

Youth SDGs Report, Ghana

Volume 1

Opening statement/Foreword

Acknowledgement

List of Abbreviation and Acronyms

CARES	Coronavirus Alleviation Revitalization of Enterprise Program
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CSSPS	Computer School Selection Placement System
CBO	Community Based Organization
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
DMTDPs	District Medium Term Development Plans
DOVVSU	Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
GETFund	Ghana Education Trust Fund
GIPC	Ghana Investment Promotion Centre
GoG	Government of Ghana
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPRS	Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy
GSFP	Ghana School Feeding Program
GSGDA	Ghana Shared Growth Development Agenda
GYEEDA	Ghana Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Agency
HLMC	High-Level Ministerial Committee
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
HLPF	High-Level Political Forum
ICC	Implementation Coordinating Committee
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IT	Information Technology
IPA	Innovation for Poverty Action
KASPRO	Kayayei Assistance Project

LESDEP	Local Enterprise and Skills Development Programme
LNOB	Leaving No One Behind
MASLOC	Microfinance and Small Loans Centre
MDAs	Ministries Departments and Agencies
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MMDAs	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoGCSP	Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection
MSMEs	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
MYPE	Meaningful Youth Participation and Engagement
NABCO	Nation Builders Corps
NADMO	National Disaster Management Organization
NAPRM-GC	Ghana Council of the National African Peer Review - Ghana Chapter
NDPC	National Development Planning Commission
NEIP	National Entrepreneurship and Innovation Program
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPO	Non-Profit Organization
NHIA	National Health Insurance Authority
NHIS	National Health Insurance Scheme
NSS	National Service Scheme
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
RCC	Regional Coordinating Council
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

STIs	Sexually Transmitted Infections
UN	United Nations
UN DESA	UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
VNR	Voluntary National Review
YAG	Youth Advocates Ghana
YAP	Youth-Adult Partnership

Highlights

1.0 Introduction

The Youth SDGs Report, Ghana presents is the state and situation of the Ghanaian youth as the 2022 Voluntary National Review (VNR) of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Ghana. The report gives a background and context of the VNR, and the need for meaningful youth participation in the VNR process in Ghana. It elaborates on the national efforts to incorporate the SDGs into national development framework taking note of past and existing key youth-driven institutions, policies and programs in Ghana. Further, it illustrates the institutional arrangement and national strategies for the implementation of the SDGs while assessing meaningful youth participation in institutional and implementation process.

This report presents evidence-based progress and challenges in adhering to leaving no one behind principle the area of discrimination; geography; governance; socio-economic status, and shock and fragility of the Ghanaian youth. The opportunities and challenges regarding means of implementation to build back from COVID-19, and outlines policy recommendations that the Ghanaian youth demand of stakeholders to ensure sustainable recovery from COVID-19 and full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

1.1 Background and Context

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the successor development framework of the Millennium Development Goals in 2015, have 17 goals and 169 targets that seek to influence areas critical to the people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership. Between now and 2030, the SDGs are in place to end poverty and hunger everywhere; to combat inequalities within and among countries; to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies; to protect human rights and promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls; and to ensure the lasting protection of the planet and its natural resources, and all stakeholders resolve also to create conditions for sustainable, inclusive and sustained economic growth, shared prosperity and decent work for all, taking into account different levels of national development and capacities.¹

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development encourages member states to "conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels, which are country-led and country-driven" (paragraph 79). These national reviews are expected to serve as a basis for the regular reviews by the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), meeting under the auspices of Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). As stipulated in paragraph 84 of the 2030 Agenda, regular reviews by the HLPF are to be

1

voluntary, state-led, undertaken by both developed and developing countries, and involve multiple stakeholders.

The review, dubbed Voluntary National Review (VNR), is a process through which countries assess and present national progress made in implementing the 2030 Agenda, including achieving its 17 Sustainable Development Goals and the pledge to leave no one behind. The purpose of VNRs are to present a snapshot of where the country stands in SDG implementation, with a view to help accelerate progress through experience sharing, peer-learning, identifying gaps and good practices, and mobilizing partnerships.

This year's HLPF themed "Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" will review in-depth the Sustainable Development Goals 4, quality education; 5, gender equality; 14, life below water; 15, life on land, and 17, partnerships for the goals. The 2030 Agenda principle of leaving no one behind (LNOB) requires that VNRs draw on contributions from groups in SDG 17.14 which includes indigenous peoples, youth groups, and vulnerable and marginalized groups such as the people with disability (PWD), mentally challenged, widows, refugees and people living with HIV/AIDS "in line with national circumstances, policies and priorities."

The United Nations (UN) system-wide Youth Strategy, Youth 2030, recognizes that young people in all their diversity need to be full-fledged partners in the work of the United Nations and in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Further, the UN World Youth Report 2020, acknowledges the active engagement of youth in sustainable development efforts is central to achieving sustainable, inclusive and stable societies by the target date, and averting the worst threats and challenges to sustainable development, including the impacts of climate change, unemployment, poverty, gender inequality, conflict, and migration.

1.2 Meaningful Youth Participation in the VNR Process in Ghana

Despite the policy and institutional arrangements, a report by United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) on the review on VNR Reports on multi-stakeholder engagement in 2030 Agenda implementation from 2016-2019 reveals that countries are most likely to refer to activities with and by civil society, the private sector, local governments, and academia in their VNR reports with a more limited number pointing to parliamentarians, youth and volunteers, and Member States tend to provide information on who is at risk of being left behind and programs and initiatives

to address their concerns, rather than specific efforts to leave no one behind from the perspective of multi-stakeholder engagement.

Critical to the success of the 2030 Agenda are the role of young people in engaging with local and national government in delivering on policies and programs. Therefore, national and subnational efforts are needed to create environments conducive to youth participation, engagement and development via education, health, employment and reduced exposure to negative activities.

It is within these global and national background and context that Youth Advocates Ghana, a youth-led organization based in Ghana takes lead on the maiden edition of the Youth SDGs report in the VNR process. This report creates a platform where the Ghanaian youth tell their own stories, success and challenges in the implementation and towards the achievement of the SDGs.

1.3 Objectives of the Report

The overarching objective of the report is to demonstrate the contribution of the Ghanaian youth in implementation and progress towards achieving the SDGs in Ghana.

The specific objective of the report is:

1. To highlight innovative SDG-related interventions by youth organizations in Ghana.
2. To share challenges and opportunities of Ghanaian youth to build back from COVID-19 towards the achievement of the SDGs.
3. To provide evidenced-based progress and challenges to Leave No One Behind principle.
4. To disseminate the findings of the Youth SDGs Report, Ghana report at HLPF in July 2022.

2 Methodology

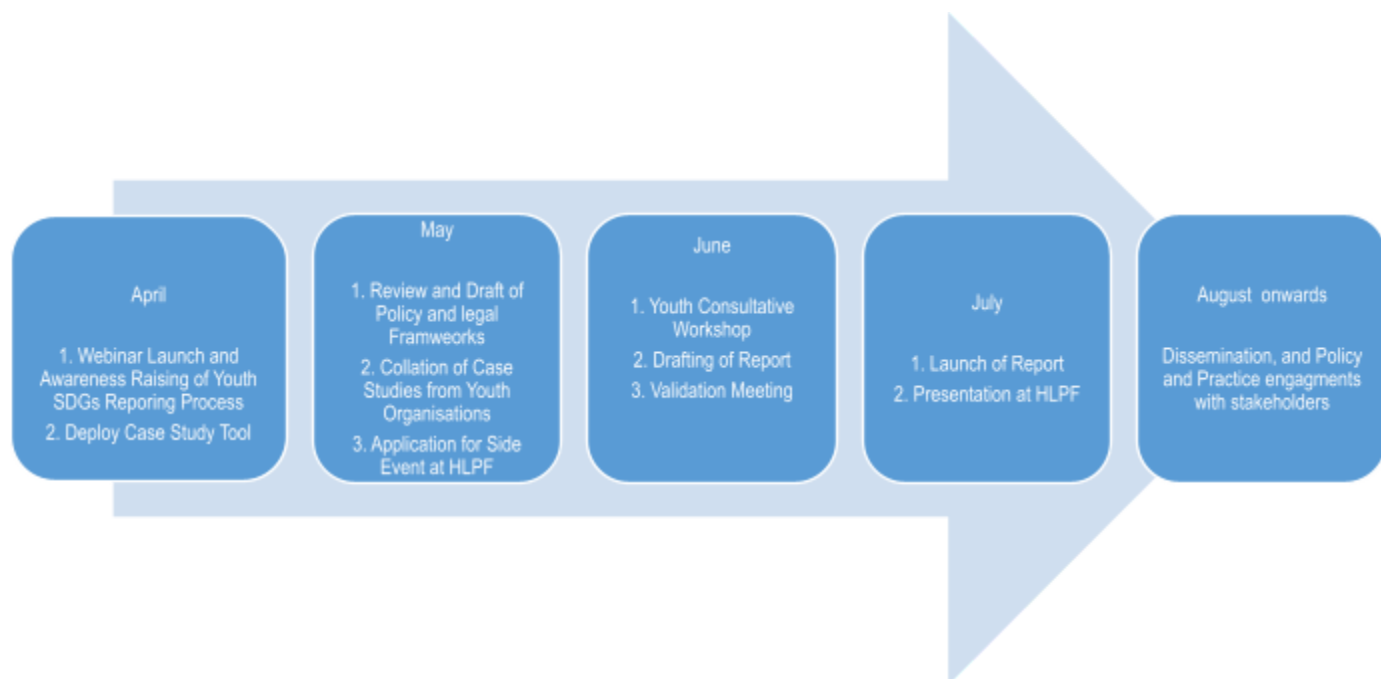
2.1 Introduction

The Youth SDGs Report, Ghana is complementary to the Voluntary National Review (VNR) process and report presented by Ghana at the 2022 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in New York. This is the second time Ghana is presenting at the HLPF, and learning and efforts to adhere to the “Leaving No One Behind” principle of UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework inspired this Youth SDGs Report. The development process of Youth SDGs Report, Ghana created an opportunity and space to increase the awareness of the VNR process, introduce the maiden volume of the Youth SDGs Report, Ghana to the Ghanaian youth, and convene stakeholders to participate in the process. The reporting processes was inclusive, and had meaningful participation from partners from the conceptualization stage to the dissemination and follow up stage of the Youth SDGs Report. The stakeholders were drawn from national and subnational levels consisting of Government of Ghana agencies, United Nation agencies, youth-led and youth-driven civil society organizations.

The Youth SDGs Report captures three main areas:

1. Institutional Mechanism for SDGs Implementation and Meaningful Youth Participation
2. Youth-led and Youth-driven SDGs-related Interventions
3. Main Themes: Review of VNR 2019; Leaving No One Behind, and Building Back from COVID-19

2.2 Youth SDGs Report Roadmap



2.3 Awareness Raising

The Youth SDGs Report, Ghana process leveraged virtual means to raise awareness on the Voluntary National Review and the Sustainable Development Goals among the Ghanaian youth. The virtual means was adopted as a coping strategy to limited resource, COVID-19 protocols, and attempt to improve on the digital divide by encouraging stakeholders adopt and adapt, and familiarize themselves to basic electronic communication tools such as video calls, email, social media. The tools and strategies adopted included a webinar, which was attended by 50 stakeholders from government workers, UN Agencies, and young individuals and youth organizations across Ghana. The webinar highlighted the importance of VNR process to the implementation and achievement of the SDGs, and the call for the Ghanaian youth to be part of national development process to achieve SDGs.

Further, an email broadcast was sent to 500+ members CSO Platform for SDGs in Ghana, including youth sub-platforms and their constituents to introduce the Youth SDGs Report, Ghana, and how it feeds into the VNR process for 2022, and the need to have a report that captures progress and matters related to youth and SDGs.

Again, the official social media handles of Youth Advocates Ghana and partners, which reaches 10,000+ followers who are furthest from reach via email or webinar to increase awareness of the VNR and the Youth SDGs Report process.

2.4 Data Collection and Report Drafting

Primary data on two approaches: case study template and consultative workshop, and secondary data through review international and national SDG-related documents.

2.4.1 Case Study Template

The technical team developed data collection in the form of case study template with inputs from the National Development Planning Commission, United Nations agencies, Ghana CSO Platform for SDGs. The template was aimed at gathering youth-led and youth-driven SDG-related interventions, and mainly included sections on identified problem; innovative solution to problem; impact of solution, and intervention's alignment with SDGs. These cases are drawn from youth organizations and start-ups across Ghana.

2.4.2 Stakeholder Consultative Workshop

The consultative workshop was mainly participated by representatives from youth organizations from Volta, Oti, Western, Western North, Central, and Greater Accra regions. The stakeholder consultative workshop was part of the primary data collection process where stakeholders, through group discussions made inputs and presentations on three main themes: review of VNR 2019; Leaving No One Behind, and Building Back from COVID-19.

2.4.3 Secondary Data Review

The secondary data included the review of Ghana VNR 2019 report, international and national policy and legal framework documents (2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, United Nations system-wide Youth Strategy, UN World Youth Report et cetera), National Medium Term Development Plans of Ghana among other VNR related reporting guidelines and protocols.

2.4.4 Report Drafting

The drafting of the Youth SDGs Report is led by Youth Advocates Ghana, with section contributions from young people, and the Ghana CSO Platform for SDGs.

2.5 Validation

2.6 Launch and Dissemination of Reports

The report was launched at Youth Advocates Ghana's side event at HLPF at New York on July 6, 2022. The dissemination of the report was in series, and will adopt forms such as using policy brief, infographic, and full reports to engage stakeholders on policy and practices.

3.0 Incorporation of the SDGs in National Development Frameworks

This chapter outlines integration of the SDGs into Ghana's development frameworks including legislation, policies, plans, budgets and programs in the implementation of SDGs and interrogate the policy coherence and interlinkages of youth-driven programs in Ghana.

Ghana has incorporated the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and African Union's Agenda 2063 to incorporate these into its national development frameworks. At the outset of the SDGs in 2015, Ghana had in place existing medium term plans and policy framework called Ghana Shared Growth Development Agenda II (GSGDA II), 2014 - 2017. Post-GSGDA II, the medium-term national development policy framework, 2018-2021 and Agenda for Jobs, 2017-2024 and the series of Coordinated Program of Economic and Social Development Policies was in place to structure the planning of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), and Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) were charged to adhere to this policy integration arrangement.

In between these transitions to incorporate the SDGs into Ghana's national development framework, the National Development Planning Commission adopted the 3A approach illustrated in Text Box 1 below.

Definition of the 3A Approaches

- **Alignment** - assess the extent of convergence between local, regional and global frameworks;
- **Adaptation** - identify suitable targets and indicators and make amendments, if necessary, to suit the Ghanaian context;
- **Adoption** - adopt targets and indicators for use in national and sub-national plans without modification if they are consistent with national aspirations.

Background and Context on 3A Approach for Ghana

Alignment: Given the fact that the country was at the mid-stage of implementing the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda 2014-2017 (GSGDA II) at the time the SDGs were adopted, government carried out an exercise to assess the extent to which GSGDA II and the associated medium-term development plans of the sectors and the sub-national governments are aligned with the SDGs. The result of the exercise showed that at least 50 percent of the SDGs have been reflected in the respective development plans. To help bridge the gap, directives were issued to MDAs and MMDAs to make the necessary adjustments to their 2017 annual action plans, which serve as the basis of the budget. This ensured that their 2017 programs and budget fully reflected the SDGs.

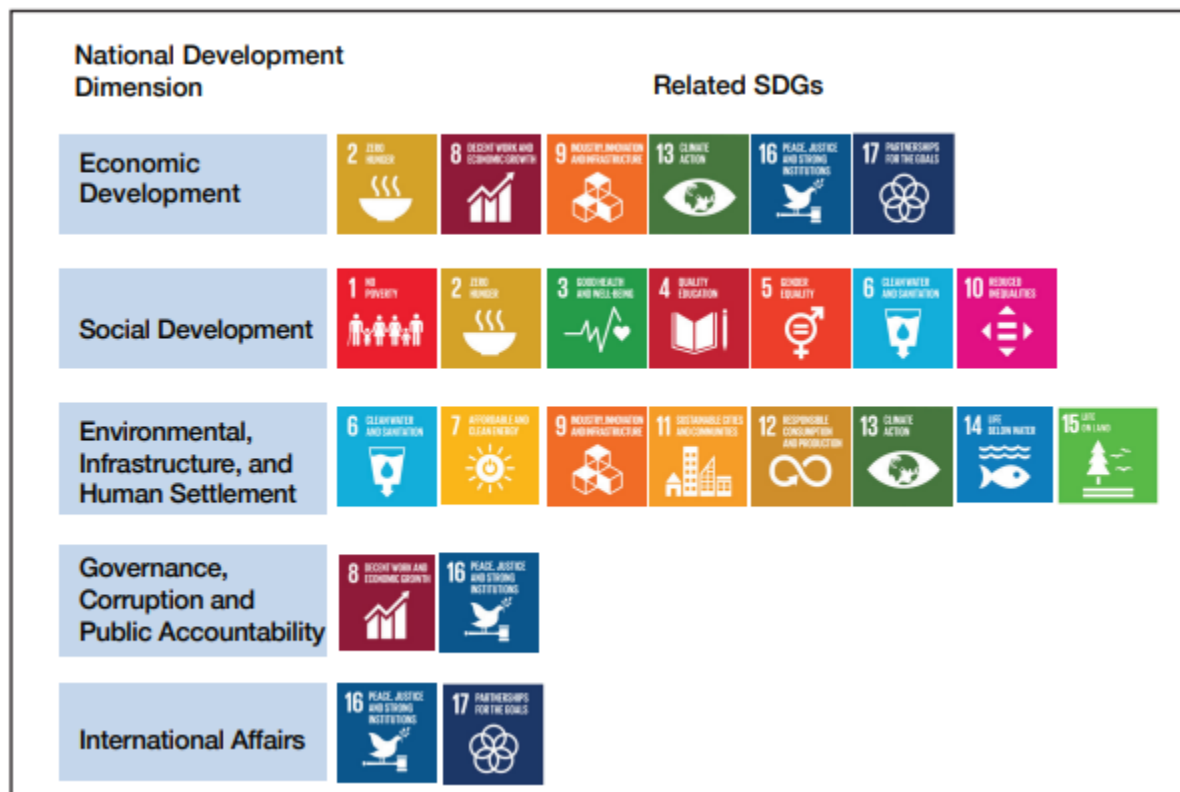
Adaptation: As GSGDA II was programmed to end in 2017, steps were taken to ensure that the successor medium-term national development framework fully reflects the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the SDGs and Agenda 2063. Adjustments were made to some of the goals and targets to reflect Ghana's development context and statistical capabilities and aspirations.

Adoption: Where the goals and targets were consistent with Ghana's development context and aspirations, they were adopted fully without any changes. The SDGs targets and indicators that did not require modification, together with those that were adapted, were then incorporated in the successor national development blueprint, the Agenda for Jobs, 2018-2021, and the associated medium-term development policy framework as well as sector and district development plans, and the monitoring and reporting frameworks

Source: Ghana's Voluntary National Review Report 2019, p. 7

To put the national development frameworks and SDGs into perspective, the Ghana's national development agenda has 5 main dimensions that aligned to the 17 SDGs.

Figure #: National Development Dimension Alignment to SDGs



Source: National Development Planning Commission

Beyond the incorporation of the SDGs into national development frameworks, the report identifies the institutional, policies and programs that Government of Ghana is implementing to serve the needs and aspirations of the Ghanaian youth. According to the National Youth Policy, Ghana defines youth to be the population between the age brackets of 15-35 years. For a country that has 57% out of 30.8 million people under 25 years, it is important that the national strategy address the needs of the current generation without compromising the needs of the future generations.

In Ghana, there is a National Youth Policy which captures policy priority areas for youth in economic, social, political, environmental and cultural dimensions; the rights of the youth; the obligations of stakeholders (civil society organizations, religious leaders, private sector, development partners, parents and guardians, and the youth) towards the youth as well as institutional arrangements such as monitoring and evaluation mechanism to measure the implementation of the policy.

In attempt to the adhere to the provisions of Chapter 6 of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, Directive Principles of State Policy; the National Youth policy, and the SDGs, the government beyond 2015 has implemented varied programs in terms of leadership development (Subnational and national Youth Parliament); skills development (Nation Builders Corps); education (Ghana School Feeding Program, Free Senior High School initiative, Ghana Education Trust Fund Scholarships, Guarantor-free Student Loan); employment schemes (Youth Employment Agency, Nation Builders Corps, National Alternative Employment and Livelihood Program for Illegal Miners, One District One Factory); entrepreneurial and start up support programs (National Entrepreneurial and Innovation Program, YouStart), and Agriculture (Youth in Agriculture for Economic Development, Planting for Food and Jobs).

Between the transition of the Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals, the then existing national development framework, Ghana Shared Growth Development Agenda (2010-2013) recognized that:

Systematic development and mobilization of youth for sustainable national development deserves focus. The main policy related issues include: uncoordinated policy and institutional framework for youth development, few vocational and skills training facilities, fusion of vocational/apprenticeship training with formal education, persistent growth of unemployment for both school completers, school dropouts, and those who never attended, increasing street children phenomenon and crime, under-mobilization and utilization of youth talents, continuing growth of youth unemployment, increasing street children phenomenon and crime, channeling of youth energies into antisocial activities.

A World Bank report on Youth Employment Programs in Ghana reveals that such programs lacks proper monitoring and evaluation, impact measurement, information systems, and the capacity to scale up. Currently, there are still widespread concerns among Ghanaian youth about the poor coherence and interlinkages of these policies, projects, and programs, which misses out on the holistic approach to youth development. Besides the existing National Youth Authority, reference are mostly made to how government interventions are tied to political parties' manifestoes, and so lack continuity even in democratic change of government. Beyond the discontinuity of intervention, there are disturbing concerns about the sustainability of statutory interventions such as Ghana Education Trust Fund (GET Fund), Ghana School Feeding Program (GSFP), and National Service Scheme (NSS) among other programs that has records of backlog payment arrears. This goes without saying that such statutory payments have special taxes that are specifically meant to finance such interventions. These slow injection payments into these statutory funds begs the question "how committed are national level efforts towards youth development." to ensure the Ghanaian youth is not left behind?

4.0 Institutional Mechanism for SDGs Implementation and Meaningful Youth Participation

This section identifies the institutions responsible for coordinating and integrating SDGs; captures factors to consider for meaningful youth participation in the institutional framework for the implementation of the SDGs, and outlines the respective responsibilities partners to ensure coherent implementation of SDGs.

4.1 Institutions Responsible for Coordinating and Integrating SDGs and National Strategies

The SDGs have become central to the operations of the Government of Ghana (GoG) since its adoption as a global development agenda. This has become even more important to GoG particularly in the selection of the President as one of the Co-Chairs of the Eminent Advocates of the SDGs. The need to show leadership, both at the global and regional levels has meant that, GoG has taken many steps in ensuring that the SDGs are aligned with the ways (administrative, legal and political) of Government. In this respect, it is important to note the following institutional arrangements for the SDGs in Ghana.

To give concentrated attention on the SDGs, construct creative partnerships and accountability mechanisms around their implementation, and integrate lessons learned into continuing national development efforts, new coordination and leadership structures have been established. A High-Level Ministerial Committee (HLMC), SDGs Implementation Coordination Committee (ICC), Technical Committee, and CSO Platform on SDGs are among the structures. In addition, the President's Office has formed, SDGs Advisory Unit to assist President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo in his role as Co-Chair of the United Nations Secretary-Eminent General's Group of SDGs Advocates.

The High-Level Ministerial Committee (HLMC), which is made up of 15 ministers, with the President's Special Advisor on SDGs serving as secretary. The Committee provides strategic direction for the SDGs and Agenda 2063 implementation, ensuring a "whole-of-government" approach by actively engaging all levels of government in a cross-sectoral and coordinated manner. The HLMC has observer status for the UN Country Team and the CSO Platform on SDGs.

The National Development Planning (Systems) Act of 1994 established a decentralized planning system in Ghana (Act 480). At the national level, this system delegates planning tasks to MDAs, and at the subnational level, to Metropolitan, Municipal, and

District Assemblies (MMDAs). The National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) oversees coordination, with 16 Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs) supporting it. The decentralized planning model encourages collaboration and engagement between government agencies and stakeholders. The commercial sector, civil society, traditional authorities, persons with disabilities (PWD), development partners, academic and research institutions, and other interest groups are among the stakeholders.

In this role, the NDPC hosts the Implementation Coordination Committee, and therefore plays a central role in ensuring localization and tracking progress of implementation of the SDGs. As the apex institutions of the Decentralized Institution, the NDPCs oversight of the SDGs is essential to how far the country goes in achieving the SDGs. The SDGs Implementation Coordinating Committee (ICC) is made up of representatives from ten key ministries, departments, and agencies, as well as the President's Office, the SDGs Philanthropy Platform, civil society organizations, and the Governing Council of the National African Peer Review Mechanism (NAPRM-GC). The ICC has granted the UN Country Team observer status.

The Ghana Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) Platform on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was established in October 2015 to ensure more coordinated civil society efforts in achieving the SDGs in Ghana. The CSOs Platform was institutionalized in May 2016 and includes more than 500-member organizations, consisting of coalitions, associations, unions, community-based organizations, local, national, and international non-governmental organizations, and religious groups. Members are located across the regions and districts of Ghana. The CSOs Platform's membership is divided into 18 sub-platforms, one for each of the 17 SDGs and a youth sub-platform, and 18 district platforms have been established. Each of the 18 sub-platforms and district platforms is headed by a team of one convener and two to five co-conveners. The convening team coordinates activities and joint efforts of the sub-platforms and represents the sub-platforms. In its membership of the ICC, the Platform ensures that the coordinated voice and perspective of Civil Society are institutional well represented and presented in the national discourse on the SDGs. Innovatively, the Youth Sub-platform is one such means of ensuring the youth are not left behind in this effort.

The central and pivot role of the GoG in the institutional arrangement for the SDGs cannot be over-emphasized. In this role, we have seen the Ministry of Finance form active collaboration with the UN Agencies, the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre and the Private Sector in various partnership efforts aimed at addressing identified challenges that has potential to stall the progress on achieving the SDGs.

4.2 Consideration for Meaningful Youth Participation in Institutional Framework for SDGs

Youth Representation by Institution: The Institutional Arrangement for the Implementation of the SDGs is heavily reliant on the Local Government Structure. In this regard, it is anticipated and expected that issues of youth are treated as with any other developmental issues. Currently, there is no institutional provision or requirement to have representation of youth, as persons or organization, in the institutional arrangement for the implementation of the SDGs.

It is important to consider government youth-oriented and youth-focused bodies such as the National Youth Authority for a Membership Status within the Implementation Coordinating Committee. Checks reveal that Ministry of Youth and Sports falls out of the 16 Ministries in the HLMC membership. It is essentially relevant that consideration is given to making this Ministry form part of the HLMC.

Youth Representation by Personnel: The emphasis of youth involvement must be in personnel as much it is advocated to be in institutions. This means that, personnel representation in the ICC and its subsequent sub-committees must take the age-defined youth cohort into consideration. This also means that, the criteria for representation in the ICC must be re-looked. The nature of political appointments as per our political system, inadvertently means that, many Heads of Institutions may be out of the aged-defined youth cohort. It is here that intentionality must be exhibited. As has been advocated on the lines of gender, it is also to be advocated to have youthful representation in these structures as a matter of diversity. Let the naivety and the professionalism of young people be smeared on all aspects of the SDGs in this structure.

Youth Representation by Strengthened Voices: The adopted strategy of localizing the targets and indicators of the SDGs into our DMTDPs and Plans of the MDAs means that, a lot more is required in ensuring that areas of concern to the development of youth are duly financed, duly monitored, and reported on, in our respective national reporting procedures, in a way that allows us to track progress or otherwise. In so far as there are flagship youth programs that are separately funded and financed and may not be in the position of addressing the myriad of youth-related targets in the SDGs, it is important for GoG to ensure that, funding at the MMDAs is available to implement and operationalize youth-oriented activities captured in the DMTDPs. It is important to also ensure that, as part of the formulation of these plans, conscious efforts are made to harvest and harmonize the collective voices of the youth. Young people, particularly, those who fall with certain subsets of the population such as those living with disability will require unique attention, both as active participants in the actions geared towards the implementation of the SDGs and, making known their needs, plight, and concerns for consideration into our nation plans and budgets.

4.3 Responsibility Allocation of Partners for coherent implementation of SDGs

The attainment of the SDGs falls squarely on the shoulders of GoG. The commitment of GoG in placing measures and structures and institutional for purposes of making the SDGs fit for implementation is laudable. The demonstration of the spirit of partnership by Government also emphasize its commitment to achieving the goals.

Financing and Funding for the Goals: The core function of financing and funding the SDGs resides with the GoG, and through the Ministry of Finance (MoF). In recent times, the MoF has proactively pursued a partnership with the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC) to operationalize many steps aimed at raising private sector awareness on the SDGs for purposes of raising financing. The Ministry of Finance has been involved in the production of the SDG Budget Reports, which indicates how much allocations GoG makes towards the SDGs annually.

Coordination and Planning: The National Development Planning Commission has the sole mandate to lead on the planning and coordination of the actions, geared towards the localization and implementation of the SDGs. This task it does working with the MMDAs and MDA under the existing Local Government Framework, that sees it provides same leadership and support in the preparation of DMTDPs.

Data Production and Analysis: The Ghana Statistical Service is the lead government agency with the mandate to produce and harvest, particularly on the reporting on the SDGs. Other agencies, specific to areas of operation and specialization produce data that is specific to their areas. As example, the Ghana Health Service and the Ministry of Health will have data that pertains to the SDG 3 as would the Ghana Education Service would have for SDG 4. However, this is not their core function as far as harmonizing, analyzing and reporting on the progress made on the SDGs.

Implementation, Monitoring and Tracking: The localization of the SDGs into the plans of MMDAs and MDAs means that, implementation and monitoring are significantly relegated to these agencies who are responsible intervention planning, process and outcome measurement of SDGs.

The United Nations in Ghana: The technical partnership and support of the UN system in Ghana must be duly acknowledged. That partnership ensures that global trends, knowledge, capacities and much more, innovations are passed on the Government to ensure localization and uptake. The SDG Investor Mapping is one such area of partnership that exemplifies that partnership.

5.0 Youth Reaction on Previous VNR Report for 2019 and Influence on Current VNR Report for 2022

Addressing Links to the previous VNR, reactions by the youth to it and links to current VNR report (to be inserted)

6.0 Innovative Youth-driven SDG-related Interventions in Ghana

6.1 Case Study 1

Organization Name: Barato Market



Lead: Dery Eric Diodome

Type: For-profit (E-commerce)

Location: Ghana

Website: baratomarket.co

Current Reach: Africa

Budget (USD): 0 - 5000

Problem

Ghana's employment crisis requires youth-led and youth driven innovative solutions. The lack of job creation in many professional fields has increased the rate of poverty and also placed the continent in a slow pace of development. Although we started in Ghana but the platform is open to every seller across the world, we have sellers outside Ghana. The group with a high rate of unemployment in Africa is the youth. According to the African Center for Economic Transformation, almost 50% of current graduates in Africa do not get jobs. This problem affects the young graduates. At the individual level the youth has limited opportunities to penetrate market, which has socio-economic multiplier effects.

The ramifications of COVID-19 did not only affect the global health, but also the world's economy, particularly Africa. During this period, businesses were closed and

individuals restricted from outdoor activities. During this period, the plight of the youth unemployment and limited opportunities to access market, but has also ignited creativity of many youth in terms developing products. Barato market gave access for people who could not go out the chance to purchase basic necessities and also help vendor to make money during the lockdown.

Solution to Problem Intervention

The Barato market is a youth-led initiative that promotes and supports small scale businesses to reach multiple customers across the world to enable them gain employment or stay in business by generating traffic onto our platform and also providing free advertisement to vendors.

Barato Market is an initiative designed to help young people sell their products and service to the world market, and consequently reduce the rampant growth of youth unemployment in Ghana and Africa. We are a business to business (B2B) and business to customers (B2C) e-commerce platform that promote Africa business and also enable the youth to set up their own business to earn income without any hustle. Barato market is different from other global online market giants, that do not permit the sellers from Africa to create shop on their online market platform, but only allows buyers from Africa.

The process for conducting business as a seller on Barato Market online portal is simple as follows: register as seller - upload images of products - receive order - deliver products - get paid. Currently, we are headquartered in Ghana, with reach across Africa. The online market portal has features such as Frequently Asked Questions and Chat platform to support both buyers and sellers with enquiries difficulties. Barato Market takes the responsibility to advertise sellers' products on all official social media platforms with funds from fundraising on the online market portal.

Positive Impact

Since its pilot in January 2022, the market has a total registration of 122 Users. 30 Vendors (online shops) of which 2 of the shops are located outside Ghana (Spain and Finland), 92 buyers, and 183 products, and over a 1000 visits. Since its inception in January 2022, Barato Market has made across sold products from, and across Africa. We believe Barato market is growing, and will contribute to reduce the unemployment rate by encouraging and creating awareness of the youth on the benefit or importance of the platform since it is a free, and only basic technical skill on internet use is required to be a vendor.

Alignment with SDGs

Barato Market is aligned to SDG Target 8.5 and 8.6. SDG 8.5 aims to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value by 2030. Additionally, SDG Target 8.6 which seeks to substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training by 2020.

The screenshot displays the Barato Market mobile app interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with a hamburger menu icon on the left, the Barato logo (a shopping cart icon followed by the text 'arato.'), a search magnifying glass icon, and a shopping cart icon with a red notification bubble containing the number '1'. Below the navigation bar, four clothing items are displayed in a 2x2 grid. Each item has a product image, a title, a brand name, a star rating, a heart icon with a '0' (indicating zero likes), and a price tag. The items are: 1) A striped smock (orange, white, and black stripes) priced at ₺200. 2) A striped smock (blue, red, and yellow stripes) priced at ₺200. 3) A black polo shirt priced at ₺100. 4) A pink polo shirt priced at ₺100. Each item's image includes a heart icon and a shopping cart icon. A black square button with a white upward-pointing arrow is located at the bottom right of the grid.

Item	Image	Title	Brand	Rating	Likes	Price
1		Smock	SmockKings	☆☆☆☆☆	0	₺200
2		Smock	SmockKings	☆☆☆☆☆	0	₺200
3		Polo shirt black	Benny's Fabrics	☆☆☆☆☆	0	₺100
4		Polo Shirt pink	Benny's Fabrics	☆☆☆☆☆	0	₺100

6.2 Case Study 2

Necessary Aid Alliance



Initiative: Calendar for Change

Lead: Mulumba Ngmenlabagna Songsore

Type: Non-profit

Website: www.necessaryaidalliance.org

Location: Upper West, Ghana

Current Reach: Upper West, Ghana

Budget (USD): 5,000 – 10,000

Problem

In the metropolitan, municipal and district capitals of Ghana, adolescent children are exposed to successful people across both male and females, and adolescent girls can draw motivation and role models from different women across all spheres of works. They are usually with an empowered mind and informed that women can be whoever they choose to be, limitless boundaries. However, the situation in rural communities is different. Using communities in the Upper West, Upper East and Northern Region as samples, adolescent girls in rural communities have limited access and availability of role models in rural areas, and so rural children are mostly not inspired and limited to their immediate environment. The concept of role models and the critical role that can play in shaping the lives of children and youth is missing in rural communities. Also,

the predominant male chauvinism in these communities present a picture where adolescent girls see themselves tied to being housewives, with limited or no chance of pursuing their dreams.

Solution to Problem Intervention

Calendar 4 Change addresses uninspired adolescent girls in rural communities by introducing the right female role models to serve as an inspiration for adolescent girls that they can achieve their dreams, and not fall victim to teenage pregnancy, school drop-out or child marriage.

Calendar 4 Change is a visual communication and mentorship project which shapes the mindset of adolescent school girls living in rural communities of Wa West District (Tanina, Poyentaga, Domangyli, Tendomeh and Nyoli) and Wa East District (Jumo, Buffiama, Yaala Number 1 & 2, and Kundungu) by providing them with the right role models on a yearly basis through a Calendar. To achieve this objective, each month of the year is represented by a photograph of a community native who has thrived with excellence in their chosen career, and displayed to adolescent girls. The role model selected for that month will pay in-person visits to schools to hold mentoring sessions with adolescent girls, and donate hygiene materials and teaching and learning materials. Each role model shares inspirational lessons, and the teachers are trained to support students immerse and reflect on these shared lessons at the beginning of each day in class.

Further, to create a lasting bond and sense of commitment, the project issues 'Commitment Cards' to each adolescent girl in the selected schools. These Commitment Cards are characterized with the adolescent girls' picture; name of school; name of the adolescent girl and, her career choice. These cards are printed and placed in an ID card holder and issued to the adolescent girls, who wear it each day to school to immerse themselves of their commitment to be inspired and work towards their career choice.

Positive Impact

The short-term project impact introduced adolescent girls in beneficiary communities through the career clinic strategy to learn about new career professions they can become. The career clinic offered an interactive session with each girl to understand the roles and responsibilities of the career professions introduced. Girls in most rural communities are without knowledge on the different career options they can become in future because of the poor exposure as a result of their remote environments.

Over six (600) hundred girls in selected communities now have been exposed to wider career options and they are motivated to stay in school and work hard to be like their selected role models. Girls now get greater material and emotional support from their parents as a result of the project. The commitment cards have warded guys with bad intentions on girls since girls are more career oriented and with a focus in life. Hanging the cards to school each day is an indication of a focused mind. In Wa East district, schools have reported that enrolment after vacations have increased by 90% and retention has been impressive.

This projected targeted adolescent girls in selected schools for commitment cards but the calendar content and reflection benefits entire school population and it is bridging the male career dominancy in the communities. Females are beginning to realize that they can equally become anything they aspire to be.

Alignment with SDGs

The solution aligned to SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequality). The project has improved enrolment among females, it has significantly reduced school dropout as a result of teenage pregnancy. Additionally, it has triggered a sense of direction and purpose among school girls, and has benefitted girls with essentials like sanitary pads, reading and learning materials from role models. In most of these schools, it was realized that majority of teachers were males which does not send a good message, and this served the notion that it was an arduous task to someday become a teacher, as a girl child. This project inspired adolescent girls that they can become teachers as well as other male-dominated professions to bridge the career inequality.



6.3 Case Study 3

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Ghana



Initiative: Kayayei Assistance Project

Lead: Bisola Olapade

Type: UN Agency

Website: <https://ghana.unfpa.org/en>

Location: Accra, Ghana

Current Reach: Accra, Ghana

Budget (USD): 100,000+

Problem

Economic migration in and of itself is not a problem. However, in the case of the Kayayei (economic migrant women and girls, mostly head porters), their living and working conditions pose varying degrees of threats to their health and their social security. These Kayayei are susceptible to varied risks and vulnerabilities including loss of dignity, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortions, sexual harassment, rape, sexual hygiene-related illnesses, and in extreme cases, lose their lives. Their sexual health-seeking behaviors are strongly influenced by fear of stigmatization at formal health facilities and limited access to health financing or insurance options.

Thus, nearly 90% of Kayayei resort to self-medication through patronizing drug peddlers, or visits to pharmacies or chemical shops. Knowledge of, and access to STI information, Family planning and contraceptive services continues to be a challenge, as most of the Kayayei only receive such information when they are privileged to participate in free Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) outreach programs, or occasionally obtain free (or subsidized) services at health facilities.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, their plight worsened, as they are faced with harsh socio-economic effects of Covid-19. For many, access to shelter, due to restrictions and Covid-19 protocols, became even more difficult. Many of them have resorted to trade sex for shelters in taxis, minibuses (mostly called 'Trotros'), market sheds and some open spaces, especially in situations where they cannot afford to pay daily rent, food, and water in such circumstances, this further increases their exposure to STIs, unintended pregnancies and unsafe abortion.

Solution to Problem Intervention

The UNFPA, in response to this problem rolled out the Kayayei Assistance Project (KASPRO) in 2019, a social intervention project that aim to address the reproductive health, empowerment, nutritional and safety needs of the Kayayei within the ages of 13-25 in Accra, the epicenter of the Kayayei activities. Additionally, the solution further minimized the incidence of sexually transmitted infections, unplanned pregnancies, sexual and gender-based violence among the Kayayei through 3 approaches.

The first approach provided sexual and reproductive health (SRH) information and services including family planning, contraceptive use, SGBV prevention, and response. This approach delivered 92 Hours of SRHR sessions to 500 Kayayei using video representation, storytelling, peer-to-peer discussion, local language facilitators and pictorial charts. These sessions covered learnings on values and Sexuality; condom use; human rights and sexuality; culture, society, sexuality; pregnancy & family planning; puberty; sexual and reproductive anatomy; norms and peer influence on sexual behavior; sexual & gender-based violence; consent, privacy and integrity, and communication, refusal & negotiation skills.

The second approach engaged selected Kayayei in skill development opportunities to support income generation for the beneficiaries and boost resilience to future shocks. These training include soap making, bead making, baking and as well business advisory support as part of sharpening their entrepreneurial skills.

The third approach provided support for Kayayei with essential food items and non-food items packaged in dignity kits containing hygiene essentials, which was limited in supply, especially to low or income Kayayei during the peak and normalization period of the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the KASPRO initiative provided support to Kayayei by registering the National Health Insurance Scheme

(NHIS) premium and renewal for all 500 girls in the cohort in collaboration with the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) due to the limited access to sexual and reproductive health care at the peak and normalization phase of the COVID-19 pandemic due to reduced or no income.

Positive Impact

The KASPRO initiative adopted effective, workable and practical approaches in addressing the dynamics of SRHR needs of vulnerable population, specifically Kayayei during and after a humanitarian crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Socially, 500 Kayayei were educated about their rights, including reproductive health, allowing them to make more informed decisions about their lives and bodies. It has also empowered them to speak-out and demand their rights when they are abused. Economically, 172 Kayayei have received hands-on training in soap making, beadwork, and baking as well as training in business advisory support, and this has given them economic power because they can now use their abilities to build some of the things and sell them to supplement their income and that of their families. There has been improved health seeking behavior among over 500 Kayayei who are enrolled onto the NHIS premium and renewed insurances. Environmentally, Kayayei improved their personal and environmental hygiene and adopted sustainable ways manage waste on menstrual materials in dignity kits.

Alignment with SDGs

The KASPRO initiative is aligned to SDG Target 3.7 as the initiative provides sexual and reproductive health care information and services. The initiative is aligned to SDG Target 3.8 as it has registered and renewed NHIS premium for Kayayei to increase their access to affordable and essential SRHR services. Through the Orange Support Centre under the KASPRO initiative, support such as referrals to the UNFPA/MoGCSP orange support center was provided victims of sexual and gender based violence (SDG Target 5.3). The initiative provides skills and opportunities for Kayayei to create employment for themselves and others in the community (SDG Target 8.5 and 8.6).

6.4 Case Study 4

Ghana Federation of Disability Organizations



Initiative: GFD and FOSDA Youth Inclusion project

Lead: Alice Appiah

Type: Non-profit

Location: Accra

Website:

Current Reach: Greater Accra; Volta; Ashanti; Bono; Bono East; Ahafo, and Northern regions of Ghana

Budget (USD): 50,000 - 100,000

Problem

Youth with disabilities generally are excluded in decision-making processes². Statistics from 2021 Population and Housing Census report depicts that there are 19,873,607 persons with disabilities who are 15 years and older. This however does not clearly show the youth range among persons with disabilities³. The United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities further mandates states parties to ensure that persons with disabilities effectively and fully participate in political and public life on an equal basis. Youth with disabilities have the rights according to article 21(3) of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana to form or join political parties and to participate in political activities subject to such qualifications and laws in a free and

² Sackey, E. (2015). Disability and political participation in Ghana: an alternative perspective. *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research*, 17(4), pp.366–381

³ 2021 PHC General report vol 3F.

democratic society. Youth with Disabilities are mostly not involved in political and decision-making processes and structures, and interventions towards meaningful inclusive are not usually comprehensive and results-driven. The Local Governance Act, 2016, (Act 963) states that 30% of Government appointees as assembly members/representatives in various districts must include persons with disabilities. Most of these appointees, however, are limited to persons with disabilities, and most specifically aged persons with disabilities, denying Youth with Disabilities these opportunities and further leaving them behind.

Solution to Problem Intervention

The intervention brought youth with disabilities together with other young people and youth organizations on a platform both online and physical to discuss the need for exposure to decision making processes, have them contribute to governance processes and jointly advocate for issues affecting persons with disabilities. These platforms are inclusive in such a way that communication is easily sent across to everybody. The platform is easy to use, accessible to persons with disabilities and able to accommodate a lot of people on a common platform. Nominations were open to mother organizations of which various youth with disabilities, heads of respective organizations were nominated to join the platform. Jointly, the youth and young people with disabilities also identified some policy modifications to include youth with disabilities in Government's programming and political structure. The Inclusive Education Policy is a typical policy identified. One of these modifications was to have sign language interpreters in all training institutions and also to make braille textbooks as part of Government's supplies of textbooks to students with disabilities. Covid-19 affected interaction and advocacy push. The pandemic exposed us to adopt more on online tools for advocacy purposes and achieve results. Limitations is that in-person interactions were hampered by COVID-19, so information targeted at youth with disabilities are mostly inaccessible.

Positive Impact

Regional youth networks which consist of individuals and groups with similar interest who are within the youth bracket across the nation now have youth with disabilities in their membership and decision-making structures. All leadership are open for competition however the vice presidency position has been reserved solely for persons with disabilities. This however does not cut across all the regional youth networks as

some of the regions had already held elections. The federation upon deliberation advocated for the other regions who were yet to hold elections to reserve the vice presidency position for persons with disabilities but not limiting them to other positions. Out of 16, we are 10 regional youth networks which are actively functioning. The other regions are in the pipeline of establishing their youth networks. Youth with disabilities now have confidence to participate in activities of regional youth networks as well as activities of a community. Currently, 4 youth with disabilities hold leadership positions among the regional youth networks across the country. This we can describe as a social impact as it has improved interaction among the youth networks. This has also improved the awareness of issues affecting persons with disabilities.

Alignment with SDGs

GFD and FOSDA Youth Inclusion project aligns with the SDG target 10.2 By 2030, which seeks to empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status; target 16.7 that ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels, and target 17.17 that encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resources strategies of partnerships.

6.5 Case Study 5

6.6 Case Study 6

6.7 Case Study 7

6.8 Case Study 8

6.9 Case Study 9

6.10 Case Study 10

7.0 Leaving no one behind

This section assesses how the principle of leaving no one behind has been mainstreamed in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Ghana. It further addresses how this principle has been translated into concrete actions for tackling inequalities and discrimination, as well as efforts to ensure inclusive and effective participation in implementation efforts.

The report detail youth who are the furthest behind and vulnerable groups are affected by policies and programs that are being implemented to address their needs and support their empowerment. The interventions featured in this section discuss the impact on the situation of the furthest behind and strategies to support and empower the Ghanaian youth, especially adolescent girls and young women.

7.2 Discrimination

- 7.2.1 Ghana has a Persons with Disability Act, 2006 (Act 715), which has sectional provisions on the rights of the persons with disability; education; employment, transportation, access to healthcare facilities, and an existing National Council on Persons with Disability. These legal and institutional arrangement to ensure that concerns of Young People with Disability (preferred to be called young people) are mainstreamed into existing arrangements to improve their ability to engage in every sector of life. Despite this arrangement, there are common concerns of little efforts to ensure the provision of the Act are still implemented. The Persons with Disability forms 3% of Ghana's population and most government agencies are not disability friendly; less opportunities for high-skilled employment discrimination; exclusion of mainstream education, and mere despise stemming from individual's socio-cultural background.
- 7.2.2 Article 17(2) of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana states that "A person shall not be discriminated against on grounds of gender, race, color, ethnic origin, religion, creed or social or economic status." Despite these provision, the stakeholder consultation revealed that the average Ghanaian youth tends to be confident that, there is discrimination in getting admitted into certain public academic institutions at the secondary and tertiary levels despite the Computer School Selection and Placement System (CSSPS) at secondary level and open applications at the post-secondary institutions level. Some of the Ghanaian youth confesses to using their ethnicity to their advantage when they are exploring education and employment opportunities, which further deepens the woes of the average Ghanaian youth with less or no financial, social and political capital thus leaving them further behind in terms of opportunities to grow.

- 7.2.3 One observation on the provision of **Article 17(2) of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana is its silence on age as part of the grounds of discrimination.** In this era of globalization, and the push for meaningful youth participation and engagement (MYPE), and the call for youth-adult partnership, there is a need for the state, private and civil society organization to hold conversation on the need to clearly add age to the age grounds of discrimination to ensure that the individual and the state benefit from the optimum innovation and potential of the Ghanaian youth.
- 7.2.4 In response to the all-time high records of sexual and gender based violence amid COVID-19, and in addition to the Domestic Violence (DV) Act, 2007 (Act, 732) and the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU), the government inaugurated a one-stop facility that has a juvenile and circuit court, police station and a shelter, and will provide social welfare services, legal aid, clinical psychology and counselling SGBV survivors, who are mostly adolescent girls and young women in January 2022. This facility, however, is located in Accra, the capital of Ghana, and so not readily accessible to other survivors in other parts of the country, and are highly likely left behind to face persisting discrimination at the household and community levels, health care facilities, and police stations.
- 7.2.5 Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the worrying increase in number of teenage pregnancies and reported cases on SGBV and reduction in postnatal care further threatened safety and security of adolescent girls and young women. Additionally, despite the “Back to School” initiative by GoG, some girls could not stand the discrimination because of recovery of SGBV and child delivery, leading to increased drop out among others. Consequently, the adolescent girls and young women will be left behind in access to education and health care.

7.2 Geography

This subsection assesses youth endurance of isolation and vulnerability, and missing or experiencing inferior public services, transportation, and internet among other infrastructure gaps due to place of residence, school and/or work.

- 7.2.1 Article 36(2)(d) charges the State, in this context Ghana, in “Undertaking even and balanced development of all regions and every part of each region of Ghana, and, in particular, improving the conditions of life in the rural areas, and generally, redressing any imbalance in development between the rural and the

urban areas.” The government in attempts to improve the employment opportunities, increase access to market to provide decent work and improve balanced economic growth of the rural and urban Ghanaian youth, introduced agriculture and industry related programs such as One District; One factory; One Village, One Dam in the Northern part of Ghana; Planting for Food and Jobs; Fertilizer Subsidy Program, and Youth in Agriculture and Economic Development. These programs beneficiaries includes young start up farmers and industrialist at the rural and urban areas, who mostly have one rainfall season in Northern Ghana, given that Ghana most practice rain-fed agriculture; have low or no startup capital for basic agricultural and industrial materials and equipment. These programs adopted a dependency approach to ensure agricultural outputs feeds factories in districts, so create decent work for the youth irrespective of their geographical location.

7.2.2 Article 25(1)(b) mandates the States to make “Secondary education in its different forms, including technical and vocational education, shall be made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means, and in particular, by the progressive introduction of free education.” According to the Ghana Education Services, there are 675 Public Senior High Schools (47 being Technical and Vocational Institutions), 308 private Senior High Schools, and 152 private Technical and Vocational Institutes, totaling 1,182 second cycle institutions in Ghana. To ensure accessibility irrespective of geographical location, the government launched a self-placement system, where students have the option as part of CSSPS to choose desired schools to attend. This was complementary to the Free Senior High Policy launched in 2017 to waive tuition, feeding and accommodation cost for admitted students into public senior high schools, and to prove equal access to education for adolescent and young people without leaving no one behind. Despite the policy benefiting 1.6 million school going adolescent and young people since its inception in 2017, there are rising concerns in terms of the actual implementation of policy to ensure students receive the expected quality education. Additionally, there are concerns of the sustainability of the Free Senior High School policy beyond a democratic change of existing government given the high cost on the national budget. The fear of the Ghanaian youth is that, this could further derail their education prospects and further widen the gap to access education.

7.2.3 Article 38(3)(a) of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic mandates the State to provide “Equal and balanced access to secondary and other appropriate pre-university education, equal access to university or equivalent education, with emphasis on science and technology.” Beyond the mere introduction of Information and Communication Technology as topic in secondary and universities, there is heavy investments in terms of providing highly qualified teachers and state of the art of the facilities in schools, colleges and universities

in Ghana. The COVID-19 pandemic has further deepened the woes of the rural Ghanaian youth due to no or poor internet connection, making them worse off than their fellow urban Ghanaian youth, who is riddled with high internet and data costs, making them worse off than their fellow youth at the global level. The technology exchange and learning process has been slow among average Ghanaian youth given both in-school and out-of-schools despite the promising youth, but low investment in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) ecosystem.

7.2.4 The Ministries, Department and Agencies (MDAs) and Metropolitan, Municipal, Districts Assemblies (MMDAs) have been decentralized to subnational (thus regional and district in the context of Ghana) to ensure public services are brought to the doorstep of young people. Nonetheless, the Ghanaian youth living outside Accra, the capital of Ghana, has to incur the explicit (high transport cost) and implicit cost (bad roads, travel risk, inconvenience, stress, disappointment) of travelling to Accra to process documentations, since it serves as the headquarters of all MDAs, and serves as the Executive, Judiciary, Legislative capital as well. This saturation of public services in the capital of Ghana cuts off the Ghanaian youth who do not have the capacity to travel far and wide to Accra, get access to most high-level public services. There is an emerging belief that “you have to be in Accra to matter.” For starters, The Ghanaian calls for the relocation of headquarters of some ministries across the regions of Ghana, and delegate most decentralized MDAs to be able carry out mandate to prevent the Ghanaian youth from being denied public services due to their geographical location.

7.2.5 The Domestic Violence in Ghana report in 2016 revealed that besides sexual violence, which was high among urban residents than rural residents, all other forms of violence (physical, psychological, economic) was high among rural residents than urban. The survivors to these violence are high among the Ghanaian youth, particularly adolescent and young women. The very vulnerability that led to exposure of violence further leaves survivors of violence in isolation because of feeling of shame or ridicule from society, and lack of the presence of state institutions to address such areas, especially in rural areas. The worry among the Ghanaian youth is that, given homogenous nature of Ghanaian geographical communities, cases of violence are usually not reported to state institutions, but preferred to be solved within the household or community, which most often leaves perpetrators to go free without sanction leading to further perpetuation. Beyond the Domestic Violence Act, 2007, there is a need for all levels of multi-stakeholder dialogue in Ghana among the youth, state and societal actors to have consensus to eradicate violence nemesis irrespective of geographical location.

7.3 Governance

This subsection reviews areas where the youth face disadvantage due to ineffective, unjust, unaccountable or unresponsive global, national and/or sub-national institutions, and explore how the youth affected by inequitable, inadequate or unjust laws, policies and processes, while discussing how the youth unable to gain influence or participate meaningfully in the decisions that have direct impact.

- 7.3.1 Ghana's National Youth Policy highlights that the "Government will inculcate in the youth democratic values and principles for their active participation in governance." This will be achieved through education of the youth in the principles and practices of good governance and the promotion of their active participation in decision-making at all levels." From the consultative workshop, the Ghanaian youth feel disconnected and left out from the system when it comes to decision making, and a growing apathy the Ghanaian youth because of lack of and shrinking space to meaningfully participate in decision making that directly impact the Ghanaian youth. Mostly youth are not consulted in decision making process, are not involved in planning, coordination and implementation of intervention either policy, project, or program.
- 7.3.2 Ghana's National Youth Policy obliges the State to "Provide exemplary leadership and a conducive environment for good governance, and provide opportunities for the youth to grow with head, heart and hand." In reference to this policy provision, the Ghanaian youth calls for certain key managerial and decision making positions in public institutions, MDAs and MMDAs to be occupied by the Ghanaian youth. Such MDA includes Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation; National Youth Authority, National Service Secretariat, all youth-driven programs and initiative. The commitment of the Government of Ghana not to leave the Ghanaian youth behind should reflect in placing youth in positions of trust, so that their novel ideas and innovations can impact national development.
- 7.3.3 There is unmatched inequality in governance regarding youth representation in decision making positions and political appointments and election at the central and local government levels. Due to unregulated electioneering leading to monetization of political campaigns,

high cost of nomination form and filling fee of political parties, the Ghanaian youth is not able to contest at top level political position and decision making positions at the national level. Further, due to the patron-client rewards of the Ghanaian political landscape, the Ghanaian youth does not get appointment for top government official or ministerial position further deepening the inequality between the older and younger generation, and hampering the Youth-Adult Partnership and intergenerational learning and knowledge exchange. Additionally, Article 62(b) of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana provides that “He has attained the age of forty years.” Beyond the non-responsiveness to gender by beginning the paragraph with “He”, the provision clearly cuts out the Ghanaian youth from contesting for the highest seat of Ghana for an opportunity to serve.

7.4 Socio-economic status

This section assesses the youth situation regarding deprivation and demerits in terms of income, life expectancy and educational attainment, and discuss section the youth population having the less chances to stay healthy, be nourished and educated as well as explore youth opportunities and challenges to compete in the labor market.

7.4.1 Despite the number of national youth-driven programs, the Ghanaian youth perceives that these interventions do not respond to needs of the Ghanaian youth which is evident in rising cost of living, unemployment, high cost of doing business for startup organizations among others. The Ghanaian youth wants to witness a country where public, private sector programs are providing high skilled training and employment in the agricultural, manufacturing services where, where the youth can gain high quality education, work in value-driving economy that provides high wages and decent work. Currently, the employment arrangements for Diploma, Higher National Diploma, Bachelor degree holders working through such as National Service Scheme (NSS) and Nation Builders’ Corp (NABCO) take monthly allowance of only five hundred and fifty-nine Ghana cedis (GHS559), seven hundred Ghana cedis (GHS700) respectively. The current inflation of 23.6% was less than half of the current rate when these allowances were instituted in 2017 (NSS) and 2018 (NABCO) respectively. The current payment arrangement is unjust comparing the low wage and high cost of living in Ghana. This exposes the Ghanaian youth to vulnerable employment and further disrupting their ability to compete at the global level.

- 7.4.2 Since the turn of the 21st century, reducing poverty inequality has been the priority of the Government of Ghana and the global community as it reflected in the Government of Ghana's national development frameworks and the United Nations' prioritization of poverty reduction and poverty eradication as Millennium Development Goal 1 (MDG 1), and the Sustainable Development Goal 1 (SDG 1) as ending poverty in all its forms everywhere. According to the Ghana Living Standard Survey 7 published in 2017, over 3.5 million children live in poverty, with monetary child poverty being 44.5% and 9.8% in the rural and urbans. More specifically, the report reveals that 73.4% of children in Ghana are multi-dimensionally poor, and are deprived of health, education, and high standard of living. This means that children transitioning from childhood into their youthful age has less chance of being educated, nourished or being healthy. Consequently, this affects the physical and cognitive development of adolescent of the human capital of Ghana.
- 7.4.3 In Ghana, 95% of girls sometimes miss school because of menstruation. Despite these worrying percentage, disposable sanitary pad are classified as a luxury good and therefore attract an import of 20% tax and a value add tax of 12.5%. These taxes automatically affect the selling price of the sanitary pad which increases burden to the already burdened adolescent girls and young women deprived of quality education, health and good standard of living. The Ghanaian youth, particularly adolescent girls and young women cannot fathom how and why disposable sanitary pads is classified as a luxury goods instead of an essential health care commodity that should attract no taxes at all, subsidized or be supplied freely to adolescent girls and young women by mean-testing.
- 7.4.4 The Ghanaian youth believe that the entrepreneurial ecosystem suppressing innovations emanating from its youthful population, and this hamper youth opportunities and deepens challenges to compete in the labor market. This is as a result of loose patency regulation, less tax emptions for local startups; weak support from public and private sector organizations. The concern of the Ghanaian youth is that, since the turn of the century, several entrepreneurial and employment programs such as Micro and Small Loans Centre (MASLOC); Ghana Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Agency (GYEEDA), Local Enterprise Skill Development Programs (LESDEP); National Entrepreneurship and Innovation Program (NEIP) amongst others have been implemented by government, however, there is no real impact measurement of these initiative besides the corruption allegations and scandals, and political clientelism that surrounds most of such programs. The Ghanaian youth believes these initiatives have not served their need accountability on these programs, and further restructuring these programs to respond to the needs of the average Ghanaian

youth. Sadly, Ghana cannot boast of any scaled up innovation regarding a COVID-19 related product or service though some Ghanaian youth innovated on handwashing machine, touchless handwashing buckets, rapid test kits, disinfection machines, and a host of other innovations.

7.4.5 The phenomena of internal migration of the Ghanaian youth population, especially vulnerable adolescent girls and young women, from the northern part of Ghana to southern part of Ghana to engage in risky and vulnerable jobs such as head portering (popular called Kayayei in Ghana), pantry work at local restaurants, salesgirls on the open market. This high-risk migration phenomenon became so profound that the current government in their political campaign promised to build hostels that will serve as decent accommodation for these young migrants, who mostly have no decent accommodation, poor health care and lack nutrition. The push factor that causes the migration of the vulnerable young Ghanaian is usually attributed escape from harmful social norms and practices such as child marriage, quest for economic opportunities or livelihood. Nonetheless, these adolescent girls and young women are vulnerable due to their low wage, indecent work, poor or no accommodation leads them to engage in (unprotected) transactional sex to make ends meet. This leads into contraction of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS, and unintended pregnancy. These chain of events have damaging repercussions to the Ghanaian adolescent girl and young woman by way of physiological, psychological and economic damage, contravening the leaving no one behind principle.

7.5 Shocks and fragility

This section discusses the extent to which the Ghanaian youth is exposed and/or vulnerable to setbacks due to the impacts of climate change, natural hazards, violence, conflict, displacement, health emergencies, economic downturns, prices or amongst other shocks

7.5.1 The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic exposed already vulnerable Ghanaian youth when the Government of Ghana put in place, stop the spread of the virus by closing basic and secondary schools, and universities, and providing alternative for remote learning through platforms and lessons on television. At the basic and secondary school level, students who missed

adolescent missed out on learning opportunities due to lack of IT infrastructure to migrate to online studies. A study by the Innovation for Poverty Action (IPA) in 2021 revealed that 30% of surveyed children claimed they experienced hunger during school closures; private school children had more to access remote learning and received more from caregivers than public school children. Additionally, the study revealed that 65% of caregivers indicated that either distance learning and/or education resources provided by the schools were not accessible for children with disabilities. The basic and secondary schools closure impacted on food security, and left behind public school children regarding missed learning opportunities. This further leaves behind children with disabilities who did not have access to remote learning material, and are likely to be exposed to hunger as well. At the University level, due to delays in migrating to online studies, the public Universities in Ghana has not been able to go back to pre-pandemic academic calendars, affecting learning outcomes.

7.5.2 According to the Bank of Ghana's Inflation Analysis and Outlook published in 2021, the average percentage for inflation was at 10.8 percent in the third quarter of 2020, compared to the 23.6%-33.6% in the second quarter of 2022. This has over doubled over the period of two years, and this increases in inflation translates to rise in the cost of living to the Ghanaian youth who is either unemployed, little or no increase in salary and/or allowance to match up inflation or has probably been laid off from work as part of shocks from COVID-19 pandemic. This ramification further leaves the Ghanaian youth behind, because of inability to save and invest.

7.5.3 According to Ghana's Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Policy, MSMEs constitute about 92% of businesses in Ghana, account for about 85% of manufacturing employment, and contribute about 70% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The policy recognizes that "MSMEs are an integral part of the Ghanaian economy, and they promote the development of the different structures of society through the generation of employment to vulnerable groups, including women, youth and low-skilled workers." Despite the Ghana government's GH¢600 million allocation for Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs) via the Ghana Coronavirus Alleviation and Revitalization of Enterprises Obaatanpa Program (Ghana CARES), the current economic outlook does not look promising to MSMEs proprietors given that 12 different taxes are charged on fuel constituting about 40% of fuel price; levy of 1.75% charge on electronic cash transfers above GHS100, 34% banking lending rates, and volatile and rising inflation month-on-month, which fluctuates between 27.6-33.6%. These economic shocks render MSMEs and the entrepreneurial

space fragile, and impedes the Ghanaian youth ability to scale up innovations, and stay in business to compete at the global level.

- 7.5.4 In response to reduce the stress and shocks of the COVID-19 pandemic among Ghanaians, especially the youth, the Government of Ghana released GH¢200 million relief for provision of water and sanitation for households for three months; GH¢1,028 million as three-month subsidy for electricity use in households and businesses, and GH¢54 million for distribution of hot meals and food packages. For the period, the Ghanaian population enjoyed the relief packages from the government until in 2021, when government through the COVID-19 Health Recovery Levy Act, 2021 (Act 1068) imposed a 1% levy on the supply of goods and services made in the country other than exempt goods and services. Beyond the feel of betrayal from the Ghanaian youth, the imposition of the levy comes at a recovery period the Ghanaian youth is building back from the stress and shocks of the COVID-19 pandemic and further put hardship on the Ghanaian youth leaving them behind in the recovery process.
- 7.5.5 According to Ghana's National Disaster Management Organization's (NADMO) account, Ghana has experienced 1,446 flood events, lost 510 lives, 309 injuries, and destroyed 54,744 and 136,563 acres of farmland between 2015 and 2020. The debate on whether poor spatial planning or climate change is the cause of the perennial flooding in Ghana, especially the capital city of Ghana, especially since the history of flooding dates back to the 1960s but has intensified lately. Annually, residents of some parts of the country, particularly Central Region, Greater Accra, North East, Upper East, experience flooding times and over, and this natural hazard leads to loss of lives and properties, displacement of households and businesses. The disruption caused by floods put the Ghanaian youth at risk of losing their lives, and also have adverse effect on the displaced youth the capacity to recover from loss of properties given the mismatch between low wage and high cost of beddings, accommodation and other lost valuables.

8.0 Means of implementation to build back from COVID-19: Opportunities and Challenges

8.1 Financing Means

This section discusses the finance opportunities for the Ghanaian youth and youth organizations to explore and leverage at the public, private; domestic and/or international level.

8.1.1 Opportunities

Science and Technology startups such as educational and financial startups that market and sell their products and services online and offline can adopt the subscription-model, where the young Ghanaian consumer can subscribe by paying small amounts periodically to access such products and services, without having to pay lump. Education can boost a sustained financing mechanism for startups while the Ghanaian youth can also afford to pay for science and technology products and services.

Access to online databases of professional networks at the individual and organizational can prove very useful to the Ghanaian youth in terms of getting access to funding for the individual, organizational and communities projects. These databases for profit and non-profit startups can be accessible by increased online search and networking at events at all levels from subnational, national, regional and global networks.

There is always strength in partnership, especially when entities merge both financial and technical resources. In this era of the recovery from COVID-19, there should be increased adoption of Youth-Adult Partnership (YAP) in both for-profit and non-profit sectors is appropriate as this will harness and consolidate resources to ensure that intergenerational ideas are sustainably developed and executed to ensure no one is left behind.

Given GoG's several commitment to youth development over the years, the COVID-related disruption of these intervention serves as an opportunity for government to move beyond implementing piecemeal interventions towards making the National Youth Authority practically independent enough to coordinate a youth-fund that focuses on financing results-driven youth-led and youth-driven startups and organizations in both rural and urban areas of Ghana.

The youth can leverage financial support programs that the financial institutions in Ghana has to offer, besides the usual bank loans for MSMEs. Most often financial support programs are products of partnership between financial institution and philanthropic organization, and therefore do not have same high cost of bank lending rates on the markets.

With the internet penetration in Ghana and globalized nature of funding opportunities, the Ghanaian youth has the opportunity to methodically or randomly improve their research on funding opportunities offered by International Non-Governmental Organization (INGOs), philanthropic organizations, investment companies.

8.1.2 Challenges

The taxes, levies, banking lending rates in open markets, and inflation rate is the prime impediment to financing profit and non-profit youth startups enterprises and companies, and does not look promising for the average Ghanaian youth. These monetary and fiscal factors distorts the cash flows and financial projects, which threatens the existence, survival and sustainability of the youth-led and youth-driven innovations, enterprises and companies.

There is a general lack of trust from funding institutions in the capacity of young individual and youth organization to manage certain amount of capital, which is usually associated with lack of experience in managing risk. This lack of trust discourages the youth from seeking funding from institutions, therefore bank and donor institutions should consider a flexible budgeting and financing approach, when partnering young people and youth organization.

Most young individual and youth organization in Ghana have a hard time creating or finding a niche in formative stages of educational and career growth. This makes it difficult to build a strong individual and organizational profile and proposal when seeking funding for initiatives, and consequently limiting the chances of securing funding for the Ghanaian youth.

Due to the loosely regulated patent law in Ghana, the Ghanaian youth is highly likely to lose an innovative idea or product through pitching and proposals in attempt to secure funding from financial institutions, investors and/or already established businesses. Given that, the Ghanaian youth mostly reluctant to share an innovation which has the potential to solve real community problems

Due to structural norms and practices, the Ghanaian youth is usually regarded as growing, inexperienced or not serious enough to impact a community capable of leading an innovation that can impact community. This untested assumptions and beliefs stifles opportunities for the Ghanaian youth to the financial resource mobilization efforts, chiefly at the informal levels (household, group or community)

Though the Ghana's 2020 SDGs Budget Report, indicated national and subnational levels budget allocation and corresponding expenditure, the report did not highlight the expenditure on youth initiatives and beneficiaries. This limited disaggregated data availability refutes the Ghanaian youth the ability to explore financing opportunities using budgetary level data.

8.2 Non-Financing Means

The section discusses opportunities and challenges on non-financing means of implementation, which include capacity development, data needs, technology, and partnerships

8.2.1 Opportunities

The Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), with support from development partners, leads the national effort in consolidating data for the government, private sector and the civil society organizations to use in planning interventions such as policies, projects and programs. The key series of national census, surveys and reports available from the GSS includes but not limited to Population and Housing Census, Ghana Living Standards Survey, Ghana Maternal Health Survey, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, COVID-19 Households and Jobs Tracker; Local Economy Tracker, Household Survey on ICT, Recruitment Costs Pilot Survey. In addition to the data from Ghana statistical Service, the various MDAs and MMDAs at the national and subnational levels have sector specific plans, policies and strategies as well quarterly, mid-year and annual reports that can facilitate planning and decision making process for young people and youth organizations.

The knowledge of internet among Ghanaian has been low as Ghana's 2019 Household Survey on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) report revealed that 39.7% of Ghanaians aged 5 years and above has knowledge of what the internet is. Though, a succeeding series of the survey has not been carried out after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the use of internet for remote learning, less outdoor engagement leading to increased use of internet for entertainment has increased knowledge of the internet for the Ghanaian youth. In essence, the internet penetration

stands at 53%, and the adoption and adaptation of internet among the young people, and by far youth organizations can be helpful in terms of reaching out to potential and existing partners, improving knowledge and skills, and getting entertainment.

Technology has the ability to transform the lifestyle of citizens in terms of impact and reach. The Ghanaian youth can get involved in the emerging Information Technology (IT) platforms such as learning hubs, innovation labs established by youth organizations and development partners to improve their knowledge and skills on basic and advanced areas of Information and Communication Technology especially in artificial intelligence to remain competitive at the subnational, national and global levels.

Ghana's National Youth Authority has been instrumental in its attempt to mobilize young people and youth organizations through its decentralized offices across the country. It has successfully developed a country-wide database of 10,000+ youth organizations. With the Right to Information Act in force, young people, and youth groups and organizations can request and have access to the database to explore partnership opportunities.

Ghana's CSO Platform for SDGs has a 40- member youth sub-platform, which consists of for-profit and nonprofit organizations working on innovative interventions responding to the SDGs. The diversity and varying capacities of organizations on the platform creates an opportunity for partnership on capacity development, planning and implementation of interventions to better position Ghanaian youth organizations to fully implement the SDGs.

The media has proven to be powerful in agenda setting, programming the minds of the population, and have a wider reach. The emergence of social media and the digitization of radio and television has led to emergence of several platforms that reaches furthest of furthest individuals at national and subnational levels. Given that, the government, private sector and civil society organizations should partner to design education and dissemination sessions on the SDGs, its progress and challenges, and how it is shaping national and subnational development.

8.2.2 Challenges

This section highlights the challenges youth and youth organizations face in resource mobilization regarding finance, technology, and capacity building that inhibits the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Data is disaggregated, up to date, and real time data is central to planning and decision making. Most often, there is wide gap in the period for conducting national census and surveys, largely due to financial constraints. This situation renders some vital data outdated to use for meaningful planning and decision making. Additionally, government intervention, due to poor monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are mostly not able to record disaggregated data on program beneficiaries (preferably called partners), especially youth.

According to Ghana's 2019 Household Survey on ICT, households in Ghana who had access to internet services was 16.8%, and access to internet is relatively higher in urban areas (20.0%) as compared to rural localities (12.8%). These percentages are less than half of the percentage of internet penetration in Ghana, which stands at 53%. This implies that more than half the Ghanaian population, and by reduction the Ghanaian youth have limited or no access to internet, which means less or no access to information, communication, education, entertainment to improve quality of health, and the most affected is the rural Ghanaian youth.

Despite the decentralized MDAs and MMDA and electronic nature of public service, there are still delays in getting information and services from public services. Specifically, when it comes to getting approvals for startup and companies in the area of Science and Technology manufacturing where young entrepreneurs are most likely to have ideas to venture into.

The increased capacity of young people and youth organizations in terms of knowledge, skills and systems to recover from COVID-19 pandemic era is imperative. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, there were already serious concerns of knowledge and skills gaps in both formal and informal employment sectors, mismatch of academic training to meet industry, and inadequate systems of youth organizations to manage intervention. The COVID-19 has come to deepen these concerns and introduce new capacity gaps that the Ghanaian youth and youth organization are adapting and adjusting.

There is strength in partnership especially towards the implementation and achievement of SDGs. It is therefore worrying there is widespread reluctance of young people and youth organization to forge partnership to develop and implement innovative ideas. This usually stems from mutual understanding regarding roles and responsibilities, which usually is impeded by team and power dynamics in partnership.

9.0 Policy and Practice Recommendations

From the findings and discussion of the Youth SDGs Report, Ghana, a Ghanaian youth:

- 9.1 *Demands* the inclusion of Ministry of Youth and Sports and the National Youth Authority to be statutory members of High-Level Ministerial Committee and Implementation Committee, which are part of the structures of the SDG Institutional arrangement for SDGs.
- 9.2 *Calls* for the sustained and increased investment in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) ecosystem along with national development dimensions and SDGs targeted at developing and improving talents and innovations of the Ghanaian youth
- 9.3 *Urges* the improvement of monitoring and evaluation system of national programs including disaggregated data collection, analysis and reporting to provide data on groups that are vulnerable to improve planning and decision making for groups, especially the youth.
- 9.4 *Calls* for the strengthening of national youth platforms for meaningful youth engagement in policies, programs and actions on issues that affect them.
- 9.5 *Further* calls in increase consciousness of the Ghanaian youth to access the right the right information and skills to demand for their rights and to hold national systems and institutions accountable.
- 9.6 *Emphasize* the strengthening of political commitment and funding for youth initiatives to drive youth innovation and solutions for the SDGs.
- 9.7 *Recommends* the strengthening of Youth-Adult Partnerships at all levels to ensure linkages between youth policies, programs of actions and means of implementation
- 9.8 *Further recommends* the youth and youth organizations align activities and projects with the medium-term development plans and strategies of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), and Metropolitan, Municipal and Districts Assemblies (MMDAs) to ensure results are aligned with SDGs Target and Indicators
- 9.9 *Calls upon* the Ministries of Health and Education to integrate comprehensive sexual education; stress management, and mental health or psychosocial support into school-based curriculum to help students in recovering from the shocks and stress of COVID-19.
- 9.10 *Calls on* the Ghanaian youth to take initiatives and active participation in the Voluntary National Review process of the SDGs at national and subnational levels.

10.0 Conclusion and next steps

Since 2015, the SDGs has shaped the Ghana's subnational and national development through its adoption, adaption, and alignment approach to the national development frameworks. The integration commitment of the Government of Ghana is a first step commitment to the implementing and achieving the SDGs. Beyond that, the institutional framework to ensure meaningful participation of all stakeholders including stakeholders that are vulnerable including the youth are likely to be behind in the participation. The current national institutional arrangement for the coordination of the implementation of the SDGs, which as structures such as High-Level Ministerial Committee, SDGs Implementation Coordination Committee, Technical Committee, does not give statutory membership to the National Youth Authority and Ministry of Youth and Sports denying the youth full representation and participation in decision making on SDGs.

Nonetheless, the Ghanaian youth demonstrates commitment, resilience and adaptability towards building back from COVID-19 to get back on a path to full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This is evident in the case studies spearheaded by youth-led and youth-driven organizations on the innovative youth-driven SDG-related interventions that cuts across social, economic, and environmental dimensions of the SDGs.

Despite the poor representation of youth in national-level decision making spaces in Ghana, the Government of Ghana has put in the several youth-driven strategies and programs in the area of the education, entrepreneurship and skills, agriculture to ensure that efforts to build back from COVID-19 does not leave the Ghanaian youth behind. The Science, Engineering, Mathematics and Technology field, however, requires heavy investment, since the field has proved essential in building back from COVID-19. Additionally, improved monitoring and impact evaluation of strategies and programs would be helpful in measuring the progress of the Ghanaian youth, and put them on path to improvement or sustainability.

Additionally, Ghana is still hard hit with the impact of the COVID-19, conflicts around the globe, and its internal fiscal and monetary outlook. The unstable and high inflation rate, fuel prices, taxes and levies make it difficult for the average Ghanaian youth to get by daily, save and invest at the individual or organizational level. Additionally, poor access to education, quality health care, food, housing deepen the vulnerability of the Ghanaian youth, especially adolescent girls and young women who are likely to be exposed to sexual and gender-based violence, transactional unprotected sex, and harmful practices. This further creates underlying and structure that leaves the Ghanaian youth behind in growth and development.

The efforts of the Ghanaian youth to build back from COVID-19 to contribute to the implementation of the SDGs comes with its financing and non-financing opportunities and challenges. The opportunities for financing source from funding databases of international groups/networks, subscription sales and investment in science and technology products and services, financial support programs from banks and philanthropic organizations. The financing means come with challenges including but not limited to high interest rates in open market, lack of trust from funding institutions, poor brand, and loose patent regulations.

On non-financing means of implementation regarding partnership, capacity development, and technology and innovation exchange, the opportunities include availability of data from national census, survey, policies, plans, strategies and programs to help the Ghanaian youth for planning and decision making, leveraging internet for capacity development regarding knowledge, skills and systems, leverage existing national youth organization database to platforms to network with individuals and organizations, and the use of media to reach out to furthest of the furthest on issues regarding COVID-19 and the SDGs. The challenges regarding non-financing means to implementing the SDGs include reluctance youth groups to partners among each other, limited or no capacity of youth and youth organizations to mane initiatives limited percentage of youth access internet, inadequate real time for planning and decision making, level data affecting planning and decision making.

The report captures the state and voice of the Ghanaian youth regarding the full implementation of the SDGs. Beyond being the largest population in the country, the Ghanaian youth is ever resilient and thrives under different cultures and environment, and is instrumental to the supporting the country to build back from COVID-19 and put the country on a path to its national development, and by extension the full implementation of 2030 Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

This report will be commissioned via a launch by Youth Advocates Ghana; discuss the key findings and emerging issues at a Side Event at High-Level Political Forum, and presented along the Government of Ghana Delegation at the at HLPF in New York in July 2022.