

AFRICA-EUROPE RELATIONSHIP, WHAT MUST BE THE PRIORITIES TO ACHIEVE A RENEWED PARTNERSHIP?

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The Africa-Europe relationship is one that has had life changing impacts on the citizens of the two continents with an even brighter potential to impact more people in several sectors ranging from climate change, education, gender, economy to youth development, employment, security, water, sanitation, hygiene, agriculture and to mention but a few.

For the purpose of this article, the writer will focus on the need to use TVET as a means to ameliorate the canker of unemployment among the youth as well as the need for a multifaceted approach in tackling climate change and sustainable inclusive growth.

According to a recent Afrobarometer report (2019/2020), unemployment ranks at the top of Africans' most important problems. This means the biggest issue in Africa is unemployment, with the most affected being women and young people. Among the several causes of this canker include but not limited to poor education, qualities of market, job scarcity, corrupt leadership as well as lack of adequate skills and requisite knowledge to function properly.

The Africa-Europe partnership needs to give much attention to this challenge of unemployment among women and young people in Africa to achieve inclusive growth.

To find a resilient solution to this challenge, several options should be explored. The African Union (AU), for instance, calls for serious efforts towards inclusive quality Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as a means to train the skilled and entrepreneurial workforce that Africa needs to create wealth and emerge out of poverty.

It would therefore not be out of place for the partnership to look at increasing labor market-relevant skills development in both general education and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) so that when the youth leave the education system, they are better prepared to find employment in the labor market or create their own jobs and employ others

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), in Africa however has some challenges that need to be given attention. These include poor perception towards TVET, gender stereotyping, poor instructor training, no linkage between vocational and general education or formal and informal education and to mention but a few.

To deal with the challenges confronting TVET in Africa, the partnership should work to make TVET attractive. The partnership could focus on programs that will develop skilled instructors, ensure employability of trainees as well as ensure lifelong learning to make TVET attractive for the youth to get involved.

The Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (AR6 IPCC) came with a number of declarations including climate change being man made, rate of warming unprecedented, warming almost everywhere and several other intriguing facts, thereby declaring Code red for humanity. Though Africa produces 3% of global greenhouse gas emissions, its inhabitants are among the most affected by the consequences of climate change.

The Africa-Europe partnership should henceforth emphasize on developing climate change mitigation and adaptation programs for resilient recovery. The partnership should look at how government agencies, civil society organizations and individuals particularly young people can get involved in the fight against climate change.

Yet, for proper sustainable inclusive development, there is the need for a multifaceted approach to achieve success. For instance, while fighting climate change, while acknowledging the fact that it is the vulnerable in society that suffer the consequence most, it is instructive to address poverty and inequality along climate mitigation and adaptation. A typical example can be to encourage women to explore non wood forest products coupled with agroforestry for a living. For example, training women and young people about best practices on how to pick and process shea kernels for sale or for shea butter to earn a livelihood. With such a pro poor program, the beneficiaries will be supported to plant more shea trees while protecting the existing ones since the trees become a source of income, as well as carbon sinks.

The Africa-Europe partnership should therefore support and equip non-governmental organizations that have interest in developing local innovations that target to solve a number of challenges as envisaged by the sustainable development goals.

When an adaptation and mitigation policy or measure leads to negative outcomes by increasing vulnerability, causing harm and affecting coping capacities and opportunities then it is problematic. The partnership should pay attention to disaster risk reduction in line with the Sendai Framework for disaster reduction, as it seeks the development of the people.

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