



**Epley, Thomas**

**THE PLAGUE OF GOOD  
INTENTIONS: *We Broke  
Africa Here's How to Fix It***  
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Corporate turnaround specialist Epley makes a compelling argument for a completely different approach to aid in sub-Saharan Africa.

In this fascinating assessment of sub-Saharan Africa's struggles, Epley applies business principles to the developing and often war-torn countries, evaluating them as he would an ailing corporation. While readers may initially be skeptical that American business strategies could apply to Africa, Epley's coherent, thoughtful thesis soon persuades. He explains why the efforts of First World aid organizations, while well-intentioned, cause more harm than good—they instill an expectation of charity rather than working with each country's culture to develop sustainable programs that will succeed long after the aid agencies have left. One of the most alarming examples is how food programs disrupt subsistence farming. The author explains that farmers stop cultivating their land when food is available through other means, and will eventually leave the property to congregate near

the food station. This results in the formerly farmed land reverting to its natural state and the population becoming entirely reliant on assistance, rather than gradually becoming independent. Epley writes that even programs which provide aid in cultivation, rather than simply providing food, are inherently unsustainable. For instance, tractors provided by an aid group to increase crop yield are useless once they break down and need parts or repair. He also takes a hard look at African governments and explains why aid to particular countries is ineffective. After his critique, Epley offers suggestions and requirements to "fix" sub-Saharan Africa, including a chapter on the steps he would take if he were the president of South Sudan. This well-informed, intelligently argued book will have readers thinking twice before donating to traditional aid organizations.

World governments would be wise to follow this manifesto to the letter.

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