



**Localising
the SDG's**
Uganda - Ghana - Zambia

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Anchoring a CS model toward
localising the SDGs in Ghana,
Uganda, and Zambia

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INTRODUCTION



In this paper there's a thorough description on how far our partner organisations from Ghana, Uganda, and Zambia respectively are, not only towards meeting the intervention's objectives and outcomes as per the original application but elaborating these notions further into feasible and workable policy recommendations. As a backdrop, the main objectives for **'Anchoring a CS model toward localising the SDGs in Ghana, Uganda, and Zambia'** were three:

1. Mobilise and engage the youth by enabling them to take ownership in localising the SDGs through grassroots activities.
2. Facilitating the building of synergies through a shared platform.
3. Lobbying and advocacy for more supportive policy frameworks.

This report embraces a key focus which lies in creating space for place-based policies for transformational changes needed to achieve the global sustainable goals. Additionally, considering the partner organisations' commitment to localising the SDGs as per the given standards of the 2030 UN agenda, they have taken upon themselves the mission of lobbying for better conditions and policies for the youth and consecutively sensibilise the policymakers to the nations' youth grievances and outdated youth policies. As mentioned above, the three countries are all different in terms of geographic stratification, and socio-cultural background. This makes it such that they all have disparate country specific issues from which follows that they all require specific space-based solutions.

While Ghana reckons that SDGs 5, 10, 13, and 16 represent the necessary pre-conditions for the realisation of all the SDGs, Uganda sees the importance in prioritising programs and processes that promote legal, economic, and technological empowerment of young people. Lastly for Zambia, the strategic actions come from facilitating more capacity building opportunities between grassroots organisations and SDG specialised NGOs. The three countries' background, although at first glimpse suggest similarities in terms of outdatedness in youth policies, they are quite different. As Ghana would point out: *'Uganda's National Youth Policy is even older than Ghana's, having been adopted in 2004. Zambia's National Policy is much more recent, but, having been adopted in 2015, still predates the SDGs'*. Ghana's national youth policy, although adopted in 2010, has at various stages been put under pressure to update and go hand in hand with the SDGs localisation process. For Uganda instead, the SDGs implementation does fit within a wider prospect that of the country's 2040 policy frameworks and the **UNSDCF2021-5**. Lastly, Zambia suggests that there has to be a compromise between the highly SDG-savvy and technical NGOs like the UN and the more grassroots and less SDG-specialised organisations. Therefore, knowledge sharing of the respective competitive advantages and know-how would be the optimal position for both ends of the NGO spectrum.

GHANA



MAIN POINTS AND TAKE AWAY RECOMMENDATIONS

It is paramount to advocate for a revision of Ghana's National Youth Policy in 2022 (NYP2022) to align it with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The key steps to be undertaken with regards to NYP are advocacy, inclusion and action and should be as per the following:

- SDG 5, 10, 13, and 16 represent the necessary principles for the realisation of all the SDGs.
- The localisation of SDG16 and its outcomes should be based upon young people's needs. Youth inclusion, engagement, and empowerment within their local context are agents of their own development. This process will require youths' access to key media and communication outlets.
- The integration of the community radio stations to other digital media and in line with SDGs 2,10,16 should be recognised as a strategic/key source of communication platform to be made available to the youth nationwide.
- Policies and media outlets should focus on promoting the youths' economic empowerment. They should address youth unemployment and marginalised youth groups. This, by promoting localised income-generation processes i.e., sustainable agriculture. Sustainable farming would aim at preventing further climate impact and preserve soil resilience while simultaneously corroborating the communities' farming capacity building.

BACKGROUND

Ghana's NYP was adopted in 2010. In 2019, the then Minister for Youth and Sports during a meeting with representatives of the Commonwealth Secretariat indicated that "the Ghana national youth policy... requires updating.... to make it more responsive to the... needs.... of youth. It needs to take into account the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.... the socio-economic landscape of the country and... developments at the international level"[i] .

During Covid-19, little was done about the proposed revisions. However, at the end of 2021, the CEO of the NY authority, asserted that the policy would be revised "by 2022". [ii] The SDGs do not directly address the youth plight. Notwithstanding, in 2015 this was an indication of the then UN Secretary-General for Ghana, Kofi Annan, who asserted: "Young people should be at the forefront of global change and innovation. Empowered, they can be key agents for development and peace. If, however, they are left on society's margins, all of us will be impoverished ".[iii] Despite this, in 2017, the UN adopted the SDGs without explicitly targeting the youth.

Uganda's National Youth Policy is even older than Ghana's, having been adopted in 2004. Zambia's National Policy is much more recent, but, having been adopted in 2015, still predates the SDGs.

EVIDENCE

Considering the African Union's Youth Charter, Ghana defines youth as those individual aged between 18 to 35. The latest projections put Ghana's population at approximately 32 million.[iv]

According to statistics, Ghana's Youth is among those left behind and they underscore the rising inequality.[v] Similarly the World Bank asserts: "Ghana is faced with 12% youth unemployment over a 50% unemployment, both higher than overall unemployment rates in the Sub-Saharan region." [vi] According to the USAID Ghana Youth Assessment study: "40% of youth in Ghana have no formal education qualification. The average literacy rate of youth in Ghana is 54%." [vii] Additionally to this, most of the Youth live in rural areas, those served by most GCRN-member stations. Environmental degradation is one more worrying factor in rural-urban migration, particularly in the most disadvantaged north region. Furthermore, the study notes: "The Northern Region is agrarian...and most employment stems from the agricultural sector. Inconsistent rainfall and seasonal variations caused by climate change deeply affect the economy, causing youth...unemployment..." [viii]

While the adoption of a NYP and subsequent initiatives are laudable, studies across the board suggest that Youth Empowerment has hardly been achieved. For this to happen, the UN notes: "The youth need SDG 16 and SDG 16 needs to be achieved with the youth. **For young people to have an influence on their societies and own their lives, they need an enabling environment with peace, justice, and inclusion.**"

Critical to this process are the SDGs 2, 10, 16. - the number of countries that adopt and implement constitutional, statutory and/or policy guarantees for public access to information. Participatory Community Radio is proven to be one of the most effective platforms for public access to information and, overall, it allows youth to voice their concerns. In 1992, the Constitution of the 4th Republic of Ghana, listing Chapter 12 as the freedom and independence of the Media, but statutory and/or policy guarantees have progressively decreased an enabling space for participatory Community Radio. The 2022 Press Freedom Index of Reporters without Borders downgraded Ghana to the 60th place, from its original 30th position in 2021. At Ghana's observance of World Press Freedom Day on 3 May 2022, the Deputy Minister for Information argued that one of the reasons for Ghana's demotion was the attack on 13 January 2022 on GCRN's founding member Radio Ada.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLEMENTATIONS

GCRN will take advantage of the enhanced opportunity to localise the SDGs presented by the imminent revision of the Ghana's National Youth Policy.

As part of the advocacy activities on the project, it will present itself as an active and articulate stakeholder in the dialogue on the revision of the National Youth Policy. It will work in this regard with the Youth platform of the Ghana CSO Coalition on the SDGs and with local partners such as the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) and the Centre for Indigenous Knowledge and Organisational Development (CIKOD), who have vast experience in national advocacy.

GCRN will also localise advocacy by integrating a critique of the current National Youth Policy in the discussions of the Community Youth Fora (youth parliaments) that will be organised by Youth Task Teams in 22 communities – one for each project implementing Community Radio Station – across 10 Regions in Ghana. The policy critique be based upon real life experiences of the youths and their communities, both in relation to the aforementioned SDGs' cross-cutting themes – SDG 5, 10, 13 and 16. The critique will feed into the community-level project activities to be initiated by the youths in each of the 22 communities.

The critique will then be voiced by the broadcasts of the 22 participating community radio stations. For what concerns GCRN, these broadcasts will be interwoven with the discussions of the Community Youth Fora and the community engagement dialogues that the Youth Task Teams will facilitate. Especially following the recently completed digital training workshop for the CRS Youth Focal Producers, the broadcast will later be integrated with other digital tools and media.

GCRN hopes Uganda and Zambia will also look towards advocating for the revision of their respective National Youth Policies so that the respective core competences of the project's partners may serve their respective advocacies. In fact, GCRN sees possibilities in applying the debate format of Open Space Centre Uganda in its advocacy.

GCRN regards the planned revision of the Ghana National Youth Policy as an additional fortuitous opening for localising the SDGs and will leverage the project's resources to that end.

UGANDA



MAIN POINTS AND TAKE AWAY RECOMMENDATIONS

This recommendation aims towards empowering young people to push towards a concretisation of the SDGs. This, by leveraging the pressing need for action towards reaching the 2030 SDG's Agenda aimed at enhancing social justice for all. It is key to prioritise programs and processes that promote legal, economic, and technological empowerment of young people (including marginalised groups) in national action plans. The localisation of the SDGs should be implemented by engaging the youth in the realisation of the Parish Development Model (PDM) on a local government level through youth-led initiatives.

BACKGROUND

In 2019, Uganda's SDG ranking regressed from its original 125th position in 2018 to 140th position out of 162 countries.

The SDG Global Index sees Uganda's ranking as average, with mild performance on SDGs 3, 8, 9, 13, 15, stagnating output on SDGs 2, 5, 6 and off-track achievements on SDGs 1, 11, and 16.

Uganda has embedded SDGs into its national developing plan and recognised NDP III as a propellant to achieving them. Similarly, the SDGs implementation is in line with the country's policy frameworks including, the 2040 vision and the UNSDCF2021-5.

2040 Vision

Uganda's Vision 2040 aims at transforming Uganda from a predominantly rural and low-income country to a competitive middle and upper-income economy. The vision aims at strengthening the opportunities of the country's key economic strongholds, including agriculture, oil, gas, tourism, minerals, ICT, water resources, and much more.

The UN Sustainable Development Framework-Uganda, 2021-2025. (UNSDCF)

This framework was launched in 2021 in a bid to reflect the aspirations of the National Vision 2040 and the Third National Development Plan 2020/21 – 2024/25 (NDPIII). The UNSDCF will serve as a strategic framework to guide the UN's action in Uganda within the next five years and succeeds the UN Development Assistance Framework (2016-2020).

The UN reform agenda and the SDGs represent a framework upon which critical areas should be tackled. Tackling these critical areas, it'd mean to support the Ugandan government and the nation to achieve the NDPIII, National Vision 2040, and the SDGs.

The Parish Development Model (PDM)

The government led PDM is a key service delivery strategy aimed at improving the population's incomes and welfare. This development plan goes hand in hand with the NDPIII. The Parish is the lowest administrative and operational hub and delivers services to the population while promoting local economic development. This way the country is opened to various development opportunities. Similarly, accelerating the implementation of the SDGs, it will benefit local communities towards better life standards. The PDM is composed of 6 intertwined pillars that address most of the SDGs. Some of its pillars concern financial inclusion, healthcare, education, clean water, transport, and communication. These social services are key in improving the households' life quality.

EVIDENCE

The PDM is premised on the notion that the Parish Development Committee together with the common citizens in the village are better placed to identify and respond to their own needs, and that it is the beneficiaries of the social services who are the best to set priorities and direct the use of resources. Government has set structures and framework for Planning, Budgeting and delivery of Public Services. Mainstreaming PDM will not alter this framework but will adopt the Parish as the lowest reference unit for planning, budgeting and delivery of interventions to drive socio-economic transformation. In short, adoption of the PDM will extend to the Parish level the whole of Government approach to Development Governance, Subcounty Workplans, Budget.

Aligning the Parish Development Model to the Localising SDGs Project. (Highlights from the 1st year of implementation and factors fuelling the need for the PDM.)

In the 1st year of the project, the project created 2 youth task forces with 45 young people and their leaders who have successfully mobilised groups of young people in their communities to engage in all project activities. The centre also conducted 6 youth parliaments across 3 districts (Kampala, Wakiso and Mukono) with a total reach of 180 young people (37% men, 53% women and 24.4% youth leaders) who can now articulate on community issues and devise solutions to their problems.

In these parliaments, youth and their leaders engage in meaningful dialogue on pressing issues concerning the SDGs and the necessary actions to be undertaken. Many of the issues arising from these parliaments are addressed by the PDM. The community issues are;

- Poverty and Youth unemployment
- Communicable Diseases
- No access to clean water

Among the solutions suggested by the youth parliaments was the need for the Government of Uganda to launch and roll out the PDM that would offer young people development opportunities and incentives fostering youth led initiatives.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLEMENTATIONS

OS is committed to empowering youth and youth leaders to advocate for an enabling environment, both legal and financial to foster the localisation of the 2030 SDGs Agenda. Considering the current project activities, OS will;

Phase 1: Raise Awareness

1. In the Youth parliaments, the youth task forces will have sessions to educate youth in their communities about the PDM and other opportunities.
2. Through SDG community awareness events – youth leaders will be ambassadors in raising awareness on the PDM, its benefits, and how they can access support for youth-led initiatives.
3. Through the Community Entry dialogues: OS will use the CRS and TV platforms to awake awareness on the PDM and its alignment to the SDGs.

Other initiatives.

Through digital and SoMe: written articles, blogs, videos etc.

Phase 2: SDGs localisation through the PDM

1. Online (and not) training and information sharing aimed at capacity building of the youth task forces. The training will be based upon the PDM as an SDGs localising means within the communities.

Phase 3: Evaluation of the PDM's effectiveness in addressing local issues

1. Conduct an end of project survey on the effectiveness of the PDM as a vehicle for localising the SDGs within the communities. The survey will consider youth participation, knowledge and implementation of the SDGs.
2. Document and present young people's success stories in the Localising SDGs guide based on findings from the National SDG symposium.

ZAMBIA



MAIN POINTS AND TAKE AWAY RECOMMENDATIONS

ACTION 1: Facilitate more capacity building opportunities between community organisations and NGO's specialised in specific SDG's

ACTION 2: Create a standard operational system aligned with the SDG's criteria that will help the different entities to work together.

BACKGROUND

ACTION 1: The UN operational activities in Zambia aim at the development and support of countries in their efforts to implement the 2030 SDGs Agenda ([UN-Zambia-UNSDG](#) | [UN in Action - Zambia](#)). On the one hand the UN, while having a wide array of technical SDGs knowledge, are not close to the community and its issues. On the other hand, the small grassroots organisations work in direct contact with the community's needs but lack the UN technical competences to intervene and solve the challenges at hand. Because of this imbalance, many community-based organisations work outside SDGs context and unable to integrate into the bigger SDGs discussion. They are thus unable to provide action plans addressing the needs of the communities.

ACTION 2: Some organisations don't have a clear understanding of the SDGs even if they work with them. There is no common framework that the NGOs can use to create a combined action to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Due to this, many NGOs work in isolation and are not aware of each other's work or impact which makes it difficult to build upon shared knowledge. Finally, we are unable to create an overview of the SDGs work carried out on a national level.

EVIDENCE

ACTION 1: CZ is a local NGO that works directly with communities from vulnerable areas of Lusaka. CZ is also one of the organisations that joined "Localising the SDGs" project aiming at bringing the SDGs to the community so as to understand the real needs of the locals. At the beginning, we started working with SDG 6 related to water and sanitation. The uncovered challenges present in the local context are as follows:

Service	% of Population	Areas %
Drinking water	64%	87% urban: 49% rural
Sanitation	33%	41% urban: 28% rural
Open defecation	10%	1% urban: 16% rural
Hygiene (soap and water handwashing facility)	24%	36% urban: 15% rural

The program has involved 20 youths from vulnerable areas of the city which has given us the opportunity to investigate issues related to those areas more closely.

Through the various project activities, where entertainment was used as a means of community engagement, we established a close relationship to the various communities while simultaneously acquiring a better understanding of their needs and issues. This framework allowed both, us and the community, a co-creation space towards workable solutions. The brainstormed solutions centred around infrastructure, sensibilisation events to raise the communities' awareness about community specific matters. This phase of localising the SDGs was facilitated by a partner CSO, Borda Zambia (BZ). BZ possesses technical competences in water and sanitation implants, key in establishing the sanitation system at the local market in Lusaka. This collaboration allowed to solve a concrete problem with highly skilled professionals.

Engaging with the community allowed us to understand its needs and provide solutions to context specific issues. This, while holding sight to the bigger SDG framework we are working in.

ACTION 2: The SDGs framework helped us to realise shared goals and interests between BORDA Zambia and Circus Zambia. Through this framework we were able to create a coordinated action and provide tangible results to the community. CSO's Shared learning and engagement will enable more of these types of partnerships while having a more effective impact on society.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLEMENTATIONS

ACTION 1: The Government should encourage fruitful partnerships by bringing different organisations together under an annual event related to the SDGs. This will be a space of interchange where the different realities can share their competences and need with each other. The event should be divided into two phases, the first is only open to the organisations and in the second the civil society is invited to discover more about SDGs and share their needs and points of view with the different organisations. This event could be launched by the Government in collaboration with UN Zambia, since it's the higher institution related to the SDGs present in the country.

ACTION 2: Since the 2030 Agenda is a common goal at a national and international level, the Government and Institution should ensure that the concept of SDGs is integrated in all the NGOs through a common system that can align their common goals. By adopting this measure, the impact can be measured on a national level using similar indicators.

CONCLUSION



This policy report took into analysis the progress process seen by the various African partners in their advocacy phase. This phase is only one of the three phases. The paper, indeed, illustrates how far the partner organisations from Ghana, Uganda, and Zambia respectively are, not only towards meeting the intervention's objectives and outcomes as per the original application but elaborating these notions further into feasible and workable policy recommendations.

The various partners embrace a key focus which lies in creating space for place-based advocacy calls towards localised policies aiming towards transformational changes needed to achieve the global sustainable goals and improve the youths' living conditions within the various countries. In fact, the three countries are quite different in terms of socio-economic and political set-ups which calls for specific youth policies and changes within legislations that will smooth the SDGs localisation process. On this note, Ghana suggests that imminent pressure towards changing the legislative setup of the country would facilitate the SDGs localisation; Uganda on the other hand, sees the SDGs localisation as a key element within a broader picture, that of the country's 2040 policy framework; and Zambia reckons that the SDGs should vert around the strategic and coordinated work of the civil society as a whole.

Ghana points out that the key to the implementation of all the SDGs are SDG2,10 and 16 as to implement constitutional, statutory and/or policy, the public access to information is paramount. In fact, Ghana sees the participatory Community Radio as the proven and most effective platforms for public access to information and, especially, it allows youth to voice their concerns. Therefore, youth freedom of information and access to public platforms like the community radios would smooth the advocacy process towards a legislation tailor-made for the young generation's needs.

Uganda, on the other hand, assigns the Parish Development model (PDM) the key role to identify and address the citizens and the youth's needs. It is in this light that the PDM will plan, budget, and deliver interventions to drive socio-economic transformation. It is in concomitance with this key interventional instrument that Uganda aims to stimulate policies, development opportunities and incentives fostering youth led initiatives.

Finally, Zambia, relies upon the government's actions to encourage fruitful partnerships by bringing different organisations together under an annual event related to the SDGs. This, according to the African partner, will offer the opportunity to the civil society as a whole to interact and find a way to cooperate on strategic topics. These events will in hindsight aim at levelling differences and aligning the national civil society towards the common goal of helping the youth and the local community towards the SDGs localisation.

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PROJECT PARTNERS



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