Strengthening Civil Society Capacity for Education for All In Republic of Benin: The Important Role of Universities and Other Research Institutions

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Abstract

This report tends to track the Benin's progress in the implementation of SDG 4, understanding what hinders its complete achievement in terms of capacity and to recognize best practices moving forwards. It recognizes the civil society organizations as good contributors and presents their needs to address the major challenges in education sector with just eight years left to the 2030 deadline. It explores the kinds of support universities can quickly bring to civil society in terms of capacity, competence gaps filling and multi-stakeholder's engagement in education area. It develops a formalized and concrete mechanism within which University researchers and teachers work in partnership with Civil Society Organizations to create knowledge that can produce urgent and rapid solutions in education area to reach the 2030 target.

The research calls for a necessary paradigm shift in the role played by universities and other education institutions in supporting Civil Society Organizations, particularly those operating in quality education, to make them fit to educational global development agenda.

Keywords : Civil society performance, Education 2030 Agenda

Introduction

The Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 provides a share blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet. Seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth, all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.

The achievement of development results is highly dependent upon the human and organizational capacities to effectively, efficiently, and accountably manage and implement the programmes and projects structured to deliver these results, more often in a particularly complex enabling environment. Countries and regions experience that reality differently.

In republic of Benin, this reality does not spare education sphere. Instead of the Government commitment to provide universal free and quality education, efforts are hindered by lack of capacity. Civil society still remains the best alternative for its contribution in the implementation of education policies.

However, in order to fulfil their roles, civil society organizations (CSOs) need to be strong and well-prepared with knowledge on technical topics, such as governance and organizational structure, resource mobilization, system of program management, human resource management, financial management, advocacy and communication. Universities can play a crucial role in upgrading civil society organizations.

With just eight years left to the 2030 deadline 'we must inject a sense of urgency. Achieving the 2030 Agenda requires immediate and accelerated actions by countries along with collaborative partnerships among governments and stakeholders at all levels[1]', stated António GUTERRES, United Nations Secretary-General, in the 2018 Sustainable Development Goals Report.

Our research, thus, explores the kinds of support universities can quickly bring to civil society in terms of capacity, competence gaps filling and multi-stakeholder's engagement in education area. The following research questions need to be addressed :

- What kind of suitable knowledge do Civil Society Organizations need to address quality education challenge in their specific environment?

- Are higher education institutions adaptive enough to address complex education challenges?

- What are the current links between Civil Society Organizations and higher education institutions?

The main objective of the research is to develop a formalized and concrete mechanism within which University researchers and teachers work in partnership with Civil Society Organizations to create knowledge that can produce urgent and rapid solutions in education area to reach the 2030 target. Particularly, the study has the following sub-objectives :

- To develop a method for rapid mapping of CSOs in education area;

- To provide a comprehensive CSOs capacity assessment tool that fits to context;

- To propose a pathway to foster the engagement of Universities in knowledge-based challenges faced by CSOs in education sphere.

Purpose

The fundamental purpose of the research is to develop cost-effective and time-bounded capacity development tools that enhance academic institutions' engagement with civil society to promote the sustainable development goal related to education.

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[1] The Sustainable Development Goals Report, 2018

The goals in the research are to:

- provide a mechanism for tracking the Republic of Benin progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goal in education sphere;

- highlight the quality and effectiveness of civil society participation in the promotion of education for all;

- develop a research and knowledge-based framework to enhance CSOs engagement in education 2030 Agenda.

Design/Methodology/Approach

To provide a general overview of where we stand in terms of progress made in post-2015 education arena, there should be a strategic planning process to develop targets and benchmarks for the goal, as well as details on monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems that will be used to track progress. Thus, our research draws from international best practices and from recent efforts to design post-2015 education frameworks. Preference has been given to a comprehensive and systemic tool designed by Global Campaign for Education[2]. That organization has set an overarching goal for education with three key objectives and eight specific targets. Each target has a set of indicators against which progress can be tracked.

Findings

Where We Stand in the Implementation of 2030 Education Agenda

What is Education 2030 Agenda?

This agenda comprises Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 – "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" by 2030 – and the Education 2030 framework for Action.

This goal provides that all Members States must guarantee 12 years of free and equitable quality education for all by 2030 and allocate a minimum between 4% and 6% of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and a minimum between 15% and 20% of their total public budget for education. Developing countries equally committed to allocate 0.7% of their GDP to Official Development Assistance (ODA), reinforcing the support to education.

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[2] The Global Campaign for Education consists of a diverse and extensive group of stakeholders from around the world. Its members in more than 100 countries share a common vision and belief in the right to and the power of education.

Efforts Made by Republic of Benin

The Post-2015 Education Sector Plan (2018–2030)

The Post-2015 Education Sector Plan (2018–2030) defines inclusive education as a "process that aims to increase participation and reduce exclusion by effectively addressing the different needs of all learners. It addresses the individual educational and learning needs of all marginalized and vulnerable children and young people : street children ; girls ; children from ethnic minority groups ; children from financially disadvantaged families ; children from nomadic/refugee/displaced families ; children living with HIV or AIDS ; and children with disabilities. Inclusive education aims to ensure that these children have equal rights and opportunities in education."

The plan is based on the guidelines for inclusion established by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2005) : « [Inclusive education] involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children."

The Post-2015 Education Sector Plan (2018–2030) defines special education as all education and training activities for persons with physical, sensory or learning disabilities, or people experiencing difficulties with personal adaptation and social integration, in order to facilitate their adaptation and social integration. Benin still has special schools. These schools follow the Integration Programme for Out-of-School Minors with Learning Disabilities (PINS in French) to manage learning disabilities.

The Education Sector Plan 2018–2030 provides for strategic options for educating children with disabilities in a mainstream school environment. It also stipulates that special centres will only receive children with multiple disabilities.

The Post-2015 Education Sector Plan (2018–2030) and the National Policy on the Protection and Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities plan to provide grants to facilities developing relevant educational initiatives for children with special needs, and to organize coaching sessions for centres and facilities with relevant inclusive educational initiatives. A draft Multi-Year Partnership Agreement (2018–2021) supervised by the French Development Agency also aims to build the country's capacities to plan, implement and monitor inclusive education. Benin should also receive support to develop sectoral plans, strategies and policies for inclusive education. Finally, regarding the integration of children with special needs from remote areas, no targeted measures have been taken to address the territorial disparities that exist between departments and communes and, especially, between urban and rural areas.

The Post-2015 Education Sector Plan (2018–2030) aims to strengthen girls' access to and retention in basic education by establishing measures to promote the recruitment and retention of female teachers in rural areas. It also seeks to exempt girls from paying secondary school fees.

In addition, it aims to select texts on sexual harassment, the fight against child marriage, and other forms of violence, and to set up listening units for girls in schools.

Currently, the Post-2015 Education Sector Plan (2018–2030) aims to implement a policy of targeting interventions to educationally disadvantaged communes. This will include conducting research into the causes of low access to education in these areas and providing quality educational supplies and services in the 25 communes.

Benin's education sector is administered by three different ministries : the Ministry of Nursery and Primary Education ; the Ministry of Secondary Education and Technical and Vocational Training (which also manages the literacy subsector) ; and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. The National Education Council helps coordinate the entire national education system, ensures compliance with the broad educational guidelines (especially for inclusive education) and helps implement the framework act on national education. It can provide opinions and formulate proposals on the pedagogy, curricula, organization and results of the education system and teacher training.

The shift towards inclusive education requires teacher training. In the transition period while all teachers in mainstream schools are gradually being trained on educating children with special needs, the Post-2015 Education Sector Plan (2018–2030) and the National Policy on the Protection and Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities plan to appoint teachers with specialized skills in specialized centres.

Education Performance Figures

Benin does not have a national education monitoring report. However, the annual Education Joint Sector Review report can be used as a tool for monitoring education. In 2019, CBO-EPT produced a voluntary national report to monitor the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 during 2016–2018. In addition, a study on the level of SDG 4 implementation in five communes in Benin was conducted in 2018.

With the specific aim of ensuring equitable and inclusive basic education for children aged 3 to 15 years, students aged 15 years and above, and students at the post-secondary level, the Post-2015 Education Sector Plan (2018–2030) identifies certain indicators, including :

- the gender parity index based on the gross enrolment rate in general, secondary and technical education

- the proportion of girls in the fields of agriculture, science and technology, and industrial science and technology

- the proportion of children with disabilities enrolled at primary school

-   the dropout rate of persons with disabilities in special institutions (from 2.2 per cent in 2016 to 0 per cent between 2021 and 2030).

In its Voluntary National Review of Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals 2018, the country has identified other indicators of inclusive education, including the parity index (rural/urban) of the gross enrolment rate in primary/secondary education. Finally, the Benin Data Portal presents some data on all levels of education, poverty, literacy and social inequalities.

Benin has abolished school fees and is carrying out the recommendations of its 2007 Educational Forum. In 2018, the net primary enrollment rate was 97 percent. Gross enrollment rate in secondary education has greatly increased in the last two decades, from 21.8 percent in 2000 to 59 percent in 2016, 67.1 percent in the case of males and 50.7 percent for females. Because of a rapid increase in the enrollment rate, the student/teacher ratio rose from 36:1 in 1990 to 53:1 in 1997 but has dropped again in the last years to 39:1 (2018). In 2018, the gross enrollment ratio in tertiary education was 12.5%.

The overall adult literacy rate is 42.4 percent (2018), significantly lower than in neighbors Togo (63.7%) and Nigeria (62%). Only 31.1% of women in Benin 15 years or older are literate, although this number increases to 51.9% for the 15-24 years old (69.8% for men).

The Human Rights Measurement Initiative (HRMI) finds that Benin is fulfilling only 77.6% of what it should be fulfilling for the right to education based on the country's level of income. HRMI breaks down the right to education by looking at the rights to both primary education and secondary education. While taking into consideration Benin's income level, the nation is achieving 96.5% of what should be possible based on its resources (income) for primary education but only 58.8% for secondary education.

The Contribution of Civil Society

For the purposes of this research, the term "civil society" is used to refer to organized groups or associations that "are separate from the state, enjoy some autonomy in relations from the state, and are formed voluntarily by members of society to protect or extend their interests, values or identities." This is the definition employed by Manor, Robinson and White in their Ford Foundation study of civil society and governance. It draws on the sociological conceptualization of civil society as a realm situated between the state and other basic building blocks of society (individuals, families and firms) (Manor, Robinson & White 1999 ; Mercer 2002 ; Edwards 2004).

A wide range of civil society organizations might be expected to be active in education. In this research we thus focused primarily on formal civil society actors operating within the national educational policy arena : non-governmental organizations, parents' associations, teachers' unions, faith-based organizations, private provider groups, and networks or coalitions. We recognize that by doing so we may have excluded forms of civil society organization that are unique to African cultural contexts, or that are located at the local or community level (Hyden 2006 ; Mercer 2003 ; Lewis 2002). One of the recommendations from our study is for further

research on the interface between formal civil society organizations in education and the local citizens, members and communities they suppose to represent.

Coalition béninoise des organisations pour l'éducation pour tous (the Beninese Coalition of Organizations for Education for All – CBO-EPT) provides tools for parents of pupils with disabilities. The Programme to Support the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (PAIPH) supports this group through awareness-raising and training activities. It is responsible for installing (portable) ramps and other modifications in schools. Other initiatives in favour of inclusive education carried out by CBO-EPT should also be noted. The organization organizes training for parents, teachers, inspection bodies, supervisors and school inspectors.

Other initiatives implemented by NGOs to promote girls' education have also been introduced, including exempting girls from school fees. The most effective measures have been reducing costs for families (particularly through free education) and sustained advocacy and awareness-raising activities.

Obviously, there is a need for harmonization in an education goals framework. « Often the disharmony is a result of a reporting framework that often privileges some targets and indicators above others. A new post-2015 education framework should, at a minimum, bring the two frameworks together within a unified architecture buttressed by unified reporting mechanisms and processes.

At the same time, a global goals framework should ensure that it is responsive to and reflects regional and national priorities and specificities. In this respect, it is possible to conceive of a global education agenda framed in such a way that there are common goals with some broad common targets, and which allow for regional and national modification and interpretation of targets and by implication indicators[3].

Table 1 below presents an overarching goal for education with three key objectives and eight specific targets. Each target has a set of indicative indicators against which progress can be tracked.

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[3] Education in the Post-2015 Development Agenda - DRAFT Synthesis Report of the Global Thematic Consultation on Education

Overall Goal : By 2030, ensure equitable, free and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all	
Objective 1 : By 2030, the right of every child to complete a full cycle of continuous, free, quality early childhood, primary and secondary education is fulfilled.	
TARGETS	**INDICATORS**
Target 1 : All children are enrolled in school by 2020, and completing a full cycle by 2030	Number and percentage of children who are enrolled in early childhood education
	Number and percentage of children who have completed at least one year of free pre-primary education by 2020, and by 2025.
	Number and percentage of children who enrol in and complete a full cycle of free primary education
	Number and percentage of children completing free quality secondary education
Target 2 : By 2025, all children are taught by qualified teachers who have training in pedagogy, rights and gender sensitivity, in an accessible and safe environment	Percentage of children taught by trained and qualified teachers, with clear and transparent national benchmarks for qualified teacher status which includes training in pedagogy, rights and gender sensitivity.
	Ratio of qualified teachers to pupils, disaggregated by location (i.e. rural-urban, sub-national, district).
	Number and percentage of educational environments that have accessible, inclusive, safe and adequate infrastructure and facilities for all students, and are free from violence and attack.
Target 3 : By 2030, all children complete full cycle of inclusive quality and gender sensitive education with relevant learning achievements determined through multiple measures	Percentage of schools with teaching and learning resources (i.e. textbooks) that are non-discriminatory, and are available for all students from the beginning of the school year.
	Percentage of children in pre-primary and grades 1 and 2 who are educated in their mother tongue.
	Percentage of children who demonstrate learning achievement in foundational competencies of literacy, numeracy, and global citizenship (human rights, sustainable development, peace, sexual and reproductive health and intercultural dialogue), according to national benchmarks that are relevant to the student.
Objective 2 : By 2030, all young people and adults are literate and have the knowledge and skills to participate fully in society and the world of work.	
TARGETS	**INDICATORS**

Target 4 : All young people (15-24) are fully literate by 2025, and all adults (15+) fully literate by 2030	Percentage of young people (15-24) with full literacy by 2020 and 2025.
	Percentage of adults (15+) with full literacy by 2020, 2025 and 2030.
	Percentage of youth and adults who have access to and complete second-chance education programmes (ensuring those who have missed out on education due to conflict, migration, gender, or other reasons, are able to gain an education).
Target 5 : By 2030 there is an increase of at least 50% in the participation of people from disadvantaged groups in quality further education (technical and vocational education and training, and tertiary education), and a narrowing of the gap in participation rates between more and less advantaged groups.	The percentage of people from different disadvantaged groups participating in further education by 2025
	Ratio of trained teachers per student (relevant to subject)
	Percentage of learning centres that are safe, accessible and have adequate infrastructure.
	Percentage of young people and adults with knowledge, skills and competences for the world of work and active global citizenship.

Objective 3 : By 2030, there are adequate and sustainable financing and governance structures for education, that are transparent and participatory.

TARGETS	INDICATORS
Target 6 : Governments calculate and allocate adequate domestic finance to ensure equitable, free and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all, including by allocating at least 20% of national budgets to education of which at least half (10% of the budget) should be for basic education.1	Percentage of the national budget allocated to education
	Percentage of the national budget allocated to basic education
	Development of a fully costed national education plan and a financing strategy
	Proportion of total education budget that is financed from domestic revenues (taxation, natural resource revenues, etc.)
Target 7 : Donors and the international community provide increased, sustained and sufficient high-quality financing for education through overseas development assistance (ODA), including by allocating at least 10% of each donor's ODA to basic education2 and at least 4% of humanitarian aid to education.	Percentage of ODA going to education
	Percentage of ODA going to basic education
	Percentage of humanitarian aid allocated to education
	Proportion of ODA for education that is harmonised behind national education sector plans (e.g. pooled fund, sectorwide approaches (SWAp), given through GPE, etc.)

Target 8 : Citizens, represented through formal civil society structures, are fully informed of and engaged in the development and monitoring of education sector policies and programmes, at school, sub-national and national level	Percentage of decision-making national and sub-national education sector committees and working groups that fully include civil society representatives and teachers' representatives.
	Percentage of schools and learning centres with functional management committees that include teachers, facilitators, parents, students, and community and local CSO representatives.
	Publication of education budgets, plans, data, donor programmes and spending information for school, subnational and national levels, in all national languages, within one month of finalisation.

TABLE 1 : An Education Goal for the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Framework[4]

Many coalition members have limited technical capacity to analyze education policies and strategies. That's why a referential tools has been proposed to serve as a guideline to Civil Society organizations' capacity development activities (Table 2).

That tool presents the targets identified in the education goal for the post-2015 sustainable development framework, as well as CSOs' strategies including advocacy, social mobilization, political and legal enforceability, development of knowledge and research, and communication. These areas of intervention are associated with a list of competences that define CSOs' professionalism. The tool is supposed to be the starting point of capacity development activities in that it can serve for capacity assessment, implementation and evaluation.

STRATEGIES BY TARGET	ADVOCACY	SOCIAL MOBILIZATION	POLITICAL AND LEGAL ENFORCEABILITY	DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND RESEARCH	COMMUNICATION
Target 1 : All children are enrolled in school by 2020, and completing a full cycle by 2030.	Dialogue with communities about education as the future Raising awareness about the	Defining mechanisms for engagement of CSOs and citizens Efforts to address the	Ensuring the constitutional right to Education. Commitment to the	Conducting research on children enrollment constraints in specific areas.	Communicating about equity of access to education. Sensitising communities

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4 Equitable, inclusive and free : a collective vision for quality education beyond 2015 ; Global Campaign for Education.

	importance of education. Supporting innovative ways for communities to ensure that all children are able to access quality education within a framework of national education plans, in a way that links this to advocacy.	issues of retention and progression of Students.	realization of human right to education. A political commitment to universal free primary education. Enhance their own participation in the development and implementation of national education sector plans. Holding governments accountable for their policy on gender. Holding governments and donors accountable to their commitments and spending towards	Training and research on communication and other strategies. CSOs need to be able to operate and they need to be strong and well-prepared with knowledge on technical topics Build demand for and strengthen country- and global-level capacities to collect, analyze, and use gender- and age-disaggregated data on education. It assists non-governmental organisations and researchers to analyse budget policies and to improve	to the importance of education budget work. Monitoring government expenditure on education and using findings to inform advocacy activities. Disseminating information in time to allow stakeholders to influence policy debates. Involving the media to maximise the visibility of research. Being able to generate data and evidence through data collection from communities and analysis, research and evaluation activities in their respective
Target 2 : By 2025, all children are taught by qualified teachers who have training in pedagogy, rights and gender sensitivity, in an accessible and safe environment.	Ability to appreciate the number of teachers recruited and trained Monitoring teaching and learning materials deliverence in a timely manner.	Promoting curriculum development and the capacity and professional development of teachers and increased teacher recruitment and assignment in rural areas.			
Target 3 : By 2030, all children complete full cycle of inclusive quality and gender sensitive education with	Examines budgets to assess whether they benefit men and women equally integration of a gender perspective into	Prevent and address school-related gender-based violence.			

relevant learning achievements determined through multiple measures.	budget analysis.		Education for All. Ability to understand the budget's legal and institutional framework, and timing of the budget cycle. Analysing the national budget and allocations to education in relation to education policies and plans.	budget processes, systems and institutions. Research on the effects of budget policies on the poor. Analyses the allocation and use of public resources to understand the impact of budgets on the poor. Build the capacity of civil society organisations in budget work Develop budget training expertise that can be directed at increasing the analytical and advocacy capacity of	countries and at the regional and global level.
Target 4 : All young people (15-24) are fully literate by 2025, and all adults (15+) fully literate by 2030.	Learning and empowerment across genders and age groups.	Proactive approach to improve school-readiness and school attainment is needed.			
Target 5 : By 2030 there is an increase of at least 50% in the participation of people from disadvantaged groups in quality further education (technical and vocational education and training, and tertiary education), and a narrowing of the gap in participation rates between more and less advantaged groups.	The inclusion of disabled people through physical, remedial and social support, and the provision of safe learning spaces for the larger community as a whole.				

Target 6 : Governments calculate and allocate adequate domestic finance to ensure equitable, free and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all, including by allocating at least 20% of national budgets to education of which at least half (10% of the budget) should be for basic education.	Advocacy : - towards the Government to meet the international benchmark of spending a total of 20% of national budget on education, focusing at least half of that to basic education [5]; - to demand adequate education financing ; - to regulate exorbitant school fees charged by the private sector ; - Raising strategic questions on education financing with the ministries of education and finance.	Enabling local communities to monitor spending on education both at national and local levels. Using participatory methods to allow communities to monitor the use of education resources. Improving transparency and accountability in the use of resources for primary education.		civil society organisations and legislatures.	

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[5] Fund the Future : An action plan for funding the Global Partnership for Education, FUND THE FUTURE, GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR EDUCATION.

Target 7 : Donors and the international community provide increased, sustained and sufficient high-quality financing for education through overseas development assistance (ODA), including by allocating at least 10% of each donor's ODA to basic education and at least 4% of humanitarian aid to education.	Advocating for increased resources to the education sector. Increasing degree of coordination among donors, and between donors and governments.	-			
Target 8 : Citizens, represented through formal civil society structures, are fully informed of and engaged in the development and monitoring of education sector policies and programmes, at school, sub-national and national level.	Citizens'particip ation for the right to education. civil society participation at decentralized levels of educational governance.	Participation in design and implementatio n of national and local education plans Have closer contacts with communities, and they can be the bridge so that student, parent or teacher concerns about the quality of			

		education services reach policy makers. Have representatio n of the marginalised groups in their own organisations and can talk on their behalf.			

TABLE 2 : List of Competences for CSOs' Professionalization.

The Role of Universities in SDGs

This sequence of the paper draws from Wanjiku. J. Thukia's research on the role of universities in Sustainable Development Goals[6].

According to Mr Thukia, vocational training centers and research sectors are highly recognized in few SDGs. However, the universities' boost is needed to achieve all of the SDGs (Bhowmik, 2017). At a glance, the SDGs transverse a wide range of specific sectors namely : agriculture, health, gender equality, water and sanitation, energy, industry and innovation, infrastructure, etc., and under each area, higher education institutions make a huge contribution. Whether in teaching, research, community engagement or advisory services. The uniques functions and expertise of universities are very vital for overcoming the interconnected social, economic and environmental challenges which are covered by the SDGs agenda Bhowmik, (2017). Arguably the SDGs will not be achieved without these sectors. (Selim et al.,2017) identifies the key roles of universities under four main categories as :

- Universities can address challenges of SDGs by improvising new innovations, solutions, and knowledge to curb the negative implications.

- Universities can formulate and evaluate result-based policies and establish monitoring mechanisms on progress.

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[6] Thukia, W.J. The role of universities in Sustainable Development Goals : The Erasmus program focus ; Masters Student, Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management, School of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure Studies, Kenyatta University, jshikut@gmail.com.

- Since SDGs' accomplishment require a 'wholeness-orientation', universities are in a better position to provide professional and personal skills, capabilities to create future leaders, decision-makers, innovators, entrepreneurs and citizens with knowledge and motivation to contribute.

Universities hold a position of neutral and trusted stakeholders within society. They also have a key role in educating the public and other sectors on the SDGs and in advocating for the importance of the SDGs. Bhowmik, J. et al. (2017) resolves that the engagement of the universities towards the achievement of SDGs is broadly on the merits of research, education, operations and governance and external leadership. His work looks deeply on each contribution and recommends steps towards accomplishing them.

So Universities can contribute to tackle barriers towards the implementation of SDGs, critically that related to education by mitigating any kind of constraints as well as specific needs and policy-based difficulties.

'To contribute to the SDGs through education, universities can :

- Incorporate the SDG agenda and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) principles into all undergraduate and graduate courses and into graduate research training.

- Offer executive education and capacity building courses for external stakeholders on SDGs and the knowledge needs to address them.

- Promote both students and community volunteering activities that address the SDGs.

- Develop exchange relationships with universities of developing countries and those that address training programs to address SDGs.

The universities can contribute to research. They :

- Support the full spectrum of research approaches needed to address the SDGs including the interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research.

- Advocate for national support and coordination of research on SDGs.

- Support capacity building for developing countries to undertake the use of research on SDGs.

- Encourage and support researchers to engage in global research community efforts to support SGDs (such as international assessments and syntheses of the current state of knowledge.

- Map how universities' researches and research strengths align with the SDGs and identify key researchers.

- Arrange innovation challenges to address SDGs for researchers across the University and external stakeholders[7].

Research Limitations/Simplications

The success of the SDG Agenda depends heavily on efficient and robust monitoring of its progress. But one of the main difficulties faced in the framework of this research is the problem of access to informations, due to the lack of disaggregated data and timely, accurate and reliable standardized data. This kind of situation did not facilitate an accurate progress tracking leading, to some biais in the research results, even if they are minor.

The analysis and findings are subject to the limitations of the data used.

Then, it is commonly stated that the sustainable development goals are integrated and inclusive. They were developed on the recognition that there are inherent synergies between all the goals; they are interconnected. Successfully addressing one issue will inadvertently also tackle others. So it was not possible to deal with the battery of interrelations of the chosen topic with all of the SDGs.

Originality/Value of the Paper

This paper examines the complexity of the debate about sustainable development goals, including the implementation of the 2030 education Agenda. While drawing from knowledge produced by high rank professionals and experts, it carries out new ideas that can drive social advancement. The research proposes simple frameworks to deal with the complex system of SDG 4 and foster future collaboration on this matter.

It also provides strategic measures based, not on the traditional discourse, but rather on a short term consideration due to the close 2030 deadline.

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[7] Thukia, W.J. The role of universities in Sustainable Development Goals : The Erasmus program focus ; Masters Student, Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management, School of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure Studies, Kenyatta University, jshikut@gmail.com

Conclusion

This research paper highlights the efforts made Republic of Benin in the implementation of 2030 education Agenda. The country has the merit of showing leadership by drafting a Post-2015 Education Sector Plan for the period 2018-2030. The Plan provides strategic options for education for all and constitutes a pathway to achieving the defined goals.

Our research has also outlined a sort of disharmony between national and international frameworks which are normally supposed to set unified targets and indicators for monitoring and reporting purpose. To quote Mr Antonio GUTERRES, Secretary-General of the United Nations, ''without evidence of where we stand now, we cannot confidently chart our path forward in realizing the Sustainable Development Goals. To that end, this report also reflects on the challenges faced in the collection, processing, analysis and dissemination of reliable, timely, accessible and sufficiently disaggregated data, and calls for better evidence-based policymaking''.

The civil society engagement is also noted in the implementation of the education sector plan. However, its efforts to deal with all the aspects of its mission are not well perceived due to lack of capacity and a real need of appropriate tools. To fill the gaps, education, research and innovation are essential, making Universities key contributors to achieving the goals.

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Universities and Sustainable Development; Towards the Global Goals ; European University Association.