

Free development of south africa essay example

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About South Africa

South Africa is located in the southern part of continental Africa. It is the 25th largest country worldwide. It is surrounded by neighboring countries (e. g., Namibia, Botswana, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, and Lesotho).

On its sides and southernmost tip are the Indian and Atlantic oceans.

South Africa has three government capitals: Pretoria (executive); Cape Town (legislative); and, Bloemfontein (judicial). Its largest city is Johannesburg. It has nine (9) provinces, eight (8) metropolitans, and 44 district and 226 local municipalities. As of 2011, South Africa is home to more than 50 million natives and immigrants. It also has 11 officially recognized languages.

This paper will discuss more about South Africa's political and economic development using the traditional and new Human Development Index (HDI).

The HDI provides an approximate statistics of a country's development capability in terms of income, education, and life expectancy. An HDI under 0. 5 represents low development, whereas an HDI of 0. 8 means high development. In the 2013 HDI, the data used were simply estimates from the

2012 HDI report.

Since 1990, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has published its HDI reports annually. The HDI Reports intend to stimulate political and economic growth all over the world. International, national, and local policy-makers have greatly benefited from the HDI reports, which spurred more efforts to reduce global poverty.

I. Political History

In 1487, Portuguese explorers settled in South Africa. The King of Portugal renamed the cape discovered by Bartolomeu Dias to Cape of Good Hope because it opened the route to India. In 1651, the Dutch colonized the Cape and established the Dutch East India Company, which sold food to ships headed to Asia. Because there were few natives in the area, slaves from India, Madagascar, and other countries worked there.

In 1795, Great Britain took the Cape and in 1803, returned to the Dutch. In 1867 and 1884, respectively, large quantities of diamonds and gold were discovered in South Africa. It made many people, especially, Europeans, to come to the country to make money. In the process, subsequent wars occurred. There were the first and second British and Boers (or Dutch) wars of 1884 and 1899-1902, respectively. Boers won the first war. In the second war, the British emerged victorious. In 1910, the British colonizers united some of South African provinces and subsequently granted the country its independence (Union).

In 1948, the white governed South Africa and implemented apartheid, or racial separation between or among races as its policy. The white and black communities were segregated such that they had their own queues and rode

in different public buses. With the abolishment of apartheid, even when the white government was determined to stay in power, it did not materialized because of different activists who fought for their rights and extended democracy to the whole of South Africa.

South Africa is a republic since 1961; it is a representative, parliamentary, democratic country. The South African President is the head of government and state. He/She is elected by the parliament while South Africans elect legislatures from the nine provinces. In 1990, apartheid ended and the African National Congress (ANC) dominated the country's national and provincial legislatures. Second in popularity is the Democratic Alliance. There are other political parties in South Africa.

The political composition of the country includes chieftains, rabbis, returned exiles, rugby players, and other community leaders from various professions. Political and other reforms are keys to improve the lives of South Africans who are under the threshold of poverty, unemployment, health risks, etc. With continuous policy enhancements, people's human rights, dignity, freedom, autonomy, and so on will be protected.

South Africa is a developing country with medium human development in terms of other HDI measures (e. g., gender inequality, life expectancy, multidimensional poverty, command over its resources, health, and so on (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2008; United Nations Development Programme, 2013).

II. Economic History

South Africa's early pastoral economy is mostly hunting, animal husbandry, and subsistence agriculture. Tribes were headed by chiefs. Individual and/or

family wealth is dependent on the number of cattle one has. Some of the tribal communities include the Bantu, Khoikhoi, San, and so on live as pastors, hunters, nomads, etc. Because of growth in population, natives dispersed from the various parts of the country. Upon the arrival of the Portuguese and other colonizers, South Africa's economy changed, especially during the periods of diamond mining and gold rush. Many companies that were in South Africa and those who arrived became mostly involved in diamond and gold mining.

South Africa has an uneven progress within and between its own regions. Its developed economy is the same to first world countries (e. g., United Kingdom, Australia), whereas its underdeveloped economy is akin to third world nations (e. g., Congo). The greatest impact of the country's discovered minerals included the surge of international financial capitals for mining operations.

Other than diamond and gold mining, there are also service industries, car manufacturing, and so on. In 2010, South Africa ranked 110 out of 169 countries in UNDP's HDI. In terms of human poverty, it ranked 85 out of 135 countries. Its average annual HDI growth is 0. 11 percent only from 2000/2012, which was twice less compared to very high HDI. During 1990, 2000, 2005, 2007, 2010, 2011, and 2012, South Africa has medium human development indices of 0. 621, 0. 622, 0. 604, 0. 609, 0. 621, 0. 625, and 0. 629, respectively. For the past two decades, overall, South Africa ranked 121 among 186 countries in terms of human development (United Nations Development Programme, 2013). In the 2013 HDI, the data used were simply estimates from the 2012 HDI report.

Income

In terms of income distribution, from 1995 to 2003, the recorded income inequality and unemployment were rated high. Evidence showed that there were more informal jobs that worsen overall unemployment and average household income. Additionally, in comparison to the average South Africans household income, White household income was fourfold or even more. According to the National Income Dynamics Study, nearly half of South Africans live below poverty. For the purposes of this study, I will only discuss, income, education, and life expectation indices, excluding inequality, poverty, and gender deficit. For this part, income index for South Africa in 2012 was not available, even for its inequality-adjusted income index. Still, South Africa has a medium HDI of 0. 629 as a developing country. HDI's income index refers to gross national income (GNI) per capita (that is, purchasing power parity in US dollars). However, there is no available value for income index for 2012, but only but only life expectancy and education values/indices of 0. 376 (below low development) and 0. 558 (near low development), respectively .

Education

In view of South Africa's educational system, it has pre-primary, primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of education. Excluding the pre-elementary year, formal basic education spans 12 years, that is, grades 1 to 12: seven and five years, respectively. For college admission at any South African university, high school graduates have to pass the senior certification exam. The country's public universities are of three types: traditional or theoretically-centered degree programs; technologically-oriented degrees or

vocationally-centered programs; and, comprehensive ones that provide both types of programs. Eleven (11) are traditional, six (6) are technological, and six (6) are comprehensive types, or 23 public higher educational institutions. In 2010, South Africa's mean and expected years of schooling, respectively, were 8.5 and 13.1. In 2012, South Africa has an inequality-adjusted education index of 0.558, which is almost near low human development index. Education index is derived from the mean and expected years of schooling of particular samples of the population. Moreover, in terms of South Africa's educational index, which is computed based on adult literacy rate (two-thirds weight) and combined gross enrolment ratio (one-third weight) for primary up to tertiary levels, the value cannot be computed for lack of data at the tertiary level (that is, as of 2012).

Life Expectancy

In 2012, South Africa's inequality-adjusted life expectancy index was 0.376, which is below low development. In the traditional HDI, the life expectancy index was 0.473 given that the life expectancy, or estimate of health and longevity, for South Africans was only 53.4 as of 2012.

III. Process of Development Phase

In the 2013 Human Development Report, *The Rise of the South: Human Progress in a Diverse World*, it also mentioned the evolving geopolitics across the world, such as the developing South African economy and politics. As among the Group of 20 (G20) of developing countries, South Africa's political and economic policies, not to mention other policies, continuous to shape its human development.

South Africa is a member of the BRICS: Brazil, Russia, India China, and itself,

as an emerging global economic power. It plays a key role in taking leadership positions among other developing countries and international arena. It leads political and economic policy initiatives to fight off poverty, especially since the end of apartheid in 1994.

Despite South Africa being the continent's biggest economy, there is high crime rate due to high unemployment and widespread poverty. Even when South Africa responded to the 2008 financial crisis, just like other developed and developing countries, its economy receded in 2009, which resulted to an abrupt slowdown in manufacturing and mining. To the contrary, construction industries benefited due to the government's huge investment programs prior to the World Cup 2010.

IV. Success of Political Policies

Success of political policies required various factors into play. Policies that addressed and balanced social, health, and other related community considerations helped ensure equal access to basic services. Politicians with pro-poor policies, simultaneously with creation of decent jobs, minimized or even prevented additional societal maladies (such as displacement of communities, overexploitation and depletion of natural resources).

At the grassroots or electorate level, since the end of apartheid policy or white government, South Africa has successfully conducted four national elections and local polls. A more democratic culture continuous to take root, which allow SA citizens to share solutions to the country's pressing issues. South Africa's social institutions and their policies brought about positive results to its human development needs. There are continuously collective or communal actions to overcome constraints to understand better societal

norms concerning politics and policy outcomes. As evidenced by its own political experiences, not only do the dominating foreign powers then that impede South Africa's own development but its own prevailing political tradition and norms.

V. Failure of Political Policies

Citizens' entitlements to a safe environment, housing, education, and healthcare are included in the bill of rights, and are known as secondary constitutional rights. In 2003 the constitutional secondary rights were used by the HIV/AIDS activist group in the Treatment Action Campaign as a means of forcing the government to change its health policy.

Failure of the political policies of the country is due to poor implementation and lack of sustainability. For instance, there is a perennial issue on land redistribution. Many farmlands are still owned by white people. For this reason, South African government targets the transfer of one-third of the farmlands to its black constituents by 2014.

In terms of unemployment, it remains high and there are many poor people as a consequence. During some periods of 2008 to 2009, there were protests made by town residents because of their poor living situations and migrant workers were even blamed for the inadequacy of job opportunities.

VI. Success of Economic Policies

The South African government uses a set of policy tools (e. g., taxation, interest rate changes, credit access, subsidies, public expenditures, etc.) to deliver sustainable human development programs and services. With proper coordination of these tools, there is a greater chance of affecting policy implementation, such as in income distribution, education, life expectancy,

employment, investment, and other areas of economic growth.

On the other hand, UNDP's 2013 Development Report entitled "Rise of the South" stated that South Africa, which includes other developing countries, is becoming a leading agent on human development growth. From 1990-2010, South Africa's change in trade to output ratio has increased, but it only made modest improvement in its HDI value (United Nations Development Programme, 2013).

For UNDP, countries cannot depend on economic growth alone as a measure of human development. There is no automatic association between the two. Nonetheless, South Africa and other countries can advance pro-poor policy strategies concurrently with investments in other parts of its various sectors, such as education and health. With proper education and good health investments, blacks can have better employment opportunities, which translate to better income.

In view of South Africa's success of its educational policies, they are mostly due to various policy reforms in its basic and higher educational system. For instance, South Africa has a conditional cash transfer programs, including other new education initiatives as it learns from the best practices of other countries. It also continues to evaluate and adapt other programs that are beneficial for black families and students.

Formerly, under apartheid, schools for black students were discriminated against through insufficient funding. Moreover, Bantu education has a separate prospectus designed only to offer learners with adequate manual or labor skills. However, with the diminishing power of the white minority government and its subsequent loss of its hold in the country, the newly

emerged leadership made some reconciliation, but the former years were times of lost of education, not to mention social disruption or lawlessness. Later on, the government merged and incorporated small institutions of higher learning into larger universities. It then renamed all of them as universities to address the imbalances.

VII. Failure of Economic Policies

South African economy is a complex, dynamic system. Its various economic policy measures are understandable using reports that present key relationships among economic variables. Hence, when analyzing the outcomes of a policy, “ everything relates to everything else.” The synergy among different policies and aggregate variables captures empirically the indirect links yet significant effects in economic growth, employment, inequality, and so on.

Although South Africa still have high incidence of poverty, this is addressed with changes in social norms. Despite the presence of exploitative dowry system, women as economic disadvantaged in society, etc., there are currently conditions that attempt to counter these incidences that affect economic policy making.

Considering that the wealth of a nation is also its people, despite government economic policies on health, the country is the second highest in the prevalence of HIV/AIDS worldwide. One out of seven people in South Africa has the virus. Such failure, which relates to the economic condition of its people and the country, require funding from the state for free anti-retroviral medicines.

VIII. Temporary or Permanent Success/Failure of Political Policies

World politics is currently experiencing a rebalancing never before encountered due to globalization and technological advancements. South Africa is changing some of its policy initiatives, locally and internationally, as there is a growing cross-border movement of ideas, services, goods, etc. Global trading has resulted to increase in world merchandise output. However, not all developing countries have fully participated in the rise of countries such as South Africa; much more is the slow pace of the least developed countries worldwide.

South Africa, as it embrace the international arena in its political and policy improvements, continues to benefit from other developed countries in terms of trade, finance, technology transfer, and investments. Hence, South Africa, as a developing country, continues to benefit from the growth spillovers and its close political international partners in human development, such as in health (United Nations Development Programme, 2013; World Bank, 2013). Thus, with changes in the composition of those who head or lead the government at the national, provincial, down to the local levels, there is so far no permanent failure on political policies, but success.

IX. Temporary or Permanent Success/Failure of Economic Policies

Various economic policy options are available to the South African government. As policy makers choose among alternatives, they evaluate development issues consistent with macro-economic and micro-economic goals. Pertinent macro-economic policy issues are duly regarded in line with the overall policies of the government based on priority developments, international experiences, and challenges brought about by the global economic crisis. On the other hand, micro-economic policy issues deal with

the problems in the development of various industries, firms, and households. In doing so, there is the promotion of efficiency of different economic sectors in terms of investments; thus, the generation of more jobs, an increase in income levels, subsequently raising of the standard of living. Given the fact that no country has a permanent failure of its economic policies because of changes in many aspects of the macro- and micro-level decision making, program implementation in various sectors of the South African society continues.

X. Conclusion

South Africa has a rich history, even a golden age in times past. It also has an abundance of valuable minerals, such as diamonds and gold. It has also been a haven of European explorers, such as the British and Dutch. For the past decades, its human development index remains at the medium level of development. Despite its history of colonization, political and economic unrest due to the previous foreign implemented apartheid policy, recurring underemployment, high incidence of crime, cyclical poverty, high incidence of HIV/AIDS, its independence and government attests to the continuing efforts to further human developments.

Political and economic policies are continually being proposed, implemented, and evaluated by the government to transform reforms into realistic outcomes. There are policies on poverty alleviation, employment opportunities, equality, health, human rights, and so forth. As a result, South Africa is developing at a much surer way. It has belonged to the BRICS developing countries of G20. Its continuing process of development looks brightly at future policy priorities that could help sustain such human

development momentum. Finally, according to the 2013 HDI Report, “individual achievements in health, education and income [] do not guarantee progress in human development if social conditions constrain individual achievements and if perceptions about progress differ.”

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