

# SANKOFA

Bato Malumu Sankofa Wata-Wata, African Union Family Magazine

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## IMPACTING THE LIVES of African Citizens

Photo: Gettyimages



Volume 3

The implementation of Agenda 2063 Aspirations and Goals related to education and culture



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To introduce the various themes covered in this magazine, along with the third issue in the series of field activities carried out by the African Union, I would like to quote two eminent leaders of Africa. Speaking of the importance of education, Nelson Mandela said, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” As regards to the role of culture, Ahmed Sekou Touré stated: “We should go down to the grassroots of our culture, not to remain there, not to be isolated there, but to draw strength and substance from there”.

Our Founding Fathers relied on these ideologies to develop and enhance education and promote culture for the advancement of Africa. Today, Agenda 2063 – the strategic framework for Africa’s development, prioritizes these themes under Aspirations 1, 5 and 6, based on the efforts initially carried out decades ago.

However, aspirations and plans are not the end result of these visions; they have to yield concrete outcomes through activities on the field.

Thus, this 26<sup>th</sup> issue of SANKOFA aims at highlighting these field actions, introducing their actors and especially their targets. Indeed, the heart of any effort for development on the continent is the human being- the African citizen.

Enjoy your reading! ●

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“Bato Malamu Sankofa Wata-Wata” is a combination of three African languages: Lingala (*Bato Malamu* - Good people), Asante Twi (*Sankofa* - return to the good history), and Hausa (*Wata-wata*- monthly).

This publication is an internal magazine of the African Union edited and published by the Administration and Human Resources Management Directorate with the support of Capacity Development Project. Each issue showcases the transformation initiated within the AU. It aims at improving the staff knowledge of the Organization by informing them about its functioning, work and structure. Moreover, it seeks to promote the spirit of belonging to the AU family among the staff.



**ASPIRATION 1**

A Prosperous Africa Based on Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development

31%

**GOAL 1**

56%

**A High Standard of Living, Quality of Life and Well Being for All**

The continent has registered notable progress towards realizing Goal 1. Recorded at 56% of the 2019 target, the period under review exhibited varied patterns in unemployment rates, especially among women and youth.

**GOAL 2**

24%

**Well Educated Citizens and Skills Revolution underpinned by Science, Technology and Innovation**

While the overall performance on this goal was only 24%, the continent registered good performance in basic education, with enrolment rates increasing from 76.8% in 2013 to 80.8% in 2019, although falling below the 2019 target of 90.7%.

Overall performance of the continent on increasing enrolment rates in pre-school and secondary school was weak, recorded at 9.5% and 8.2% respectively. Enrolment rates at pre-school and secondary-school level rose marginally from 39% and 25.7% in 2013 to 43.4% and 29.4% in 2019 respectively. In the same way, the 6.9% increase in secondary school net enrolment rates – up from 22.1% in 2013 – denotes a deficit of 85% from the 2019 target.



**ASPIRATION 5**

Africa with a Strong Cultural Identity, Common Heritage, Shared Values and Ethics

16%

**GOAL 16**

12%

**African Cultural Renaissance is pre-eminent**

The key measurement for pre-eminence of an African Cultural Renaissance was the percentage of content in primary and secondary school education curriculum that is on indigenous African culture, values and language. The assessment of the aggregate total score of the continent reveals a very weak performance, recording a low score of 12%, partly due to a lack of relevant data. However, there are other related efforts although not directly linked to the school education curriculum.



**ASPIRATION 6**

An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of the African People, especially its women and youth, and caring for children

39%

**GOAL 17**

40%

**African Cultural Renaissance is pre-eminent**

During the period under review, youth empowerment was pursued, in-part, through efforts geared at reducing unemployment rates among youth, but registered a very low score of -128%, signalling a likelihood of not attaining the overall target by 2023 if radical changes are not made. A similar pattern of weak performance was recorded in reducing child trafficking, child labour and child marriages, with an aggregate score of 12%, -6% and 23% respectively against the 2019 targets. The continent, however, recorded strong performance on the implementation of the provisions of the African Charter on the Rights of the Youth by Member States, pitched at 77% against the 2019 targets. To date, 43 countries have signed the Charter.

# THEME

## Investing in African citizens to improve living conditions across the continent



Students at Aberdeen Primary School in Freetown, Sierra Leone. Photo: © Dominic Chavez/World Bank

The essence of any development endeavor is measured by the direct impact it has on the lives of its targets. Africa is the world's second-largest, second-most populous and youngest continent. It accounted for 19% of the global youth population in 2015 with 226 million young people between the ages of 15 and 24 living in Africa, while almost 60% of its total population in 2019 were under the age of 25 according to the 2019 Ibrahim Forum Report. In addition, over 50% of the African population is made up of women. This youthful population constitutes Africa's greatest asset and potential which can be harnessed to fast track the continent's development efforts, as well as advance the achievement of its ambitious Agenda 2063. The Aspiration 6 of this Agenda emphasizes on the need to rely on the potential of all the African peoples, especially on its women and youth for inclusive growth and sustainable development. As such, to accelerate Africa's integration and development process in collaboration with especially the African citizens, youth education and empowerment have become an issue of high priority for the African Union (AU), its Member States, Organs and development partners.

Agenda 2063 envisions developing world class human resources to drive the economic and technological transformation of the continent through quality education.

Meantime, there have been multiple constraints confronting Africa's higher education system which is quite underdeveloped, and was of low priority several years back. There is also a limited access to tertiary or continuing education to certain relevant age groups, with a significant under-representation of women in fields like science and technology, agriculture, health and engineering. This contributes to the high migration of African talents in search of training and research opportunities abroad, where they potentially remain after completing their studies, rather than returning to develop the continent. More so, there seems to be a clear mismatch between education or the pattern skills production and the needs of the continent's job market.

Improving the higher education system of the continent and facilitating access to tertiary and continuing education for young people is not enough to mitigate the important economic challenges facing the African youth. Most youngsters are either unemployed, under-employed, have insecure jobs or temporary employment with horrendous working conditions, which can push them into the unstable informal sector with extremely low wages. Women face greater barriers to job opportunities with serious and deplorable conditionalities. Such conditions can stimulate

conflict and instability, contributing to massive youth migration or compelling them to join rebel or terrorist groups out of frustration.

To advance Africa's development objectives and enhance its capacity to create and sustain increased opportunities for youth employment, skills development and entrepreneurship, the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) developed and launched the Skills and Employability (S&E) Program. The Program is focused on influencing policies based on practice, strengthening systems and processes, influencing appropriate curricular development, financing skills development and promoting dialogues and knowledge sharing – a powerful mechanism to produce knowledge and innovation by providing answers to common questions. The S&E Program has trained 10,115 youth, facilitated the provision of internships to 21,833 others as part of formal training, as well as designed 81% of curricular with the private sector in a bid to link education/training with industries' needs.

Despite these efforts to improve the quality and access to education and skills development, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities to all African youth, some social norms and values of the patriarchy system, traditions, religions and socio-economic pressures, and gender-based discriminations are preventing girls and women from benefiting from such prospects, as well as realizing their full potential. Previously, it was presumed that education renders a woman too independent and unfit to perform "her duties of a woman" – taking care of the house, raising children and providing the needs of husbands. Poor families even prioritized the education of boys over girls – the most likely to drop out to get married and start a family or later abandon their profession for similar reasons.

To eliminate all barriers to quality education, health and social services to women, the African Union International Center for Girls' and Women's Education (AU-CIEFFA) was mandated to promote, protect, and advocate for girls' and women's right to good quality education, that will empower them in all spheres of life. With a particular interest on gender equality, gender-sensitive learning and teaching environment, the Agency contributes to ensuring quality education for girls and increased access and retention of girls in educational systems. To fulfill its mission, AU-CIEFFA is working with traditional and religious leaders to change mindsets and influence behaviors of communities to promote girls access to education and retention in school. It is also building the capacity of youth to become agents of change and champions of girls' education in their societies.

However, all the continent's education decisions must be made on the basis of accurate and up-to-date information to ensure effectiveness of actions undertaken. It is with

this in mind that the Pan African Institute of Education for Development (IPED) was set up by the African Union. This specialized institution of the African Union is tasked with the responsibility to function as Africa's Education Observatory. This is a central role in ensuring quality, responsive, and inclusive education development in Africa, based on sound, accurate and timely information, to meet the individual and collective goals for the development of human resources and intellectual capacity in Africa. One of its key focus areas is Education Management Information Systems (EMIS). But, it also provides support in monitoring and evaluating actions taken at continental and regional level.

Knowing and transferring Africa's history, language and cultural heritage from one generation to the other is critical for the continent's integration, unity and sustainable development. Africa is said to be the most multilingual continent in the world, hosting a diversity of ethnicities and cultures, with over a thousand languages spoken across the continent. Some major languages spread across national boundaries and are spoken by different peoples in different countries around the continent- for example; Yoruba, Fulfulde, Wolof and Swahili. The African Academy of Language (ACALAN) which became a specialized institute of the AU in 2006 has been assigned to develop and promote African languages so that they can be used in all spheres of life, in addition to the languages African states inherited from colonization. ACALAN is engaged in projects like developing a Linguistic Atlas for Africa, a Pan-African Masters and PhD Program in African Languages,

a Pan-African Center for Interpretation and Translation, and Stories Across Africa for children. To encourage the use of African languages as a language of instruction and in the media, ACALAN has a TV station which showcases the various African languages. The Center for Linguistic and Historical Studies (CELHTO) is also involved in promoting African languages, but most importantly collecting and preserving oral traditions and all aspects concerning African societies and cultures. It is the reference institution for the collection and use of oral tradition data on the continent, producing documents on inter-generational dialogue, an atlas on African tales and legends, books on African cultures from oral sources, and adapting African tales to digital support.

The AU's focus on quality education, skills development and entrepreneurship for the African citizens, as well as promoting and preserving its languages and cultural heritage, are all geared towards equipping all Africans with the necessary knowledge and know-how to drive the continent's sustainable development, and achieve its vision of integration, prosperity and peace. However, emphasis should also be laid on increasing continental efforts to Silencing the Guns completely across Africa as citizens in conflict-ridden and warring states still face grave economic challenges with limited opportunities, and might be left behind in the development trajectory of the continent. ●

“The essence of any development endeavor is measured by the direct impact it has on the lives of its targets.”

By the editorial team

## WORKING WITHIN THE SKILLS, EMPLOYMENT, AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP ECOSYSTEM TO LEVERAGE THE DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND



Young people from different parts of Africa. Photo: montage from GettyImages

# AUDA-NEPAD

## Skills and Employability Program

Africa remains the youngest continent in the world, with the most significant potential workforce. In 2015, 226 million youth aged 15 to 24 lived in Africa, representing almost 20 percent of the continent's population. With the addition of people younger than 35 years old, this share reaches up to 75 percent of the total population. It is, therefore, vital to create an enabling environment that facilitates the development of appropriate skills aligned to current and future industry needs, policies that promote and advocate for decent job creation, and formalized mechanisms to support entrepreneurship. The Skills and Employability (S&E) Program offers a portfolio of programs under one umbrella to catalyze transformation and increase the capacity to create and sustain increased opportunities for decent employment, skills development, and entrepreneurship.

The African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) S&E Program is in line with the relevant policies of the African Union (AU), their initiatives, and plan of actions launched in the reporting period. The African Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment 2019- 2023 (APAYE) is a five-year continental framework and plan of action for implementing the African Youth Charter, the African Union's decision on harnessing the demographic dividend through investment in youth, and the targets on youth articulated in the Agenda 2063 Ten Year Implementation Plan. APAYE serves as the AU's overarching programmatic document to guide and influence the efforts and contributions of key partners and stakeholders engaged in youth empowerment on the continent.

### SCOPE AND APPROACH

The S&E program works at continental, regional, and country levels, focussing on evidence-based policy transformation, establishing robust systems and processes,

and promoting implementation improvements based on lessons learnt from good practice. The scope is premised on the view that transforming the lives of young people on the continent requires us to recognize that we operate in a complex and dynamic ecosystem; characterized by linkages and connections across countries, regions, and different stakeholders. Therefore, to meaningfully impact the skills, employment, and entrepreneurship arena on the continent, we must create platforms that allow stakeholders to identify and establish the necessary relationships and networks to co-create knowledge from practice. There is the sober realization that many issues can only be addressed by acting in collaboration with others.

The two projects described here - Skills Initiative for Africa (SIFA) and Agriculture Technical Vocational Education and Training for Women (ATVET4W) - aim to address the above landscape, delivering knowledge through sharing of best practices, strengthening public-private partnerships for employment-oriented skills development, financing of innovative technical and vocational education and training (TVET) projects, capacity building of youth and women, and improving the small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) ecosystem development.

### INFLUENCING POLICY BASED ON PRACTICE

Policy recommendations should be informed by experience and practice to be more effective and to better respond to on-the-ground realities. The S&E Program takes cognizance of the fact that placing youth at the centre of development efforts and economic growth strategies cannot continue as a cross-cutting issue to tick the boxes. Much effort is still required to ensure that youth employment through skills development is addressed on a scale equivalent to the magnitude of the

challenge. By aligning to continental frameworks such as the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP), the Agriculture Technical Vocational Education and Training (ATVET) project has supported the inclusion of youth employment strategies in 11 National Agriculture Investment Plans (NAIPs), which serve as a blueprint for agriculture development. The addition of ATVET in national policy and strategic documents has occurred in Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Namibia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, and Uganda.

Furthermore, through SIFA Regional Coordinators, the Working with Private Sector Actors Program is providing technical input into country-level policy frameworks; these include the Decent Work Country Program in South Africa and the Recognition of Prior Language Policy in Kenya.

### STRENGTHENING SYSTEMS and PROCESSES

#### Engaging the private sector

Engaging and working with the private sector is fundamental in the drive to create decent employment. Jobs will only be created based on the needs of the private sector. Working in close partnership with leading employer associations, the Regional Coordinators have established committees within these associations in Kenya and South Africa. This intervention is ground-breaking work at the level of the employer associations; and demonstrates a willingness to take ownership and play a role in shaping the future of skills and employment for youth.

The objective is to work through the associated business companies to facilitate partnerships with public sector TVET institutions, to address employment-oriented skills development. This should see an expansion of opportunities for young people to enter into learnerships, apprenticeships, while on the other hand, opportunities for the modernization of TVET institutions through private sector investments.

#### Financing mechanisms

Through the AUDA-NEPAD, the Financing Facility for Skills Development is designed to coherently address the common challenges in skills development to support innovative and sustainable approaches. The Financing Facility provides funding on a competitive basis. Three funding windows have been designed for different strategies: Funding Windows I and II are designed for large investment projects including construction or rehabilitation of vocational schools and equipment of training facilities, the third Funding Window will support smaller innovative projects.

So far, the projects that are under consideration include equipment upgrades and training of youth in industrial maintenance, aqua-culture, food safety along the food chain and agricultural mechanization, water and energy installations, and maintenance. The projects represent a diversity of sectors and incorporate competence training for work readiness and digital transformation. The objective of SIFA FC is to support Member States to put in place the necessary conditions that ensure improved accessibility to practice-oriented education and training for young people, especially women (30%). A critical success indicator will be that graduates of initial and continuing skills development

measures supported by the skills initiative are in employment appropriate to their qualifications. The project is supported by the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through funding from the German Development Bank (KfW) and the European Union (EU). The SIFA FC is also being implemented in Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon, Tunisia, South Africa, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Togo.

### INFLUENCING PRACTICE

#### Curriculum Development

Outdated curricula remain the biggest challenge to TVET in Africa. The Competency-Based Education and Training (CBET) approach is AUDA-NEPAD's methodology of choice for reviewing existing and developing new TVET curricula. By identifying in-demand occupations along value chains with high income or employment potential, Member States have been supported in developing modularized curriculum which responds to these labor market needs. In addressing the matching of skills supply to demand, the private sector has actively been engaged to ensure that their skills needs are met. Through AUDA-NEPAD support, the Council for TVET (COTVET) in Ghana was supported to institutionalize CBET methodology. As a result, COTVET has been able to transfer the knowledge gained in agriculture TVET to other sectors across the country.

### DIALOGUE AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING: THE MULTIPLIER EFFECT

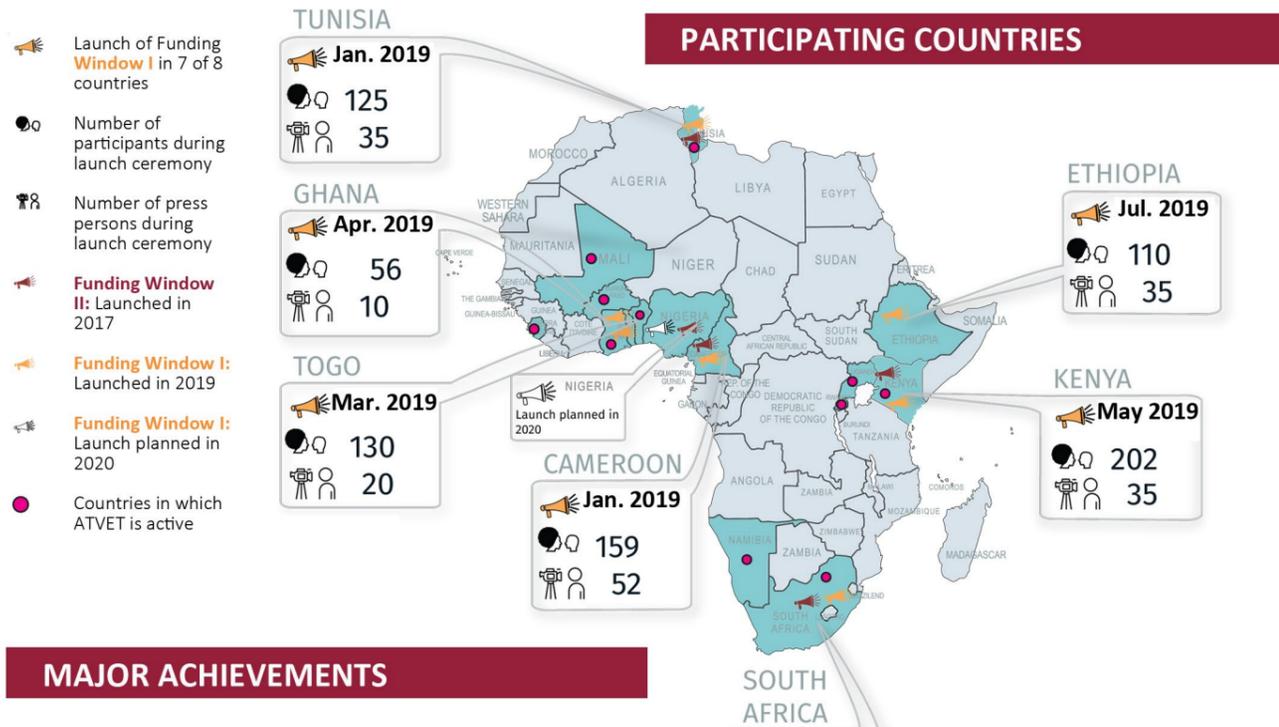
Online and face-to-face communication platforms enable dialogue amongst stakeholders for knowledge sharing and co-creation. Knowledge sharing across country and regional boundaries on the continent is a powerful mechanism. This mechanism brings together multiple-stakeholders to produce knowledge and innovation that provides specific answers to common questions.

The online platform African Skills Portal for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship (ASPYEE) promotes successful, replicable practices and African solutions that contribute to decent employment, skills development, and youth participation in entrepreneurship. The emphasis is on sharing lessons learnt from experience, examining both challenges and successes.

A face-to-face dialogue platform, Africa Creates Jobs! (ACJ!), brings together the relevant continental stakeholders from government, business, and practitioners to develop policy input with a particular focus on strengthening the voice of Africa's youth in the process. It is jointly hosted by the African Union Commission, the AUDA-NEPAD Agency and Business Africa. The foundation of the activities taking place under Africa Talks Jobs (ATJ) is the African Union Roadmap of the Decade for Technical, Professional, Entrepreneurial Training and Youth Employment. ●



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**MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS**

<b>POLICY</b>	<b>Input</b> from Practice into Key Skills and Employment Frameworks, Strategies and Policies				
<b>SYSTEMS &amp; PROCESSES</b>	<b>Kenya South Africa</b> Establish skills and employment committees with Employer Associations	<b>Ghana</b> Council for TVET (COTVET) supported to implement Competency based Education and Training	<b>7 of 8 countries</b> SIFA Financing Facility funds innovative and sustainable projects for employment oriented Skills Development		
<b>PRACTICE</b>	<b>10,115</b> Trained 3264 Female 6851 Male	<b>1,833</b> Internships in private companies as part of formal training	<b>31%</b> Following trainings of trainees are employed and <b>19%</b> are self-employed	<b>81%</b> Of Curricula jointly developed with Private Sector	<b>43</b> Total Gender sensitive curricula
<b>DIALOGUE &amp; KNOWLEDGE SHARING</b>	<b>400</b> Participants from all African Regions: Private Sector, Educational Institutions, International Organisation, Civil Society, and Politicians attended the Event Africa Talks Jobs (ATJ)	<b>120</b> Companies and Associations pledged during ATJ in 2017 to invest in Skills Development	<b>20,000</b> Hits ASPYEE Portal	<b>36</b> Validated Good Practices from different Countries	

**ADDAI AGNES**  
GETTING AN EMPLOYMENT THANKS TO TVET



Addai Agnes driving a tractor

Qualification Framework (NQF) has led to the recognition of 98 agricultural occupations for vocational training for youth according to the labor market demand, providing trainees with a nationally recognized qualification which opens doors for employment and improves market access. Through support to the recognition of TVET in National Qualification Frameworks, trainees are better placed to get formal employment, such as in Ghana were the “Women in the Driving Seat” Training which targets developing women’s skills in managing agricultural machinery and equipment, has had resounding success. Not only has it trained over 100 young women in tractor driving and maintenance, it has also broken gender barriers where women previously were not able to drive tractors, to them becoming top employees in the companies that employed them.

Addai Agnes is a small business owner and hails from a peri-urban area. She completed the “Women in the Driving Seat” tractor training with flying colors. When she started her work placement,

Addai encountered some obstacles. Initially her seniors did not trust her with using a tractor. During the initial stages of her placement, she was not even allowed to drive a tractor herself. However, once her principals witnessed her impressive skills, they offered her a job at the farm. Rather than being an employee, she ultimately plans to own a farm herself and use the skills she has acquired in the training.

The Skills and Employability Program has tackled the issue of skills mismatch by engaging the private sector in TVET in all areas including, policy reform through articulation of their labor skills requirements, contributing to funding mechanisms through skills levies, down to training delivery (Work Experience Learning – WEL). With the establishment of Skills Technical Working Groups (TWG), the private sector has begun to take interest in TVET realizing the potential benefits that come with well trained artisans. ●

**W**ith the continent becoming a global village, the need for mutual recognition of qualifications at continental, regional and national level is a precursor for the successful implementation of initiatives such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Skills portability between African Union Member States will go a long way to ensure migration within Africa presents more lucrative economic options for skilled youth. The African Union has developed a Continental Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to foster youth employment, as well as a Plan of Action for the African Decade for Technical, Professional, Entrepreneurial Training and Youth Employment.

Furthermore, the East African Community (EAC) has already made strides to operationalize a TVET harmonization strategy in their Partner States. In Benin, for example, the process of including agriculture in the National

# ENSURING THAT ALL GIRLS AND WOMEN HAVE THE REQUIRED COMPETENCIES TO RESPOND TO THE CONTINENT'S CHALLENGES



A girl from Burkina Faso supervising her little sister in her studies

## AU/CIEFFA

### The African Union – International Centre for Girls' and Women's Education in Africa

Recent studies report that 52 million girls are out of school in Africa and 76 million women are illiterate in only 9 countries of Africa (UNESCO, 2014). This is because of systemic harmful values and norms of patriarchy, traditional, religious and socio-economic pressures, as well as gender-based discrimination amongst others. Without its two full-fledged wings, the African continent is unlikely to fly atop of the global arena.

The African Union-International Centre for Girls' and Women's Education in Africa (AU/CIEFFA) is based in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso and established under the Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology (HRST) of the African Union Commission (AUC). The origins of this AU Center date back to the year 1990, when the international community met at the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand. They adopted a declaration and a plan of action through which they committed themselves to meet all citizens' fundamental educational needs, and particularly, ensure girls' access to education and improving the quality of their training.

AU/CIEFFA became a specialized institution of the African Union in 2004 (following Decision Assembly/AU/ Dec.44 (III)) with the mandate to promote, protect and advocate for girls' and women's right to good quality education which will empower them in all spheres of life. The mandate and vision of AU /CIEFFA are anchored in the umbrella of Aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063 as well as in the Continental Education Strategy for Africa 16-25 (CESA), in order to ensure that the gender dimension is mainstreaming within those two key frameworks and policy.

The Continental Education Strategy for Africa specifically calls for a "qualitative system of education and training to provide the African continent with efficient human resources adapted to African core values and therefore capable of achieving the vision and ambitions of the African Union." The respective implementation of Action Plans for such frameworks on women and girls' rights to a quality education is essential in the view of timely data. The data necessitates a strengthened continental education

management information systems (EMIS) with the full participation of non-governmental and governmental actors.

AU/CIEFFA works in close collaboration with AU Member States and Governments, Regional Economic Communities, civil society organizations, international partners, youth, parliamentarians, traditional and religious leaders among so many other public and private stakeholders, in order to ensure that adopted and ratified global, continental, regional and national policies pertaining to girls' and women's education are effectively implemented by countries.

In this regards, AU/CIEFFA maintains a specific working relationship with its partners for strong accountability and partnership in the popularization and the implementation of these policies. The Centre coordinates, develops and formulates the necessary policies, lines of actions, strategies and guidance to all relevant stakeholders in addressing gender equality, equity, leadership and advocacy in the learning and teaching environment, in order to develop gender-responsive and transformative schools that will increase girls' access and retention within educational systems in Africa.

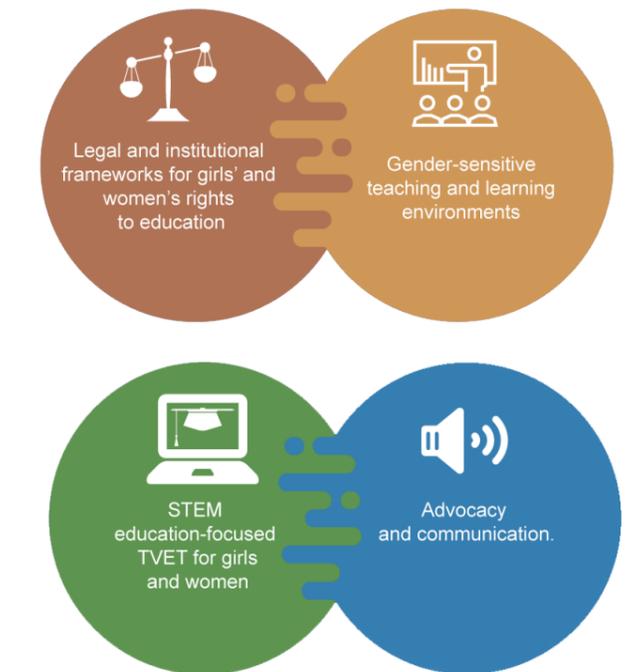
#### AU/CIEFFA: A continental response for women empowerment through education

To close the gap between men and women within the African society, the African Union has prioritized education as the fastest way of putting in place an inclusive society based on the aspirations of Agenda 2063. As a specialized institution of the African Union, the International Centre for Girls' and Women's Education's role is to provide necessary policies, frameworks, strategies to relevant stakeholders including AU Member States, civil society and development partners to address gender equality. Through a particular focus on gender equality, gender sensitive learning and teaching environments, the AU/CIEFFA contributes to ensuring quality education for girls and increasing access and retention of girls in educational systems in Africa.

AU/CIEFFA also plays a key role in the achievement of Aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063: "An Africa whose development is people driven, relying on the potential of the African People, particularly its Women and Youth and caring for children". More specifically, Goal 17 with its focus on "Full gender equality in all spheres of life" pushes for the elimination of all barriers to quality education, health and social services for women and girls by 2020. The proposed strategy to implement this goal at national levels is to ensure that education systems provide the young generations of African citizens with quality education that imparts key generic

competencies, skills and attitudes that lead to a culture of lifelong learning and entrepreneurship.

#### How does the AU/CIEFFA operate?



AU/CIEFFA strategic axes

Since AU/CIEFFA became operational as an African Union specialized institution, its activities are guided by a three-year strategic plan establishing the direction and defining the strategy of the institution. The first strategic plan was implemented from 2015 to 2017. The second one runs from 2018 to 2020. It has four strategic axes:

- Legal and institutional frameworks for girls' and women's rights to Education
- Gender-sensitive teaching and learning environments
- STEM education-focused TVET for girls and women, and
- Advocacy and communication ●

#### By the AU/CIEFFA team

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## KEY FACTS AND FIGURES

### GIRLS' AND WOMEN'S EDUCATION IN AFRICA



## ENGAGING DECISION MAKERS TO SPEED UP CHANGE

Every year, AU/CIEFFA convenes on the margins of the African Union Summit in January/February, a high-level dialogue to raise awareness on issues relating to girls' and women's education. This comprises a multi-stakeholders' platform to engage with government representatives, international organizations and civil society, to share experiences and discuss strategies for accelerating the implementation of national, regional and international frameworks in order to promote girls' access and retention in educational systems. The High Level dialogue in 2019, under the theme: "IDPs refugees and returnees: Securing access and quality education for girls, women and boys", had as main objective to define strategies to bridge the gaps in schooling for girls in conflict or forced displacement. The theme for the High Level Dialogue in 2020 was: "Silencing the Guns to ensure safe schools and learning outcomes for girls and women for Africa's development".

## WORKING HAND IN HAND WITH TRADITIONAL AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS TO CHANGE MINDSETS



Family photo of some African religious and traditional leaders at a meeting in Kampala, Uganda

Involving traditional and religious leaders towards the empowerment of girls and women through education is one of the key axis of the AU/CIEFFA Strategic Plan. In fact, it is believed that they can play a key role in reshaping mindsets and influencing behaviour of members of their communities

to promote girls' access and retention in schools. Through the power of words, religious and traditional leaders can engage and influence families, communities, parliamentarians and decision-makers in communities. They, as gatekeepers of African societies, are capable of unlocking closed doors and related challenges that impede girls and women's education by bringing every other key player on board. More specifically, their voices are critical to combating issues such as early child marriages and pregnancies.

The most recent meeting of the AU/CIEFFA with traditional and religious authorities gathered 35 traditional and religious leaders in Kampala, Uganda from 19- 20 June 2019. They reiterated their commitment to uphold girls' and young women's universal and inalienable human rights to access and learn at all levels of educational systems.

## CAPACITATING THE AFRICAN YOUTH TO TRANSFORM GIRLS' EDUCATION AT GRASSROOTS LEVEL

The African youth are considered as a strategic asset that the continent should harness for the achievement of the aspirations of Agenda 2063 as well as the Sustainable Development Goals. At the AU/CIEFFA, partnering with young people is considered key to advancing girls' rights to quality education in African communities, nations and the continent at large. Since 2017, the Centre, through capacity building workshops, is nurturing young Africans to become change agents and champions of girls' education in their communities. AU/CIEFFA's youth capacity building workshops are windows of opportunity to build a network of young advocates in favor of girls' and women's education in Africa. Organized on an annual basis since 2017, the workshop targets young Africans, and especially for young women to raise awareness on their role as actors within the society influencing mindsets and existing harmful practices, girls' access to school and completion, and affect their future empowerment. Over 120 young people have been trained and are now significantly contributing to changing girls' education landscape in their respective countries. ●



Young Africans doing activities together at a capacity building workshop

## ENSURING QUALITY, RESPONSIVE AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT



Students in primary Seven at Zakani primary School in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, during an English language class. Photo: © World Bank

## IPED

### Pan African Institute of Education for Development

**T**imely data is essential for Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) to ensure the efficiency in policy formulation by governmental bodies. The existent data blanks in the progress reports submitted by Member States towards the implementation of the Action Plans for Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) calls for a strengthened continental EMIS. CESA aims to set up “a qualitative system of education and training to provide the African continent with efficient human resources adapted to African core values and therefore capable of achieving the vision and ambitions of the African Union.”

Thus, the present challenges towards achieving this goal are due to the poor reporting of education data in Member States occasioned by less effective national EMIS systems. It is observable that the national expenditure on education in African countries is still insufficient, with some countries having as low as 7%. This is incompatible with the aspirations of continental strategies like the afore-

mentioned CESA and Agenda 2063 Aspiration 1 which emphasizes on a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development. This Aspiration intends to have an African human capital fully developed through sustained investments based on universal early childhood development and basic education, and sustained investments in higher education, science, technology, research and innovation, as well as eliminate gender disparities at all levels of education. It also aspires to expand and strengthen post-graduate education to have world-class infrastructure for learning and research. Poor planning caused by lack of adequate resources is clearly an obstacle to achieving the objectives of the aforementioned continental strategies.

The Pan-African Institute of Education for Development (IPED) through its EMIS support structure with the mandate of ensuring quality, responsive and inclusive education, hence aims to support national EMIS systems across Africa. The ultimate goal is to have a strong and formidable

continental EMIS to help in effective education data reporting, planning and resource allocation towards the achievement of CESA objectives and Agenda 2063 goals which are all in tandem with the United Nations SDGs.

IPED is a specialized institution of the African Union that functions as the observatory of Education in Africa. Originally known as the African Bureau of Education Sciences (BASE) under the Organization of African Unity, IPED’s role is to ensure quality, responsive and inclusive education development in Africa based on sound, accurate, and timely information, in order to meet the individual and collective goals for the development of human resources and intellectual capacity in the continent. It is headquartered in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and works closely with entities like the International Centre for Girls’ and Women’s Education in Africa (CIEFFA) based in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso and the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA).

All international and continental development frameworks recognize education as the key to Africa’s development. In line with this, education in Africa has been prioritized

for intense investment to produce quality human capital to support the objectives of the various development frameworks, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Agenda 2063, as well as education-specific frameworks like the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 2016-2025) and Edu2030. As the African Union observatory for education in the continent, IPED is mandated to establish a continental Education Management Information System in line with its role of ensuring quality, responsive and inclusive education. The system will contain both granular and composite education data obtained from the national EMIS systems of Member States. The immediate focus of IPED therefore is to help strengthen the national EMIS systems of Member States so that they can feed into the continental EMIS for adequate and informed policy-making, planning, and resource allocation.

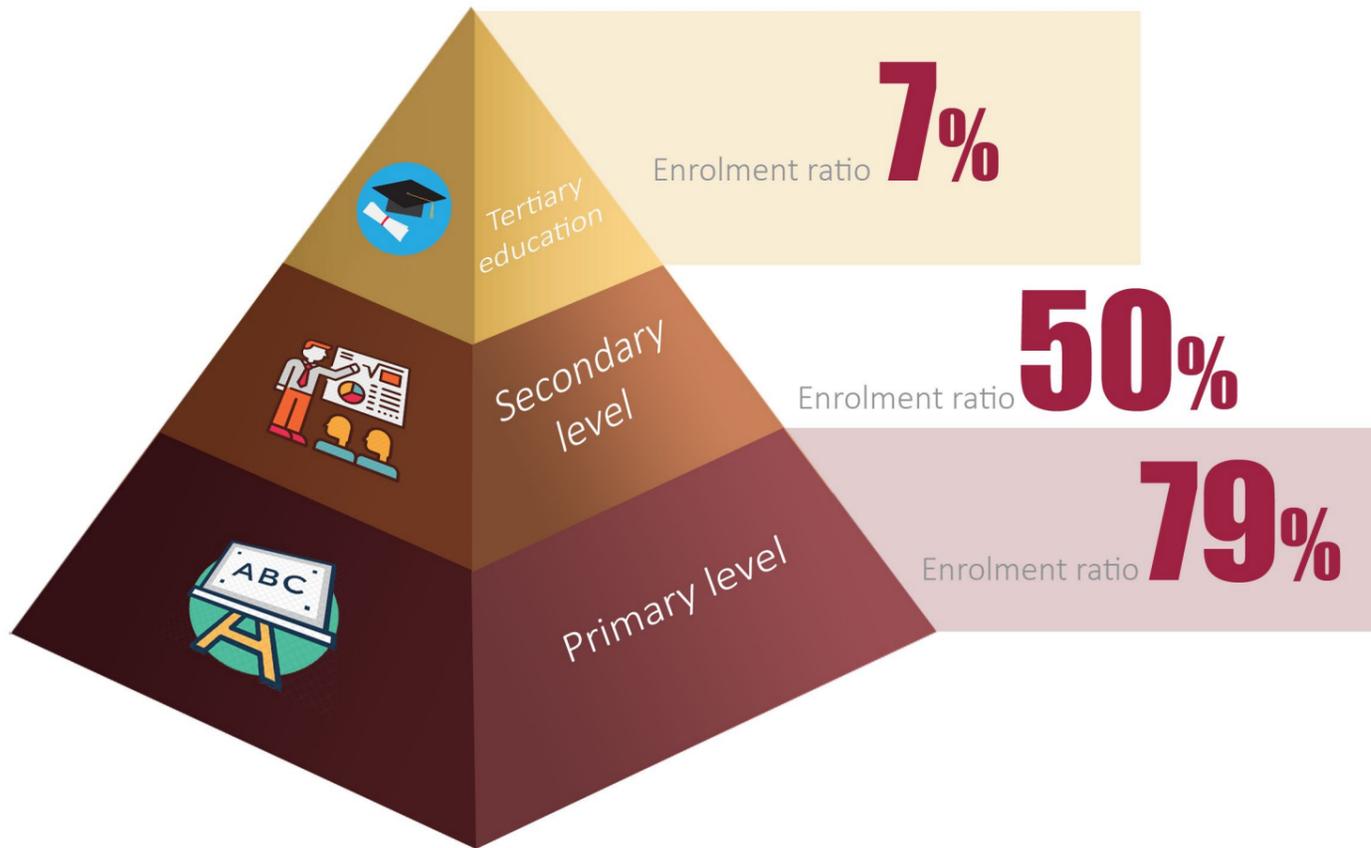
“Data is essential for Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) to ensure the efficiency in policy formulation by governmental bodies”

IPED is also responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Plan of Action and reporting on continental and regional performance on all priority goals by producing analytical reports based on statistical indicators. ●

### Education Management Information Systems (EMIS)

EMIS is a system for organizing information in a systematic way for the management of educational development. It is based in the ministry of education of each Member State and tasked with collecting, processing, analyzing, publishing, and distributing of education information for use in educational management. It is no secret that many AU Member States are struggling with their EMIS systems due to various challenges. These struggles and the significance of having effective EMIS systems has prompted extensive support from partners like the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) and Global Partnership for Education. Efficient EMIS systems are those that have high accuracy of education data obtained from schools. These data should be up to date to aid the allocation of per capita funds to schools, monitoring of school enrolment and attendance, teacher turnover, address of emergent institutional issues and to inform planning and policy formulation at the national level. However, many Member States still grapple with the issue of data quality, timeliness, and in significant cases, data blanks.

AU Human Resources, Sciences and Technology (HRST) Department in collaboration with partners, has helped Regional Economic Communities develop their own regional EMIS Norms and Standards (based on the continental framework) using the expertise of EMIS experts in Member States’ ministries of education. To date, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the East African Community (EAC) have adopted their own EMIS Norms and Standards codes of practice and are currently assessing their Member States’ compliance on these frameworks by using peer review by Member States. The AU HRST, with its key technical partner in this area – Association for the Development of Education in Africa – undertook an assessment of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) Member States EMIS capacities in 2010 and a regional capacity building report was developed in 2011. This foundation needs to feed into an endorsement of best practices by developing agreed norms and standards. ●



The private providers currently enroll about

**25%**

of the students on the continent.

TVET enrolment stands at only

**6%**

of total enrolment in secondary education.

There are more or less

**30 million**

children that are unschooled in Africa and their number is growing due to rapid population growth.

Source: Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25) 2016 – 2025

## EMIS

### CASE STUDY OF SOUTH SUDAN



Victoria Michael and three of her children in Sudan. From left: Samuel (9), Joseph (8), Godwin (6). Photo: © World Bank

The Education Management Information System (EMIS) Support Project makes available reliable and timely national, county and village education statistics for the world's newest country, the Republic of South Sudan and all 10 states. The project — which reaches 98 percent of all known schools at all education levels, covering more than 1.7 million students — prepares the national and state governments, education officials and staff to collect, understand, and use education data.

The project collaborates with the central government to create evidence-based approaches to allocating education funds to the states. Using the most current historical data and a simple graphic presentation, experts equip government officials to estimate operating and capital costs by simulating enrollment and calculating teacher, textbooks and classroom requirements annually. Donors also use the EMIS information to verify trends and prepare estimates for planning. To support decentralized decision making, the

project helped establish education planning and budgeting units in all 10 states.

The units have computers, training manuals and resource guides. Trainings in data analysis, data interpretation and policy briefs are conducted regularly. Approximately 60 planning personnel routinely support state governors.

The project draws on current, appropriate and cost-effective technology. Because South Sudan does not have national radio or television, the project provided VSAT satellite internet capabilities to a variety of national and state level offices. The project introduced smartphones that access regional cell networks to transfer data from county and state sites and is introducing low-cost tablets to speed school level data entry and review. Using a customized “K-Mobile” cellphone-based system, experts collected photographic, geopositioning and verification data for more than 2,000 schools and made the information available in Google Earth format via the internet. ●

# DEVELOPING AND PROMOTING AFRICAN LANGUAGES AS A FACTOR OF AFRICAN INTEGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT



Dar es Salaam New Bus Transit System. Photo: © World Bank

## ACALAN

### African Academy of Languages

The role of language in the socio-economic development of a nation cannot be overemphasized. Language is the main pillar of culture and heritage, therefore an important factor of sustainable development; it builds a harmonious relationship in local and global contexts. Language as the principal means of communication and interaction for humans is a means of effective dialogue and sharing common ideas. In fact, the acquisition of language skills is one of the primary means of advancement that enabled humans to flourish and reign over other hominid species.

The primary purpose of language is effective communication, which in turn ensures sustainable development, if this mode of communication relates the intended meaning as a vehicle to achieving the set of goals, and not an end in itself. It is a means of education, and is essential to the identity of citizens of a nation and hence to national unity, and sustainable socio-economic development in a larger perspective.

Thence, African languages like any other languages have socio-economic value to the African peoples and should not be seen as a burden and hindrance to the political processes, the economy, social cohesion and nation building. The roles

of African languages to the African peoples should not be limited to mere communication at the local level and to social interactions among friends and family. African languages should rightly be considered an integral part of the factors of Africa's integration and development. Despite the fact that they are spoken across all age groups and by the vast majority of the African population, they have still not been embraced as official languages and languages of instruction and development. This has led to a failure to appropriately and sustainably harness its full economic value and possibilities. The exclusive use of the languages issued from colonization: English, French, Portuguese and Spanish as official languages in Africa favor the elite and middle class, to which the majority of Africans do not belong.

It is therefore now self-evident that the use of both African languages and these partner languages will guarantee that knowledge relevant for development is available and accessible to the vast majority of the African peoples who use one of both categories of languages for their daily needs. On the other hand, the use of only these foreign official languages, ensures that available knowledge for development is accessible only to a minority (of about 40%) who have a reasonable level of functional knowledge of

these languages. This means that the majority of Africans (about 60%) who use uniquely or essentially an African language will thus be unwittingly marginalized and excluded in the development process. This is known to have been one of the major factors to the slow pace of realization of the United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015) and the current UN Sustainable Development Goals. This is the situation that the Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the African Union (AU) seeks to redress via the instrumentality of the work of the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN).

On December 19th 2000, the then President of the Republic of Mali, His Excellency Alpha Oumar KONARE, established a Mission for the African Academy of Languages (MACALAN), by Presidential Decree N°00-630/PRM. The Mission became the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN) in January 2006, when its statutes were adopted by the Sixth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the African Union, as a specialized institution of the African Union. ACALAN is entrusted with the mandate to develop and promote African languages so that they can be used in all spheres of life in partnership with the languages inherited from colonization.

ACALAN's overall mission is to collaborate with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and AU Member States to develop and promote African languages by encouraging the

formulation and establishment of vigorous and articulated language policies and the sharing of experiences in policy-making and implementation in the Member States, as a means of using African languages in a wider range of domains, as a factor of African integration and development.

**“ Language is the main pillar of culture and heritage, therefore an important factor of sustainable development; it builds a harmonious relationship in local and global contexts.**

To effectively and sustainably fulfil its mandate, the statutes of ACALAN made provision for five (5) Organs namely: (i) the AU Conference of Ministers of Culture – (now, Specialized Technical Committee on Youth, Culture and Sports (STC-YCS) as its supreme organ; (ii) the Governing Board, which is its highest policy organ; (iii) the Scientific and Technical Committee as its consultative organ; (iv) the Assembly of Academicians as its advisory organ; and (v) the Executive Secretariat- administrative organ.

ACALAN also has two working structures: (i) National Language Structures (NLS) as Institutional focal

points of ACALAN in the Member States, and Vehicular Cross-border Language Commissions. ●



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#### ACALAN's core projects

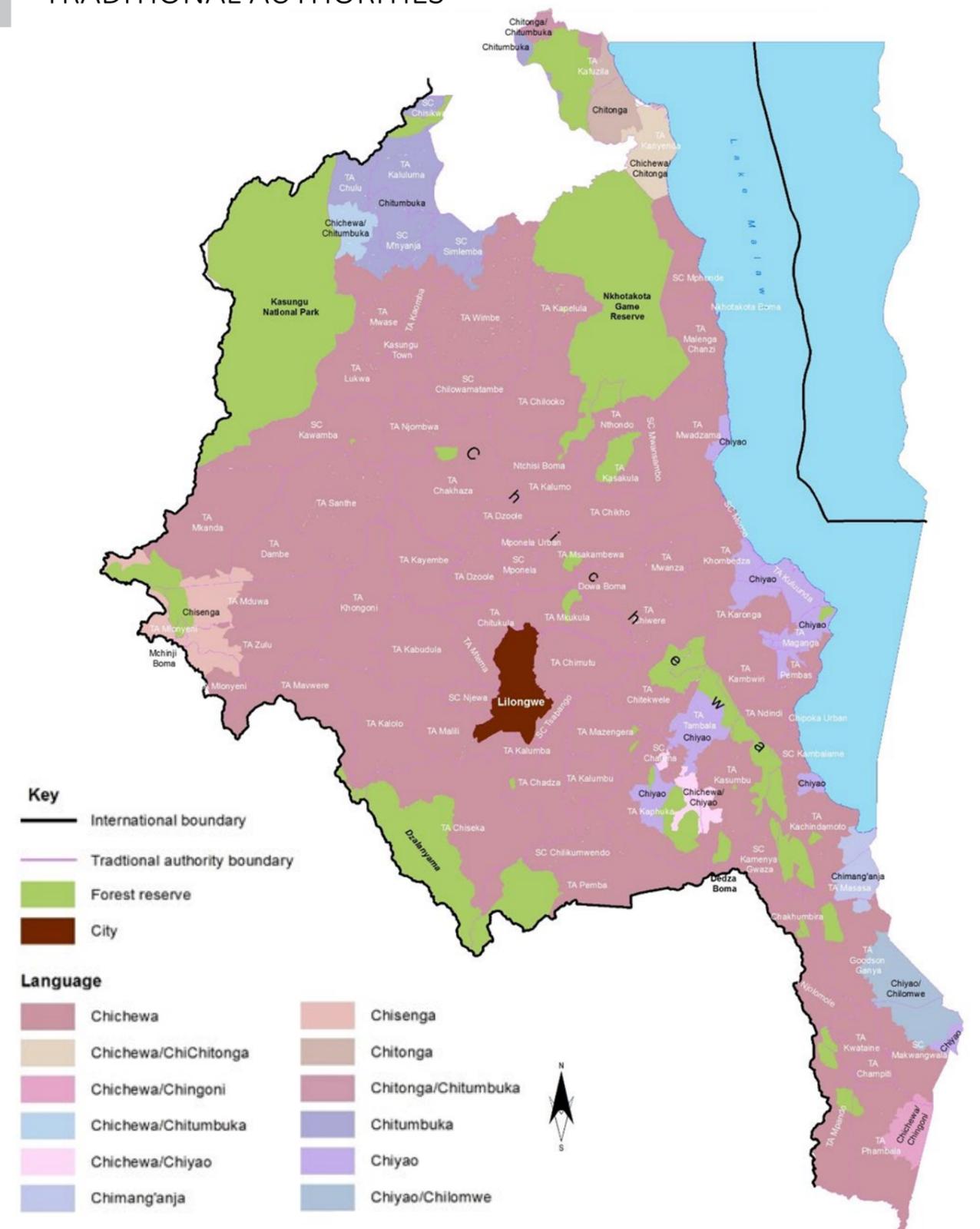
1. The Linguistic Atlas for Africa (LAA) - to produce precise information about the number of African languages, their interrelations and dialectical variations.
2. The Pan-African Master's and PhD Program in African Languages and Applied Linguistics (PANMAPAL) - to train qualified linguists, language professionals, educators and other practitioners to become specialists in African languages.
3. The Pan-African Centre for Interpretation and Translation (PACTI) - to train Africans in the sphere of professional translation and interpretation so as to enable African languages become true working languages and languages of instruction in a multilingual context.
4. Terminology and Lexicography (TLEX) - to train dictionary compilers and terminology developers; and to provide research, support, counsel services in these fields in the major African languages.
5. Stories Across Africa (SAA) - aims to produce anthologies of stories for children to enjoy in their own languages as a means of instilling the culture of reading in them; and
6. African Languages and the Cyberspace (ALC) - to promote African languages in the cyberspace and apply Human Language Technologies to them. ●

## ACALAN'S MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS



- Developed the Dar-es-Salaam Framework for Action as a collective commitment to action for African Governments to ensure that Article 25 of the Constitutive Act of the African Union (AU), previously Article 29 of the Charter of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) is implemented by promoting Kiswahili as a language of wider communication in Africa;
- Developed the Kiswahili corpus (three million terms so far) and a platform for the corpus harvesting and storing : <http://www.kiswahili-acalan.org>;
- Launched an interactive and comprehensive platform and Online Radio and TV platforms for African languages to raise the visibility of ACALAN in the Member States of the African Union;
- Produced (in collaboration with UNESCO), the African regional document entitled the Addis Ababa Proclamation on the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages, as a policy document to be part of the Global Strategic Outcomes Document of the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages for the United Nations General Assembly;
- Revised and consolidated the methodological framework for the development of terminologies in African languages;
- Launched the Prize of excellence for literary works in African languages (ECOWAS chapter);
- Established national coordinating committees for the linguistic atlas of Africa and conception of the draft Linguistic atlas of Africa (ECOWAS Chapter) in A2 format for level 0 and A3 country maps for level 1 regional maps, including the production of the paper version to be presented at the next meeting on the linguistic atlas of Africa;
- Launched the Pan-African Centre for Interpretation and Translation (PACIT), which aims to train Africans in the profession of translation and interpretation so as to enable African languages become true working languages and languages of instruction in a multilingual context.
- Had the Specialised Technical Committee Youth, Culture, and Sport (STC-YCS3) of the African Union, held in Alger in October 2018, adopted its proposition for 24 to 30 January to become the African Languages Week.

## ACALAN'S LINGUISTIC ATLAS OF AFRICA PROJECT SHOWCASING LANGUAGE DIVERSITY IN CENTRAL MALAWI TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES



# PROMOTING AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT THROUGH HISTORY AND ORAL TRADITIONS



Oral tradition data collection in Niger

## CELHTO

### The Centre for Linguistic and Historical Studies by Oral Tradition

The famous South African trumpeter, Hugh Masekela, perfectly sums up the importance of African culture in these words: *“I’ve got to where I am in life not because of something I brought to the world but through something I found - the wealth of African Culture”*. Indeed, this feature is essential for personal, national and even continental development. It is an identity factor that promotes the unity of a community, a country or a continent.

It is with this in mind that the first attempts for a rational organization of research on oral tradition were undertaken within the framework of drafting a General History of Africa, adopted by the Fourteenth Session

of the UNESCO General Conference in 1964. In 1966, the UNESCO International Scientific Committee in charge of this project, after having identified the oral, written, and archaeological sources, recommended that UNESCO’s highest priority should be: *“assisting in the collection, conservation and use of oral tradition data and encouraging the creation of centers of documentation of oral tradition in Africa”*.

Thus, was created the Research and Documentation Center for Oral Tradition (CRDTO) in Niamey in 1968. A few years later, in 1974, the CRDTO of Niamey was integrated into the organizational chart of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) under the name Center for Linguistic and

Historical Studies by Oral Tradition (CELHTO). This center works for the recovery of the continent’s autonomy with regard to external cultural visions by asserting a cultural identity, promoting the integration and development of the continent.

In 2005, CELHTO’s mandate was reoriented to better meet the needs of the continent. Its new missions stem from two factors: the evolution of its activities and the advent of the African Union.

The evolution of CELHTO’s activities has extended its field of action far beyond the collection of oral traditions and the promotion of African languages, to taking a particular interest in all that concerns societies and cultures. The advent of the African Union, with new bodies such as the Pan-African Parliament, the Economic, Social and Cultural Council, and the Court of Justice, entails a new mission for CELHTO which consists in providing these bodies reliable and up-to-date information and analysis, enabling them to participate effectively in the AU decision-making process. Several AU priorities, such

**“ I’ve got to where I am in life not because of something I brought to the world but through something I found – the wealth of African Culture**

as accelerating the implementation of the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community (ECA / AEC) and NEPAD, call on CELHTO to direct its activities resolutely towards effective participation in the self-development process of the African continent, anchored on African traditions, rid of dysfunctional values duly identified. The same is true of the emphasis put by the AU on the economic, political and socio-cultural integration of the continent. Contributing to this new dynamic of integration to which all the living forces of the continent, in particular civil society organizations (CSOs) are entrusted, constitutes a new mission for CELHTO.

The center is today a reference for the collection and use of history and oral tradition data in Africa. ●



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#### KEY PROGRAMS

Collection, safeguarding, digitization and diffusion of African oral tradition

- Collection of oral sources, tangible and intangible traces of African cultures and Grant for Master and PhD;
- Strategic relevance of orality in the endogenous development of Africa;
- Digitization, preservation and dissemination.

Strengthening the development and use of African languages

- Collection and transcription of data in African languages;
- Formulation of a conceptual framework of policies for the promotion of practical texts in African languages;
- Strengthening the use of African languages.

Research, valorization and results publications

- Organization of scientific meetings;
- Conducting of studies;
- Scientific Publications.

Heritage, prevention and conflicts resolution in Africa

- Endogenous mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution in Africa;
- Training of defence and security forces in heritage protection during armed conflict;
- Youth education on heritage;
- Support the African civil society and diaspora. ●

## CELHTO'S MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS



For more than **50 years**, CELHTO has achieved measurable results in various fields which make it one of the oldest and most credible institutions in its fields.



### Writing and promotion of the General History of Africa

CELHTO actively participated in collecting and making available oral tradition data as a source for writing the **General History of Africa 8 volumes**. It was also involved in the translation of the General History of Africa into Hausa in collaboration with the University of Sokoto in Nigeria and in Fulfulde with a team of language experts organized within a network called " Société des Etudes Peules" (SEP).



### Oral Tradition Collection, Digitization and Archiving

For years, CELHTO has collected and archived data from the African oral tradition. To date, CELHTO has approximately **600 linear meters of documents**, almost all of which are digitized.



### Inventories, security and promotion of African cultural heritage

CELHTO works to assist AU countries in the development of inventories with the participation of local communities as well as other measures for the safeguarding, sustainable management of cultural heritage and its integration into national development policies. To share the collected resources, CELHTO has set up a dynamic website (<http://www.celhto.org>).



### Scientific production

CELHTO has organized numerous scientific meetings and carried out linguistic, historical and sociological studies on African communities and has **published around 150 works based on the study of African cultures** through history and oral tradition. Almost all the results of this work have been published.



### Promotion of African cultural industries

For several years, CELHTO has been supporting African cultural industries with technical / financial support or by strengthening the capacities of stakeholders. In the **cinematographic field**, for example, CELHTO is a financial partner of the Pan-African film and television festival of Ouagadougou (FESPACO), one of the largest African film festivals which takes place every two years in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. CELHTO also funded the **production of a documentary film** proclaimed in 2001 by UNESCO as a masterpiece of humanity. Moreover, it has partnered with many other **storytelling festivals** in Africa.



### Support for scientific research

For several years, CELHTO has been developing programs for the collection of oral sources through **university research** by awarding grants to enable masters or doctorate students to undertake fieldwork as part of their research. This information on African culture is thus classified in a database and made available to users and to all those who are interested in African cultural issues.

## BRIDA ADELINE\*

### INTEGRATING THE WORLD OF RESEARCH



*"In 2016, while I was doing my Masters in Languages, Literature and Civilizations at the Félix Houphouët-Boigny University of Cocody in Abidjan - Côte d'Ivoire, I was informed of a USD 1500 grant launched by the Centre for Linguistic and Historical Studies by Oral Tradition (CELHTO), intended to help young researchers from member countries of the African Union. Since I enjoy doing research and because of the opportunity that this grant could represent, I did not hesitate to submit my application.*

*I was therefore thrilled when this grant was awarded to me, because of the relevance of my research project which deals with the functions proverbs in the "Bété" traditional society. Moreover, the objectives of this research fitted perfectly with those of CELHTO which are, inter alia, to undertake linguistic, historical and sociological studies on the communities.*

*I was invited for a study trip at the Center from July 1 to 31, 2016, in rather flattering conditions for a student and future researcher. The managers and staff of the Center were welcoming. They opened wide the CELHTO premises to me, while putting me in the best conditions to appreciate the activities of the Center and benefit more from my visit.*

*This internship at CELHTO was a very enriching and beneficial experience, especially with regard to the many sources of knowledge consulted. In addition, I was fortunate to meet great personalities from the world of research. I was also able to exchange views and interview experts from the CELHTO network. This trip motivated me more in my desire to research the functions of proverbs in traditional societies, especially among the "Bété", an ethnic subgroup in western Côte d'Ivoire.*

*Thanks to this internship, I gained experience and I was able to offer papers and participate in symposia as well as scientific days organized on the continent. I am the author of an article, published by CELHTO Press entitled, "The aims of inscribing memory in Bété proverbs".*

*Today, I am finalizing my doctoral thesis and I still benefit from the support of CELHTO and its large network of researchers in social sciences, which gives me the opportunity to become a confirmed researcher". ●*

\* Brida Adeline is the winner of the 1st Edition of BOURSE CELHTO. She is a PhD student in U.F.R Languages, Literature and Civilizations within the Department of Modern Letters of the Félix Houphouët-Boigny University of Cocody-Abidjan (RCI).



Children enjoy playing football and other sports in the afternoon. Photo: John Fredricks/NurPhoto via Getty Images

## Using football to educate and empower children in Chainda - Lusaka

Every child in our world today deserves an opportunity to learn. Early childhood or primary education is the key to future academic success and even its continuity to secondary and tertiary levels. In fact, learning is primordial to the intellectual and social development of young people, availing them with awareness and tools to improve both their living conditions and those of their families and communities at large. However, millions of children are robbed of quality basic education merely because of where they were born, live and grow up. High poverty rates across the African continent which birth mass unemployment and illnesses, coupled with the illiteracy of some parents, multiply the risks of children not attending or dropping out of school. In addition, persistent inequalities and marginalization instigated by sex, health, or cultural identities and tradition, contribute to preventing children from enjoying their right to education, especially the girl child.

Chainda is located 20km east of Lusaka, the capital city of Zambia. It is a low-income community with approximately 26,000 people, facing several challenges like high levels of HIV transmissions, as well as high poverty and unemployment rates. Most kids in this locality come from broken homes and are at risk of dropping out of school at an early age, or not even ever seeing the four walls of a classroom. Meantime, local, national and international civil society organizations, associations and youth activists have been engaging in several activities to keep kids from this locality in school, while using informal methods to educate them on different social ills. Such is the case of an international non-governmental organization called “Tackle Africa”, which uses football coaching to teach young Africans about sexual health and HIV, helping them to make the right decisions about their well-being.

Inspired by the work and accomplishments of Tackle Africa within the community, another project called “Stand Up”, emerged in 2018 with the aim of empowering and educating the children of Chainda through football. The project targets kids between 6 and 14 years old. Through weekly soccer training and meaningful strategic partnerships with other organizations, Stand Up has made great strides in helping these kids stay in school. The project is called “Stand Up” because it implies “standing for the vulnerable kids who are often marginalized because of poverty”. Meaning, access to opportunities such as education, or the right to play seem far-fetched for children in this community, especially the most vulnerable who have to grow up fast and drop out of school to take up the responsibilities of the adults to support their families. Stand Up is therefore a platform for these children to meet new friends and share a passion for football – a safe haven for them to learn and grow, preventing them from falling prey to disruptive behaviors like drinking and engaging in unprotected sex especially for the teenagers, as this often leads to unwanted pregnancies and the contraction of HIV/AIDS.

Sports Centers and schools can play a critical role in addressing issues affecting young people through the combination of sports and education. These avenues can also inspire youth leadership, helping young people to attain their full potential and effect transformational change in their communities. In essence, it sometimes takes just one person to inspire others to overcome their challenges and follow their dreams. Thus, the benefits of using football as a means of educating children are well beyond physical health and fitness, as it contributes to their emotional and mental wellbeing as well. For example, the words of encouragement from a coach, team and friends’ support, as well as attaining and surpassing set goals can enormously boost a child’s self-confidence. Furthermore, these football or sporting activities also permit the kids to learn important life skills, including values like teamwork, discipline, punctuality, patience, hard work, resilience, fair play and the respect for oneself and others. Beyond developing technical football skills, the children will be able to handle competition, and deal with winning and

losing – the essence of life – and how to overcome disappointments and transform them into strengths.

When these values are instilled in young people at an early age, they are more likely to carry them through adolescence into adulthood, performing their duties and responsibilities with excellence. Similarly, if these principles are imparted with intention, they have the power to maximize football as a great source of relevant informal education.

According to the Commonwealth Youth Programs, Youth and Health, “if society invests in the physical and mental health of its people, it is likely to have a payoff, especially in the long term.” As a matter of fact, Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights

of the Child recognizes that young people have the right to play: “States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.” Unfortunately, there are many communities around the world with a few or lack of recreation centers or facilities to support or facilitate physical education or sports, limiting or preventing young people from fully exercising their right to

play. In some countries, marginalization in participation in sports is also increased by gender. Young girls do not always enjoy equal opportunities in sports like their male counterparts, though enormous improvements have been made in this regard in some parts of the world. Until such issues are addressed, some countries will continue to be left out in creating opportunities for girls, undermining the efforts towards the realization of the continental Agenda 2063, as well as the global Agenda 2030 on sustainable development. ●

“Through weekly soccer training and meaningful strategic partnerships with other organizations, Stand Up has made great strides in helping these kids stay in school



**Mwape Lillian Chibuye**  
AU Youth Volunteer, MWF Alumni and Founder of ‘Stand Up’ Chainda, Zambia  
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A boy stands by as people inspect a damaged building following a rocket attack by forces loyal to eastern Libyan strongman Khalifa Haftar. Photo: MAHMUD TURKIA/AFP via Getty Images

## Lost Education: The impact of war and conflicts on children

Children are usually the first victims of any given conflict or war. Though international laws protect entities like hospitals, religious establishments and schools which are supposed to be out of bounds during war, schools and children have gradually become targets, used as weapons of war. Conflicts can strip children of not only their families, friends, homes and even their identity, dignity, pride and hope, but most especially of their basic rights to safety, quality education, health and an enjoyable childhood.

According to global figures produced by some United Nations (UN) Specialized Agencies like the United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) in its education strategy for 2019-2030, at least 175 million pre-primary school-age children and every one in five of 262 million primary and secondary school-age children are still

not accessing education. In addition, the independent, global think tank - the Overseas Development Institute of London posits that, in 2016, there were more than 75 million children aged between 3 and 18 in urgent need of educational support in 35 crisis-affected countries. The UN Refugee Agency adds that, only 50 per cent of refugee children have access to primary education, and only 22 per cent of refugee adolescents are in lower-secondary school. These figures indicate the urgent need to increase efforts towards helping all children, particularly those in crises-ridden countries, access high quality education.

Ongoing violent crises across the African continent are causing devastating effects on the lives of African children who are being subjected to a range of both physical and psychological injuries. During the various brutal tactics used in warfare such as, explosions or bombarding,

gunfire or vehicle crashes, children are killed, wounded, imprisoned, exploited, and even forced to flee their homes at the risks of losing their parents and becoming orphans with no support or protection. Some of these kids eventually become “child soldiers”, while others face everlasting traumas resulting from witnessing the killing and rape of their relatives, undergoing various forms of torture and rape, and escaping from one conflict area into a new one. The atmosphere of violence and war also instills feelings of fear, anxiety and depression in kids, as they become exposed to both physical and sexual exploitation. Furthermore, since children have now become targets for terrorist group recruitment, in an attempt to escape desperate conflict and war situations, some children actually develop interests in joining such groups as a last resort to ensuring their safety and survival.

In an African country like Libya for example, UNICEF has reported that 93,000 children are in need of educational support - a disastrous news for a country that had the lowest numbers in Africa before 2011. Moreover, attacks against health facilities, roads and schools have caused many to flee their houses and seek refuge in areas that lack the basic human necessities. However, the needs of children affected by wars and conflicts are not merely limited to basic needs like food, clean drinking water or shelter. The children can end up growing up in an environment full of difficulties with limited opportunities to attain their full potential and ensuring a prosperous future and stability for themselves, their families, economies and the entire continent. Unfortunately, the children may tend to continue developing mentally in ways which can be dangerous for society, since their norms, values and goals may become completely disturbing and contrary to reasonable social character.

A child’s interest should be developed towards creating value and influencing change in society. When their mindset is subjected to forced alterations from the social and global challenges and needs, problems are created. Hence, the child can eventually become a burden to society, since without an opportunity to benefit from formal education within the confines of a classroom, they might resort to

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spending time on unguided education. They will learn diverse life skills and manners based on the environment they find themselves in. If a child is born within or finds himself in a refugee or internally displaced persons’ (IDPs) camps, he could begin to nurture a feeling of hatred and revenge against those whom he believes are responsible for his predicaments- caused his family to flee their home - which might impede future reconciliation and conflict resolution efforts in his community or country.

It is therefore evident that there is a pressing need to step up global and regional efforts to support children and young people affected by wars to regain their confidence and build constructive relationships with their peers, families and society. International non-governmental organizations need to scale up assistance in providing education to children during wars and conflicts, as it is considered a life-saving priority for the children, their families and communities. Child-friendly spaces for learning should be created, and basic medical treatment and counsel should be provided especially for girls and women who need constant protection from especially sexual violence and exploitation – the new weapon of war nowadays. Beyond protection for the basic survival and development of children in war-thorn countries, the international community needs to be united in finding lasting solutions to peace across the globe to prevent children from experiencing the catastrophic effects of wars.

Our hope for the future lies on the children of today. Winning global battles like climate change, silencing the guns, eliminating poverty, providing healthcare to all in need, ensuring food security and guaranteeing access to education for all children, will only happen when focus is placed on the those who are most important – children. ●



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**Body temperature screening** is being carried out at the AU gates and entrances into all AUC buildings by staff of MHSD, SSSD and AUC Youth Volunteers.



**Hand sanitizers** have been **dispensed** in all AUC buildings. Please use them.



**The number of staff allowed to enter the elevator** (lifts) at the Old and New Conference Complex is limited to **only Four** at any given time to allow for distancing.



**Number of participants at meeting** should be **reduced** with adequate spacing between participants. The option of video conferencing should be considered always.



**All Staff returning from affected countries must inform the MHSD.** Depending on the risk of contracting the COVID-19, self home quarantine may be prescribed and the HRM Division will be informed accordingly.



If you have **symptoms of fever, cough, difficulty in breathing or other respiratory symptoms**, whether you have travelled or not, please call MHSD and arrange a visit to the AU Clinic.



**Visit the AU Clinic only when it is absolutely necessary** to reduce overcrowding and unnecessary exposure.

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**1**  Meeting organizers should always consider whether the meeting, regardless of size, can achieve the similar outcome if held **virtually (audio or video conference)**

**2** Does your meeting involve **1000 people or more persons** ? **Postpone meeting** until further guidance is issued 

**3** Does your meeting involve **50 or more persons** ? 

**A. International participant(s): Postpone meeting** until further guidance is issued. Rare exceptions can be made for important and urgent meetings. If the meeting will have a near term impact on health, safety, and/or security, hold meeting with public infection prevention and control measures in place.

**B. No interational participant: Institute public infection prevention and control measures.**




**4** Does your meeting involve **less than 50 persons** ? 

**A. International participant(s): Consider postponing meeting** If the meeting will have a near term impact on health, safety, and/or security hold meeting with public infection prevention and control measures in place.

**B. No international participant: Hold meeting and institute public infection prevention and control measures.**



## Aspiration 7 of Agenda 2063\*

“Africa as a strong, united, resilient and influential global player and partner.”



*\*Agenda 2063 is Africa's blueprint and master plan for transforming Africa into the global powerhouse of the future. It is the continent's strategic framework that aims to deliver on its goal for inclusive and sustainable development and is a concrete manifestation of the pan-African drive for unity, self-determination, freedom, progress and collective prosperity pursued under Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance.*