

## ASSIGNMENT 2: SDG Implementation in Contrasting Countries

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GBLD520

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Sunday, August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016

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The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was a universally agreed upon document, formally adopted at the United Nations by members and governments on September 25, 2015. This agenda is comprised of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with 169 related targets. These goals and specific targets were built on years of discussions to establish a guide to global development, which led to the creation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the subsequent SDGs. The SDGs focus on the critical areas of humanity in the social, economic, and environmental realms of sustainable development and have different implications, implementations and impacts in different countries around the world. The 15 year SDG plan is of essential for humanity to thrive and for our planet to survive. The SDGs are really our 1<sup>st</sup> attempt for global unification focused on a universal goal, Tomorrow.

Canada and Mali are the two countries I have chosen to explore and compare, based on their ranking in the Human Development Index (HDI). Each country must rely on their own national and regional infrastructure to ensure that they meet their own objectives and ultimately, align with the global SDGs. The ability to implement these national programs and services successfully will determine the country's ability and readiness to meet the 2030 SDGs. None of this can be seen in the rankings of the HDI, or when looking at the SDGs for Canada and Mali. The need and impact of the SDGs is not apparent when looking at the ranking, and the numbers cannot begin to demonstrate the complexity of implementation to the low end country.

The Human Development Index (HDI) focuses on three dimensions: the expectation of a long and healthy life; the ability to acquire knowledge; and the ability to earn a decent living. Based on scores, each country is placed along a scale (see Figure 1.) from Very High Human Development, such as Canada at 9<sup>th</sup> in the world, and to Mali at 179<sup>th</sup>, in Low Human Development out of 188 countries.

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### Human development indices

HDI rank	Human Development Index	Inequality-adjusted HDI		Gender Development Index		Gender Inequality Index		Multidimensional Poverty Index*		
	Value	Value	Overall loss (%)	Difference from HDI rank <sup>b</sup>	Value	Group <sup>c</sup>	Value	Rank	HDRO specifications <sup>d</sup>	Year and survey <sup>e</sup>
	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	Value	2005-2014
<b>VERY HIGH HUMAN DEVELOPMENT</b>										
9 Canada	0.913	0.832	8.8	-2	0.982	1	0.129	25	..	..
<b>LOW HUMAN DEVELOPMENT</b>										
179 Mali	0.419	0.270	35.7	1	0.776	5	0.677	150	0.456	2012/2013 D

Figure 1. Human Development Indices. This 2014 HDI ranking of Canada and Mali.

Countries at the low end of the HDI, like Mali, have much further to go, yet depend on those at the high end, like Canada, to work together in this interconnected global system of sustainable development. Low development countries have been tasked with halving or eradicating various indicators of underdevelopment, while higher developed nations have promised to increase funding, offer relief on debt, and work on trade reform and technology transfers (Langford, 2016). The interconnectedness of all nations also impacts the interdependency and success of the SDGs.

Canada and Mali are two countries at polar extremes, geographically, economically, socially, and environmentally, yet they are not at odds. Canada and Mali have formal diplomatic ties, with each hosting an embassy in the other's capital city, and friendly foreign relations with community twinning programs, and business resource partnerships. Canada is focused on providing aid and development assistance to Mali and is one of its largest donors. In fact, it could be said that the development of Mali and the ability to achieve the SDGs is somewhat dependent on the well-being of the Canadian economy, and the bilateral aid provided by Canada. The global interdependence of nations can not be overstated.

In a comparison of how Canada and Mali differ in geography, social and cultural, economic and environmental factors, we reflect on these SDGs, including #13, as all other SDGs are at the mercy of our environment. SDG#1 – End Poverty; SDG #2 – End Hunger; SDG #3 – Good Health

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and Well-Being; SDG #4 – Quality Education; SDG #5 – Gender Equality; SDG #6 – Clean Water and Sanitation; SDG #13 – Climate Action.

As mentioned, Canada and Mali are at opposite scales of development and well-being for it's citizens. Both have started to explore how the SDGs can be integrated into existing national strategies and plans. Priorities are based on the urgency of development and need, and which requires the most time and effort. Canada and Mali have very different priorities when it comes to determining on which goals to focus and what the national and regional targets should be. In some cases, there is not the luxury of choice for priority.

Canada is a young country founded in 1867, and located in North America. Canada is one of the world's richest western nations with an abundance of natural resources: energy, minerals, timber, fish and fresh water. Its economy is one of the largest and most stable in the world, despite a smaller population. In 2015, Canada spent 2% of it's federal budget on international assistance, with 34% of aid going to the least developed countries, and \$152 million going to Mali (CIDP, 2016) specifically.

Mali, is the cultural heir to ancient African empires and is the heart of Sub-Saharan Africa. It's power and position of importance grew and in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, it was renowned as the seat of Islamic scholarship. Mali is land locked in West Africa, with the mostly uninhabitable Sahara dessert occupying the north and the south of Mali being lush with the Niger river weaving through, as the lifeblood of the country. Mali has considerable natural resources, with gold, uranium, salt, livestock and agriculture with 80% for export, yet lacks the national infrastructure to access and move goods and provide services easily.

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Mali is dependent on foreign aid and investment and its economic status fluctuates depending on factors that effect global markets. Mali receives trade support through the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) as well as an active in other organizations such as the African Union (AU), the World Bank (WB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other UN agencies, non government organizations (NGOs) and international organizations (IOs). All of these organization are hoping to raise Mali to a higher level of development, and incorporates many of the SDGs, including #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, and so many others as they interconnect and link to each other.

In Mali, is has been estimated that almost 60 per cent of the population lives in poverty, and survive on less than \$2.00 per day. This is one of the countries greatest challenges and a major focus of international organizations to help Mali create change and progress in SDG #1. Mali has been involved in initiatives to reduce debt and focus on combating poverty, like the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative and Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI) working with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. Canada's international development efforts focus on Mali, and work with them to reduce poverty, following the Government of Mali's priorities in their National Poverty Reduction Strategy.

When speaking of SDG #1, poverty in Canada is measured on a scale far different than that of Mali. Canada has never had a federal anti-poverty strategy so many provincial governments have created regional poverty plans. In Canada, a great majority of First Nations communities live in severe poverty compared to the other marginalized communities. Health care and complex issues related to alcoholism and addiction are common in the indigenous community resulting in the barriers to development and SDG#1. The new government is working to create change at the community level and alleviate the discrepancies between all Canadian populations. National

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organizations like Canada Without Poverty and NGO's like Canadian Feed the Children work with local organizations to achieve regional targets. With a new political party in power, Canada is creating a national strategy to work towards SDG #1 and impact the subsequent SDGs.

Canada is an active participant in global organizations, including: G8, G-20, NATO, OECD, WTO, Commonwealth, OAS, APEC, and United Nations. Canada's reputation is one of the best in the world, (RepTrak, 2015) with a strong peacekeeping force and military ally in a many NATO missions as well. Canada has free trade agreements and initiatives with most countries and is a partner in NAFTA. The WTO is a central to Canada's global trade strategy and enables the country to provide goods and services around the world. Canada has impact globally and can impact SDGs.

Most of Canada's population of 32,367,938 (worldometer, 2016) people, live in the south of the country, as 4/5 of the country is forest and mountains and wilderness, inhabited mainly by wildlife. Canadians are educated with 99% literacy and 44% having attended university of college (Aneki.com, 2016). We are on way to reaching SDG #4 with opportunities for learning and jobs in all industries, with a growing technology and online sector.

Canada is an democratic and liberal country, both politically and socially and a leader in human rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women. The new Liberal government recently appointed 50% of women as ministers in parliament, meeting SDG #5. Gender equality is paramount and a value to Canadians, yet women are still paid less than men and majority of board of directors, presidents or power positions are still held by men. Laws exist to prohibit discrimination, and women enjoy the same rights as men, yet there is not true equality yet. The Canadian International Development Agency incorporates gender equality in their programs and services as part of the requirements by Canada to help achieve SDG #5 around the world.

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Mali's population was listed at 18,199,756 million and have an average life expectancy of 54 years (WorldOMeters, 2016). Mali is one of the poorest countries in the world with the majority of people living in extreme poverty. The average worker's annual salary is approximately US\$1,500 with 80% working in agriculture. It is a democratic country yet tribal politics exist and divisions among competing ethnic groups create strife. Mali has many issues and educating the population is a main focus for sustainable development. The literacy rate is at 46% (Aneki.com, 2016) and there is a significant difference in education between the genders. If the education level can increase for all citizens equally, then there is the opportunity for the economy to grow and the country to achieve SDG #4.

Gender equality is not prevalent in Mali, however there is almost 10% representation in parliament by women (Aneki.com, 2016). Women in Mali continue to suffer from discrimination and most are subjected to traditional roles, especially in rural areas. It is difficult to focus on SDG #5 when holding women back from fully participating, this holds back the potential for a country and economy to grow and prosper. Violence against women, including wife beating, is tolerated and a high percentage of women still undergo female genital mutilation. These practises will change as international programs from the UNICEF, WHO and other IO's NGOs are offered and cultural norms change. The SDGs and the African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063 offer an opportunity for progress on gender equality, and Mali will work to get to SDG #5, but change will take time. In Mali, legislative modification and political commitments can create social change for gender equality and women's empowerment.

Mali faces numerous challenges related to poverty, malnutrition, hygiene, sanitation and lack of access to water, basic health care and medical facilities. The country's ability to focus on different SDGs is dependent on how well it is set up to deal with internal social, economic and environmental factors, and it is not fairing well. When exploring the implementation of SDG#3,

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health and well-being is difficult, and with the lack of infrastructure, the population requires outside assistance. The citizens are dependent on NGOs, and IOs to provide services for health and well being and there are limited medical facilities even when there is access. The nation cannot support its citizens alone. Their national strategy includes multiple partners to ensure national, regional and international plans are in-line and working towards all SDGs.

Mali works with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP), and the Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) on programs that work in cooperation with the government to implement development programs. Some of the SDG cannot be undertaken alone and require extensive collaboration without other stakeholders (IOs, NGOs, MNCs, CS), adding another layer of complexity to the implementation. As well, The SDGs are so interconnected that cannot be implemented in isolation as they impact the other goals. There is a complex network of aid programs and development assistance with multiple partners and numerous initiatives and it's a layered and complex situation.

In Mali, there is chronic food insecurity due to violent conflict and civil war with the North opposing the Southern rebel nomadic Tuaregs, and terrorist groups such as al-Qaida impacting fertile areas. The lack of food security impacts the ability of the nation to feed itself causing barriers to achieving SDG #2, zero hunger. With the lack of safety and security for the population around food, there is the need for global assistance. In Mali, food assistance programs are supported by international partners which help vulnerable communities to end hunger, improve nutrition and work towards achieving SDG #2. A significant barrier is the insufficient availability of water which hinder the ability to achieve SDG #6. The WFP is able to focus on vulnerable areas in Mali by working with the Ministry of Agriculture and Education and a network of IO's like Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Partnership for Child Development (PCD) and USAID to provide food and



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nutrition services to targeted areas. Most of the food distributed by WFP is purchased in Mali which helps boost the local economy and that has created supportive solutions to alleviate poverty and hunger and enhance health and well-being. Working in partnership with outside stakeholders to end hunger and improve nutrition and access to water is the only way Mali can implement plans to achieve most of the SDGs.

Canada joined the global environmental community in December 2015, by signing the Paris Agreement and will have a national focus on reducing greenhouse gases and fossil fuels. Canada is now aligned itself with local, provincial national and global partners to achieve SDG #13. Climate action and SDG #13 impact Canada and the country's natural resources directly. With Canada now establishing an international expectation for involvement, civic programs and policies have shifted to meet global standards, and cities are creating local change to support SDG #13. Canada will need to balance sustainable environmental practises with and economic prosperity as it moves to achieve the global targets.

Mali also faces incredible environmental challenges including desertification, deforestation, erosion and lack of water. The degradation of natural resources is a critical issue where the majority of population lives in rural areas and livelihoods and lives are dependent on these resources. Climate change jeopardises development and creates a cycle of poverty. Mali cannot work on SDG #1 and the subsequent goals, without considering the impact of SDG #13 and all it's implications. Climate change is a significant threat to Mali's development and poverty reduction, it requires global support and national policies to work towards all the noted SDGs.

International organizations, NGO's, Governments and citizens working together have the opportunity to change our future and implement the change needed to achieve the global goals. Canada and Mali have different routes to achieve the SDGs, and different issues, but working in

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collaboration to share best practices can create the change needed for tomorrow. The SDGs are the planet's best hope of getting humanity back on track today for our survival tomorrow.

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