

HBS IN AFRICA: RESEARCH THEMES

CONTEXT

Harvard Business School faculty and students look at how the tools of business and finance can contribute to addressing big global challenges. Our aspirations in sub-Saharan Africa include helping to mobilize global capital, having a positive impact on business practices, and contributing to the education in leadership, management, and commerce of the next generation of African businesspeople. We are attempting to concentrate on seeking educational impact in areas that are not already well covered by national governments, multilateral financial institutions, international development finance, and major charities.

Areas of Focus:

- Infrastructure finance and delivery, including public-private partnerships for power, roads, rail, airports, water
- Food and agribusiness as well as related retail distribution
- Manufacturing and processing
- Innovative and technology-rich approaches to overcoming operating obstacles and institutional voids

Overarching Themes:

- Capital flows, investment, corporate finance and SME growth funding
- Market selection and segmentation
- Operations management, including:
 - Supply chain strategy and logistics
 - Leadership, talent acquisition and management
 - Growth and expansion

RESEARCH QUESTIONS: MAY 2017; PROFESSOR JOHN MACOMBER

HBS MBA Field Course. Would Dakar be an appropriate venue for the “Immersive Field Course: Africa: Building Cities” in January of 2019? The course has been and will be offered in 2016, 2017, and 2018 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. A determining factor is whether there is enough expertise in the city to accommodate eight teams of Harvard MBAs considering future private finance of infrastructure like roads, power, water/sanitation, and more.

P3 Models. Are there “best in class” examples of Public Private Partnership scoping, competition, award, and delivery that can be models for other projects in sub-Saharan Africa? The Dakar - Diamniadio Toll Highway is one possible project.

Innovation in Infrastructure and City Building. What else is being done in Dakar and Diamniadio that should be known by Harvard students and faculty? What other entities are doing significant infrastructure finance and delivery? What else should be understood as the footprint of HBS in Africa is built out?

Themes and organization of research. Are we taking the right approach?

HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL IN AFRICA

The HBS Africa Research Center is located Johannesburg. The geographic focus to date is on Cote d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa and Tanzania.

[Harvard Business School](#) is one of the leading business schools in the world. Our 250 faculty generate dozens of books and hundreds of pieces of teaching material each year. HBS syllabi, HBS Case Studies, Harvard Business Review articles and other publications are used in every major business program around the globe.

[Prof. John Macomber](#) is a Senior Lecturer in Finance at Harvard Business School. His primary courses are “[Building Sustainable Cities and Infrastructure](#),” “[Immersive Field Course: Africa: Building Cities](#),” and “Doing Business in Africa” (in planning). Macomber’s research focuses on the potential for increased private investment and delivery of public infrastructure in both developed and emerging economies. His professional background before joining the Harvard faculty was in real estate and construction. Publications include “[Building Sustainable Cities](#)” in Harvard Business Review and “[What Africa can Teach America About Funding Infrastructure Projects](#)” in Forbes.