

Doing Global Justice

POS/SBS 480, Fall 2012

15 Points

Due Saturday December 15th

IMPORTANT: Be sure to watch *Through a Child's Eyes: Views of Global Poverty* before starting this assignment! It is available through Films on Demand through the ASU library.

Hypothetical Scenario

As you are returning home to the U.S. from a 10-day study tour of South Africa (what an experience!), your plane had to divert to one of the countries listed below (your choice). You had to stay one night in that country, in a moderately priced hotel—it seems pretty raunchy at first. As you are having dinner at a sidewalk cafe you notice a 9-year-old girl (I'll say "girl" here, but you can choose a boy for your assignment if you'd like) sitting on a curb across the street wearing torn and dirty clothes. Something about her catches your eye, perhaps her warm, but poignant, smile, so when you finish dinner you approach her and strike up a conversation. She slowly warms up to you and tells you about her predicament. Her family and the fields in their village have been badly disrupted by the recent situations (war, dictatorship, whatever is appropriate) in the country and they are struggling to make enough to eat. There are few jobs, and she has already fallen a year behind in school.

Her older brother is planning on migrating (illegally of course) to Europe in a week. This will involve a treacherous journey across inhospitable land and sea and he will probably be caught by European border patrol and sent back. There is a chance that he will make it, but if he does, he will have to live underground in some big foreign city, and work for much less than minimum wage in hazardous conditions. But, at least he will have a job, and maybe he will meet other people from his country, and maybe save enough to send some money back to their village. And, maybe, he will succeed enough so that he will also be able to continue his education (he has finished 9th grade). Your new friend on the curb will probably make the journey with her brother. She doesn't want to go, she is afraid, but there is so little for her in this country. She asks you what she should do. You stammer that you really don't know.

You feel her pain and your eyes tear up. You think of kids her age that you know in the U.S. and how they are probably right now at the movie theatre watching a movie that cost hundreds of millions of dollars to make, or shopping at Justice, or watching the Disney Channel on a big-screen TV, and they take all that for granted. But, you don't know what to tell your new friend. You give her \$40, leaving you \$20 for food at the airport tomorrow, and she asks for your email address which you give her. She asks you to send her an email in the next week to her brother's email address with advice on what she should do. She politely says thank you and you go back to your now seemingly-luxurious hotel room with its air conditioning and swimming pool. You think of her and her family all night. You also think of an essay that you read many months ago

by Peter Singer; something about a pond and something called the Millennium Development Goals. “What was the moral of that story?” you wonder.

On the plane home the next day you are, coincidentally, seated next to an economic development consultant who is working for the United Nations Development Program. You tell him the story of this little girl and he gives out a little laugh and he tells you that there are hundreds of millions of kids just like that in Africa, and while each child has a tragic story, the best way to address this *is not* to tend to the individual child but to raise the income of her country. You ask him how to do that and he replies with a feint smile, and then quotes a famous development scholar:

We are no closer to a useable blueprint for development than we were 50 years ago. It is true that we now think we know which blueprints to avoid, but it is not always clear that we know why (Abhijit Banerjee, 2004).

He says that if you really want to help, you should become more informed. You should become more familiar with the Millennium Development Goals by reading the latest MDG report (Millennium Development Goals Report – 2011). He also suggests that you might want to consider developing some micro-development projects in her village, but that many development agencies are probably already working in the area with mixed results.

When you get back home, you quickly turn to Google to find out more about her country. You find a Millennium Development Goal report just for her country as well as other poverty reduction strategies. Reading these thoroughly, you find that there are many aid organizations from many countries already doing development work there. So much is already being done, but it doesn't seem to be helping her or her family or her village, at least not nearly enough.

You are torn between trying to help her country, her village, her family, her specifically. Where does one start? You feel an attachment to her and you want to help her, but you know there are many children just like her in her village and in her country. Will her friends be jealous if she is helped? Will some of her neighbors take things that you send to her? Why is she so important to you?

You watch two films about poverty in Africa: *Why Are We Here?* and *Through a Child's Eyes*. You read academic articles on participatory development. This makes sense: you need to ask the local people, those who are marginalized, how best to help. But then, you read two pretty damning critiques of participatory development.

Cooke, Bill, “Rules of Thumb for Participatory Change Agents”
and

Williams, Glyn, “Evaluating Participatory Development: Tyranny, Power and Re(Politicisation)”

One friend recommends that you read: Banerjee and Duflo's book, *Poor Economics*.

Another friend notes that there has been a lot of conflict in that country and that you need to read some stuff on transitional justice. She recommends that you read a book called *Left to Tell* by Immaculée Ilibagiza and that you should watch films about the Gacaca trials in Rwanda.

Another friend knows of someone who was a refugee from Africa and he told him how horrible asylum seekers are treated in Europe and the U.S. You watch a film about African refugees in Europe being sent to Ghana even if they are not from Ghana. Of course, you don't want to have that happen to your new friend. You read a bit about the U.S. asylum system and you don't want her or her brother to have to go through that and you wonder if she or her family members would qualify for asylum.

A group of your friends think you have “gone off the deep end” because you haven't gone out to celebrate your return from Africa. Instead, you seem obsessed with research and all this talk about villages in Africa. Why should you care about that stuff, especially when there are so many new movies out and a couple of new bars have just opened near campus. Anyways, you are all supposed to be planning for your spring break trip to Lake Havasu.

You speak to one of your professors and he tells you about one of his book chapters on human rights in Mexico about structural violence, states of exception, and cauterization. This helps you understand more about why her village and her country have not responded so well to development efforts. There are all kinds of structural violence in that part of the world: from colonialism, vestiges of slavery, class hierarchies, poverty, misogyny, etc. This makes sense, as does the development literature talking about poverty traps, conflict traps, education traps, resource traps, etc.

While these theories help you understand the situation, they don't give you concrete answers to help your friend and she might be leaving for Europe in 4 days. And, she asked you to email her with your advice before then. You are feeling panicked and overwhelmed.

You decide you will ask your parents to donate money to help her. Your Mom who is a successful businesswoman, asks you to come up with a detailed plan as to where the money will go. You realize the best way to organize this plan is in two parts. First, will be a letter to your new friend. You will write the first page or two in language that she can understand, at least with a little help from her older brother. You will then lay out a well-researched academic report to attach to your email, but you know that your friend will not be able to understand most of it. But you want her to have it, maybe just to show her that you are serious and maybe she'll understand it someday. And you especially want to convince your Mom that you have taken this very seriously.

You decide to write a 10-12 page report that includes the following:

1. **Background Information** on your country (should be fairly brief and in relation to the MDGs – I don't need to know the national bird, unless it can be used for alleviating hunger). Be sure to discuss the country's current status on the MDGs and Other Development Indicators: Possible sources include UNDG Reports (www.undg.org), World Bank – Millennium Development Goals Data Set (<http://ddp->

ext.worldbank.org/ext/GMIS/gdmis.do?siteId=2&menuId=LNAV01HOME3), Your Country's PRSP, Reports from UNDP, DFID, USAID, SIDA, etc., HIPC Reports, MCC Reports

2. Decide on two (of the first 42) MDG indicators that are most critical and are related to children. These decisions should be informed by the current progress in your country and what you think are the most important MDG goals. Be sure to discuss why you chose them.
3. **Micro-Level Development Strategies:** Discuss specific interventions that will help improve the two MDG indicators that you chose above. Be sure to discuss the strategies in some detail. You should start by looking at Scholarly **articles from Academic Search Premier, MEDLINE, etc. These are crucial sources: you must consult and cite 2-3 scholarly sources on micro-level interventions. They might not be directly related to your country, but could be initiatives tried in a nearby or analogous location. You can also search for Strategy papers from NGOs, etc. – use Google to find these. Rely on specific examples from *Poor Economics* to discuss how you will tailor your implementation strategy so that it is most successful**
4. **Be sure to discuss participatory strategies for implementation:** How will you achieve these interventions? How will you involve the community, especially marginalized groups in this process. Will they be involved in all aspects of the intervention? Will they be empowered by this effort? Will they be dis-empowered?
5. **Conclusion:** Summary, will these work, what is your timetable, etc.? What are the chances of achieving meeting the MDG indicators?
6. Extra Credit Appendix (3 Points Possible): Read Simmons' recent essay, "Human Rights: Abuses, Trauma, Joy" and write a paragraph or two on the place of joy in human rights and development work. You might want to look up additional sources for this. You might also want to make specific recommendations in relation to your country. Recall that Banerjee and Duflo seem to bemoan the spending of money on festivals by poor people.

Countries

You should choose one of the following countries and consider the situation listed here. Feel free to add any (realistic) details about your friend, her family, and her village.

Country (or Region)	Situation
The Gambia	Dictatorship and lack of fundamental freedoms
The Casamance region of Senegal	Low-level civil war for decades
Eritrea	Dictatorship (the North Korea of Africa)
Mauritania	Remnants of slavery
Mali	Coup and civil war