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CHAPTER 8

The African Union's Agenda 2063: Education and Its Realization

Michael Addaney

1 Introduction

The African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063 is a well-developed comprehensive plan for the structural transformation of Africa which was adopted at the AU's golden jubilee summit in 2013.[1] The heads of states and governments assembled at the summit declared their resolve to make progress in eight priority fields which are to be integrated into national development policies and plans.[2] These priority areas include African identity and renaissance, continuation of the struggle against (neo)colonialism and for the right to self-determination, African integration for socioeconomic development, peace and security, democratic governance as well as to establish and position Africa's destiny at the global level.[3] The Agenda is anchored in and driven by the development aspirations of the African peoples that were culminated through a broader continental consultative process. Various stakeholders including governments, civil society organizations, think tanks, research institutions, Africans in the Diaspora, women, children as well as the private sector were all

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consulted.[4] The regional economic communities (RECs) through their inter-ministerial sector meetings were actively involved in the process.[5]

It has been observed that Agenda 2063 is an ambitious and comprehensive blueprint for Africa.[6] But it faces major challenges such as lack of resources for its effective and efficient execution as well as lack of commitment from African leaders and the AU itself.[7] This is due to the well-established perception that African leaders publicly agree on the issues that they do not actually believe in or fully support. History reminds us of the several failed continental agendas adopted by the AU since its inception that sought to propel shared growth, security, and sustainable development through the advancement of political, economic, social, and technological transformation similar to the new Agenda. Nevertheless, the AU has successfully advanced popular concepts such adopting 'African solutions to African challenges' and 'African Renaissance which despite much contestations seems to be accepted as the way forward in building the Africa we want by 2063. However, critics point to the failure of the Trans-African Highway agenda which the African Group at the United Nations headquarters in partnership with the then Organisation for African Unity (OUA, now AU) and the Economic Commission for Africa championed in the 1970s.[8] This Agenda was stillborn and never saw the light of day despite the hype and the pledges that were made to raise funds for its realization. Much as the new Agenda is welcome, this and other failed initiatives by the AU due to lack of commitment from African leaders[9] raise skepticism about its implementation.

To overcome these hurdles, there is the need for a careful identification of the challenges ahead and the requisite solutions to address such challenges adequately. Education is touted as the key to enlightenment and transformation. It is, therefore, one of the most potent vehicles for finding effective solution to the challenges ahead as well as an 'efficient tool for the execution of the new Agenda'.[10] It has been contended that the AU through its member states needs to integrate the Agenda into their national educational plans and initiate institutional as well as policy reforms at the national level to enhance access to quality and accessible basic and higher education.[11] On this premise, through a qualitative approach, this chapter meta-analytically argues that the existing continental education systems, pedagogy, and curriculum are not responsive to the Agenda's eight point goals. Therefore, the existing education system needs to be reformed to be rights-respecting, that is context-specific as well as cogent enough to drive the successful and effective delivery of the Agenda.

It has been argued that managing the implementation of the Agenda for sustainable development impact requires that the African peoples should have the core principles of the Agenda engrained in their hearts, distilled in their minds, and skilled in their fingers through national and regional teaching and research institutions.[12] For instance, the Agenda identifies among others the prevalence and severity of extreme unpredictable weather conditions which distort normal crops patterns, reduce agricultural and industrial production as well as export earnings which affect the socio-economic development of Africans.[13] It further recognizes that climate change and natural disasters will continue to adversely impact the development of Africa for many years to come and admit Africa's limited capacity for disaster preparedness and prevention which is the resulting trail of suffering, deaths, and material destruction in every natural disaster.[14] It, therefore, seeks to achieve high standard of living, quality life, and well-being for all Africans as well as to build resilient economies and communities.[15]

The Agenda identifies strategies but without integrating these aspirations and strategies into the existing educational system, it will only remain in theoretical realms and shelves just like the other regional agendas and policies. On this premise, this chapter posits that integrating the Agenda into the existing continental and national educational systems is the durable means of achieving clarity, synergy, cooperation, and coherence among the national and regional implementation strategies to ensure that no one is left behind. DeGhetto et al. argue that there is the need to address the question of how the Agenda can be effectively and efficiently integrated and synchronized into national-level policies as well as specific legislative and policy actions are to be adopted to ensure that the integration is not only effected but well managed to make sustainable impact.[16] The chapter is divided into four sections: Section 1 introduces the chapter and is followed by a brief discussion of the Agenda 2063. Section 3 examines education as an instrument for realizing the Agenda 2063, and Section 4 concludes by recommending education as the cogent strategy and bedrock to realize the Agenda 2063.

2 This is What We Want: Agenda 2063 from a General Perspective

Agenda 2063 is an ambitious and people-centered continental vision with a carefully crafted action plan that aims to position Africa for growth over the next 50 years. It incorporates lessons and experiences from Africa's past. The core objective is to secure unity, prosperity as

well as peace for all its citizens. In simple terms, Agenda 2063 is targeted at ensuring that Africa do things differently in a people-centered manner, by scaling and scoping up to ensure it is bigger as well as better in terms of governance, performance outcomes, and impact on citizens.[17] According to the Africa Union Commission, the critical success factors for the Agenda are inter alia the participation of multiple key stakeholders at all stages from preparation to implementation, a result-based management approach with SMART (specific, measureable, achievable, realistic, and time bound) strategic objectives as well as instilling the right set of African values especially in the area of attitudes, and mind sets.[18] Agenda 2063 originates from the AU Constitutive Act and vision while it also builds on continental, subregional, and national priorities.[19]

DeGhetto et al. assert that as both a continental vision and action plan, the Agenda strongly calls for positive socioeconomic transformation in Africa.[20] This is relevant since it goes beyond drivers for economic growth and shared development and demands for transparent governance, transformational change as well as shared prosperity. Achieving this requires, inter alia, human resource capacities and competencies for the management of the longitudinal, multilevel transformational change. The Agenda challenges all the citizens of Africa to take stock of and learn from Africa's past experiences for its future growth and development. It is argued that this learning is 'not a mere academic exercise of taking cognizance of the historical past but as a non-reversal as well as sustaining change of attitude at the individual, institutional, and societal levels'.[21] This type of learning requires a unique combination of human capacities and competencies in order to manage the transformational changes within African states. From this perspective, the Agenda is a clarion call for Africans to think hard and wide on how to manage its future particularly, especially across generations in the areas of politics and business, technology and innovation, as well as development and society as a whole.

2.1 Africa's Promise Future

In 2013, African heads of state and government pledged their commitment to progress in eight key priority areas, which includes African identity and renaissance, the continued struggle against colonialism and the right to self-determination, continental integration, social and economic development and transformation, peace and security, democratic governance,

determining Africa's destiny, and fostering Africa's place in the world.[22] There are seven primary aspirations that comprise the Agenda 2063. These aspirations stem from the eight priority areas mentioned above. These priority areas have been further broken down into 18 goals which are further distilled into 44 priority areas. Furthermore, the 44 areas are finally watered down to 161 unique and distinctive national-level targets. Thus, the vision of Agenda 2063 is broadly comprehensive and covers the issues of identity, political independence, self-determination, and socioeconomic development in light of globalization (Table 1).

In preparing the Agenda, the African Union Commission preliminarily designed 11 multistakeholder groups for broader consultation. These included the (RECs) and all AU organs, technical experts from member states, technical experts from academia and think tanks, civil society, women and youth, the private sector, faith-based and cultural organizations, Africans in the Diaspora, Africa's eminent persons, former heads of state and government, as well as citizens through Internet-based consultations.[24] This approach empowers and challenges the ordinary African citizens to take responsibility in implementing and shaping the destiny of continent. The framework entails 12 flagship projects which are regarded as priority in implementing the Agenda. These projects include the establishment of African financial institutions, formulation of a commodities strategy as well as ending wars, civil conflicts, and gender-based violence. Other projects are an integrated high-speed train networks

Table 1 The seven-point agenda 2063[a]

Agenda	*Aspirations*
1	A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development
2	An integrated continent, politically united, based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa's renaissance
3	An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice, and the rule of law
4	A peaceful and secure Africa
5	An Africa with strong cultural identity, common heritage, values, and ethics
6	An Africa whose development is people driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children
7	Africa as a strong, united, and influential global player and partner

Source Agenda 2063—The Africa we want, 2015

[a] African Union Commission, *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want,* Popular Version, Final Edition, (Addis Ababa: African Union, 2015) (African Union Commission 2015a)

that connect all African capitals as well as commercial centers, an African e-university that offers students easy access from anywhere on the globe, and the Africa outer space strategy that aims to use outer space to bolster development in agriculture, disaster management, remote sensing, climate forecast, banking and finance, as well as defense and security.

This framework also includes national-level strategic targets such as achieving a 100% literacy rate by 2030, universal access to quality health care and services by 2030, annual GDP growth of not less than 7% during the period, 50% of all elected officials at local, regional, and national levels to be women by 2030, Africa's share in global GDP to be 15% by 2063 as well as the science, technology, and innovation centers in Africa to have at least 15% of the world's patents by 2063.[25] It boldly asserts that the proportion of aid in national development budgets in all African countries must be zero by 2030.[26] In all, there are more than 160 national-level targets captured in the framework. Undeniably, Agenda 2063 requires serious consideration and focus with substantial effects likely to be witnessed by individuals, countries and the continent as well as the world.

From conceptualization through design to its current implementation phase, Agenda 2063 appears quite different from previous continental development agendas such as the Lagos Plan of Action.[27] The Agenda is more detailed with specific goals, strategic priorities, and targets. These strategic goals and priorities are challenging but realistic and achievable. The priority areas are very critical and relevant to the continent's emerging needs, and the strategic targets are directly specific and quantified.[28] These goals, priorities, and aspirations raise important educational questions including the sustainable management of the transformations, modernization of agriculture and natural resource management and infrastructure development, climate change adaptation and mitigation and sustainable development, education and capacity building, private-sector engagement, transformative governance as well as incentives, sociopolitical buy-in and broader continental ownership.

Furthermore, there are other critical questions that are arising within the African Union member states at different levels of development as well as commitment to the vision and aspirations of the Agenda. It has been argued that the more developed African economies such as Nigeria, South Africa and Egypt may regard the Agenda differently from the less developed and/or struggling countries such as Burundi and Guinea Bissau.[29] This is because the Agenda's goals and aspirations

are comprehensive and cover wide range of human development issues. Therefore, this requires multidisciplinary and integrated approaches as well as different educational and human capacity building methods.

Despite the promising nature of the vision, priorities, and action plans, there are several key issues related to the implementation of the Agenda that need to be identified and addressed. The chapter identifies education among the lot and argues that it is the bedrock for resolving all the other issues that can impede the realization of the Agenda. Quality education is needed to raise and equip the human capacity required to man the new institutional arrangements to effectively move the Agenda toward realized change, development, integration, and transformation. This is very important. Acemoglu and Robinson observe that Africa is in critical need of developing inclusive political and economic institutions.[30] It should be observed that although the Agenda rightly demands for inclusive growth and sustainable development, these are not possible without quality education and associated inclusive institutions. The experience of other developing countries elsewhere shows that it is not enough just to reform 'institutional arrangements'. There is the need for Africa to build effective institutions that are capable of balancing and protecting competing political, economic, and social interests without resorting to conflict or fragility. A critical area of importance is good governance and quality education. Indeed, the AUC asserts that previous continental agendas such the Lagos Plan of Action (Abuja Treaty) demonstrate for the Agenda 2063 to succeed, however, the citizens of Africa must own the process and drive the outcome.[31] Therefore, the issue of ownership needs to be addressed since it has significant implications for the buy-in, commitment as well as resourcing, monitoring, and sustainable implementation of the Agenda.

3 Education: An Instrument for Realizing the Agenda 2063

It has been acknowledged that implementing Agenda 2063 could be hindered by lack of human capacity.[32] Africa's most significant challenge is to invest in capacity building through enhanced education in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.[33] This implies that there is the need for measures that enhance change in the mind-set of people as well as build the capacity of Africa's human resource through education, research, and knowledge acquisition. The need for greater

clarity on the roles and obligation of regional, subregional, and national institutions in the implementation of the Agenda is underscored. This will create an avenue for the Agenda to be aligned with other existing regional, subregional and national-level frameworks and aspirations as well as strengthen ownership and domestication of the Agenda by member states. Education[34] has been variously defined. It has been described the process of becoming aware of one's environment for a better and informed decision-making. Conceptually, education is defined as entailing a lifelong formal and informal process of equipping an individual to be fully aware of his environment and to exploit, manage, and dominate same for the benefit of himself and the society at large.[35]

UNICEF argues that education is the bedrock of sustainable development and serves as the pivot around which socioeconomic and political developments as well as cultural transformation of a society revolve.[36] Lawal describes education as the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, attitudes, interest, abilities, competence, and the cultural norms of a society by people and to transmit this life to the coming generations, so as to enhance perpetual development of the society.[37] These definitions capture two things. They highlight the dynamics of education and acknowledge education as a process that different individuals can have different levels of education either formally or informally acquired over a lifetime. On the other hand, the definitions and conceptualizations unpack the essence of education 'to produce a useful citizen'.[38] It can be argued that a useful citizen is useful both to himself and play relevant role in advancing the sustainable development of the society in which he or she lives as well as to the global community.

Education 'is an indispensable key to, though not a sufficient condition for, personal and social improvement…education can help ensure a safer, healthier, more prosperous and environmentally sound world, while simultaneously contributing to social, economic, and cultural progress'.[39] The following can be deduced from the conceptual and definitional analysis above. For the purpose of this chapter, the relevant words are the following:

1. aware of his environment and,
2. for the benefit of himself and the society at large,
3. formal and informal process,
4. lifelong, and
5. to exploit, manage, and dominate same.

Therefore, in realizing Agenda 2063, the African Union must ensure that Africa's education systems are churning out useful citizens who are educated sufficiently to be aware of their environment in terms of development aspirations, and are capable of dominating and realizing the same. On this premise, the begging question is 'are the educational systems and policies in Africa designed and underpinned by the principles as discussed above'. What efforts are being made to ensure that the current educational systems are training people to be aware of their environment and to dominate same for self and society at large?

On the other hand, development has been narrowly defined as an increase in gross domestic product (GDP) of a country. This narrow understanding and conceptualization of development is misleading. Most African countries have been experiencing steady economic growth over the last decade without corresponding socioeconomic development. In Nigeria, the GDP was estimated at some miserable US$36 billion in 1999.[40] In 2015, it had risen to an estimated US$489.2 billion.[41] Ghana, Kenya and Rwanda have all been experiencing an average growth rate of more than 5% since the last decade.[42] Conversely, the poverty gaps in these countries keep widening.[43] However, it is well known that this economic growth has been associated with an increasing poverty and unemployment. Similar cases like this across the continent have created a negative spate of democratic reversals as well as the potential reversals in other smoldering cauldrons.[44] Without a carefully mapped out plan to implement the Agenda, this kind of development is what Africa will experience instead of the Africa we want. Development has therefore been contemporarily conceptualized as 'a process concerned with people's capacity in a defined area over a defined period to manage and induce positive change through predicting, planning, understanding and monitoring change as well as reducing or eliminating unwanted or unwarranted change'. This indicates that the African peoples and institutions must be informed, rational and clear about their choices, their obvious destination as well as the direction.[45] Achieving this will require that such people and institutions must have a degree of education.

Through Agenda 2063, Africa's political leadership has agreed on the need to optimize Africa's resources for the benefit of all Africans. It has been argued that achieving this requires the building of the requisite human capital as well as empowers Africa's youth, scientists, researchers, and innovators to drive the execution and realization of the Agenda.[46] Admittedly, Africa's prospects of becoming the twenty-first-century engine

of growth are already emerging. The African Development Bank argues that the continent is 'undergoing four major tectonic shifts painting a paradox of prosperity and poverty, dynamism of youth and disease'.[47] It further argues that overcoming this paradox requires rapid innovative and high-impact interventions in the education and research front.[48]

The AU has ostensibly engaged high gear in taking on the enormous challenges the continent faces.[49] Nevertheless, much work needs to be done in order for the ordinary Africans to own the process of Africa's renewal and work side by side with the AU to create and build the Africa we want by 2063. To realize this, the peoples and institutions of Africa have to decide what they are best able to contribute as well as identify others with similar convictions. The implication is that the renewal of Africa pointedly articulated in the Agenda 2063 must be driven by the people. Therefore, brining on board the common people will enable ownership of the Agenda by ordinary Africans and will also facilitate grassroots participation. This will address the deeply felt grievance that the African Union is a club of dictators' who are out of touch with the needs and aspirations of the African peoples. It has been emphasized that there can be no grassroots ownership and participation in realizing the Agenda if it has not been integrated into the existing educational systems and policies.[50] Agenda 2063 needs the backing of educational and sustainable planning theories, frameworks, concepts, methods as well as tools for its effective and sustaining implementation. It is, therefore, argued that African governments as well as institutions need to integrate the Agenda into their national education plans, strategies, pedagogies, and curriculum from basic school to tertiary level.[51]

4 Education, the Way Forward to 2063

The purpose of this chapter was to inform policy makers, scholars, and practitioners interested in the transformation and development of Africa about the continent's 50-year roadmap for transformation—Agenda 2063. Of course, the details constituting Agenda 2063 are extensive. Thus, it provided breathe and concise overview of the strategic goals, priority areas, and aspirations. In addition, because Agenda 2063 is in its initial phase, the chapter discussed some key issues that need to be addressed in order for it to be realized. Considering these issues and the poor quality of education particularly research and innovation on the African context, it is recommended that the continent's educational systems is reformed toward the

following: (1) building and equipping human resources, (2) strengthening national educational institutions, (3) mounting a robust regional identity among the peoples of Africa (3) leveraging existing resources and building a comparative advantage, and (4) conducting more rigorous research on the African context, focused on realizing the Agenda. It is believed that quality human resource base is required to forge strong institutions, build a strong regional identity, as well as develop comparative regional advantage based on existing resources. This will form an important building block to realize the Agenda's strategic objectives of achieving structural transformation, as well as unity, prosperity, and peace for all of Africa's citizens.

5 Conclusion

This chapter sought to inform the discourse on the relevance of education to the effective realization of Africa's 50-year roadmap and plan for transformation, Agenda 2063. Evidently, like any revolutionary agenda, the Agenda 2063 contains comprehensive documents and details. Being in its initial phase, thus, there is the need to provide a succinct synopsis of the prime spur, main strategic objectives, as well as the programmed projects and how education can be utilized to achieve these strategic intentions. Therefore, this chapter outlined the key issues that need to be considered and addressed in order to realize Africa's desired transformation as set in the Agenda. Among several issues, the chapter makes a strong case for African governments and development partners to integrate Agenda 2063 into regional and national educational policies. It argues that building strong institutions as well as forming a strong regional identity at the international pedestal to achieve the aspirations and objectives set out in the Agenda requires a robust complementary educational strategy. This is because, as discussed in the chapter, developing a home region advantage based on existing natural and human resources are imperative building blocks to realize the structural transformation, continental unity, shared prosperity, and sustainable peace for all of Africa's citizens as envisaged in the Agenda. In conclusion, it should be observed as discussed in the chapter that 'Agenda 2063 is too important and strategic to be left to the African Union alone'. The renewal of Africa must be driven by the people and governments on the continent through adopting and integrating Agenda 2063 into their national educational policies, programmes and plans and, by extension, into educational curricula to make its realization a possibility.

Notes

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