


Dear Readers,

The first issue of Vol. 16 is a collection of many intriguing papers. First, based on field research conducted in May 2021, Gergely Buda presents seven Ugandan businesses and entrepreneurs which apply circular economy practices in their operations. The examples touch on plastic recycling, agriculture, carpentry, textile, and paper and packaging industries. Second, using a political ecology perspective, Rashed Daher's article seeks to understand the origin of water problems in Egypt, and argues that beyond existing scarcity due to environmental challenges, current sociopolitical conditions play a significant role. Third, Judit Kiss deals with the controversial role of external financial resources in Africa. She concludes that not the external world finances Africa, but Africa finances the world. The issue of financing Africa's development cannot be solved without (a) mobilizing domestic resources (including domestic savings), (b) attracting external resources as well as improving the use and avoiding the misuse of inflowing financial resources, and (c) curbing capital flight and tackling illicit financial outflow. Fourth, again based on a series of field research, Robert Kłosowicz looks at the 'Western Sahara question' from the perspective of Mauritania, which is in quite a difficult position as it attempts to not become conflicted with either of its powerful neighbours, both of which are aspiring to be leaders in the region. Fifth, Alfred Babo, based on ethnographic research in the Moshi District, argues that beyond changes induced by the ethical business organization, local coffee-growing farmers are trapped in "darkness" due to having insufficient information on their trading partner and limited ability to empower and transform their cooperatives. Finally, we offer a review of fresh insight into the impact of Covid-19 on higher education worldwide, but with a peculiar focus on African countries.



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GERGELY BUDA

SEVEN BUSINESSES USING PRINCIPLES OF  
CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA:  
RESULTS OF FIELD RESEARCH IN UGANDA

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Sub-Saharan Africa is facing multiple challenges regarding waste management, economic productivity, and climate change, all of which seriously endanger sustainable development. The concept of circular economy provides potential solutions for addressing this complex, multidimensional challenge. The aim of this paper is to contribute to the academic research and understanding of the circular economy's status, its application, and its limits in the Sub-Saharan African context. Therefore, the study presents seven Ugandan businesses and entrepreneurs which apply circular economy practices in their operations based on field research conducted in May 2021. The examples touch on plastic recycling, agriculture, carpentry, textile, and paper and packaging industries. The main economic benefits generated are lower input costs, saved waste management costs, and better products for consumers. The improvement of waste collection as well as the reduction of waste landfills and GHG emissions can be considered the most significant environmental benefits. Beside job and additional income creation, better hygienic conditions and improved food nutrient content represent important social benefits. The primary challenges are formed by machinery and production problems which, along with fierce competition over imported products, limit the achievement of economies of scale to support economic sustainability of these initiatives..

RASHED DAHER

BEYOND SCARCITY: AN ASSESSMENT OF  
WATER MANAGEMENT IN EGYPT  
FROM A POLITICAL ECOLOGY PERSPECTIVE

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Water management constitutes a challenge for contemporary Egypt, as the country faces a water shortage that, in certain areas, might endanger the basic needs of people in the dry season. This article seeks to understand the origin of water problems, and argues that beyond existing scarcity due to environmental challenges, current sociopolitical conditions play a significant role. Egypt is socially, economically, and environmentally in a difficult position to be sustainable. The paper utilizes the political ecology approach to shed light on the nexus between the fields mentioned above and tries to create an integrated and comprehensive strategy to analyze the water problems and possible solutions for contemporary Egypt. SWOT analysis helps evaluate the existing conditions (strengths and weaknesses) and potentialities (opportunities and threats) for the Egyptian agriculture and water management sector. Three different angles are utilized during the analysis: the infrastructural background (the economic aspect), the institutional basis (the political aspect), and the international impacts (the environmental aspect) that affect water policy. Regarding the mounting challenges, a slow change of the system is expected, but negative changes in the natural environment could accelerate pressure on Egyptian society and government to adjust. However, the support of international partners to maintain a politically and socially stable Egypt contributes to maintaining archaic political-economic structures that are unsustainable.

BRAUER-BENKE JÓZSEF

## WHO FINANCES WHOM?

THE CONTROVERSIAL ROLE OF EXTERNAL FINANCIAL RESOURCES IN AFRICA

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In contrast to the highly developed countries and some developing regions, Africa highly depends on external resources of financing development. According to the saving-investment gap concept, there is a significant gap between savings and investment rates. As domestic resources are limited and their mobilization is slow, the region should rely on external sources of finance (i.e., aid, export revenues, FDI, loans, and remittances) in order to close the finance gap. Despite the massive inflow of external resources, the 200 billion USD yearly financing gap still prevails. The outflow of financial resources from Africa in the form of profit repatriations, debt service, tax dodging, capital flight and illicit financial flow exceeds the inflow, suggesting that Africa is a bottomless barrel. The long-standing concept about the saving-investment gap does not provide a full explanation for the prevailing financing gap. The main research questions are as follows: (a) Why is there a permanent financing gap in Africa? b) Why does the outflow of financial resources exceed the inflow? c) What should be done to close the financing gap and solve the problem of financing development?

ROBERT KŁOSOWICZ

POLICIES OF THE MAGHREB COUNTRIES TOWARD  
WESTERN SAHARA: MAURITANIA'S PERSPECTIVE

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Mauritania is the country considered closest historically and culturally to the inhabitants of Western Sahara. It also has the longest border with the territory of Western Sahara. This country's legal status is defined in Article 73 of the Charter of the United Nations, which indicates that it is a non-self-governing territory going through the process of decolonization. The border between Mauritania and Western Sahara is 1564 km in length, which constitutes 75% of all the land borders of Western Sahara. The area that Mauritania borders with is completely controlled by the self-proclaimed Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic, which constitutes about 20% of the territory of Western Sahara. The remaining 80% of the territory is occupied and administered by neighbouring Morocco. The problem of Western Sahara, which has caused great divisions between Morocco and Algeria since the mid-1970s, is that POLISARIO's main supporter has also constituted a serious issue for Mauritanian foreign politics. Within this dispute, Mauritania is in quite a difficult position as it attempts to not become conflicted with either of its powerful neighbours, both of which are aspiring to be leaders in the region. At a press conference in November 2019, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mauritania, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, issued a statement indicating that Mauritania does not intend to remain just an observer any longer, but rather plans to become an active participant in addressing the Western Sahara issue to finally resolve the 46-year conflict. This conflict casts a shadow on the regional cooperation within the framework of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), which – if it actually functioned – could aid in the economic development of the region, especially important for the politically and economically weak Mauritania. This has become even more important in the most recent period with the global economy experiencing turbulence following the two-year COVID-19 epidemic and the current war in Ukraine.

ALFRED BABO

“WE ARE IN THE DARKNESS”:  
THE IMPACT OF FAIR TRADE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE  
OF COFFEE GROWERS IN THE KILIMANJARO REGION

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Studying the impacts of Fairtrade on rural communities requires examining how Western ethical businesses and eco-friendly social movements affect farmers' livelihoods. This research took place in coffee-growing communities in Tanzania and aimed to understand local farmers' prospects for their collaboration with Fairtrade. Although the Fairtrade initiative aims to strengthen cultivation skills to increase the quality and price of coffee production, farmers and leaders of the rural cooperatives critically assessed the mitigated impacts of the ethical trade on the development of their lives and communities. The article, based on ethnographic research in the Moshi District, argues that beyond changes induced by the ethical business organization, farmers are trapped in “darkness” due to having insufficient information on their trading partner and limited ability to empower and transform their cooperatives.

REVIEW

BÁLINT FETTER

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