

DEFINING AFODI: WHAT WE DO, HOW AND WHY

ORGANIZATIONAL STATEMENT

Kampala, Uganda

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see afodiuganda.org, research.afodiuganda.org and arjef.afodiuganda.org

1. ACTION FOR DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE / AFODI

AFODI, which stands for Action for Development Initiative, is a registered think tank in Uganda. That means that AFODI is an association that promotes entrepreneurship and freedom by organizing events and publishing books, a journal, studies, papers and articles.

That begs the question whether AFODI is a political organization, and the answer depends on how one defines “political”: we can be called very political, or not at all. In short:

- if “political” refers to supporting a specific party, or holding some party affiliation, we are not political at all;
- if “political” is defined as critically analyzing and commenting on governmental policies, we are very political.

To clarify, here is a short overview:

WHAT WE DO	WHAT WE DON'T DO
Critically and independently analyze and comment on policies, laws and regulations	Applaud or attack policies, laws and regulations because of their origin or party
Look at facts and results	Assist propaganda and agenda
Recognize the higher efficiency of self-organization of large systems	Pretend centralization can compete with, or even surpass, self-organization of large systems
Recognize the constant change of everything, which forces us to adapt constantly	Insist on outdated concepts

Admittedly, that can appear quite abstract at first glance, but it is actually easy to understand. AFODI is not bound to a party program or to a funded ideological line, and it acknowledges that conditions change and that conclusions have to be revised when the evidence changes. Large systems, countries, societies and economies are extremely complex, and at the moment no form of human control can surpass self-organization, so centralization and central planning fail as methods of running such systems, which is a historically and empirically established result. Market mechanisms react faster and better, and that is why AFODI supports a free-market economy.

Maybe one day an information system could reach an efficiency that allows for an alternative; at the moment that remains science fiction. Once that day comes, AFODI will be open to evaluate it and adapt accordingly.

What AFODI aims at:

MERITOCRACY	Zero discrimination, 100% performance-based reward and reimbursement!
FREEDOM	Say, think and do what you want as long as your actions don't limit other people's same rights. Adults should and must be free to make their own decisions and bear the consequences of their actions!
PROSPERITY	Throttling the hard and smart work of diligent and motivated people is an unethical act that no society can afford. Masquerading envy as "greater good" has repeatedly led to failure and impoverishment!
THAT MEANS: NO PRIVILEGES - EQUAL RIGHTS FOR ALL.	

Taxation, regulation and fiat currencies have historically and empirically failed as tools of lasting prosperity, and after short periods of seeming upswings they have produced inflation, debasement and distorted investment. That was well explained as boom-and-bust cycles, and the existing counterarguments failed to argue with proof or evidence: central planners, socialists, fascists, Keynesians, MMT theorists and many others offer mere theories, cherry-picking the boom moments and claiming that the busts came for completely different reasons. In modern academia and in state-controlled research institutes it has become particularly fashionable to ignore the obvious record of inflation and deindustrialization. Most mainstream economists propagate the idea that a government can regulate an economy in a beneficial way, which is most welcome to governments and established institutes, all of whom benefit from upholding such beliefs. Governments and institutions award such economists with grants, funding and tenure, and punish dissidents with unemployment and blocked careers.

AFODI does not take money from government, and we are neither the government's allies nor its foes. We do not exist to like the government or to hate it; we exist to show which arrangements work better for the economy:

When government does things we see as positive, we say so and explain the reasons, and when government does things we see as negative, we again say so and explain the reasons.

We are incorruptible because we are independent. That is why a government that is interested in results should be glad to have a source like this: AFODI's interest lies in societal and economic success, and a government that is smart enough to prefer results over comfort will use the research.

2. RESEARCH & JOURNAL

As an organization promoting prosperity, freedom and entrepreneurship, AFODI is tightly connected to economics and socioeconomics, and in a wider sense to political theory and to the field called social science.

AFODI cooperates with Ugandan universities, students and student groups, faculties and professors. These cooperations are mutually useful and enrich learning and knowledge in many ways.

That cooperation has led AFODI to found a journal as well, promoting better research and evidence-based methodology. That means confronting, with evidence, the unfounded theories of the currently preferred academic narratives, which use unscientific modeling, statistical tricks and linear mathematics to propagate what large official organizations and institutions pay them to circulate.

A large share of social science as it is now practiced is therefore not a truth-seeking discipline but captured, uncritical and agenda-driven work, and the consequences are serious, because the universities then produce credentialed compliance instead of independent judgment, and a field that should drive prosperity becomes a brake on it.

That condition is reversible:

Evidence-based method, institutional independence from government, and independence from large official organizations would turn the research around quickly, which is why AFODI builds the journal and the university partnerships at the same time rather than walking away from the universities.

Uganda is at a crossroads, and it has to decide whether it wants to follow the path most Western societies took, sacrificing truth and innovation and harvesting economic decline and industrial stagnation, or to recover a higher scientific standard and make university research independent and productive again.

AFODI's *African Research Journal of Economic Freedom* is the instrument for that second path: it publishes evidence-based studies and papers, and those results are discussed in our events, meetings, seminars and conferences, and in television presentations, the podcast and the other publications. Studies on property, security and related legal questions are issued separately and are not the subject of this statement.

3. THE ELEVATOR PITCH

The elevator pitch is a crucial marketing tool: imagine you have a great idea, you step into an elevator, and in it is the person who can make that idea a reality; you now have only seconds to convince that investor before the ride is over. This marketing exercise shows that success depends largely on being able to

communicate ideas precisely and concisely. Socialists, National Socialists, theocrats and other extremists are, unfortunately, very good at elevator pitching:

- the rich stole from you, that's why you are poor – we must tax the rich into oblivion for a fair world
- our culture is the best, we are the chosen people, all others want to destroy us – kick them all out

These claims have a lot in common, are always manipulative generalizations, and translate to: there's an enemy minority, give us total control so that we destroy that enemy. That control always involves the power to expropriate and jail dissidents, and it never is a sustainable model. Every single time it leads to poverty, deindustrialization and typically ends in war.

The elevator pitch and marketing in general, is not about nuance – it wants to sell. Like a magic trick, it is about perception and deception, and when people are desperate due to lack of food and jobs, emotions run high and elevator pitches beat facts.

Here is AFODI's elevator pitch and we underline it with facts and real science:

There are 5 concrete policies that have proven to work efficiently and reliably, decentralization, deregulation, detaxation, freedom of speech and property rights. The less we have of each, the faster a society collapses, the more we have of them, the more society prospers!

Solution	Explanation	Evidentiary literature
DECENTRALIZATION	The last 5,000 years show that centralization leads to legal tender, later to fiat, to debasement, and to large-scale failure, while decentralization has worked sustainably.	Hoppe, Werner
DEREGULATION	A free-market system is more efficient: it reacts to local needs and refrains from needless and counterproductive rules.	Mises, Hayek, Rothbard, Sowell
DETAXATION	When the “fair share” is only financing a useless bureaucracy that makes all and everything expensive and slow, while not realizing any sustainable solution – taxation is the problem, not the solution.	Friedman, Hoppe, Laffer
FREEDOM OF SPEECH	If the individual is silenced, the majority rule becomes a tyranny, that destroys economy and society.	US Constitution, Voltaire, Bastiat
PROPERTY RIGHTS	If an individual's property is not protected by the majority's rules, safety is abolished and the social and economic fallout is massive.	North, Huerta de Soto

Our elevator pitch does not look for scapegoats and does not try to “divide and conquer.”

The solutions it names are evidence-based and verifiable, and they have never failed when applied, even only partially and half-heartedly, as in Switzerland, Singapore, or pre-EU Estonia. Freedom and prosperity work, and they are society’s best chance at peace and safety.

It is time for African countries to take matters into their own hands and become free-market economies.

Thank you very much for your kind interest,
see you soon at AFODI



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