



UNICEF/HTA2010-00619/Marco Domine

AFRICA'S CHILDREN: FUTURE LEADERS OF INNOVATION IN THE POST-2015 WORLD

UNICEF Conference Outcome Report

The Concept

Children are the key actors in shaping the ideas and tools that will define how we will achieve equitable sustainable development for the global future. Within minutes a three year old can operate software on an electronic device that took many of us days to decipher. Eight year olds can now mobilize their communities, raise money and become entrepreneurs. At that age, most of us barely knew how to count to one hundred. Much of how we operate now and what we think is important to teach our children is becoming extinct as a means of future survival.

This raises issues that are of particular importance for Africa's children, as thinking begins on the Post 2015 agenda. How are governments, communities and private sector positioned to address these future challenges?

To further explore the subject within the ECOSOC 2013 theme, UNICEF brought together Member States, UN system partners and private sector on 29th May 2013 to interact with young innovator/ entrepreneurs who have developed companies and initiatives of global importance headed to change the landscape in Africa. These young independent entrepreneurs showcased initiatives that they have begun in **Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, Rwanda** and **Uganda**.

The discussion focused on the issues concerning:

- *Key social sectors that matter to assure safe, healthy and educated children on the horizon of Post 2015;*
- *Vision and practice from the African perspective on innovation that will secure the best position for African children and youth to grow new ideas and to possess the skills for the future.*

Key Outcomes of the Discussion

INNOVATION AND POST-2015: WRITING A NEW NARRATIVE FOR AFRICA

Innovation drives human development and human development drives innovation. Investing in child development is critical for human development and we cannot talk about economic growth without talking about healthy and literate communities. In order for Africa's children to become the innovators of tomorrow, investments are needed beginning with early childhood development. Early care and cognitive development is directly linked to the creation of a productive workforce and will only occur if investments are made in quality education systems that encourage creativity and leadership. This is especially critical for girls' education including their transition to secondary school. Education systems must equip children and young people not only with skills and but most importantly provide a safe environment that will foster creative ideas they require to become the future leaders of innovation. Without these investments, sustainable development is unattainable.

The Sustainable Development Goals and the Post-2015 development agenda are an opportunity to rebrand Africa. The continent must become an ecosystem which combines proactive policy and partnership to develop a culture that promotes critical thinking and questioning. In a post-2015 agenda we need to think globally and non-territorially.

Establishing the core link between children, youth and innovation in a Post-2015 world is essential. Young innovators and entrepreneurs are needed to create the solutions of the future. These innovations are crucial to enable greater access to services, commodities, timely information, and achieving literacy at the grassroots level. Innovative ideas and solutions are especially important to reach the bottom 20 per cent and marginalized groups.

Setting progressive national policy on skills development for innovation is vital. There are many experiences in African countries yielding results of focused government policy combined with public and private sector initiatives. These include Rwanda (*'Rebuilding a Nation through Innovation'*), Uganda and South Africa, among many others.

Technology and innovation has the power to help children and young people in Africa to overcome traditional barriers. With technology, the world has become "one small village". Communication and knowledge sharing is easier than ever before. This can provide children [and particularly young girls], with access to endless possibilities.

Africa is home to one of the fastest-growing industries: broadband technology. There is great potential for the continent in the arena of technology and innovation. In this respect government, private sector and community investment will be needed to achieve results.

A transformative approach to partnerships is essential, including placing greater emphasis on the participatory role of the people on the ground, the private sector, and away from dependence on North-South solutions. In order to ensure sustainable innovation for development in Africa, solutions need to come from within, taking into account specific local needs that must go beyond providing financial assistance. In many cases local communities identify their development with 'outside' solutions: this must change.

Innovation and entrepreneurship is not solely linked to financial capital. In order for young people to harvest ideas and become innovators they also require access to mentors and to an empowering environment.

Scaling-up innovations is central, as is mainstreaming these innovations and technological developments inclusive of marginalized and traditionally excluded groups. Ideas are plentiful, however ideas that go to scale are rare. Innovators must seek to create innovations that can be scaled-up, that are transformative, and more importantly that are sustainable.

Africa's children and young people will need to own and drive innovation and technology advancement that will transform African economies and assure sustainable poverty reduction.

Programme

- 1:00 PM - Welcome:** Mr. Nicholas Alipui, Director of Programmes, UNICEF
- 1.05 PM - Introduction of the theme and speakers:** HE Macharia Kamau, Permanent Representative, Republic of Kenya (Chair)
- 1.10 PM - Opening remarks:** Ms. Jeanne Byaje, Deputy Permanent Representative, Rwanda
- 1.17 PM - Post 2015: Sustainable Development starts with Children**
Mr. Nicholas Alipui, Director of Programmes, UNICEF
- 1.25 PM - Entrepreneur Group 1: Learning for the future**
1.50 PM - Discussion
- 2.10 PM - Entrepreneur Group 2: New partnership models**
2.35 PM - Discussion
- 2.55 PM - Closing:** HE Macharia Kamau, Permanent Representative, Republic of Kenya



PREPARING AFRICA'S FUTURE LEADERS OF INNOVATION: VISION AND PRACTICE

Group 1: Learning for the future

Ms. Wayetu Moore, Founder

[One Moore Book](#)

One Moore Book initiative publishes and distributes children's books for children of countries including **Liberia** and Haiti with low literacy rates and underrepresented cultures where there is limited culturally appropriate learning material. Her books also serve the dual purpose of teaching children in the United States about foreign cultures. She has published 18 books. [UNICEF Podcast](#)

Ms. Catherine Kipsang, Founder

[Politk](#)

Politk is a start-up that provides information on political, cultural and economic issues taking place in **Kenya**. The website is a social platform that hopes to motivate more interest in Kenyan politics among youth and to increase transparency and public participation. Last October, Ms. Kipsang gave a speech on 'Transparency and Governance' at the [One Young World](#) conference in Pittsburgh and was counseled and introduced by Jack Dorsey, the founder of Twitter. [UNICEF Podcast](#)

Mr. Samuel M. Gebru, Founder

[Ethiopian Global Initiative](#)

Ethiopian Global Initiative (EGI) is an international organization working to leverage and invest the collective social and intellectual capital of students and professionals. EGI focuses its work in **Ethiopia** on four key areas: health, education, civic engagement and economic development.

Mr. Mahmud Johnson, Social Entrepreneur

[Post-conflict development](#)

Mr. Johnson is working with eAcademy for Conscious Social Change, an online platform that provides social entrepreneurship and personal leadership skills training to women and youth in post-conflict developing countries. He will be returning to **Liberia** to launch the programme and build an infrastructure of support to reduce barriers to technological access for end users. (Note that Mr. Johnson had an emergency that prevented him from attending the event.)

Group 2: New partnership models

Mr. Timothy Kaboya, Co-founder, COO

[ELERwanda](#)

ELERwanda is a youth platform for innovation and entrepreneurship that connects students from **Rwanda** to innovators, advocates, mentors, and investors. [UNICEF Podcast](#)

Mr. Jon Gosier, Founder

[Appfrica](#)

Appfrica was founded in 2008 in Kampala, **Uganda**, as an innovative global consultancy specializing in market research studies, custom technology solutions and investment in emerging markets.

Ms. Liz Ngonzi, Founder

[Entrepreneur-in-Residence Cornell University](#)

Ms. Ngonzi connects nonprofit organizations and social enterprises to funders. In May 2012 she engaged the African Medical & Research Foundation (AMREF) to introduce leaders of the African diaspora community in the US to its work, as a means to launch its global Stand Up for African Mothers campaign. Ms. Ngozi is the 2011-2013 Entrepreneur-in-Residence, Cornell University.

Mr. Teddy Ruge, Founder

[ProjectDiaspora](#)

ProjectDiaspora was founded in September 2007 with a simple mission to promote African diaspora engagement in sustainable economic activities within Africa. ProjectDiaspora actively seeks to mobilize, engage, and motivate members of the African diaspora to participate in Africa's economic, social, and cultural renaissance. Looking beyond the \$40 billion in annual remittances

We sincerely thank each of you for your support and active participation.

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