

The Efficacy of the Development Studies Programme in Zimbabwe's Development Work

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Abstract

The article analyses the impact of the development studies (DS) programme at Zimbabwean higher education institutions on development work in Zimbabwe. It describes how development studies became one of the most popular subjects in the humanities, offered by more than 10 universities and colleges in Zimbabwe. More than two decades later, there is convincing evidence that the programme's influence on the development sector in Zimbabwe is diminishing. The article contends that the programme has been essential in sparking policy debates and incubating development theory among students and academics. However, the discipline has provided little in terms of actual practice and expertise in development work and community implementation. Therefore, development studies in Zimbabwe is an academic discipline with limited relevance to community development on the ground. This research is qualitative in nature. Qualitative data collected using purposive sampling is used to illustrate the rise of the discipline and its disparate effects on development activities in Zimbabwe. The article recommends a revision of the DS curriculum so that it fits the practical requirements for development work in Zimbabwe.

Keywords: curriculum; development studies; humanities; universities; Zimbabwe