

Why do people help others?

Why do people work voluntarily, donate money or take time for their fellow human beings? Is commitment about travelling half of the world and saving human lives? Is it useful to be engaged in a place which we do not know much about and where we have a limited ability to speak the language? Or does it make more sense to be engaged where we live and where we have a greater knowledge of the people and their needs?

Many people engage themselves on a daily basis in order to help others. It is however not always easy to decide where it makes sense to become involved. The history of development cooperation shows that deeds carried out with good intention do not always have a positive outcome and can also cause harm.

Despite this it is worthwhile to show solidarity. To be born into a rich country has nothing to do with achievement or performance but rather luck. And also within small communities we have different opportunities based on sex, ethnicity, where we were born or the educational background of our parents. These are opportunities which in high-income countries are much more pronounced than in developing countries.