

Teaching, Learning and Integrating the SDGs at universities and beyond - Linking to the Decade of Action (13 July 2020)

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Thank you for the opportunity you have given me to share Africa's experience in training on the SDGs.

1. *All for one and one for all' – Which roles do cooperation and partnerships play for the Global Agenda?*

The international community enthusiastically welcomed the adoption of the SDGs in 2015. Unfortunately, concrete actions for the implementation of the SDGs did not start quickly. This is the reason why civil society organizations like ICAE have taken initiatives so that all components of society are made aware of the SDGs and take an active part in its achievement. We used a lot of non-formal learning opportunities. In 2018 and 2019, member networks were trained on the content indicators and targets of the SDGs with the financial support of Swiss Cooperation. In Mali, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Guinea, The Gambia, Liberia and Sierra Leone, facilitators of the lifelong learning centers received three days of training - workshops on content and implications of SDGs. That training enabled them to understand the challenges linked to the 2030 agenda and to contextualise the global goals. These training sessions were carried out by consultants. After that, national facilitators thematized and disseminated the acquired knowledge in the form of teaching units that have been practiced in lifelong learning centers. For example, teaching units have been designed in national languages on hygiene, family health (SDG 3), drought (ODD 13), deforestation (SDG 13), famine (SDG 2) and girl's schooling (SDG 4)....

The resources are scarce, therefore cooperation and partnership are crucial for the achievement of the SDGs, and all segments of the Society must actively participate in their implementation. This is the

reason why in our region we have involved mayors, community radios, state agents, consultants / academics in all of our training sessions. Local radios are very much listened in the communities and they manage to achieve impact on significant number of people at the same time. In Sierra Leone, for example, our partner network organizes a weekly program on the radio channel "Kiss". Debates are held over the radio and listeners can call to ask questions about the SDG being debated.

Partnership with mayors is also essential because they are responsible for local development and they are closer to the communities and their problems. Unfortunately, they are very little involved in the SDG implementation initiatives.

2. What are the challenges, and what opportunities can we build the future on?

The challenges we face in achieving the SDGs in Africa are linked to:

- the weak coordination of the SDG implementation initiatives of stakeholders: civil society (as one of the main providers of education) is not sufficiently involved in the actions undertaken by the government for the achievement of the 2030 agenda;
- the absence of a multi-stakeholder monitoring structure (states, civil society, donors, academics, mayors, etc.) at community and national level. As a result, the outcomes and challenges are unknown to the general public;
- Very limited resources for organizing appropriate and relevant training for actors (trainers of trainers, facilitators, grassroots communities, etc.), while the SDGs are still very little known to the general public.

In terms of opportunity, the coronavirus crisis reinforces the importance of training on the SDGs **to develop more** resilient and sustainable communities, **with the focus on most vulnerable ones.**

More than ever, we must strengthen the partnership between state actors, civil society organizations, donors, international organizations and grassroots communities for a synergy of action in achieving the 2030 agenda. I encourage the organizers of this webinar to continue working in unity for the effective achievement of the SDGs.