

ASSIGNMENT 1: SDG GOAL 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

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Caryl Dolinko - # 332385

Royal Roads University

GBLD520

Jason Steeves

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<http://caryldolinko.weebly.com/>

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SLIDE 2 – UN Sustainable Development Goals

On September 25th 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted an agenda with a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and a plan to stimulate global action to strengthen peace, end poverty, and ensure prosperity for all.

At the core of each goal, there are specific targets to be achieved and by 2030, in areas of economic, social and environmental importance, with indicators for measurement of success.

Global areas of critical need are: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, Partnership. The future of our interconnected world depends on us working towards these SDGs for the sake of our planet and humanity.

SLIDE 3 – Goal #5 – Gender Equality

Women are 49.5% of the world's population (Worldbank, 2015).

Goal # 5, *Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*, is inherent and indivisible from the other Sustainable Development Goals. Equality is not common nor consistent across the world and the SDGs aim to change that. Religion, politics, economics and migration are impacting the role women will have in our future and the targets keep stakeholders focused on the sustainable development goals.

When women and girls have equal access to education, health care, work, and a voice in government, business, and economic decision-making, then economies are stimulated and everybody benefits. Women must be included for the SDGs to succeed.

SLIDE 4 – Goal #5 – Targets and Indicators

These targets are influenced by politics and economics of the region and country. In most places, laws, and social policy and practises need to reviewed, revised or abolished to achieve gender equality, and empower all women and girls to achieve the SDGs. The SDGs provide some basic indicators of success.

SLIDE 5 – 3 Regions – North America, Middle East, Africa

The SDG #5 and it's 9 targets are at different stages of implementation in *North America, Middle East and Africa*. These regions and their countries vary in extreme in their laws, politics, economics and level of gender equality and systems, legislation and cultures.

The impact of globalization has been a motivator for change, creating regional organizations that are interconnected through trade, and necessity of partnership. Global pandemics and humanitarian crisis are not constrained to geographic boundaries so issues are shared and collaboration needed.

SLIDE 6 – North America

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The North American continent is home to Canada, United States and Mexico. This diverse region is divided culturally, geographically, linguistically, and economically, and have integrated economically under NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement). Gender equality varies in the region, and Canada is the most progressive with women occupying 50% of parliamentary seats. Disparaging difference in wages between men and women in all countries, with Mexico the worst at a gender pay gap of 28% and Women not in enough leadership positions. The American economy is the strongest, influencing trade in the region. Challenges in this region are political instability, corruption, lawless drug trade and a struggle for influence. Gender equality in this region varies and focus on targets is different for each country.

SLIDE 7 – Middle East

This region is vast and varied including the countries of Israel, Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Iraq, Iran. A volatile region divided by religious belief, historical wars and political ideology. Religious doctrine determines laws, culture, and society norms. In many countries, women are highly educated and in Israel, women constitute 1/3 of military conscripts. Women in most countries do not have equal rights and in some countries, the religious doctrine which rules, oppresses and prohibits progress.

SLIDE 8 – Africa

The region consists of North, West, East, Central and Southern Africa all under the African Union. The area is massive with over 55 recognized countries and states and united. A massive region of collective communities at different stages of development. Women hold 23% of seats in national parliaments in Africa, with Rwanda at 63% yet in general, girls receive fewer resources as education, health care, nutrition, and voice. Challenges in this region include humanitarian crises, environmental degradation, migration and refugees, violence and discrimination, no access to healthcare, low economic opportunity and political instability. Gender parity is still far from being realized.

SLIDE 9 – Needs and Conditions

In order for the other 16 of the SDGs to succeed, gender equality needs to be implemented. Education is the key to changing lives for girls and programs have been initiated. Women are slowly taking leadership roles in community, business and government positions. Religion and antiquated conservative beliefs holds back most regions in the Middle East from realizing their potential without the engagement of women and girls. Policies and legislation in all countries need to be reviewed, revised or abolished to meet Goal #5. All countries need to end discrimination in the workplace but when culture is deeply integrated, that change takes time.

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SLIDE 10 – Controversies Globally

Health care is not easily accessible, available nor affordable. Women's rights and empowerment for girls cannot be realized when running from war, terrorists or religious fanatics. Religious beliefs, cultural attitudes and economic limitations prohibit women and girls from reaching their potential. Inability to own land and discriminatory customs, laws and practices stop women from economic freedom and success. Stopping discrimination and violence against women requires a personal commitment by men, and a change of cultural norms.

International and regional organizations need to work closely with local communities to implement SDGs. Inability to own land and discriminatory customs, laws and practices stop gender equality from impacting Africa sooner. Stopping discrimination and violence against women is a personal commitment and a global goal.

SLIDE 11 – Recommendations

In all global regions, governments need to create and/or reform laws and legislation that will require society and cultures to adhere to new norms. In Africa, provide easy access to health care and eliminate of harmful medical practises through measures and policies at the local level. All regions need to provide education, access to technology and equal opportunity for positions of leadership. Civic organizations, community groups and religious leaders need to engage girls and mobilize women for today's economy and tomorrow's world.

SLIDE 12 – Stakeholders

All levels of stakeholders, international, national and local and need to be involved in gender equality, if the SDGs are to meet their targets. Stakeholders in government, the private sector and civic society need to address and transform the power imbalance between genders and remove all barriers that prohibit progress. Gender equality involves everybody, at every level of life and we are all expected to contribute to the realization of the SDGs. Women are half the world and our equality matters.

SLIDE 13 – The Future

Success of Goal #5 will rely on the recognition that gender equality is critical for the SDGs, and our common future, which is why it's the 'stand alone' goal. Partnerships between local and national

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governments, women's groups and other NGO's are aligning to support common health goals to initiate change. Discriminatory laws that restrict land ownership, property rights or any access or opportunity in some way against women are being challenged. Women are being empowered by education and those who have access to technology are finding a voice. Women are slowly gaining access to work and economic opportunities which will benefit the country and region's growth. Elections are voting women into the most powerful leadership positions globally, and girls now have role models that can influence global change. Women are an integral solution to the SDG and although the future looks bright yet change takes time.

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