

SDG LOCALIZATION IN GHANA

The SDG Philanthropy Platform (the Platform) has again been recognized in Ghana's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) localization efforts. This is typified by SDG Philanthropy Platform Ghana's membership of the SDG Implementation Coordinating Committee - a body formed to advise and shape Ghana's SDG alignment with the national development framework. The body is led by the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC), and made up of representatives from civil society organizations, civil society SDG Platform, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Local Government, Ghana Statistical Service, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Disaster Management Organization, among many others. Giving the Platform a seat on such an important Committee is a reflection of the government's embrace of philanthropy as an equally important player in the localization of the SDGs in Ghana.

The Government of Ghana has been very eager to recognize philanthropy's duty to serve, to work for the common good, and service to others within the broader national development framework anchored on the SDGs. For the government, implementing the SDGs involves a varied range of actors from the public and private sectors, philanthropy, civil society, and NGOs, so understanding the role each actor plays in the broader mandate of the NDPC is crucial. For the Platform, it is an opportunity for philanthropy to tap directly into public policy and calcify the nimbleness of philanthropy in the implementation of the SDGs in Ghana. In this way philanthropy is a constant in SDG localization and implementation. The Platform has been asked to select specific SDGs of interest, so they can share in the responsibility for monitoring those indicators in relation with the selected SDGs.

In addition, it is important to recognize that robust data and policy formulation are two factors that improve the quality of the human condition. Consequently, there is a growing awareness of the importance of well-defined data requirements for monitoring SDG progress. It is therefore worthwhile to note the role that philanthropy can play, as the Platform continues to drive data in the thematic areas of water, education, and livelihood.

Furthermore, having the SDG Philanthropy Platform on the Committee is encouraging because boundaries should not be erected between what government and philanthropy do, as their intentions and efforts are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, they reinforce each other in the pursuit of solutions to improve the human condition as encapsulated within the broader scheme of the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals. In such regard, the increasing appreciation of philanthropy as not merely a source of finance but also an important resource for developing and driving policy is a salutary reminder of the important role of philanthropy. Philanthropy is not entirely about gap-filling - it can also contribute to the thinking processes.

Ghana's integration of the SDG targets revolves around the 3As approach: Alignment, Adaptation, and Adoption. Let's breakdown the 3As. First, alignment reflects the effort of mapping the SDGs to existing development frameworks such as the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA II) and the Long Term National Development Plan, which will be implemented over the next 40-years starting from 2018. Second, adaptation involves a modification of the SDG targets to precisely fit local context applicability. Third, adoption involves directly fitting those targets which are in close alignment with existing development frameworks.

It is most gratifying to indicate that involving philanthropy in Ghana's SDG localization is a demonstration of the fact that both government and philanthropy are partners in the enterprise of knowledge exchange to enhance SDG outcomes. What is certain is that unlike the MDGs, the government is creating a clearer path for philanthropy in the implementation of the SDGs. This will certainly hasten the work and improve future outcomes.

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