

Tutorial: **Understanding How to Drive the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Education) in Your Community, City, Country**

Part 3 - SDG 4 - "Country Initiatives that have been Registered with the UN, Who's Partnering with Whom and How We Can Increase the Effectiveness of initiatives"

Business and Government in the implementation of the SDGs

You've heard it often enough: The government doesn't do as good a job as the private sector.

There is a big part of the world's population that believes that governments are inefficient at providing their citizens with needed services and that the private sector (businesses) would be more efficient, less wasteful and generally better at providing these same services.

Social scientists have a different perspective: They believe that the private sector's "profit motive" tends to "commoditize" essential human care services making them financially and physically inaccessible to people who may need them the most.

They believe that governments have a critically important role to play in leveling the playing field and providing access to "fundamental to life" services for all their citizens. These "fundamental to life" services include food, water, shelter, healthcare, education, decent employment and the pursuit of self-actualization and the infrastructure to provide these essential services

But governments are famously bureaucratic and frequently lack adequate resources to pay for essential services

What about Private - Public Partnerships (PPPs)?

Partnerships between government and the private sector seem like the answer but for such partnerships to be successful, they must include the following terms and conditions:

- Both parties must invest - programs and projects should not be financed exclusively by government funds
- Credible cost/ benefit analysis
- Optimal risk allocation
- Fiscal accounting and reporting standards (transparency)
- Legal, regulatory and monitoring framework
- Safeguarding citizens welfare
- Providing value for the money

Why should we be concerned about any of this?

Basically, the fulfillment of 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda depends on these partnerships.

Governments alone cannot deliver on the promise. We need the the expertise and other resources from the private sector. But the UN, the IMF and the World Bank have cautioned us that these partnerships haven't always worked in favor of citizens

However, partnerships that include the consideration of the above criteria have been extremely successful. And, these partnerships have greatly benefited from legal, regulatory monitoring and oversight by a commission comprised of representatives of the private and public sectors and citizens' groups.

In fact, we can go so far as to say that given the vagaries of the public and private sectors, citizen oversight makes the difference between the success and failure of these partnerships that are so critical to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

It is, therefore, government's obligation to proactively seek out the best private sector partners and to name inclusive commissions that will safeguard the welfare of citizens and assure the creation of value for all the money that will no doubt be spent in the pursuit of SDG 4.

How can we hold these partnerships accountable?

It is up to civil society and organizations like ours to hold governments accountable for the deliverables for contracts that they may sign with the private sector.

Deliverables have to be tangible, of long term value and aligned with the targets and dimensions of SDG 4

Country Initiatives so far.and why I'm concerned

After a lot of research into initiatives that have already been registered with the UN, I've found that:

- There are only 154 initiatives for SDG 4 so far
- Within this group, there are few initiatives that address free equitable primary and secondary education, quality childhood development, care and pre-primary education, equal access to technical, vocational and tertiary education, eliminate gender disparities, ensure a substantial proportion of men and women achieve literacy and numeracy, upgrade facilities, increase scholarships, train teachers

- Very few initiatives have, so far, partnered with their governments.
- Most initiatives are being provided by small non-profit organizations which is a good grassroots effort but it is hard to understand how they will finance their activities.
- There are few University - led initiatives. This is a bit disappointing because University initiatives can be the perfect mix of public and private perspectives
- Some initiatives are being provided by profit- making companies - initiatives exclusively and seem to be an extension of what companies are already doing and it is difficult to figure out how much new money is being spent on SDG 4 targets and dimensions
- Some profit - making organizations have simply announced what they do without actually outlining what they intend doing for the implementation of SDG 4
- A very large number of initiatives cross cut with other SDGs - for example, the preservation of marine life, study of ecology, oceans, mountains
- Evaluation isn't mentioned by and large
- There are very few bi-lateral or multi-lateral projects which can create a whole different set of desirable synergies

Please click [here](#) for the list of initiatives and partnerships that our NFA countries have registered with the UN

What now that you've made us all anxious about the state of SDG 4?

I know that one of the targets of SDG 4, is to educate everyone about sustainable development, biodiversity, climate change, environmental preservation which would explain the many educational initiatives that cross - cut with SDGs 11, 13, 14, 15

And, it is still early days for the 2030 Agenda and hopefully there will be many, many initiatives that address all 7 SDG 4 targets and 3 dimensions, essential to a comprehensive approach to Education.

(To refresh your memory about SDG 4 Targets and Dimensions, please see Tutorial - Part 1)

As usual, I think the antidote to anxiety is to build knowledge and become engaged in the process as a problem- solver and advocate. So, here's a list of actions that you can take starting immediately:

- [Learn more](#) about the initiatives in your respective countries
- If you believe that they have promise, become involved in helping them -my impression is that most are pretty small and could use the additional help
- If they do not have a partnership with government, facilitate a relationship with local government - it's easier than making the quantum leap to a relationship with the federal or central government
- If don't find your country's initiatives on the list provided here, ask for a meeting with your elected representative to government to discuss the status of SDG 4 in your country - your country may still be in the throes of planning. Ask for a timeline - 2030 is not that far away.
- Make sure you emphasize your concern about the comprehensive implementation of SDG 4 with all of its targets and dimensions- that you don't want it to be lost in the shuffle. As you know, the MDGs had a goal to achieve universal primary education and fell short of the goals.

- Identify private sector companies in your city or country whose Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) goals align with one of more of SDG 4 targets. As an NFA comprised of graduate women, you have considerable prestige in your communities, cities and countries. Use it to discuss SDG 4 with the companies' CSR officer. Become a liaison between local government and the local company to facilitate dialogue and a possible partnership for an identified initiative.
- If the initiatives in your country are exclusively operated by the private sector, ask about the possibility of government's involvement since we now know that a private - public partnership with oversight will probably result in better outcomes
- Find out about monitoring and oversight commissions that may be in the process of being formed and volunteer to serve on one.

In Part 4 we will discuss the financing of SDGs, involvement of UN agencies, the World Bank, International Monetary Fund in your countries and what we all need to know about SDG financing to continue to push for the meaningful implementation of SDG 4

Part 5 will focus on the evaluation of the implementation of SDGs - Global Indicator Framework and the Localizing of SDGs

In the final part of our tutorial - Part 6- we'll put, everything we know, all together in very practical terms

In the meantime, please let us know:

1) If there are other SDG 4 initiatives in your country that we may not know about and who's partnering with whom and oversight mechanisms that may be in place

2) What you and your NFA are doing to promote SDG 4 and to advance work to meet its outcome targets and fill out its dimensions