Abstract: The Millennium Development Goals were a global endeavour to achieve pro-poor human development between 2000 and 2015. Although adopted by 189 heads of state, few governments of developing countries took ownership of the Goals by adjusting their national policies to UNDP guidelines for accomplishment. This research finds a correlation between ownership and MDG achievement by studying the policies and progress of Burkina Faso, Uganda and Kenya. The findings are used to argue for strategic cooperation between the UNDP, World Bank and IMF for successful pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Global Development Goals in Sub-Saharan Africa

The Relationship Between MDG Ownership and Development Progress

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1. Introduction

On September 25th, 2015, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): seventeen goals aiming to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all within the next one and a half decades. Fifteen years earlier, on September 18th, 2000, a similar agreement was signed in the form of the Millennium Declaration and its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), during the largest United Nations convention ever to be held at that time. Like its successors, the objectives of the MDGs were to drastically decrease the number of people suffering from poverty, hunger, lack of education, gender inequality, child mortality, unsatisfactory maternal health and disease while ensuring environmental sustainability and establishing a global partnership for development before the end of 2015.

Now that the MDG deadline has been reached, it is useful to look back upon the Goals to see what lessons we can learn to improve the global pursuit of the SDGs. This thesis is concerned with the lack of 'ownership' of the MDGs by national governments in the developing world: a tendency to proclaim commitment to the Goals without changing national policies towards this end. It sets out to find a relationship between MDG ownership and the accomplishment of the Goals in Sub-Saharan Africa, which remains the least developed region in the world. The findings are used to argue for closer cooperation between the UNDP, IMF and World Bank. In this way I mean to contribute to development strategies by use of global goals and the work of the UNDP in particular.

The thesis will consist of five parts. This introduction will explain the research question and methodology of the research. Second, I will present a literature review on MDG ownership in countries and argue why this is important. Third, an analysis of UNDP national policy guidelines towards achieving the MDGs, in the form of the Millennium Project, will be made. Fourth, these recommendations will be compared to the actual policies of national governments between 2000 and 2015 to assess the extent to which ownership was taken by countries with varying records of achieving the Goals. Finally, a conclusion will present policy recommendations for the UNDP that will increase its effectiveness as global campaign leader for both the MDGs and SDGs, as well as the impact of global goalsetting.

1.1 About the Millennium Development Goals

The MDGs were based on new development paradigms that became dominant in the early 1990's, particularly in the work of UNICEF and WHO, in which human development and human rights were regarded as more important than statistical economic growth of a country. This new discourse prioritised not only the transfer of resources from developed to developing nations, but also the implementation of civil, political, economic, social and cultural human rights, including a right to develop, particularly for women, children and the poorest of society (Arndt et al., 2016; Jolly et al., 2009; Weiss & Daws, 2007). The following statement, part of the UN campaign to achieve the MDGs, shows the emphasis of the MDGs on the relationship between human rights and development (pro-poor growth), by stating that this approach to development:

'implies we are talking not of welfare or charity, but of rights and entitlements. This means that taking action to achieve the goals is an obligation. And the approach also creates a framework for holding various actors, including governments, accountable. Moreover it is widely acknowledged that sustainable development requires the active involvement of the poor and civil society. Thus without respect and fulfilment of human rights such as non-discrimination, right to participation, freedom of expression and assembly, achieving – and even more importantly – sustaining the Millennium Goals will not be possible' (UNDP, 2004)

With the MDGs, the United Nations embarked on an ambitious quest for global development in the combined interests of both the global South and North, and guided the way for the Bretton Woods institutions, bilateral aid organisations and countless NGOs, thus allying the '*three UNs'* to pursue a common goal (Weiss & Daws, 2007; Jolly et al., 2009). The setting of goals in itself was not a unique thing to do for the UN, but the MDGs managed to mobilize the global system to an unprecedented extent, often accredited to their clear, quantified and time-bound nature (Weiss & Daws, 2007; Jolly et al., 2009). They were also the most communicated and promoted goals ever to be set, raising awareness across all spectrums of society and ushering the entire global system to participate in the endeavour (Jolly et al., 2009). The resulting consensus on multilateral development strategy represented a major advance in international development (Weiss & Daws, 2007).

Five years before the deadline, in 2010, the overarching goal to reduce poverty was already met (World Bank, 2016b). The number of people globally living beneath the poverty line of $1.25 per day has since further been reduced with 68 per cent compared to 1990 (UNDP, 2015b). However, most of this progress can be explained by the remarkable economic development of China, where the number of people below the poverty line dropped by 94 per cent (UNDP, 2015b), and to lesser extent India and South East Asia (World Bank, 2016b). Much progress has also been made towards the accomplishment of the other goals, although none have been reached. 91 Per cent of children in the developing world have access to primary education, compared to 80 per cent in 1990. Two thirds of developing countries have achieved gender equality in primary education (the number for secondary and tertiary education being lower), child mortality has globally been reduced with 53 per cent (target: 66,7) and maternal mortality ratio dropped 45 per cent (targeted at 75%) (UNDP, 2015b).

Least progress has been made in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) (Easterly, 2009; Maathai, 2011; UNDP, 2015b; World Bank, 2016a). In this region, 26 countries are still off-track in eradicating poverty and hunger, compared to only seven with sufficient progress, nine having met the goal and insufficient data on the remaining five states, making it the only region not to have met the first goal (UNDP, 2015b; World Bank, 2016a). From this, poor performance in the accomplishment of the other goals can be expected in the region as well (Sahn & Stifel, 2003; Maathai, 2011). Indeed, only 80 per cent of children receive primary education, gender equality is still lowest in the world, child and maternal mortality dropped insufficiently and the region still struggles with the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and, more recently, Ebola (UNDP, 2015b; World Bank, 2016a). Harsh climate, political instability and a large head start for the rest of the developing world in 1990 have been named as causes for this relatively poor performance of Sub-Saharan Africa (Sahn & Stifel, 2003; Ahmed & Cleeve, 2004; Maathai, 2011; World bank, 2016b). Moreover, Fukuda-Parr (2008) found in a study of 22 countries (primarily Sub-Saharan African) that few developing countries took ownership of the MDGs. That is, they did not actively commit themselves to achieving the goals by following UNDP guidelines that were specifically created to assist the poorest nations (Fukuda-Parr, 2008).

1.2 Research question

With nearly 1 billion inhabitants, and as the fastest growing region of the world, it is in SSA where the greatest challenge for the SDGs lies. Not only is the area behind the rest of the developing world on nearly all targets, the failure to catch up between 2000 and 2015 suggests that development may be harder to achieve here (Arndt et al., 2016). For the UN, the international community and, most importantly, the region itself to successfully pursue the SDGs, more knowledge is needed on development strategies in SSA specifically. However, little research has been done into the analysis of different country performance in the region, the role of the UN in this and the lessons that can be learned from it. Early in the MDG period assessments have been made, by authors such as Sahn & Stifel (2003) and Ahmed & Cleeve (2004) and by researchers who were in some way involved in the Millennium Project (Radelet, 2004; Sachs & McArthurs, 2005; Sachs, 2012), but none more recent, conclusive and free of potential bias. There is also no literature on how MDG strategies are to be changed under the SDGs, save for another article by Fukuda-Parr (2016), which deals with the new form of global goal setting that the SDGs engage in.

Hence there is an important gap in the literature that is essential to be filled in the early SDG timeframe for the goals to be more successful than the MDGs, particularly in SSA. This thesis means to provide part of this knowledge for researchers and policymakers alike by asking 'h*ow did taking ownership of the Millennium Development Goals and its United Nations Development Programme guidelines by national governments influence development in Sub-Saharan Africa?*'

I define 't*aking ownership'* as 'committing to the MDGs in national development strategies and adopting UNDP guidelines into national policies to actively pursue the Goals by UN standards.' *United Nations Development Programme guidelines* are the official recommendations on how to accomplish the goals that the UNDP released through the Millennium Project. *Development* is regarded as the attainment of the MDGs.

The research question builds forth on the work of development economist Sakiko Fukuda-Parr. In her research she found that amongst the 22 studied developing countries, governments are likely to proclaim their commitment to the MDGs but rarely adjust their national policies to realise them. They *do not take ownership* of the Goals (Fukuda-Parr, 2008). However, Fukuda-Parr does not assess whether that makes a difference for the accomplishment of the goals in the studied countries, and no policy evaluation can therefore be made from her findings as an issue is being raised without testing its significance in limiting development. This thesis expands upon her work by using her conclusion as a starting point, but digs deeper into the implications of ownership, and lack thereof. Where Fukuda-Parr researched *if* countries took ownership, I mean to research *which* countries took ownership of the MDGs and with *what result*. This study thus goes further into the impact of the UNDP's approach as global campaign leader and contributes to the improvement of UNDP policy. In this way the research takes an active stance by explaining the slow progress of SSA towards the MDGs and uses these insights to propose a change of strategy to improve the sub-continent's performance for the SDGs.

The focus on the UNDP flows from the important position it takes in MDG and SDG implementation, for it is the UN body that specialises in development on a national level. It helps national governments 'to develop policies, leadership skills, partnering abilities, institutional capabilities and build resilience in order to sustain development results' (UNDP, 2016a). It supervised national implementation of the MDGs and gave advice on development strategies to realise the Goals. It was also selected by Secretary General Kofi Annan to function as ´scorekeeper´ (helping countries in monitoring MDG progress and reporting on it) and as 'campaign leader', to encourage national and international support of the Goals (UNDP, 2016b). On top of that, the UNDP permanently chairs the

United Nations Development Group, a collaboration of 32 UN development agencies plus a variety of observers which coordinates UN body cooperation on a national and international level (UNDG, 2016). Moreover, it is now also spearheading the SDG project and thus continues to be a central actor in combating under-development in years to come (UNDP, 2016b).

For these reasons the work of the UNDP is closely linked to the success of the MDGs in the past and the SDGs in the future. Strengthening this body is therefore of utmost importance if development is to be accelerated under the SDGs. The study of developing countries not taking ownership of the MDGs and the effect this has on their development tells us particularly interesting information about the UNDP's role as global campaign leader and supervisor of national implementation. It can shed light on where efforts should be allocated when dealing with global goals. The results of this research enable me to generate advice on how the UNDP strategies for the SDGs can be improved.

1.3 Methodology

I hypothesise that countries that took ownership of the MDGs have had more success in achieving them. This would imply that UNDP policy suggestions were the best way to achieve the MDGs and that following said suggestions is advisable. This hypothesis would be proven right if my study finds that governments that did commit to the MDGs did indeed accomplish more Goals than their counterparts who created their own policies. The hypothesis would be disproven if no such correlation could convincingly be verified based on the findings.

In her article, Fukuda-Parr does not make a difference between well performing and lesser performing countries and in what way states followed UNDP policy recommendations (Fukuda-Parr, 2008). Her findings, other than her conclusion, cannot be used a source for this thesis. This is data that I have to generate myself. In order to test the hypothesis and answer the research question, I therefore propose to do a comparative case study in which I compare the extent to which governments actively followed UNDP guidelines and how many Goals were indeed attained by them. A case study approach allows for careful assessment of a country and helps to provide explanations, which Large-N statistical analysis does not, but which is critical for studying and advising on policy (Arndt et al., 2016). First I will assess what recommendations have been made by the UNDP to achieve the goals. Then I will compare these recommendations to the actual policies that were used by countries, to see whether ownership of the Goals was taken and if a correlation between ownership and development can be found.

Due to the limited number of words to which this thesis is bound, a selection of three countries will be included in the case study, all from within SSA. As political unrest has been shown to negatively affect development (Roe & Siegel, 2011), all selected countries have to be relatively stable. Likewise, institutional capacity directly influences development (Besley & Persson, 2010) and therefore only strong states qualify for comparison. This poses a problem, as most African states cannot be considered 'strong' (Arndt et al., 2016; Herbst, 2012) and strong statehood cannot be expected in countries with low tax revenues (UN Millennium Project, 2005). Therefore, relative state capacity is the requirement. Finally, a difference in number of achieved MDGs is necessary, in order to be able to pinpoint a difference between well performing and lesser performing countries. This research recognizes that some SSA countries were indeed able to achieve some MDGs and that statistical development took place in the region over the past 25 years (Sahn & Stifel, 2003; Ahmed & Cleeve, 2004; World Bank, 2016a; Arndt et al., 2016). In light of overall failure to accomplish the MDGs on the sub-continent, these success stories serve as an anchor and a point of reference from which can be theorized on the importance of ownership.

I choose to include the following countries in my analysis: Burkina Faso, Uganda and Kenya. Burkina Faso has done exceptionally well in its pursuit of the MDGs. It has even been credited by the UNDP as the fastest accelerator of progress in Africa (UNDP, 2015a). Uganda has made considerable steps as well, but on a more modest scale than Burkina Faso. Kenya has struggled badly to achieve the Goals and on most levels the situation in the country has declined since 2000. If following UNDP guidelines truly benefited development, then it is likely I that Burkina Faso took significantly more ownership of the MDGs than Uganda and Kenya. In this line of reasoning Kenya is expected to have taken little or no ownership at all. A comparison between Burkina Faso, Uganda and Kenya then highlights the gravity of national policy in global goalsetting.

For the same reason that a selection of countries has to be made, I am unable to study recommendations and policies towards all of the eight MDGs. Therefore, another selection has to be made of which MDGs will be taken into consideration for this research. I choose to look at MDG 1 and 2. Goal 1 is to eradicate extreme hunger and poverty. It is the overarching Goal of the MDGs and therefore important to take into account. Success in this goal is also correlated to performance towards other goals, according to a study by Pingali, Stamoulis and stringer (2006). Goal 2 is to ensure universal primary education. This, too, is correlated with the other goals as good education is an investment in future development (Larson et al., 2006; Harper et al. 2003; Dercon et al. 2012). Together these two goals form good indicators of performance towards attaining the MDGs. Moreover, they are quantified, making them easier to measure, which means sources are more reliable and suitable for comparison. For this reason, they are the most suitable Goals to be used in the case study. In choosing to study these two Goals in particular, the case studies reflect their relative overall performance towards the Millennium Development Goals. Burkina Faso has made significant progress on both. Uganda only achieved Goal 1 and Kenya accomplished neither. A study of Goals 1 and 2 in these countries in particular therefore covers the variety of outcomes and potentially the policy realities that were their cause.

An array of sources will be used for this research. Firstly, the UNDP MDG guidelines will be deducted from the work of the UN Millennium Project. This was a special body of experts which was commissioned by the UNDP to create a document with policy guidelines to achieve the Goals. They did this in the form of the 356-page report to the UN Secretary-General, titled '*Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals*'. This document will serve as the primary source from which the UNDP guidelines to achieve the MDGs are drawn.

Secondly, to find out to which policies Burkina Faso, Uganda and Kenya used, I will follow Fukuda-Parr's example of using Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP), which she also utilised to this end (Fukuda-Parr, 2008). PRSPs are documents that Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) give to the IMF and World Bank to be considered for loans and debt relieve and in which they justify their intent with the aid. The Millennium Project stresses the importance of these documents in achieving the MDGs and recommends governments to henceforth make their PRSPs 'MDG-based' (UN Millennium Project, 2005). They are an excellent source to reflect on national policies and their relationship to the MDGs. Additionally, the MDG progress reports that national governments wrote together with the UNDP, as well as regional and global progress reports by the UNDP will be used. While PRSPs may be emphasizing monetary and financial development policies because they are written for the World Bank and IMF, the MDG progress reports run the risk of rhetorically glorifying commitment to the MDGs without the accompanying policies being implemented. Therefore, the sources have to be critically read, double-checked and compared, so they provide a reliable indication of MDG ownership by the respective governments.

2. A case for guidelines and ownership

Jolly, Emmerij and Weiss (2009) argue that the true strength of the UN lies in its ability to inspire and pave the way for the global community towards a certain goal. They claim that ideas that originated within the UN can change the world in four different ways: by changing the way issues are perceived globally, by setting agendas for action, by changing the way key actors perceive their interests and by having these actors absorb UN ideas into their own institution (Jolly et al., 2009). The MDGs seem to be a fine example of this. First, the idea that development was closely related to human rights and should be regarded as such, was established. Then, the MDGs provided a clear set of goals and indicators of how development could be achieved, facilitating agenda setting for other actors. Third, it inspired a whole range of new NGOs, as well as existing ones and other actors to align their interests alongside the MDGs. Finally, many of these actors started to communicate their commitment to the MDGs in their mission statements and objectives (Jolly et al. 2009).

Although this may be true for the Breton Woods institutions, NGOs and a number of governments, the theory does not hold for the majority of developing countries. As Fukuda-Parr showed, many developing countries and donors proclaimed commitment to the MDGs without changing national policies towards this end (Fukuda-Parr, 2008). The UN idea of quantified development targets with an emphasis on human development failed to inspire and lead many of these key actors. Is the lack of taking ownership of the MDGs amongst developing country governments, by extension, a failure of the UN and her work?

Some authors have argued it is not, because the MDGs were never meant to be implemented on a national level. Rather, they were to be adjusted to the context of a country. That is, the capabilities of a government and the challenges it faced should have been used as a vantage point to create national goals that were inspired by the MDGs, but were more realistic to attain on a national scale (Vandemoortele & Roy, 2004). Many developing countries were believed not to have the resources to combat the challenges they faced in order to achieve the global goals (De Renzio, 2005). Therefore, the goals have been criticised of being too ambitious on a national level (Clemens, Kenny & Moss, 2007) and that measuring by global goals would undermine the progress that has been made in Africa (Easterly, 2009). However, adjusting the goals to a national level runs the risk of downgrading the ambition of the goals to accelerate poverty reduction and other development processes, both globally and nationally. The very power of the MDGs lay in their ambition and their attempt to kick-start a growth spurt, rather than to develop along the same line that had been followed for decades.

For this reason, the Millennium Project discarded these critiques. A fear of being held accountable may have made governments and donors, not willing to increase budgetary commitment and major policy changes, want to water down the goals under the pretence that they were unrealistic. It admitted that the goals were indeed ambitious to be achieved in the poorest countries but ‘in most or even all countries they can still be achieved by 2015 if there are intensive efforts by all parties’ (UN Millennium Project, 2005, p. 44). Rather than adjusting the Goals to a national level, the Project argued that they should be used to spark bold, needs-based policy changes. Not acceleration to, but achievement of the Goals was to be the purpose of policy change, holding true to the ambition of the Millennium Declaration which stated:

We will spare no effort to free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty, to which more than a billion of them are currently subjected. We are committed to making the right to development a reality for everyone and to freeing the entire human race from want (Millennium Declaration, 2000).

Nearly all governments in the world participated in the Millennium Summit. It therefore seems peculiar that governments would withdraw from their commitment in national policy. Even if the criticisms discussed above were wrongly discarded by the Millennium Project, the intention of the United Nations as an institution was still to have national governments participate in and take ownership of the Millennium Development Goals. Thus an analysis of MDG ownership and development progress is still useful with regard to the work of the UN. It is to this analysis that this thesis now turns.

3. UNDP Guidelines

In this chapter I will summarise the UNDP guidelines as they were proposed by the Millennium Project in their final report to the UNDP and Secretary General. First I will look at the special attention that the Project gave to the difficulty of developing Sub-Saharan Africa and the policy recommendations that followed from it. Then I will describe the policy guidelines for each of the two MDGs that I study.

Guidelines will be classified as either development priority or development investment, to enable me to differentiate between the importance of following certain recommendations. For example, the need to increase rural productivity would be a priority while improving rural infrastructure would be an investment towards attaining this priority. This will become important in the next chapter when I will rate the ownership Burkina Faso, Uganda, and Kenya took of the MDGs. Only the most important Millennium Project guidelines will be highlighted here, as their report is too large to summarize in detail. An overview of all the guidelines used in this research can be found in table 1.

3.1 The special challenge for Africa

The UN Millennium Project dedicated special attention to the needs of the African continent, with SSA in particular, because it is the most underdeveloped region of the world. They acknowledged that the region suffers from governance issues such as the vulnerability of states and corruption but find that, given the low tax income, relatively these are not worse than elsewhere in the world. Therefore, bad governance cannot be the explanation of Africa’s ongoing poverty crisis. They concluded rather that Sub-Sahara Africa is stuck in a poverty trap where it does not have the resources to alleviate itself from poverty, because of poverty itself. Causes for this poverty trap are: high transport costs and small markets, low agricultural productivity, widespread disease, a history of (neo-) colonial geopolitics and slow influx of technology (UN Millennium Project, 2005).

Although these are very serious problems, the Project believed that committed SSA governments could overcome them through intensive investments in solving the roots of these challenges to development (UN Millennium Project, 2005). Therefore, following the Project guidelines should help SSA countries make significant progress. The report stresses that the socio-economic status of women in Africa needs special consideration in this regard because ‘to a great extent, women are the farmers, caregivers, and child-raisers of Africa’ (p. 153). Because women perform the largest share of unemployed work, development investments have a special benefit for them and should therefore not be overlooked (UN Millennium Project, 2005).

Three general priorities were made by the Project concerning the pursuit of the MDGs. First was the importance to increase human capital by training social and community workers. After all, education, agricultural knowledge exchange and the health care sector cannot function without well trained staff. They propose investments in the form of short term training programmes for degrees and certifications, as well as training existing staff, adequate salaries and proper management systems.

The second priority it set was for regional integration of sharing knowledge, resources and trade. Thirdly, the creation of a strategy group, chaired by the government, is recommended. This multi-stakeholder, MDG based working group could function as an MDG accelerator within the county. It should include governmental organisations, international organisations (including UN bodies), civil society and people who would be affected by development policies (UN Millennium Project, 2005).

2.2 UNDP guidelines towards Goal 1

Guidelines towards the accomplishment of Goal 1 can be divided into two categories: towards rural development and towards urban development. The most important priority for rural development is raising rural productivity. Increased agricultural output increases rural household incomes and reduce both hunger and poverty. The Project calls for a 'Twenty-first Century African Green Revolution' that would double the continents' productivity' (p. 154). The new seed varieties of the Green Revolution in Latin America and South-East Asia consume high amounts of water. As the Sub-Saharan African climate is unfavourable to such farming, irrigation systems have to be put in place to increase farm yields and thus increase food productivity which can either be sold to trading partners or used within borders to alleviate extreme hunger. This also involves increased agricultural knowledge through communication amongst farmers and social workers with educated backgrounds (UN Millennium Project, 2005).

The second priority for rural development is to lower transport costs. This is so that farmers can access farming technology and fertilizer and so they can transport their product to the market. The prime focus should be on the national, regional and European markets (UN Millennium Project, 2005). A study found that halving transport costs could increase the volume of transport five times, which would greatly increase rural revenue (Limao & Venables, 1999). To accomplish this, an extensive road system that connects the inland (where most Africans live) to the coast (from where goods can be shipped) is of utmost importance. Moreover, connection to the electricity network would greatly benefit rural production and its access to markets (UN Millennium Project, 2005).

The second category of policy guidelines by the Millennium Project is urban development. African cities are rapidly growing due to continuous rural-urban migration. Poverty refugees seek better lives in the city, where they hope to find work. The small manufacturing and service industries of African cities are rarely internationally competitive and grow slowly. Their demand for labour is outgrown by the labour supply the migrants bring to the city, which drives urban poverty to increasingly high levels. Like the rural areas, it is a priority that the cities are connected to the international market. Industries should focus on selling clothing and light manufactured products. Here, too, the infrastructure needs to be improved, along with access to electricity and water. Export oriented businesses have to be promoted (UN Millennium Project, 2005).

2.3 UNDP guidelines towards Goal 2

The Project deemed that policies aiming towards Goal 2, universal primary education, should give priority to creating incentives to let children go to school to ensure both universal enrolment and universal completion of school. The project suggested a number of investments to ensure enrolment. It recommends governments give payments to poor families to prevent them from keeping their children at home to work rather than sending them to school. Closely related to these cash rewards are in-kind payments that would benefit the family, such as free lunch at schools. Other incentives are the lowering of school costs and the provision of scholarships (UN Millennium Project, 2005).

It is important that all children have access to quality education. Therefore, schools have to be built near the homes of children, even in remote areas. This also means that school buildings have to be large enough to house all attending children and adequately equipped with writing and teaching materials. There should be a sufficient amount of teachers to accommodate the number of pupils they teach and teachers have to be well trained. Universal education should become a national norm, both institutionally and socially and support towards this is encouraged. Teachers should be accountable for their work by parents and the government. It is also endorsed to let civil society, the UN and development partners help in the design of the schoolings system and the curriculum (UN Millennium Project, 2005).

There is particularly an insufficient attendance rate in SSA amongst girls. This is particularly so because of their socio-economic status and disadvantaged position on the labour market. Therefore, the gender bias in education has to be broken in order to ensure universal primary education amongst both girls and boys.

Table 1 displays the policy guidelines take from the UN Millennium Project final report. Investments are classified by priority.

Table 1. UN Millennium Project guidelines towards Millennium Development Goals 1 and 2 in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Millennium Development Goal	**Development Priorities**	**Development Investments**
General	Increase Human Capital	Educate Staff Adequate Salaries Human Resource Management
	Regional Integration	
	National MDG Strategy Group	
Goal 1	Increase Rural Productivity	Irrigation Knowledge to Farmers Rural Infrastructure Rural Electrification
	Lower Rural Transport Costs	Rural Infrastructure Rural Electrification
	Connect Cities to International Markets	Export Orientation (competitiveness) Urban Infrastructure Urban Electrification
Goal 2	Incentivise School Attendance	Cash Rewards In-kind Payment Lowering Costs Scholarships Access to Schools
	Improve Education	Sufficient Materials Large Enough Buildings Sufficient Teachers Quality Teachers Accountability for Teachers Cooperate with Partners
	Gender Equality	Move Against Gender Bias

4. MDG Ownership in Developing Countries

A comparison between different countries will be made here, but a methodological issue has to be addressed first. How does one measure and compare *ownership*? The qualitative nature of such a concept makes for difficult cross-case comparison. In order to make sense of the data that I collect, I therefore introduce a point system that quantifies ownership so that it becomes measurable.

The system builds forth on the classification of UNDP guidelines that was proposed in the previous chapter. In my analysis, development priorities will be awarded with one point, whereas development investments will be awarded with two points. This way, a country that follows the UNDP suggestion to increase rural productivity, for example, but creates its own policies towards this end ranks lower in ownership than a country that also abides to the UNDP's recommended investments. The latter country takes more ownership of MDGs because it followed the UNDP more closely than the former.

This is in line with the fact that many states swore commitment to the Goals without making policy changes (Fukuda-Parr, 2008). Similarly, they can claim dedication to a certain development priority without making the accompanying investments. Hence the difference in *ownership rate* between priorities and investments. Because specific statements of devotion towards the MDGs have turned out to often be meaningless, these will not be awarded points in the analysis. If a priority or investment has only been carried out to a certain extent, but not at the government´s full capacity compared to the other states, they will be awarded half points.

Some investments, such as rural infrastructure, are suggested by the UNDP to achieve multiple priorities. Because the effect of the investment is likely independent of the reason it was made, these will only be counted once. Therefore, a country that has improved its rural infrastructure to increase rural productivity and to lower transport costs will only be awarded two points instead of four. However, a difference will be made between rural and urban investments such as electrification and infrastructure, because they affect a significantly different part of the population and therefore do not substitute each other.

The maximum number of points to be earned is thus 53: 9 for priorities and 44 for investments. Using this model, it is unlikely that any country would have a perfect score, as some investments rule each other out. Lowering costs for schooling and awarding scholarships are not expected to be used simultaneously. The ownership rate has to be considered relatively to the maximum attainable points. The model is a crude method, but it will suffice to make distinction between countries possible. The findings, summarised in table 2, are as follows:

4.1 Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso is amongst the greatest success stories of the MDGs in Sub-Saharan Africa. It took remarkable ownership of the MDGs by following the UNDP guidelines closely. Although it did not achieve all of the Goals, it has been the fastest accelerator of progress on the continent and is praised by the UNDP as an example for other states (UNDP, 2015a). In 2000 it had a poverty rate of 46.6%, amongst the highest in Africa, (MED Burkina Faso, 2003) which it lowered to 19% in 2014, the second largest reduction in Africa after the Gambia. Primary net enrolment rate rose from 36.7% to 66.8% in 2012 (UNDP, 2015a), the fastest increase in enrolment rate ever recorded (Easterly, 2009).

In order to acquire this impressive momentum, an intensive collection of policies was introduced. Burkina Faso confirmed its commitment to the MDGs in both its PRSPs and MDG reports, which it sought to align to each other (MED Burkina Faso, 2003). Good governance was envisioned to be the key, which was done through self-reflection and inclusive decision-making with international, national and local stakeholders (MED Burkina Faso, 2003;2004;2008;2010). Countless of working groups, programmes, councils, frameworks and departments were founded for this purpose.

Seeking to strengthen its own capabilities to catalyse development, Burkina Faso´s government trained its public sector staff through mid-career education and training programmes. In this way it increased its human capital for the sake of more effective development leadership. To foster overall economic growth of the country, Burkina Faso sought to stimulate the private sector and its engagement in the regional and global macro economy. It did this by creating a competitive environment that would attract private investment through liberalisation, privatisation, establishment of legal frameworks and focus groups and to increase its monetary capacity (MED Burkina Faso, 2004) as demanded by the IMF and World Bank. Within five years the tertiary sector claimed the largest share of national GDP (MED Burkina Faso, 2008).

However, around 85% of Burkina Faso's population relied on agriculture as their main source of income (MED Burkina Faso, 2004). To achieve pro-poor growth, policies had to target this group in particular. Investments in rural development were the main priority for the government, both to reduce poverty and hunger and to assure universal primary education (MED Burkina Faso, 2004; 2008). The largest share of the development budget went to four pillars of development, primarily to accelerating growth, followed by expanding job creation, ensuring access to social services and good governance (MED Burkina Faso, 2004; 2008).

Increasing rural productivity, decreasing rural transport costs and promoting agricultural export were chief components of the poverty reduction strategy. This included a wide variety of investments, both in line with the UNDP guidelines as well as initiatives by the government itself. Credit or seeds, livestock and technology were made available for the poorest of farmers, particularly women, who comprise 40% of the rural labour force but suffer disproportionally from poverty. Irrigation was improved through small scale local projects as well as large scale constructions of dams, reservoirs and wetlands in the regions that were most vulnerable to seasonal droughts. This allowed the yearlong cultivation of water-intensive seasonal cash crops. Through solar powered energy and other pilot projects in remote areas, a national rural electrification strategy was created in 2003 (MED Burkina Faso, 2004). Until resources were available for more advanced technology, diesel engines were distributed for communal energy provision (MED Burkina Faso, 2008). Thousands of manure pits were dug to further increase rural production. Farmers were trained in cooperation with the national farmers' association to spread knowledge about manure use, diversification, intensification and farming technology amongst other topics in an attempt to 'professionalise' the agricultural sector (MED Burkina Faso, 2003; 2004; 2008; 2010).

Additionally, research was done into farming techniques and soil fertility, in particular with regard to the production of cotton, Burkina Faso's primary agricultural export product (MED Burkina Faso, 2004). After cotton, livestock takes the largest share of rural labour. Therefore, new slaughterhouses, livestock markets and milk transformation units were built and old ones rehabilitated to support the market (MED Burkina Faso, 2004; 2008). Although Burkina Faso's main export product is gold, very few policy changes were made in the mining sector, without significant change. It may be possible that the gold sector was already a thriving one, therefore not requiring much government intervention for the sake of pro-poor growth.

Most of the newly build roads were between the largest cities. From 2000 to 2002 411km of new paved roads were constructed which connected the largest cities to each other and to neighbouring countries and the coast. Rail and air connections were improved to further connect Burkina Faso to the surrounding lands and waters. Many existing roads were reinforced or received due maintenance (MED Burkina Faso, 2004; 2008). The rural road network was also expanded and maintained, but existed primarily of dirt roads (MED Burkina Faso, 2008). Similar to infrastructure, the urban electricity network was improved, by enlarging Burkina Faso's own energy production and by connecting border cities to the electricity grid of Ghana. Electricity costs were also reduced and information about efficient energy use was distributed to make electricity more affordable. In 2002 alone, 15,623 households received access to electricity. In the first three years after the Millennium Declaration Burkina Faso's electrification rate rose from 3 to 12 percent (MED Burkina Faso, 2004) and to 16,5% in 2008 (MED Burkina Faso, 2008).

Structural changes were also made to education, both to incentivise enrolment, improve the quality of education and to create gender equality. In the provinces with the lowest enrolment rates, parent's contribution to girls' schooling were covered by the government. Social awareness activities and the involvement of families and communities in the education process were utilised to move against the gender bias and to stimulate girl enrolment rates (MED Burkina Faso, 2004). As a result, neigh half of the children attending schools in 2012 were girls (UNDP, 2015a). School supplies and textbooks were made available for all at government expense. Other in kind payments came in the form of free school lunches (MED Burkina Faso, 2004).

Nearly 300 new school were build each year, alongside many pre-schooling facilities and educational day-care centres (MED Burkina Faso, 2004; 2008). However, the teacher supply could not keep up with the increased school attendance, resulting in a student to teacher ratio of 54 in 2006, higher than desired (MED Burkina Faso, 2008). A new law abolished the rule that guaranteed licensed teachers of employment. Teachers henceforth had to put effort in their work, lest they lose their job. Teachers were also preferable selected from the local community so that he or she could be held accountable for his work and was more closely connected to the students (MED Burkina Faso, 2004). The growing demand for teachers and the lack thereof leads to questions about how effective these policies were in facilitating the weigh off between quality and quantity of teachers.

These policies constitute to an ownership rate of 45 for Burkina Faso. The nation may not have managed to get a 100% primary education enrolment rate, but its strides forward defy all expectations. The development of Burkina Faso is a lesson that teaches how limited resources and intensive cooperation can be mobilised to alleviate one of the poorest nations from the poverty trap. If the progress can be maintained under the SDGs, the country is in for a bright future. Following the recommendations of the Millennium Project most certainly played a large part in this success. But setbacks also have to be acknowledged. Regional differences in development are prominent (MED Burkina Faso, 2010). Between 2000 and 2012 Burkina Faso's primary education completion rate *dropped* from 62 to 57 (UNDP, 2015a). It is unclear what caused this trend, but is shows that the progress in the country is not unconditional. Burkina Faso is yet to overcome these challenges, but it´s relative success and high ownership rate of the MDGs begins to suggest support for the hypothesis.

4.2 Uganda

Contrary to Burkina Faso, Uganda has had more difficulty in realising the MDGs. True, it did succeed to halve its poverty rate of nearly 40% by 2013 (MFPED Uganda, 2013; Van Campenhout et al., 2016) and was amongst the best performers in Sub-Saharan Africa in that regard (UNDP, 2015a). But little was achieved in the field of increased enrolment. At the start of the millennium Uganda already had a relatively high net enrolment ratio of 86% in 2002; a number which *decreased* over the following years to 83% in 2010 (MFPED Uganda, 2013). Completion rates did rise from 38% in 2000 to 55% in 2012 (UNDP, 2015a) but overall progress has been disappointing. Could it be that Uganda´s relative ownership rate of the respective goals differs?

Uganda claimed to be committed to both Goals (MFPED Uganda, 2003; 2005; 2010b). However, it's policies resembled the UNDP suggestions much more closely for Goal 1 than for Goal 2. Cost-effectiveness of investments were of great importance to the government and much research was done into this. Public sector reforms sought to increase public wages, whilst keeping costs low and maintaining efficiency. Human capital was increased through a reward and appraisal system for good performance within the public sector. Reformed management was meant to counter corruption and promote accountability and effectiveness. Staff were given training and extra education to become more proficient at their jobs. (MFPED Uganda, 2005). In these ways the government increased its own ability to challenge the MDGs.

Poverty reduction was done through Uganda's own inclusive decision-making and monitoring Poverty Eradication Action Plan (MFPED Uganda, 2003; 2005; 2010a; 2010b), which was already existent in 2000, but was adapted to mirror the MDGs (MFPED Uganda, 2003). The plan had one primary objective: to follow a Western model of industrialisation that would catapult Uganda into the third millennium as a middle-income country. This meant a shift from an agriculturally oriented economy towards one that relies on industries and services. In part, this decision was motivated by the developments of the years prior to the MDGs. Between 1990 and 2003 agricultural revenue only grew by 3.8% per year against 10.5% for industry and 7.5% for services. However, in 2005 69% of the population was still employed in agriculture, while only 8% was in industry and 23% in services. The government wanted to remove constraints on agriculture by increasing opportunities in non-farm sectors, drawing upon the large rural labour force. An increased demand for non-agricultural goods and services was needed to cause this shift (MFPED Uganda, 2003; 2005).

Uganda thus focussed on liberalisation and competitive practices of the secondary and tertiary sectors. Protectionism was abolished, state property was privatised and regulations were created in favour of private investment and expansion. Medium, small-scale and micro-enterprises represented 12% of rural employment and 40% in urban areas in 2005. Tax regulations and other bureaucratic obstacles were loosened to attract private investment in these sub-sectors, which would kick-start growth. Private sector skill and business development trainings were made available to the owners of these enterprises (MFPED Uganda, 2003; 2005; 2010a; 2010b; 2014). Social safety nets such as pensions and unconditional cash transfers were installed to encourage higher-risk high-value activities (MFPED Uganda, 2010b). In 2014 an income support programme was piloted (MFPED Uganda, 2014).

Urban areas were largely connected to the electricity grid but suffered frequent outages due to poor technologies. New generators were installed to lower the number of outages and support a reliable electricity supply. The construction of two large dams which would make up for the growing energy demand were planned (MFPED Uganda, 2005), but they are not yet operative (MFPED Uganda, 2014). Many undertakings were left to private actors, with the government encouraging investment in electrification rather than engaging in the practice themselves. It did issue awareness campaigns about responsible electricity use to lower energy waste (MFPED Uganda, 2005).

As most roads were between cities and regional hubs, both the urban and rural road networks were in need of expansion and improvement, with primary focus on urban infrastructure (MFPED Uganda, 2005). As with energy, the private sector was encouraged to lead the charge. The physical infrastructure has been greatly expanded this way (17% of roads were paved in 2013 (MFPED Uganda, 2014)), but mainly businesses and industries reaped the benefits (MFPED Uganda, 2010b; 2014). Entebbe Airport was expanded to accommodate increased international trade and travel and rail connections to Kenya were improved in a collaborative project between the two countries (MFPED Uganda, 2005).

Yet 96% of the poor remained engaged in self-employed agriculture in 2005. Pro-poor growth could only be achieved if policies to increase rural productivity were implemented. Agriculture was to be modernised and commercialised to increase revenue and meet demands. Research into farming practices and technologies were conducted and the results where shared with farmers. Moreover, advice on and access to (micro)finance, market strategies and management were offered by the government, particularly to the poorest farmers with least access to resources and information, which were commonly women (MFPED Uganda, 2005; 2007).

Rural household electrification, which was 3% in 2003, was aimed to be increased to 10% in 2012 through a series of small scale addition to the national electricity network. Similarly, investments were made in the expansion and improvement of the rural infrastructure network, which was in bad state. The government was unsure whether improved irrigation would be profitable. It invested into researching the cost effectiveness of large scale irrigation while only small scale projects were done in the neediest areas. The rapidly growing telecommunications network in Uganda did not stretch out towards more remote regions where the poorest lived. Therefore, special taxation and regulation was introduced on the profits in this sector to make sure every Ugandan had either direct or indirect access to some form of telecommunication (MFPED Uganda, 2005).

Uganda did claim commitment to MDG 2, but it's policies do not reflect this dedication in the same way they do for Goal 1. The country strived for 'massive expansion of primary education' (MFPED Uganda, 2005: xxii). This would counter the rapid population growth in Uganda, which pressured the enrolment ratio. Schools were build, enlarged and sufficiently equipped and teachers were incentivised to work in remote areas, so that many children had access to primary education. Books were provided by the state. The curriculum was changed so that it became more relevant for the development context of Uganda. Alongside English, lower grades were taught in their native tongues, for better learning. The gender gap in education had already been eliminated by 2000 (MFPED Uganda, 2005; 2010) and even shifted in favour of girls in the following years (MFPED Uganda, 2013).

But the policies to allow universal primary education failed. The enrolment rate of 86% slowly decreased towards 83% (MFPED Uganda, 2013). To a degree that may have to do with the government's excessive focus on the promotion of secondary education, on which it spent nearly as much effort as on primary schooling. This, in turn, must have been part of the national industrialisation scheme. Moreover, schooling remained expensive. Schools provided the benefit of nutritious meals for children but parents were required to pay for these, as well as tuition fees and uniforms. Teachers were trained to give higher quality education and had to comply with performance targets but were in low supply. They had to do multi-grade and double-shift teaching (MFPED Uganda, 2005), which helped to give more children access to education and lower drop-out rates (MFPED Uganda, 2014), but must have also lowered the quality of the lessons.

Uganda receives an ownership rate of 39.5. However, the points are unevenly distributed between the two Goals, with a relatively low Ugandan rate of 15 for MDG 2. Education policies primarily aimed to improve education, rather than to increase enrolment. This kept schooling relatively expensive and inaccessible for the poor. Uganda has to be credited for its ability to promote secondary and even tertiary education enrolment, but as higher level education is not included in Goal 2, these investments cannot be rewarded with ownership points. The case of Uganda thus strengthens the hypothesis: high ownership rate for MDG 1 led to achievement of the goals, low ownership rate for MDG 2 stalled progress.

4.3 Kenya

Kenya's exact performance is difficult to measure due to conflicting sources, a fact that other researchers also encountered (Bigsten et al., 2016). All agree that the poverty level was 52.9% in 2000 (MDP Kenya, 2014; World Bank, 2013). But in their final MDG report on Africa, the UNDP concluded that Kenya's poverty has risen by a staggering 28.4% over the course of the MDG period (UNDP, 2015a) while the government's most recent measurement claimed the poverty rate to be at 45.2% in 2009 (MDP Kenya, 2014) and the World Bank estimated it to be between 34 and 42 per cent in 2013 (World Bank, 2013). Likely the sources use different data to calculate rates. Be that as it may, none of these trends indicate that Kenya has achieved Goal 1, despite its dominant economic position in East Africa (Bigsten et al., 2016).

MDG 2 came closer to Kenya's reach, although here, too, there is uncertainty as to what extent. The 2015 report by Kenya's National Bureau of Statistics claimed a primary net enrolment rate of 88.2%, a number which had been stagnant since at least 2011 (KNBS, 2015). Earlier reports, on the other hand, claimed this number grew from 67.8% in 2000 to 95.9% in 2013 (KNBS, 2014; MDP Kenya, 2014). It may be for this uncertainty that the UNDP omits the current enrolment rate from their final MDG report for Africa, only confirming the base rate (UNDP, 2015a).

The contrast in the sources left aside, it is safe to assume that Kenya did not halve its poverty rate, whilst making considerable progress towards universal primary enrolment. Only in 2012, with the deadline coming up, did Kenya emphasise their commitment to all MDGs in their PRSP (MDP Kenya, 2012). Unsurprisingly then, I find that educational policies did not diverge greatly from UNDP guidelines, while the same cannot be said of Kenya's eradication of poverty and hunger, where the government chose to continue a Washington Consensus model based on Public Private Partnerships rather than the path of human development.

Kenya's poverty reduction strategy was created in consultation with stakeholders from across the spectrum of society. By far most effort was put into structural reforms of government policies and institutions and good governance in all sectors, creating environments for the private sector to flourish and consequently participate in development. It is not always clear what these reforms entailed and what their purpose was, but the overall philosophy was that if the government created as conditions as favourable as possible for private investment, that would automatically aid the poorest, assuming a trickle-down effect of wealth. The main sectors that the government meant to reform this way were agriculture, tourism, trade and industry, which were in need of scale up of production and revenue to catch up with Kenya's rapidly growing population (MDP Kenya, 2003; 2005; 2012).

As a result of this approach, Kenya did not do many large scale aid projects that directly helped the poor. Of the development budget that it had, the largest share went to infrastructure, followed by rural development and human resource development, all expected to be reinforced by private investor contributions (MDP Kenya, 2003; 2005; 2007; 2012; 2014). Although the government vowed to spend 6.7% of GDP on development, this part of the budget was frequently cut, stalling many projects (MDP Kenya, 2005).

Similar to Burkina Faso and Uganda, the government wanted to create a national environment that would attract public investment through liberalisation, privatisation, enhancing competitiveness and good governance. Most investments were therefore made in urban development, rather than rural development, despite the government's claimed priorities (MDP Kenya, 2005; 2012). This is not surprising when the bulk of development investment is left to the private sector. Infrastructure in and between cities was improved to connect Kenya to the global market on which it could competitively sell its products. Well-maintained, safe roads were build alongside a reliable electricity grid (MDP Kenya, 2005; 2012).

The corporations responsible for these measures were all state owned, but were privatised to increase their competitive efficiency (MDP Kenya, 2005). None of the governmental targets of roadbuilding or electrification were met, but considerable urban progress was made in this way (MDP Kenya, 2012; 2014). Likewise, the national airport and sea port were privatised, to maintain their competitive edge towards landlocked neighbours Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. The telecommunications services were also greatly expanded in the cities. Various forms of consultation were made available for the private sector by the government (MDP Kenya, 2005; 2007; 2012; 2014).

Projects to connect rural areas to roads and power were piloted, but at a much smaller scale than urban infrastructure. Only few rural communities were indeed connected to the grid or supplied with electricity in some other way. Agricultural research was done through state run research facilities which supplied farmers with knowledge about productivity and commercialisation but farmer unions were responsible for direct aid such as provision of technology. Other investments in rural development included the empowerment of poor farmers through small scale access to credit and provision of services, reduced fuel taxes to lower transport costs (MDP Kenya, 2005) and reformation of succession regulation to grant equal ownership rights to women (MDP Kenya, 2003). Only in 2009-11 did the government get involved with more direct measures to help the poor, purchasing seeds, rehabilitating irrigation systems and strengthening social safety nets, reacting to droughts that hit the country (MDP Kenya, 2012; 2014).

Primary education was made free for all in Kenya and buildings were constructed and expanded (MDP Kenya, 2003; 2005; 2007; 2012; 2014). Lunches were made freely available for all pupils (MDP Kenya, 2012; 2014). A national teacher training programme was launched, to accommodate for the large influx of children into school (MDP Kenya, 2012). Teachers were trained and redeployed to give quality education where it was most needed. They were given salary awards as motivation for good performance. Teaching and learning materials were provided and the curriculum was made relevant for core skill development. Decision-making was brought down to the local level where school administrators would work together with the community (MDP Kenya, 2005; 2014). Kenya is the only country that included Public Private Partnerships in the improvement of the school system (MDP Kenya, 2014). It is also the only country of the three studied here that achieved a 1:1 book ratio for pupils. The gender gap in education was eradicated in 2010 (MDP Kenya, 2012).

Unsurprisingly, Kenya is rewarded with an ownership rate of 40, the majority of points earned for its schooling policies. Its development strategy may allow the country to reap the benefits of their investments to foster private sector development on the long term, it did not suffice to halve poverty and hunger rates. What projects were finished mainly benefitted the urban community, which was already relatively richer than their rural counterparts. Hence the development of Kenya generally failed to be pro-poor (Bigsten et al., 2016). Universal education, on the other hand, made remarkable strides forward. Accessibility to free education, sufficient supplies and in-kind payments all helped to promote not only primary, but also secondary and tertiary education.

Goal	Priority	Investment	Burkina Faso	Uganda	Kenya
General	Increase Human Capital		Green	Green	Green
		Educate Staff	Green	Green	Red
		Good Salaries	Red	Green	Red
		Improve HR Management	Green	Green	Green
	Regional Integration		Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
	National MDG Strategy Group		Yellow	Green	Yellow
MDG 1	Increase Rural Productivity		Green	Green	Green
		Irrigation	Green	Yellow	Yellow
		Knowledge to Farmers	Green	Green	Green
		Rural Infrastructure	Green	Green	Yellow
		Rural Electrification	Green	Green	Yellow
	Lower Rural Transport Costs		Green	Green	Green
	Connect Cities to International Markets		Green	Green	Green
		Export Orientation	Green	Green	Green
		Urban Infrastructure	Green	Green	Green
		Urban Electrification	Green	Green	Green
MDG 2	Incentivise School Attendance		Green	Green	Green
		Cash Rewards	Green	Red	Red
		In-Kind Payments	Green	Red	Green
		Lowering Costs	Green	Yellow	Green
		Scholarships	Red	Red	Red
		Access to Schools	Green	Green	Green
	Improve Education		Green	Green	Green
		Sufficient Materials	Green	Green	Green
		Large Enough Buildings	Green	Green	Green
		Enough Teachers	Green	Red	Green
		Quality Teachers	Yellow	Yellow	Green
		Accountable Teachers	Green	Green	Green
		Cooperate with partners	Red	Red	Green
	Gender Equality		Green	Green	Green
		Move Against Bias	Green	Green	Yellow
		Total Ownership General	**6**	**8.5**	**4**
		Total Ownership MDG 1	**17**	**16**	**14**
		Total Ownership MDG 2	**22**	**15**	**22**
		Total Ownership	**45**	**39.5**	**40**

Table 2. Millennium Development Goals Ownership rates for Burkina Faso, Uganda and Kenya. Green signifies all available points awarded. Yellow signifies half available points awarded. Red signifies no points awarded.

Conclusion

An analysis of the gathered data confirms the hypothesis: where countries took more ownership of a Millennium Development Goal by implementing the policies that the UNDP recommended, they were more likely to achieve that Goal or achieve significant progress. At the same time, where they diverted their policies from those proposed by the UNDP, the studied states failed to develop sufficiently enough to accomplish the MDGs within the set timeframe.

Burkina Faso has the highest ownership rate and made most progress towards both Goals. Kenya ends in second place with 40 points, closely followed by Uganda with 39.5 points. However, not the points the states earned but rather those they did not earn are of significance if anything is to be learned from development under the MDGs in Sub-Saharan Africa. Kenya's modest commitment to rural irrigation, electrification and connection to infrastructure sufficed to prevent the country from serious poverty reduction and Uganda's slow investment in irrigation contributed to it not being as successful as Burkina Faso in eradicating poverty and hunger. This indicates that only partial commitment to the UNDP guidelines is not enough achieve progress, at least with regard to MDG 1, and that full commitment should be the norm.

Likewise, the Ugandan case demonstrated the importance of making education affordable for all. Increasing the quality of education helped to decrease the national dropout rate but did not sufficiently incentivise parents to send their children to school. To make that happen, it is crucial that even the poor can afford quality education, despite their financial disadvantages. By only partly lowering costs through the provision of teaching materials, Uganda failed to give the poorest families the support they need to send all children to school. Burkina Faso and Kenya's policies, which lowered primary education costs for parents much further than Uganda, did invoke the desired effect and raised enrolment to a far greater extent.

No strong correlation can convincingly be argued based on the results of this study about the role that general priorities and investments have on overall ability to achieve the MDGs, safe for the possibility that educating public sector staff helps to lower poverty and hunger rates. This is based on the finding that Burkina Faso and Uganda, who both did so, achieved Goal 1, whereas Kenya did not. Future research may help to reinforce evidence of this relation.

Of course these findings are not as black and white as they may appear and weaknesses have to be acknowledged. Despite considerable differences in performance, none of the studied countries acquired a primary enrolment rate of 100%. Burkina Faso, although it has the highest increase at such ever recorded, remains the country with the lowest enrolment. Its decrease in completion rate also suggests that significant improvements are yet to be made. The report of the Millennium Project therefore cannot be seen as a panacea that would ensure full completion of all Goals if adhered to. At the same time Uganda and Kenya's rapidly growing populations help to explain why they had difficulty in realising MDGs 2 and 1 respectively.

The sources also have to be reviewed critically. As I pointed out for Kenya, official sources may faultily represent reality. Similarly, Burkina Faso's growth is accredited to urban migration and land expansion, not increased productivity, development sources that cannot be sustained (Grimm et al., 2016). Poverty reduction in Uganda was likely very un-linear across the regions of the country, with the North lacking behind and the West, the second richest region, not being as wealthy as the government's reports suggest (Van Campenhout et al., 2016). Fast growing populations result in lower poverty rates but increased number of people living below the poverty line (Grimm et al., 2016). This does not render the sources useless. Academics and the United Nations alike continue to rely on official reports for primary fact-finding. It means that the data should not be taken too literally and reality might not be as rosy as the authors may portray. Yet the general trends they indicate remain true, so the argument of this thesis holds; MDG ownership *does* facilitate development.

This argument can be strengthened further by future research that builds forth on this study. For example, it would be useful to look into the correlation between MDG ownership and the non-quantified Goals that have not been included into this study, such as combating diseases (Goal 6) and creating partnerships for development (Goal 8). As there is more difficulty in measuring these Goals, the researchers should clearly define what they consider development and progress in that case. The geographical scope of study can also be shifted (do Latin American countries show the same trends?) as well as an analysis of the best-performing countries: did China, for example, follow UNDP guidelines to achieve the MDGs or can its success be a result of it economic growth? Finally, these results also raise concerns about UN ideas other than global goalsetting that also may not find as much resonance in SSA and the underdeveloped world as they are intended to have. The political will of African governments to contribute to development in the way they are urged to do may seriously limit development in all its forms (Human Rights, Fair Trade) and on all levels (Grass-root, national). This is not limited to the UN, but may also affect the African Union, bi-lateral cooperation and corporate social responsibility projects, amongst others. Future academic research should be used to test the truth of these suspicions and direct policy makers to address the issue.

The findings of this thesis have two significant implications for the UNDP and the Sustainable Development Goals. First, it confirms that the expert taskforce that was the Millennium Project indeed proposed the most efficient foreseeable plan to achieve the MDGs, more so than did national governments. Second, if the SDGs are to be successfully pursued, then the UNDP should commit to a global campaign that challenges states to fully take ownership of the Goals. It should revise its priorities to exert itself to ensuring that the work of the Millennium Project, or a new document with guidelines that may accompany the SDGs, forms the core of all development strategies, both those of governments and donors. If not, Sub-Saharan Africa, and consequently the world, will not reach its full potential by 2030.

The UNDP does not have to convince the government of every developing country, however, but only the management of two key actors: The World Bank and the IMF. Their development aid is conditional, subject to the liberal trade ideology that the institutions were founded on. Only if the development policies of a country are in line with this vision are they eligible for aid. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers used in this research serve as a vehicle for developing countries to justify their intent with the aid. In other words, the Bretton Woods institutions knew that many states were not taking ownership of the goals and preferred to create their own policies, and still approved their proposals. The UNDP, and the United Nations as a whole, must realign the priorities of the World Bank and IMF with those of human development and the Sustainable Development Goals. Only when their policies reflect the UNDP guidelines would countries then qualify for loans, giving them more incentive to take ownership of the Goals.

Needless to say, there should be room for some case-specific flexibility, as long as there is limited divergence from the preferred path of development. It is not the only strategy that the UNDP could apply to stimulate ownership, but it is an efficient, cost-effective and feasible one, and attainable within short time to actively facilitate the SDG programme. If the world is committed to the accomplishment of the SDGs, then it needs to truly rally behind them and the UNDP. Governments, donors, Bretton Woods institutions and the UN, *all* will have to take ownership of the Goals. Only in this way can the development under global goals be maximised and human development be truly accelerated at its full potential in the years to come.

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