



Hunger News & Hope

...a Seeds of Hope publication

UN Sustainable Development Goals: What Progress has Been Made?

by Sarah Westbrook

In September 2015, all 193 member nations of the United Nations approved a new goal set with “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,” replacing their previous set of goals issued in the year 2000, known as the “United Nations Millennium Declaration.” The Sustainable Development Goals contain 17 new benchmarks meant to be reached by the year 2030, built on the progress and success seen in the Millennium Goals. These new goals create a comprehensive vision of the UN and are designed to be more inclusive.

The goals are as follows:

1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere;
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture;
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages;
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all;
5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls;
6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all;
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all;
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable

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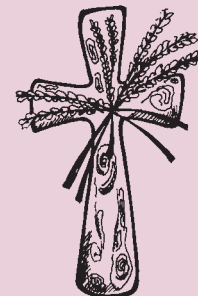
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Cross & Wheat logo by Erin Kennedy Mayer.



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economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all;

9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation;
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries;
11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable;
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns;
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts;
14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development;
15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss;
16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access for justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels; and
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

Armed with these goals, the world gathered its momentum and leapt into action. Paraguay, for example, placed its sanitation and water agency within the department of health, ensuring its treatment as a health priority, which has allowed 94 percent of its rural population to have access to clean drinking water, a bright spot in Latin America.

In 2016, however, we hit a wall. Due to violence and climate-related shocks, the number of chronically undernourished people rose by 38 million, increasing the total to 815 million. The first year of the SDG implementation was the slowest year of economic growth since the 2008-2009 global financial crisis. Moreover, the Department for

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International Development spent 13.88 percent of its budget on disaster relief—the largest amount for any issue.

Despite this immediate setback, people all around the world are banding together to make these goals a reality. Child mortality is decreasing every year, while a health infrastructure that helps women find skilled obstetric care is lessening maternal deaths in Ethiopia. The Democratic Republic of Congo has a program training health workers that is aimed at making vital medical care more accessible.

Three women in Afghanistan are running their own veterinary clinic and teaching the importance of education to change attitudes and stifle gender equality. Dr. Devi Shetty, a cardiac surgeon in India, set up an affordable healthcare company called Narayana Health to provide low cost, high quality healthcare and now has more than 20 medical centers in India.

In 2016, Costa Rica successfully powered its electrical grid with renewable energy for 113 consecutive days, and private sectors in Malawi are creating custom-built portable water filters for households lacking access to safe drinking water, lessening the risk of contracting water-borne diseases by half.

On a larger scale, the country of Rwanda became the first low-income country to provide universal eye-care to its entire population. Although this might seem like a trivial cause compared to fighting poverty, if uneducated parents—particularly mothers—can keep their eyesight sharp, they can continue working their jobs and their work won't deteriorate as they age.

These improvements are done in an effort to break the cycle of poverty by helping working mothers keep their jobs sorting coffee beans. In previous years, their eyesight had deteriorated around the age of 45, forcing them to take their young daughters out of school to sort beans and start the cycle over again. Now they have improved eyesight and are able to keep their jobs longer and provide a steady financial home life for their children.

Some of these examples might seem small or insignificant, but any progress is worth celebrating. In Tanzania,

Art courtesy of the United Nations Food & Agriculture Organisation



young people were using social media to promote planting trees to combat deforestation. The school system was so impressed that it announced a policy that will see every student in the country plant a tree while at school. Meanwhile, in Singapore last year, the world's largest sustainability program took place. Called the UNLEASH program, this is an effort to acquire new ideas and accelerate them for solving the world's biggest problems.

This program has only been in effect the past two years, but the ideas, brought forth primarily by its youth participants, are already setting the tone for the future of the SDGs. Last year's winners, Urban Cool, proposed community-owned sustainable cooling systems to combat the heat waves in India's slums and aid the most vulnerable.

Although the progress is extraordinary and should be applauded, there is still a long way to go and much to do.

When Kevin Rudd, former Prime Minister of Australia and the president of the Asia Society Policy Institute, looks at the state of the world, he finds no hope of delivering on the Goals set for 2030. With the political and financial support being given now, he declares there is no way we could reach the goals initiated.

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However, Kerry Kennedy, the President of the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights nonprofit organization, looks at the current state of things and is encouraged. He comments on the change in world dictators, the fall of communism, the change in South Africa from apartheid to now, and the

acknowledgment and prioritization of women's rights—and he is heartened. His optimism stems from “the small groups of determined people that harnessed the dream of freedom and made it come true.”

An overlying theme seen in every progress report is the need for a united front. Large and small groups are helping get us closer to making the Sustainable Development Goals a reality, and their example is one worth following.

While there is no way at this point to tell definitively if the Sustainable Development Goals will be met, the time to come together and make change happen is now. There is work being accomplished to make these goals a reality and it's being perfected by individuals who are using the skills they possess to help change the world.

— Sarah Westbrook was the Seeds of Hope summer 2018 intern. She is from Longview, TX. At this writing, she was a Professional Writing major at Baylor University. She says that she has learned much at Seeds about becoming engaged in the issues about which you are passionate. “I never thought I could use my voice to help others,” she wrote, “but Seeds has taught me that you can use the gifts you're given to change the world.”



Right: An intern carries seedlings at the World Hunger Relief Training Farm in Elm Mott, TX.

Photo by Matthew Lester.

Far right: a young girl at Tutti Island in Sudan hears a discussion about women's rights.

Photo courtesy of Lee McKenna.

Wheat art by Mary Daily, IBVM.

Pope Francis & the Sustainable Development Goals

by Katie Cook and Sarah Westbrook

In September 2015, just before the members of the United Nations adopted *Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals*, Pope Francis was on hand to speak to the UN General Assembly about the religious values that cause many of us to aim for these goals. It was the first time a Roman pontiff had addressed the UN.

The Pope highlighted environmental rights and the connection between environmental concerns and financial inequality around the world. Adam Russell Taylor wrote shortly afterward for the World Bank,

It was fitting and profound to have the Pope frame the global goals' agenda with his remarks, since in many ways his recently released encyclical, Laudato Si, embodies the integrated and indivisible nature of the sustainable development agenda.¹

The Pope insisted that a “true ‘right of the environment’” is part of our creation story, that human beings are part of the environment and in communion with it, and that any harm done to the environment is harm done to humanity. Human beings were not given the earth with the authorization to abuse or destroy it, he said. Instead, the story of the creation calls on people to serve the earth, rather than the other way around.

He explained that environmental degradation and poverty go hand-in-hand, that economic and social exclusion are a complete denial of humanity, and that selfish overuse of natural resources disproportionately hurts weak and disadvantaged populations. To serve the poor, he said, you have to serve the environment.

Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home² was released in May before the September 2015 summit. In it, the Pope says that our present environmental crisis is a moral and spiritual challenge to every person on the planet, claims that we are all connected, and calls for greater investments in renewable energy and a binding global agreement to dramatically reduce carbon emissions.

Two months ago, Pope Francis convened an international conference at the Vatican called “Religions and the Sustainable Development Goals: Listening to the Cry of the Earth and the Poor.”

He told the assembly that, when we discuss such topics as the SDGs, we often leave out the voices of impoverished people, migrants, indigenous people and young people. He called inclusion of these groups in the discussion and also for what St. John Paul II called “an ecological conversion.”

The SDGs are supported by “our deepest religious and ethical values,” he continued. He said,

[T]hose of us who are religious need to open up the treasures of our best traditions in order to engage in a true and respectful dialogue on how to build the future of our planet.³

The conclusion of his opening address included elements from *Laudato Si'*:

[T]hree and a half years since the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, we must be even more acutely aware of the importance of accelerat-



Left: Pope Francis greets religious leaders from around the world at a March 2019 conference, “Religions and the Sustainable Development Goals,” held in the Vatican. Photo courtesy of Vatican News.

ing and adapting our actions in responding adequately to both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.⁴

—Katie Cook is the Seeds of Hope editor and Sarah Westbrook was the Summer 2018 Professional Writing intern for Seeds. Sources: United Nations, World Bank, Vatican News, Crux News Site, Pope Francis' Second Papal Encyclical, *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*, John Carroll University Campus Ministry. For more about the SDGs, see *Sustainable Development Goals: Action Towards 2030* from Caritas International.

Endnotes

1. Adam Russell Taylor, "Caring for Our Common Home, Pope Francis and the SDGs," from the World Bank.
2. The words *Laudato Si'* are the first words of the *Canticum of the Creatures* by St. Francis of Assisi, written in 1225.
3. Quoted by Lydia O'Kane in Vatican News.
4. Ibid.



A World Hunger Relief intern from Nigeria plants a seedling. Photo by Matt Lester.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

What You Can Do to Help

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a group of goals set forth by the United Nations to make the world a better and more sustainable place. They will only be attainable if we all get involved, and there are a number of simple things you can do in your everyday life. Here are 17 actions you can take to help the 17 SDGs become a reality:

1. Save electricity by using power strips and turning them off completely when you're not using them.
2. Freeze leftovers and fresh produce if you think you won't have time to eat them before they ruin.
3. Bring your own bag when you shop. Using your own reusable tote cuts down on all the plastic bags.
4. If you use a dishwasher, you can save water by not washing your plates before you run the machine.
5. Shop at your local businesses. This keeps people employed and helps prevent trucks from driving far distances.
6. Take fewer napkins at restaurants. You don't need a large stack of napkins when you go out to eat, take just what you need.
7. Get in the habit of using a refillable water bottle and coffee cup.
8. Donate what you don't use. Your items aren't useless even if you're done with them and donating can give your old things a new life.
9. Stop paper bills and bank statements. Paying online means less paper, which means less forest destruction.
10. Always turn off the lights when you're not using them. This is one of the easiest ways to save energy.
11. Recycling keeps landfills from growing. Recycle your paper, plastic and aluminum.
12. Use more rugs. Rugs keep your house warm and your thermostat working less, which also saves you money on electricity.
13. Plan out meals and be smart with your shopping trips.
14. Utilize biking, walking and public transports.
15. Take advantage of your right to elect leaders and use it to be involved in your country and local community. Your voice is a gift, and it's your right to use it.
16. Be brave. Speak out against any discrimination you see in your life. Everyone is equal and deserves kindness and equality.
17. Stay informed. There is a wealth of information out there, and there's a whole world that needs your prayers and help.

See also "*The Lazy Person's Guide to Saving the World*" on the UN's Sustainable Development page: www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/takeaction/.



Continuing the Conversation... On Panhandling

Editor's note: It would seem that the stories we printed about Panhandling in the most recent issue of Hunger News & Hope [See "How Should We Respond to Panhandlers?" and "What I Learned from Panhandlers," HNH Vol 18 No 3, pages 2-3] have struck a definite chord with our readers. Below is one response from a longtime reader. Charley Garrison has been pastor of the Central Texas Metropolitan Community Church in Waco, TX for 15 years and the coordinator of the Red Door Pantry, a food pantry for HIV-positive people, for 10 years. Upon receiving his copy of HNH, he immediately wrote the following response.

As always, thanks for the publication! Here are my thoughts, in response to your articles on panhandling ["How Should We Respond to Panhandlers?" and "What I Learned from Panhandlers," HNH Vol 18 No 3, pages 2-3]:

...I would say that if I had been reduced to sleeping under a bridge, possibly because of circumstances out of my control, I would also want something to numb me out.

For those who don't want to give to people because they might spend it on drugs or alcohol, I would say that if I had been reduced to sleeping under a bridge, possibly because of circumstances out of my control, I would also want something to numb me out. Just try to imagine, not a day or two of that kind of life, but an existence seemingly without end! If I'm not going to help them out of their mess, am I also going to be the one to deny them a mental respite from it?

When leaving the office to go home [in Beverly Hills, TX], I take the Jack Kultgen Freeway that runs along Interstate-35 because it's the quickest route. More times than not, there is someone standing at a three-way-stop intersection close to the HEB grocery store on South Valley Mills Drive.

I carry dollar bills in the coin container of my car for folks asking for money, and so I make sure I'm in the lane closest to that person (I have plenty of time to merge back into the lane that I need to turn off to my home).

I look at that route as a toll road. If I want to get home by the quickest route, I pay the toll. And that means look-

ing the person in the eye when I place a buck in his or her hands and humbly accepting his or her "God bless you!"

And yes, there are a few folks who prefer that existence. When I lived in New Orleans, I served as a director for a day center for HIV-positive adults. The day center almost exclusively served homeless folks. I loved each of them and they taught me a lot. Through a team effort of a lot of folks, we were finally able to get one of our clients into a house. He ended up back on the streets because he couldn't handle being confined to a house, nor did he wish to take on the responsibilities that went along with living there. He left the house, preferring instead the freedom of the streets.

—Rev. Charley Garrison, Pastor
Central Texas Metropolitan Community Church
Waco, TX

We welcome your responses! This is a complicated issue and warrants careful discernment. We think our readership community is a perfect place to continue such a conversation. Please email seedseditor1@gmail.com with your thoughts. —lkc

Hunger News & Hope

received five
Associated Church Press
awards for 2018.

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Bread for the World Releases 2018 Hunger Report

The Bread for the World Institute recently released its 29th annual Hunger Report: *The Jobs Challenge: Working to End Hunger by 2030*. The 2018 report explores why millions of American workers and their families are hungry and poor, and how government policies can change this. Decent jobs that pay a livable wage enable many of us to support ourselves and our families. Far too many people in the United States, however, have jobs that do not guarantee freedom from hunger. A full-time minimum wage worker earns about \$15,000 a year, but the poverty line for a family of four is about \$24,000 a year. Moreover, economists calculate that meeting a family's basic needs requires an income of approximately twice the poverty level.

The Jobs Challenge explains clearly why the United States needs better jobs and better work-related policies to end hunger. You can read and explore the report to understand more about the root causes of hunger and poverty.

Ending global hunger and extreme poverty is within our grasp. Incomes are rising even in countries once thought to be facing insurmountable challenges, showing that progress is possible anywhere when barriers are removed. A global consensus has now formed that 2030 is an ambitious but attainable target date. [See the stories about the UN Sustainable Development Goals, beginning on page 1°.]

Ending global hunger and extreme poverty is within our grasp.... A global consensus has now formed that 2030 is an ambitious but attainable target date.

**—Asma Lateef, Executive Director,
Bread for the World Institute**

In the United States, the preferred way of ending hunger is by ensuring that everyone who wants a job can get one and that it pays a sufficient wage. The bare minimum that defines a “decent” job is a sufficient wage, which should provide families with the means to put food on the table. For those who are raising children, a decent job should allow them to balance their responsibilities as an employee and parent.



*The new 2018 Hunger Report from Bread for the World Institute is titled *The Jobs Challenge: Working to End Hunger by 2030*.*

Photo courtesy of Bread for the World.

Decent jobs are also the best way to end hunger and extreme poverty in developing countries. The zero-sum narrative holds that prosperity in another part of the world must come at the expense of workers in the United States. But it doesn't have to be this way. Better policies can make the difference. We can reclaim the American Dream for all in our country, and we can share that powerful dream with our neighbors who are striving for more than a subsistence life. This is the jobs challenge that the 2018 Hunger Report addresses.

— From Asma Lateef, Executive Director of the Bread for the World Institute. The report can be downloaded at www.bread.org.

Teach Justice through Worship.

Ask for a free promotional copy of a Lent, Advent or Hunger Emphasis worship packet from Seeds of Hope.



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Statement of Purpose

Seeds of Hope is a private, independent group of believers responding to a common burden for the poor and hungry people in God's world, and acting on the strong belief that biblical mandates to feed the poor were not intended to be optional. The group seeks out people of faith who feel called to care for poor and vulnerable people; and to affirm, enable and empower a variety of responses to the problems of poverty.

Quotes, Poems & Pithy Sayings

O God, giver of life and health,
your Son Jesus Christ has called us
to hunger and thirst to see right prevail;
refresh us with your grace
that we may not be weary of well-doing;
for the sake of him who meets all our needs,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.

God of the hungry,
make us hunger and thirst for the right,
till our thirst for justice has been satisfied
and hunger has gone from the earth.

—*New Zealand Prayer Book*



Art by Sally Lynn Askins

Editorial Address

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Seeds also produces *Sacred Seasons*, a series of worship materials for

Advent, Lent and an annual Hunger Emphasis—with an attitude “toward justice, peace and food security for all of God’s children.” These include litanies, sermons, children’s and youth activities, bulletin art and drama.

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