on assistance to help the conditions of recipient countries such as food scarcity, poverty and other conditions. After all, often or even almost all humanitarian assistance carried out by large countries must have been calculated by the country that assists to achieve an interest of the aid-giving country. For example in Nigeria, the United States certainly provides humanitarian assistance in the country not for free, where the United States sees the opportunities possessed by the Nigerian state as a country whose main income is highly dependent on oil. (V. A & Yahaya, 2021) In the Prosper Africa program, the United States brings at least several interests such as economic, security and political, and business interests.

In the economic sector itself, Africa's middle class has been steadily growing over the past few decades, which is of course also in line with the consumer goods market in Africa for the United States itself because Africa will certainly become more than just a consumer market for America. If this is the case, Africa also has the potential to become a future supply base for the manufacturing sector for the United States. The United States' interest in this sector can certainly be said to be the main interest in initiating "The Prosper Africa" program. The initiative of this program substantially aims to increase US-Africa trade and investment so as to spur economic growth with the United States and Africa. Correspondingly, the U S State Department also states that the Prosper Africa Program aims to provide an unparalleled competitive advantage to accelerate US-Africa trade and investment, as well as create a "US- Africa trade and investment opportunity pipeline" for US Companies active in the sector. So in summary, America's economic interest in Africa is to maintain the sustainability of its own economy, it is expected that through the Prosperous Africa Program America will easily reach goods for its industrial activities, increase trade and investment between the two directions of America-Africa, as well as other sectors such as agriculture that have good opportunities for the future. Therefore, it can be said that America's interest in entering the Africa Prosperity Program is to maintain the sustainability of the American economy so that it continues to run even in the future as a long-term prospect.

Furthermore, the interests brought by the United States are about America's security and geopolitical interests in Africa itself. The Prosper Africa program or "The Prosper Africa" according to the national security advisor at the time, John Bolton, can also be said to help counter the influence of other major countries in

Africa besides the United States which are often called "Predators", these countries are Russia and China in addition to encouraging US investment, expanding the US class. Africa's middle class, as well as improving the business climate across the region. (Congressional Research Service (CRS), 2020) The influence of these countries today can also be said to be strong in Africa, compared to America, other major countries such as China place their interests stronger than America on the continent. Departing from that, the United States sees the influence of other countries in Africa as a threat that must be eradicated because America sees the potential possessed by Africa making America aggressively launch humanitarian assistance programs, one of which is through the Prosperous Africa Program. (Mysheta et al., 2022) Seeing China's influence and contribution in Africa, America has many challenges to try to rival its influence in Africa, therefore the launch of "The Prosper Africa" is America's effort to love China in Africa.

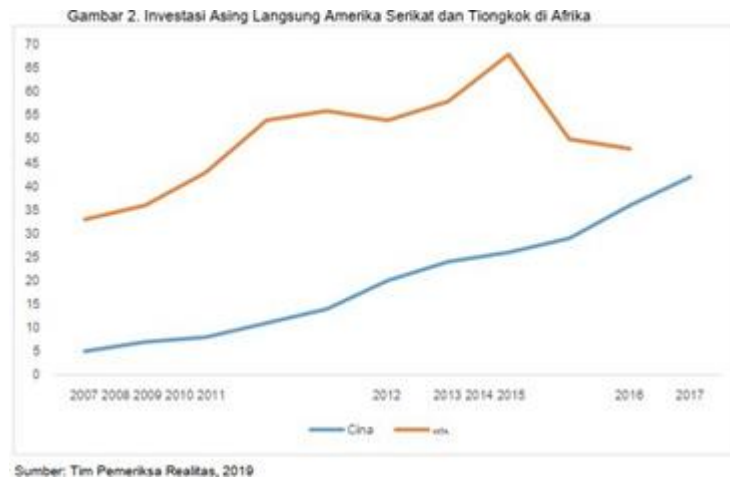


Figure 3. Comparing United States and China investing in Africa

In addition, the geopolitical interests of the United States in Africa can be seen through the establishment of AFRICOM, which is a further recognition that America and Africa have mutually beneficial geopolitical and military interests so that cooperation between the two countries is needed. (Stith, 2021) Through AFRICOM, America also has an important mission to provide economic assistance and military assistance to prevent Africa from becoming a place for the next generation of terrorism. The last interest brought by the United States in the Africa Prosperity Program is business interest. Prior to the establishment of Africa Prosperity, the US private sector had difficulty accessing trade and investment. One of the difficulties faced by private parties such as American companies is that it is difficult to reach areas in Africa where before the Prosperous Africa Program the

government in the United States was still unable to help with this problem. US interests in the business sector also include facilitating access to US trade and investment programs as well as assisting with certain transactions. The Prosperous application program is here to be a solution for the private sector related to trade and investment activities that previously had these obstacles. The full-service Africa Prosperity Program will facilitate services for both countries, investors, and businesses and create extensive outreach and employment in the future, especially for Nigeria itself. Because it is known that these African countries have many young people and high poverty rates, resulting in a ready and willing workforce. Africa's rapidly growing population and markets also create opportunities for businesses in determining the global growth environment, and at the same time greater investment and innovation will meet the previously unmet demand for goods and services in Africa. (Mysheta et al., 2022)

The Prosperous Africa Program In Nigeria

The African welfare program assistance provided by the United States to Nigeria is an agribusiness-based program. The sector that is focused on in African welfare program assistance to Nigeria is the agricultural sector. In the future the agricultural sector can help create more of the agribusiness sector. Assistance provided by the United States can be in the form of money, services or physical goods which can help solve problems, improve defense, respond to crises or support economic growth in Nigeria. (Tasya Mysheta et al., 2022) Nigeria's economic growth and development is supported by its abundant human and material resources and is also supported by the condition of vegetation (various plants) and various types of soil that are suitable for agricultural purposes. In fact, currently most developing countries rely on services as a sector that contributes more to improving the economy, such as Nigeria which is gaining momentum in its services sector. This is because the number of rural people moving to urban areas continues to increase for reasons of looking for work opportunities. With a mixed economy focused on telecommunications, technology and financial services enabling Nigeria with this strategy will deliver results in the future.

Even though in 2001 and 2010 it became the country with the highest GDP growth in the world due to oil revenues, in the Nigerian economy the agricultural sector still plays an important role. More than 40% of Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product comes from the agricultural sector, which produces food and employs most of the population. Nigeria is the second largest country in Africa in producing fresh tomatoes and according to a 2018 report by PricewaterhouseCoopers International

Limited (PwC) 2.3 million tons of fresh tomatoes are produced every year. The facts found are 'Landscape analysis of dried tomato production and market in Nigeria' the title of a study conducted by the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) in 2017. The report states that more than forty-five percent of fresh tomatoes produced in Nigeria are lost due to improper handling and other logistical problems. (Moguluwa et al., n.d.) Therefore, one example of the program is a company in Nigeria that processes agricultural products called Tomato Jos, and is run by Mira Mehta. Tomato Jos is looking into the possibility of producing tomatoes in Nigeria. In other words, Tomato Jos is a fully integrated business, which means that the company is involved in all aspects of the business, from farming to management, and will ultimately provide branded food products as output. In this company led by Mira Mehta, they have commercial farming, and they have farming according to Tomato Jos standards, where they bring farmers to their fields and train the farmers how to grow tomatoes according to their standards, then after the farmers, they following the company's program for two years, they were declared to have passed and were able to practice on their land, and it is estimated that on average farmers who took part in this company's program experienced an increase in income of around five years(Prosper Africa, n.d.-a).

Conditions in Nigeria Post Implementation of The Prosperous Africa Agribusiness Program in Nigeria Raised \$4.4M

With the help of transaction advisor Prosper Africa, backed by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Tomato Jos successfully raised \$4.4 million in funding. By hiring and training new employees and small farmers to grow produce in an economical way while increasing productivity, this investment will support the expansion of the local workforce as the business grows. By working with thousands of farmers across 2,600 hectares of land, the investment is also expected to generate \$1 million in direct revenue for the local economy. Tomato Jos is an American company founded by Mira Mehta. The company produces high-quality local products by combining knowledge of local markets with best practices in food processing and agriculture. As a result, farmers' yields increased drastically, and their average income increased by 455%. American and local investors make up the majority of Tomato Jos investors.

CONCLUSIONS

The Prosperous Africa program initiated by the US government is a form of business and foreign aid designed to support economic growth in Africa, focusing on poverty reduction. Nigeria, a country with a large population and economic potential in Africa, is one of the main recipients of this program. The program's implementation has shown significant positive impacts, contributing to poverty reduction and improved economic welfare in the country. Agriculture is one of the important sectors in the Nigerian economy, and the program has provided substantial support for agricultural modernization. Through the provision of more advanced agricultural technologies and training for farmers, agricultural productivity has increased. This has not only increased the income of the farmers but also helped to reduce rural poverty levels. In addition, the program also supports regional economic cooperation and political stability. By strengthening economic ties between Nigeria and neighboring countries, Prosperous Africa helps create a more stable environment that supports investment and economic growth.

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