



**INTERROGATING REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP AMONG YOUTH
ENTREPRENEURS IN AFRICA TO FULFILL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
GOAL SEVENTEEN**

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ABSTRACT: *This study aims at addressing the regional partnership among young entrepreneurs in Africa in meeting Sustainable Development Goals through technology, trade, finance, and capacity building. A qualitative research method was adopted during the study. Many African youths indulge in entrepreneurship after graduating from colleges and universities due to a lack of employment on the continent. Second, Africa needs more capacity-building workshops and seminars regionally to enlighten the youths on the importance of being an entrepreneur and molding them towards the path. Third, some youth entrepreneurs are unaware of the SDGs among the participants interviewed. Finally, regional capacity building has empowered many youth entrepreneurs in Africa. The study was limited to three countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Therefore, the generalised study results about Africa are only limited to a few African nations. It was challenging gathering data as most participants were adamant about providing information on camera. Some participants altogether felt uncomfortable participating in the research.*

KEYWORDS: Entrepreneurship, Capacity building, Youths, Partnerships.



INTRODUCTION

According to the United Nations, SDG 17 advocates for coordinated investments and equitable trade to promote sustainable development globally (UN, 2021). The Goals aim at promoting development in technology, trade finance, and capacity building in all nations across the world. Third-world countries are left behind in development and growth, which inspired the creation of Sustainable Development Goals (UN, 2020). Africa, in general as a third-world country, has a lot of untapped potential that is yet to be exploited. The continent has been developing gradually with the introduction of sustainable development goals. The finance sector has improved drastically, with foreign banks setting their branches in African countries. Capacity-building activities are being conducted for both international and local youths who are in the field to enable them to learn and grow. Unlike back in the 19th and 20th century, the African technology sector has gradually grown with telecom giants, such as Globacom Limited, Telkom, Etisalat Egypt, Maroc Telecom, Ethio Telecom, Safaricom, Airtel, Vodacom Group, Orange Africa and MTN Group dominating the continent (Monzon, 2021). Additionally, the growth in technology has led to the rapid spread of sensors, networks, artificial intelligence, and new emerging technologies that are beneficial to entrepreneurs. In Africa today, evolving technologies such as drones, robots, and CCTV cameras with facial recognition are being used (Usman, 2020). The evolving technology has attracted many youths to venture into entrepreneurial activities involving trade, technology, and finance.

The UN has defined 19 Targets and 25 Indicators for SDG 17. This study will focus on target 16 that aims at enhancing global partnership for sustainable development. Collaboration and partnership among countries are essential in developing the world. This factor will allow the third-world countries to grow and develop without being exploited by the first-world countries. Through UN Goal 17, a global partnership is necessary between governments, local and foreign, the private sectors worldwide, and civil society (UN, 2021). Improving regional partnerships will build and strengthen diplomatic relationships between countries across the globe. Investors will have an opportunity to venture into their country's market and all across the globe, thus leading to an improved world economy and growth. As a result, a regional partnership among young African entrepreneurs is vital in meeting SDG 17. The population of Africa is highly composed of youths who indulge in entrepreneurship to provide for their families and make their lives better (Mueller & Thurlow, 2019). Moreover, with the improvement in the education sector in Africa, more youths are indulging and getting involved in entrepreneurship and trade (Gough & Langevang, 2016). This study addresses the regional partnership among young African entrepreneurs in meeting SDG goals through technology, trade, finance, and team building.

Young Africans have come up with innovative technology methods that have transformed the technology world completely (Gutowski et al., 2020). For instance, a Kenyan Morris Mbetsa has ventured into the international market through technology by finding solutions to some of our everyday problems. He created the mobile tracking system, speed limiter and developed some revenue collections systems used within Kenya (Koigi, 2020). Africa has a high number of young men and women in technology who contribute immensely to the continent's growth and development. Revolutionary change has taken place in Africa that aids in its growth and development.



LITERATURE REVIEW

Sustainable development is fundamental in ensuring third world countries are not left behind in world evolution. According to UNDP (2021), the global partnership is crucial for effective development and cooperation worldwide. It leads to cooperation for the shared benefits of the people in the world while bringing peace and prosperity. Makoni (2021) notes that global partnership brings together governments, civil society, and the private sector to foster development and good relations among countries. This result fosters good relations among countries. Through good relations, partnerships are created, and knowledge is shared between one country and another. Capacity building is termed as vital in motivating and encouraging young entrepreneurs to grow and venture into entrepreneurship (Global Giving, 2021). Young people today have a wide range of ideas that will aid in developing the world in general; therefore, through capacity building, they can brainstorm, learn and bring world-changing ideas that will aid in the entrepreneurial growth of their nations and globe (OECD, 2014). According to OECD (2014), seminars are fundamental in bringing together youths from different parts worldwide. These seminars aid in supporting youths in entrepreneurship by enlightening them and propelling them to be a better version of themselves.

The ACBF (2017) acknowledges that capacity building in entrepreneurship is the key to tapping unemployment in Africa. Tabengwa (2017) notes that youth unemployment in Africa has risen dramatically over the years. Thousands of graduates who graduate yearly are left unemployed. Tabengwa (2017) advocates adopting capacity building to curb youth unemployment in African countries at all costs. Regional partnerships among youths will aid in developing and growing entrepreneurship in Africa. According to Fox and Gandi (2021), youth unemployment in sub-Saharan Africa is an issue to watch out for, since the highest number of the population is jobless. This factor calls for more capacity-building workshops and seminars regionally to empower the youths to use their skills in different ways. Today, many youths in Africa have indulged in entrepreneurship, where they put their innovative ideas in technology, trade and finance into practice. These factors have led to creation of employment opportunities and the availability of role models in the continent. Hilson and Osei (2014) identify tackling unemployment among African youths as vital, which can be done through capacity building. Regional partnerships will aid in capacity building and motivating young people across Africa. According to the UN (2021), the Sustainable Development Goal 17 will aid in promoting and developing cooperation among countries through fostering partnerships among countries. African youths will grow, learn and develop themselves in the entrepreneurial world (Atiase et al., 2017).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study has been established to address the regional partnership among young African entrepreneurs in meeting SDG goals through technology, trade, finance, and capacity building. Primary data in this study was gathered through a one-on-one personal interview, where open-ended questions were asked. As a result, the provisional data was used in fulfilling the aim of the study. This study helped us acquire first-hand data on youth involvement in entrepreneurship and the impact of capacity building and regional partnership in sustainable development within African countries. Due to this reason, an in-person interview proved to be more efficient as the participants could respond to the interview questions freely without their



contributions being limited. The study was conducted within East Africa from participants in Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia who are young entrepreneurs. The study area harbors many young entrepreneurs and graduates who are interested and some already venturing into entrepreneurship within their countries. The study selected young youths who are graduates of colleges, universities, and high schools that have ventured into entrepreneurship due to a lack of employment opportunities within their respective countries. The study selection criteria involved youths who have completed their high school, college, and university degrees and those who dropped out of high school between the ages of 18 to 28 years. A total of 110 participants were interviewed with an average interview length of 3 to 10 minutes each. Anonymity and verbal consent were guaranteed to the interviews during the interviews. The interviews were conducted in their workplaces, cafes, and out in parks where they felt most comfortable. All the interview questions used for this study focused on sustainable development goals 17 targets 16 at enhancing global partnership for sustainable development through collaboration and cooperation among countries.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The second author transcribed and wrote the transcripts of the data gathered from the interviews to get a clear sense of the gathered data, identify issues addressed in the interviews that were not analyzed, and identify any new themes that arose while the interviews were being conducted. This factor helped us assess the completeness of the data gathered for this study. The transcript data were checked for consistency and relevance to the topic of study before being included in the study, according to Mero-Jaffe (2011) recommendations. The coded sections obtained from the study were analyzed and checked according to the respondent's knowledge of SDG 17, target 16 knowledge.

RESULTS

A total of 208 qualified participants were selected and participated in the research study. The study results are illustrated in Figures 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Table 1: Participants' Awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals

Knowledge of Sustainable Development Goals	Total numbers
Fully aware	25
Not fully aware	50
I have heard of it a know a little about it	20
I have heard of it but do not know it	10
I have never heard of it	5
Total no :	110

Table 1 illustrates the number of participants depending on their knowledge of the SDGs. 25 out of the 110 participants were fully aware of the existence and had knowledge of the SDGs, 50 participants were aware and knowledgeable about the Goals though not fully, 20 participants had heard about the Goals but could not pinpoint their numbers in the SDG chart, 10



participants had heard about the Sustainable Development Goals but knew nothing about them while 5 participants had no idea of the existence of the SDGs.

Table 2: Participants Who Have Been Involved in Capacity Building Regionally

Involvement in capacity building	Total numbers
Yes	50
No	60
I would want to	50
I am not interested	10

Table 2 illustrates the number of participants who have been involved in capacity building. Of the 110 participants, 50 have been involved in capacity building at the regional level and within the country, while 60 have never been involved in capacity building. Out of the 60 who have never been involved in capacity building, 50 of them were interested in indulging in capacity building, whether locally or regionally, while 10 of them were not interested in ever being involved in capacity building at all.

Table 3: Participants Who Believe the Capacity Building Will Aid in Averting Unemployment in Africa and Build on Entrepreneurship

Participants' views	Total numbers
Yes	90
Unsure	15
No	5

Table 3 illustrates the participants' views on whether team building can aid in averting unemployment and promoting entrepreneurship in Africa. Out of the total participants, a high number of 90 were positive that capacity building would be beneficial while 15 were unsure, and only 5 thought the capacity building could not help.

Table 4: Participants' Belief on Sustainable Development Goals Achievement by 2030 within Africa

Opinions	Total number
Yes	45
Unsure	35
No	30
Total no.	110

Table 4 illustrates the participants' opinions on whether the Sustainable Development Goals will be achievable by 2030 from today. According to the participants, 45 were confident the goals were achievable, while 35 were unsure, and 30 believed the goals could not be achieved by 2030 as per the UN aims.



FINDINGS

According to the study, many youths entrepreneurs in Africa have at least heard and are aware of the Sustainable Development Goals. They believe capacity building is essential in helping Africa combat the high levels of unemployment that have affected the continent in general. Several issues were discovered in the study; First, many African youths indulge in entrepreneurship after graduating from colleges and universities due to lack of employment on the continent. This factor is due to the high number of graduates graduating and low job opportunities that cannot accommodate the high numbers that graduate yearly. Second, Africa needs more capacity-building workshops and seminars regionally to enlighten the youths on the importance of being an entrepreneur and molding them towards the path. Most participants agreed that capacity building would be crucial in mentoring African youths to indulge in entrepreneurship and create long-lasting partnerships. Third, a section of the youth entrepreneurs is unaware of the SDGs among the participants interviewed. Others are uninterested in taking part in capacity building, leaving much to be done in curbing unemployment and advocating for partnerships and capacity building. Finally, regional capacity building has empowered many youth entrepreneurs in Africa. From the research, many youths who have indulged in entrepreneurship and believe in the capacity building have been engaged in several capacities building activities and acknowledge its usefulness in developing Africa.

LIMITATIONS

The study was limited to three countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Therefore, the study results being generalized about Africa are only limited to a few African nations. It was challenging gathering data as most participants were adamant in providing information in camera, citing animosity. Some participants altogether felt unmemorable participating in the research.

CONCLUSION

In summary, African youths need to indulge in capacity building to learn and be nurtured in the essence and advantage of entrepreneurship. Regional partnerships will help the young entrepreneurs to widen their scope in finance, trade, and technology and help them avert unemployment that affects most of them.

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