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Report

Education System
Through the Prism of the Sustainable Development Goals
(cases of Ghana, South Africa, Tunisia, Ethiopia)

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1. Introduction

The beginning of the active history of the sustainable development goals (SDG) started in September, 2015, from their official adoption by the UN Member States (Chin and Jacobsson, 2016). Continuing the path of addressing important social and economic issues on the global level, the UN General Assembly presented the agenda of "a new coherent way of thinking about how issues as diverse as poverty, education and climate change fit together"(p.320, Nilsson, Griggs and Visbeck, 2016). This so-called the 2030 Agenda basically illustrates an action plan for transforming the world, acting in favour of people, peace, the planet, prosperity and partnerships (*Report on U.N. Sustainable Development Goals*, 2017) through wrapping around economic, social and environmental targets in 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Notable, that the overall set of SDGs addressed a broad spectre of various issues, while their predecessors, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), had a primary focus on solving the problem of poverty, perceiving it as a multi-dimensional phenomenon (Loewe, 2012). Within MDGs agenda, there was offered a complex of transparent international priorities "that helped channel substantial funding from aid agencies and foundations" (p.20, Gaffney, 2014). And although MDGs had numerous strengths as the UN agenda, being understandable, measurable and clear in terms of deadlines to achieve, those goals had been criticized due to particular weaknesses.

In compare with SDGs, Millennium Development Goals were not global, thus it created obligations on the developing countries; therefore, they were supposed to be implemented in short and medium perspective, while policies related to the sustainability direction have to be long-term designed, e.g. the agenda proposed should be implemented during next 15 years (UN SDG, 2015). In addition, within MDGs the environmental objectives had received lack of attention, being a primary field of sustainable policies. Currently, they play a central role in the complex of SDGs (Loewe, 2012).

Sustainable Development Goals had been presented in the ambitious manner, since their implementation is supposed to be universal, meaning that they should be applied to all nations in the world (Gaffney, 2014; Lane, 2017).

The overall 17 indivisible goals embraced an extensive range of issues, being "integrated and indivisible" as well as "global in nature" (p.9, UN, 2015). Therefore, in regard to the criteria of universality, they are supposed to be applicable to both developed and developing countries (Vladimirova and Le Blanc, 2016), somehow guiding the strategic decisions and shaping a policy. The common path among all countries should lead to the sustainability on a global level. Meanwhile, the goals are characterized by interrelatedness, trade-offs and synergies between each other, and their balanced integration to the policy design promotes movement towards the main aim (UN, 2015b).

The central focus of this paper is primary put on education, which had been defined as a separate goal in the set of SDGs (UN SDG, 2015) and, therefore, it was particularly emphasized in the preceding MDGs earlier (Vladimirova and Le Blanc, 2016). Although, the MDGs served as the outcome of the process coming from 1990, and focused mainly on poverty reduction, it consisted a list of various goals within the area of education, which were formulated in the UN's Millennium Declaration (Loewe, 2012). In this regard, education had been identified as one of the main sectors, commonly shared in agenda of both SDGs and MDGs.

Education, being "at the heart of the international development" (p.275, Lane, 2017) during last decades, within SDGs priorities had been defined as "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (UN, 2015). This goal implies

developing education system from various angles, to provide its availability to all social groups on different levels and territories. Additional emphasis is placed on eliminating disparities based on gender, health condition, access to the facilities, the level of income and social vulnerability.

Several targets are covered by the broad umbrella of education with numerous indicators. Some areas lay on the boundaries of the formal education system, however achieving the thresholds, covered by their indicators, is critically important for the common goal.

Other index subsections categorize the quality of education, as an outcome of education provision and learning opportunities, and illustrate the level of equity, capturing measurement of those, who "excluded" or have limited access to education service (Thaung, 2018). Nevertheless, it remains clear, that making the goals, targets and indicators more or less universal for every country does not eliminate the differences among them. Thus, the UN pointed up the specificity of each place in terms of challenges facing, in particularly in African countries, as the example of the most vulnerable territories. This can serve as an explanation of our choice, as young researchers, to turn the attention to the education system in the context of African countries.

We share the view, that the Sustainable Development Goals are for all, and everyone should contribute, as it was proclaimed by the University of Bologna (*Report on U.N. Sustainable Development Goals*, 2019). In this respect, we believe, that involvement and collaboration can be fundamental for building a strong base towards the direction of the sustainable future.

Due to support of the University of Bologna, which is deeply involved in the SDGs activity, and in particularly the Institute of Advanced Studies, we have opportunity to present a preliminary investigation in a report format, which sheds light on the current situation on education in African countries. Since education plays an enabling role for many areas under the umbrella of SDGs, it has a close connection with policy (Vladimirova and Le Blanc, 2016), thus within this paper we attempted to consider education in a link with social, economic, and primarily political changes in a country. Our core assumption is that political changes and reforms in education policy could provide significant changes on the national education, having impact on various indicators, as quality of education, literacy, inclusivity, access to the facilities for particular social groups, etc. Hence, we tried to obtain a general understanding of the situation before and after, trying to extract implications for shaping future directions in designing a policy.

Maintaining the focus on four countries, we conducted the initial investigation in cases of Ghana, South Africa, Tunisia and Ethiopia. Taking into account differences in social and economic characteristics of the territory, our general purpose was to see whether they can be somehow comparable in terms of the analysis, and what they can share in common and possibly learn from each other from their experiences in attempts to strengthen education policy and reforming education system, as well as what challenges they faced and how they were able to overcome them, or which way had been chosen by government to handle the problems and whether those issues still remain.

This paper has the following structure: starting from introduction, where we address the relevance of the work through the prism of SDGs agenda, within the second section we will illustrate the cases of Ghana, Tunisia, South Africa and Ethiopia. Afterwards, the next section is conclusion as a final section, ending with references. Each part illustrates a brief investigation from the beginning till the list of bibliography at the end, presenting a piece of the initial study within the interrelated fields of SDGs, education and African countries. Hence in the final part of conclusion, we will provide the results in a nutshell and offer directions for future research.

2. Education System in African Context

2.1 Case of Ghana

Eric Owusu Obeng

Ghana, previously called the Gold Coast, was the one of first colonized countries in West Africa to gain political independence from colonial rule in 1957. This previous British colony of about 92,000 square miles shares boundaries with three French-speaking countries: Burkina Faso to the north, Côte d'Ivoire to the west and Togo to the east. The Atlantic Ocean lies is to the south of Ghana. Just as many African countries, Ghana is a diverse, multilingual nation with over 48 indigenous languages spoken throughout the country, the most widespread of which is Akan. However, English is the formal language of instruction at all levels of education. Furthermore, local languages may sometimes be used at the elementary level and this is region-specific (*Fact sheet, Education in Ghana*, 2012).

Early History of Education in Ghana. An Overview:

Ghana has been a pioneer in modern mass education in West Africa. The development of education in Ghana is closely tied to the socio-political changes that have taken place from colonial times to the present day. Education was mainly informal, and based on apprenticeship before the arrival of European settlers. The earliest recorded history of formal education in Ghana is linked directly with the history of European activities on the Gold Coast. The Portuguese were the first European settlers to arrive at the then Gold Coast in 1471. In 1529, the then Governor of the Portuguese Castle at Elmina in Ghana supported the notion to teach reading, writing, and the Catholic religion to the people. However, this was only targeted at populations linked with their social, economic and religious interests (Adu-Gyamfi, Donkoh and Addo, 2016) (Graham, 1971).

Throughout the late eighteenth century and the nineteenth century, children of wealthy African merchants on the coast and relatives of some of the important local chiefs were taught to read and write at the castle schools built at the coast. C. K. Graham, a historian reported the findings that the majority of students being taught in these schools were mulatto children of the European castle staff and their African women. While pupils received religious instruction as part of their basic training, the primary purpose for educating young people was to prepare them for employment in the European commercial enterprises on the coast. Hence, many a times, these schools were fully funded by the European settlers. Since education provided by these European settlers was basic, some students had the opportunity to travel to countries of colonial masters to study (Adu-Gyamfi, Donkoh and Addo, 2016) (Graham, 1971).

The effort to provide Christian education on the Gold Coast took a decisive turn with the arrival of Wesleyan and Basel missionaries in 1835. Despite the achievements on the coast, efforts to open schools in the mainland areas of the then Gold Coast faced some friction from local dwellers. Apparently, some of the local chiefs in these areas expressed fear that the western-style education would negatively impact local values and culture. Wesleyan efforts to conduct schools continued to be limited to just the coast throughout the nineteenth century (Graham, 1971). Education followed this path till Ghana's independence in 1957.

▪ **Major Educational Reforms after Independence (1957)**

Several Educational Reforms have been initiated over the years aimed at finding lasting solutions to problems concerning education in Ghana. Below is a discussion of the various educational reforms initiated and implemented by successive governments after independence with the quest of providing Ghanaians with a good and workable educational system. These reforms include:

▪ **The Accelerated Development Plan of 1951 and Education Act of 1961**

This is the first education reform initiated by the first prime minister of Ghana, Dr Kwame Nkrumah after independence from colonial rule. It was aimed at rapidly expanding the educational system, and also recognizing the importance of teacher training schools to have enough quality trained teachers to teach in schools. This seven-year development plan did not abandon the service of untrained teachers at the time who were helping to man the classrooms until trained teachers were produced. However, it is relevant to acknowledge the fact that, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's proposed reforms after self-governing was to ensure the recognition of African identity by embarking on a system which trained teachers from the African standpoint. This initiative was probably an attempt to eradicate western thoughts and culture from the minds of Ghanaians. As such, Nkrumah's reforms introduced subjects pertaining to African Cultural identity, values and practices. Again, the local dialects (region specific) were used as a medium of instruction in the lower primary schools to groom the students till, they reached upper primary level and from there to all higher levels, English was then used as a medium of communication (Adu-Gyamfi, Donkoh and Addo, 2016) (Akyeampong, 2017).

In accordance with this act, the central government helped built approximately fifteen new secondary schools in different regions of Ghana. Also, several technical institutions were established to boost the Technical/Vocational sector for effective productivity. The plan also introduced a complete structural process which comprised of 10 years of elementary education (primary school and junior high school) combined with a free textbook scheme.

▪ **Reforms of the National Liberation Council**

A new regime emerged after an organized coup d'etat in 24 February 1966 by the National Liberation Council (NLC) comprising of both military and civilian officers overthrew the first prime minister of Ghana, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's government. This exercise was the first mode of acquisition of power in the history of Ghana. To recover the grave economic situation in the country, the NLC made few major decisions regarding the educational sector by forming a new Education Review Committee to undertake a comprehensive review of the entire formal educational system. However, the government was quick to abandon the Seven-Year Development Plan initiated by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah and modifying the free textbook scheme to allow parents to pay part of the cost of the distribution of textbooks to students. The structure of the education system under the NLC was such that the ten (10) years of elementary education by the Nkrumah government was reduced to eight (8) years to prepare students for secondary schools' entry and an additional two (2) year continuation course of middle school. The entry requirement of secondary schools rested on the Common Entrance Examination by students in their final eighth year. The secondary school lasted for five (5) years to prepare students for the West African Examinations which was used as an entry requirement for university education, which was four (4) years (Adu-Gyamfi, Donkoh and Addo, 2016) ((WAEC), 2012).

- **The New Structure and Content of Education of 1974**

Since Ghana's independence, succeeding governments have shown recognition for the significance of education to national growth. In 1974, a new military government led by Colonel I. K Akyeampong who also came into power via a coup d'etat to overthrow the previous government headed by Dr Bussia. Colonel Akyeampong formed a new committee known as the Dzobo Committee, to review the then state of education in Ghana. Findings from this report led to the restructure of the education which introduced the concept of the Junior Secondary School (JSS) and the Senior Secondary School (SSS). Pre-tertiary education was reduced from seventeen (17) to thirteen (13) years. Interestingly, the six (6) years of primary education remained the same, the four years of middle school which is equivalent to junior secondary school was reduced to three years. Also, senior secondary school was reduced from five years to four years. The central idea behind these reforms was to enable graduates to develop skills that will be beneficial in the job markets or even make them self-employed. The enactment of this reform began on an experimental basis where new subjects such as Tailoring, Woodwork, Catering, Dressmaking, Metalwork, Technical Drawing Masonry and Automobile Practice were introduced (Adu-Gyamfi, Donkoh and Addo, 2016) (Owusu-Mensah, 2008).

- **Educational Reform of 2007**

The New Patriotic Party (N.P.P.) won power in the 2000 general elections in Ghana. After two years in government, President John Agyekum Kuffour inaugurated a committee to review the existing education system in Ghana at the time. Reports from this committee also led to some reforms. The main idea of the reform includes formation of human capital for industrial growth, preservation of cultural identity/traditional indigenous knowledge or creativity and also improvements in science and technology (Ghana, 2009). This reform extended Senior High School (SHS) education from three (3) to four (4) years. The first year of SHS was dedicated to study "core subjects" such as English Language, Mathematics, Integrated Science, Information Communication Technology (ICT) and Social Studies. Recommendations from this committee were the inclusion of two (2) years Kindergarten into the Universal Basic Education hence making it eleven (11) years of Universal Basic Education. The Universal Basic Education was structured into two (2) years of Kindergarten, six (6) years of Primary Education, three (3) years of Junior High School (JHS). Also, emphasis was placed on Literacy, Numeracy and Creative Arts at the basic level and the change from three (3) years of Senior Secondary School (SSS) to four (4) years of Senior High School (SHS) (Adu-Gyamfi, Donkoh and Addo, 2016) (Ghana, 2009). The reason was to ensure that teachers have enough time to finish the syllabus and give students adequate time to prepare `for the West African Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE). However, a study revealed that students under the 3-year system scored higher grades than students from the 4-year system. This led it to be changed back to three years by the Atta-Mills government after an election victory in 2008 (Ghanaweb, 2009).

- **Reforms of 2017**

Again, a new government led by President Nana Addo Danquah in 2017 brought free education to secondary school level, which was an upgrade on the free compulsory basic education (*Free SHS - Wikipedia*, 2018). This system also brought pressure unto the education system in Ghana in terms of facilities, teachers etc. As such a new system of schooling was also introduced to cope with these pressures, the two-track system. Some children go to school while others take a break. So

far, it has succeeded in wedging more students into classrooms. However, supporters say it is a temporary solution while more teachers are hired, and schools are built (*Double Track System*, 2018).

Current structure of the Education system in Ghana

• **Basic education level:** Basic Education lasts 11 years and the curriculum is free and compulsory (age 4-15) and is defined as "the minimum period of schooling needed to ensure that children acquire basic literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving skills as well as skills for creativity and healthy living". It is divided into Kindergarten, Primary school and Junior High School (JHS), which ends with passing the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). – comprising kindergarten (two years), primary (six years) and junior high school (three years) (*Education in Ghana - Wikipedia*, 2018).

• **Second cycle education:** three years – consisting of senior high school grammar and technical education, as well as other post-basic skills-development programmes, including the National Apprenticeship Programme. Students in this phase undertake another standardised test called the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) at the end of the three-year secondary education. Students can then move on to university, technical university (formerly called polytechnics), colleges of education or other forms of specialised training institutions after the WASSCE. Moreover, after passing the BECE, students who wish to also pursue vocational Education can follow the vocational and technical pathways. They can then proceed to join a university or polytechnic programme dependent on passing their WASSCE (*Education in Ghana - Wikipedia*, 2018) (Bibby and Peil, 1974).

• **Tertiary level education**: comprising diploma programmes at teacher training institutions and polytechnics, as well as undergraduate programmes spanning a minimum duration of three years (for diploma programmes) and four years (for undergraduate degree courses). Master's programmes are usually an average of two years while PhD takes 3-4 years. Ghana also possesses many specialized colleges of education (e.g. Nursing training colleges and teacher training colleges). Students are accepted into these institutions through a competitive selection process following successful pass in their WASSCE. New tertiary education graduates are mandated to serve one year within the National Services. (*Education in Ghana - Wikipedia*, 2018).

Conclusion

Ghana's focus on increasing access to education over the past decades have certainly been impressive. The country's youth literacy rate, for example, jumped from 71 percent in 2000 to 86 percent in 2010. Ghanaian children now attend school in higher rates than their counterparts in many other African countries, as well as in developing nations in other world regions. While more than 84 percent of children participated in elementary education in 2017, the gross enrolment rate (GER) in secondary education increased from 57 percent in 2012 to 73 percent in 2017. These improvements come amidst a solid performance of Ghana's economy, which has been the second-fastest growing in Africa after Ethiopia's in recent years (Adu-Agyem and Osei-Poku, 2012) (*Fact sheet, Education in Ghana*, 2012). Upon all these success stories, Ghana still has more to do to achieve the SDG goal on education.

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2.2 Case of South Africa

Gerhardus Petrus Kirsten
Mansoureh Gholami

South Africa is the southernmost country on the African continent. Prior to 1994, South Africa had four areas: the Transvaal and Orange Free State, beforehand Boer republics, and Natal and the Cape. In 1996, under South Africa's new democratic constitution, the countries were disassembled and South Africa combined into the present nine areas. South Africa's nine areas are the Eastern Cape, the Free State, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, the Northern Cape, North West and the Western Cape. (Kiplangat, 2017)

There is likewise a wide variety in the racial synthesis of the various areas' populaces. Figures of 2011 uncover that dark South Africans are the greater part populace bunch in seven of the nine territories, involving from 75% to 97% of the common aggregate. However they make up not exactly 33% of the populace in the Western Cape (26.7%) and under a half in the Northern Cape (46.5%) (Fataar, 2017).

The nine regions are each additionally divided into regions. Metropolitan districts are almost populated urban zones with significant urban communities – for example, Johannesburg or Durban – at their center. Region districts are bigger, less urban areas fixated on at least one town or little city. Region regions are additionally isolated into neighborhood districts.

Current status of education system

The most important changes that made by the latest political changes to transform the educational system into current system are the following: (Kiplangat, 2017) (Fataar, 2017);

— An extension of understudy enrolment and widened access to arrive at a more extensive appropriation of social gatherings and classes, including grown-up students;
— Greater responsiveness to cultural needs and interests;
— Increased collaboration and organization in structures of administration, both at the framework and institutional levels;
— An advanced education framework structured, arranged, managed and supported as a solitary facilitated framework including colleges, experts and schools;
— Alignment of capabilities with the National Qualifications Framework permitting sufficient channels, adaptable passage, just as leave focuses and level and vertical versatility;
— A key open financing system considering the quantity of understudies in various fields and levels of study; and tending to the unique needs of foundations, for example, value, change and research framework;
— Establishment of an advanced education quality board answerable for program accreditation, institutional examining and quality advancement;
— Distance training and asset based learning.

Political changes

Since 1994, South African policy development has generally been driven by the new constitution of the nation. Its command is to understand an arrangement of education that is changed and democratized in arrangement with the qualities guarding human dignity, equality, human rights and freedom, non-racism and non-sexism, and one that guarantees the privilege to fundamental instruction for all residents. In this manner, the destinations of these approaches are substantial

considering the nation's history, inconspicuous endeavors of isolation/separation, and the acquired inheritance of imbalance that still weavers all areas of work and that is by all accounts changing into a wide range of structures. The array of policies which saw the light after 1994 was supposed to bring hope for the nation – cutting across all sectors. The hope was expressed that with a number of well-grounded policies in place the South African society would soon see the benefits resulting from their implementation. However, soon their implementation became a colossal stride which some critics describe as a blind leap into the sea. Nonetheless, the legitimacy of such an overhaul is seldom questioned, particularly by those who stand to benefit from the proper implementation of such policy.(Blamey and Mackenzie, 2007)

Policy development for the period after 1994 initiated with the arrangement by previous President Nelson Mandela of a National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) whose job was to build up an approach structure for the change of South Africa's advanced education division which at that point included colleges, specialists, and nursing, agribusiness and instructors' preparation universities. This procedure, which began in Parliament in 1995, finished in the Higher Education Act of 1997.(Beck, 2000)

Educational system before the political change

Before the political change (i.e., the end of Apartheid), educational steering by the government was mainly aimed at favoring and promoting white South Africans (Hay, Monappula- Mapesela 2009). The Bantu Education Act, 1953 (Act No. 47 of 1953; later renamed the Black Education Act, 1953) was introduced by the Apartheid government to allow for educational facilities separated by race. The prime minister at that time, Hendrik Verwoerd, motivated this act, by saying (Parsons 1982):

"*I will reform it [black education] so that Natives will be taught from childhood to realize that equality with Europeans is not for them.* "

The so-called 'black' schools were forced to follow a special Bantu syllabus. Even the tertiary institutions were separated by race, where non-whites had to attend *tribal* universities. Verwoerd was sure that the introduction of these policies would create a great working force made up of non-whites which could be exploited by the whites. He saw complete racial segregation as the end goal of Apartheid.

By the turn of 1994 and the birth of liberalism into the South African government all these policies have been dropped. Since then the educational steering has been aimed at promoting equality in education. In the following section we see statistics about the educational changes after Apartheid, especially based on race.
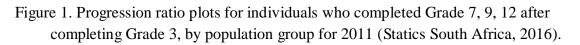
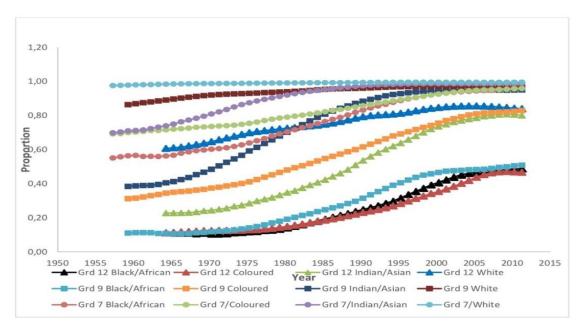### Comparison and conclusion

In spite of the fact, that the framework can be hailed for huge achievements made in change, genuine disparities are as yet the request for the day, henceforth the proceeding with change motivation, approach investigation and survey. Then again, and notwithstanding the negative outcomes of the politically-sanctioned racial segregation inheritance, the framework overall is still at present the best created in Africa, with significant assets. Most foundations appreciate universal consideration and acknowledgment since they have grown globally focused research and educating limits. These important highlights and accomplishments have been held. In any case, the framework's disparities, lopsided characteristics mutilations still have far to go before being genuinely and

adequately tended to (Kiplangat, 2017). A number of challenges that after implementation of these policies in South African higher education still exist, as outlined in the following:

— Misconceptions about approach issues and their incentive by individuals from society hamper arrangement improvement, usage, investigation and audit.

— Certain partners still deny their job in strategy issues. This disavowal is typically joined by negative study, commitment in intentional befuddling trivial discussions about what makes a difference and what doesn't make a difference. This frequently moves center from the genuine reason for approach.

— There is dread or reluctance to make intense strides (settle on hard decisions) in the progression of change, especially in situations where non-supporters have little to lose.

— An absence of confidence and protection from strategy investigation, arranging, and usage by different partners defers liberation through assessment.

— In numerous advanced education foundations, the previously waning assets are misled and are not utilized for certifiable change issues. This suggests a proceeded with cycle of unremarkableness in execution, just as a ceaseless round of accusing the administration.

— Policy should be examined for the great it means granting to the partners and not as per its beginnings or the evaluators' assorted perspectives and belief systems. This renders the procedure free of predisposition somewhat.

— Among different difficulties, poor arrangement arranging and powerlessness to estimate precisely the basic prerequisites of overseeing change of the advanced education framework as a monstrous and exceptionally complex task can likewise be viewed as crippling powers in harvesting approach profits following 15 years of strategy controlling by government.(Fataar, 2017)

The following figure shows how the number of South Africans studying at a university has increased after 1994 (fig.1).

Figure 1. Progression ratio plots for individuals who completed Grade 7, 9, 12 after completing Grade 3, by population group for 2011 (Statics South Africa, 2016).

The following graph shows how different race groups have been affected by apartheid and how this influenced their education (fig.2).
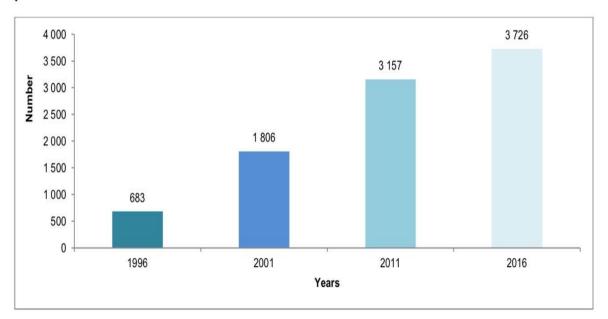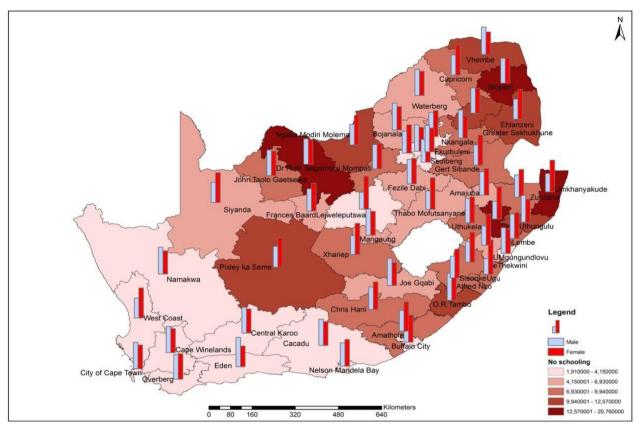
Figure 2. Number of students enrolled in post-secondary education in a given academic year 100,000 inhabitants (Statics South Africa, 2016)

The final image shows where most of the uneducated people live in South Africa. We can link this to where the homelands were during apartheid.

Figure 3. Individuals aged 25-64 with no schooling by district and gender (Statics South Africa, 2016)

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2.3 Case of Tunisia

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Ghaieth Ben Hamouda

Tunisia is considered as the only fully democratic sovereign state in the Arab world. Tunisia is located in north Africa and is bordered by Libya, Algeria and the Mediterranean Sea and has an area of approximately 163,610 km^2. It has a population of around 11,434,994 people and has a GDP of around $151.566 billion, which is at the higher end of all African countries (National Institute of Statistics -Tunisia, 2019).

Current status of educational system

- **Childhood education**

Kindergartens. These are socio-educational institutions under the supervision of the Ministry for Women, the Family and Childhood and belong either to the private sector, the quasi-public local authorities or specialist associations. There has been considerable improvement in the coverage of kindergartens from 7.1 percent in 1990 to 14 percent in 2000.But this rate is still low primarily because most 3 to 6-year-olds do not attend kindergarten (UNESCO, 2019).

The "Kouttab". These educational institutions also cater for 3 to 5 year-olds and their task is to initiate them into learning the Qur'an as well as reading, writing and arithmetic. They are under the supervision of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Reforms have enabled to increase the number of these schools from 378 in 1987 to 961 in 2007.

The preparatory year. The preparatory year is an integral part of basic education, but it is not compulsory. It is supervised by the Ministry of Education and Training, and is provided in public primary schools or in private or quasi-public institutions.

- **Basic education**

Enseignement de base consists of nine years of school education and is divided into two distinct stages: 6 years of primary and 3 years of preparatory education (lower secondary).

- **Secondary (upper) education**

The four years of secondary education are open to students who passed the final exam after the preparatory cycle. The students focus on entering university level or join the workforce after completion. The secondary cycle is divided into two stages: general academic and specialized. In the academic stream all students follow a common curriculum for one year after which they choose one of the five specializations from language arts, sciences, and economics and management in case the student is specializing in science at the end of the second year he must choose again but this time between math, experimental sciences, computer sciences or technical sciences. The language of instruction in technical, scientific and mathematics fields is French. At the end of the fourth year of secondary studies, students take "Examen National du Baccalauréat", which is the entry exam to higher education (The Development of Education National Report, Republic of Tunisia, 2004-2008).

- **Higher education**

Recently since 2005–06, the government has implemented a reform that is based on the European three-tier model of bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees. This reform is known as

LCD: licence (three years) master's (two-years), doctorate (five years)

The entire educational system is free of charges. Which is why private education is less important.

Political change

The last major political change in Tunisia happened in January 2011, which led to the eviction of the longtime president Ben Ali. It was an intensive 28-day campaign of civil resistance and a series of street demonstrations. The demonstrations were caused by high unemployment, food inflation, corruption, a lack of political freedoms (such as freedom of speech) and poor living conditions. The protests constituted the most dramatic wave of social and political unrest in Tunisia in three decades and resulted in scores of deaths and injuries, most of which were the result of action by police and security forces. It eventually led to a thorough democratization of the country and to free and democratic elections (Wikipedia article: Revolution in Tunisia, 2019).

Educational system before the political change

After the revolution the main educational scheme remained nearly the same. Therefore, we focus on how the political change affected the education of the Tunisian population.

Comparison and conclusion

In fig.4 we show the total number of enrolled students in primary, lower secondary, upper secondary and higher educational institutions for the years between 2009 and 2012.
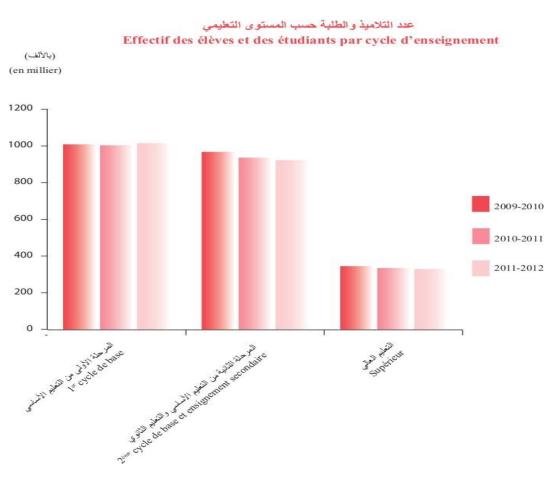
Figure 4. Enrollment ratios for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd educational cycle,
(National Institute of Statistics-Tunisia, 2019)

Worth to notice, that in the secondary educational cycle we see a drop in the number of students during the period of the revolution. The number of students in the primary cycle stays constant from 2009 to 2010 and rises from 2011 to 2012. The number of students in the higher education cycle drops slightly in this time period.

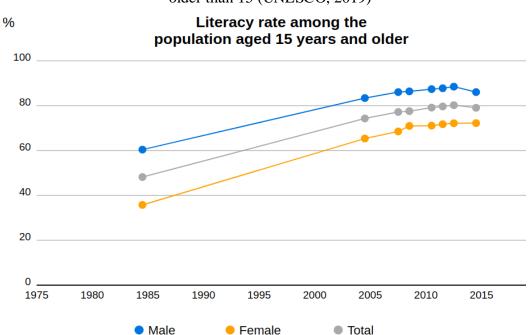In fig.5 we show the literacy rate for the population aged 15 and older for the years 1985 until 2015.

Figure 5. Literacy rate for male and female population
older than 15 (UNESCO, 2019)

Here we can clearly see a decline the literacy in the period between 2011 and 2015 which is the period after the revolution. The decline is particularly strong among the male population.

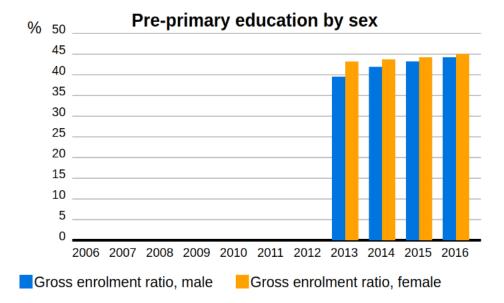In fig.6 we show the percentage of government expenditure on education.

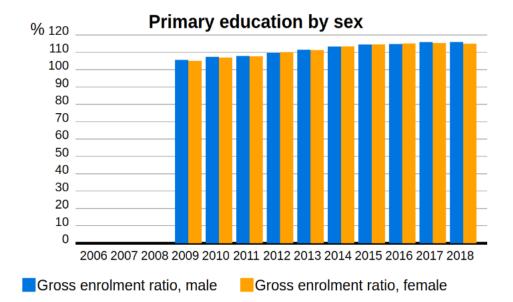Figure 6. Government expenditure on education, (UNESCO SDG, 2019)

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Government expenditure on education										
as % of GDP	6.53	6.25	...	6.25	...	...	6.6	...	...	...
as % of total government expenditure	25.26	24.85	...	20.99	...	...	22.62	...	...	...

Looking at the years 2009, 2010 and 2012 we can see a drop in the expenditure after the revolution. We see a decline of the number of students in the secondary and higher educational cycle and a decrease of literacy in the same time period. In addition, the government decreases its investments in the educational system. This shows a clear impact of the Tunisian revolution on the national education.

In fig.4 a,b,c,d we compare the enrollment ratios for female and male students for the years 2006 until 2016 for all the educational cycles.

Figures 7 (a,b,c,d). Gross enrolment ratios for male and female students for all educational cycles (UNESCO SDG, 2019)

Pre-primary education by sex

Gross enrolment ratio, male   Gross enrolment ratio, female

Primary education by sex

Gross enrolment ratio, male   Gross enrolment ratio, female

Secondary education by sex

(% axis: 0–110)

2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2016

■ Gross enrolment ratio, male   ■ Gross enrolment ratio, female

Tertiary education by sex

(% axis: 0–50)

2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017

■ Gross enrolment ratio, male   ■ Gross enrolment ratio, female

Comparing the enrollment ratios, we see that only in the primary education the gross enrollment ratio between male and female students is comparable. In all the other periods more female students are enrolled. Especially at university level one can see a strong difference in the enrollment ratios. This trend might be explained by the economic crisis due to the Revolution in the year 10/11.

Comparing the data, we can see a trend. Even though the revolution did not affect the structure of the educational system itself, it still had an impact on the education of the Tunisian population.

We see a decline of the number of students in the secondary and higher educational cycle and a decrease of literacy in the same time period. In addition, the government decreases its investments in the educational system. This shows a clear impact of the Tunisian revolution on the country's education.

The decrease of government expenditure in education in the period after the revolution is mostly due to an economic crisis and a major change of the political system. The decline in the enrollment number of students could be related to the economic crisis. Some of the students might have had to join the working force in order to support their families. However, more data is needed in order to find possible correlations between these developments

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2.4 Case of Ethiopia

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Atsede Ghidey Alemayehu

Ethiopia has some remarkable peculiarities among other African countries, namely, it is the oldest independent country (at least 2000 years) and the second largest in population size. Ethiopia is the only country that has never been colonized except for 5 years of occupation by Italy in 1936-1941. Thus, it was a symbol of African independence and one of the founder members of the United Nations. Ethiopia has a unique heritage being a land of two main religions – Christianity and Islam. It is a home of one of the oldest Christian denomination – Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and its diversity of more than 80 ethnic groups and corresponding languages is, particularly, striking. Ethiopia had a monarchy till 1974, when because of the coup a military junta, the Derg, established a socialist state. Another crucial milestone of Ethiopian history and the most recent one happened in 1991 affecting all dimensions of Ethiopian life. Coalition of rebel forces, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front withdrew the Derg regime and since then, Ethiopia is a federal parliamentary republic with a new constitution of 1994 that guarantees the religious, cultural and political rights for all ethnic groups living on its territory (BBC, 2019).

The first modern government school in Ethiopia was established in 1908 under the rule of the Emperor Menelik II. Within almost a century, the number of primary and secondary schools reached 10730 with nearly 3.5 million students being enrolled. However, despite well-observed growth of educational sector, the number of problems exists without being properly fixed. The Ethiopian educational sector is seen as elitist, formalistic, rigid and highly bureaucratic. Undoubtedly, there were several governmental attempts to solve the problems, however, those reforms kept being a highly debatable topic both from the efficiency and cost-benefit analysis perspectives.

Here we aim to focus on why an impressive development of educational sector in Ethiopia is a two-sided coin. In the next section, we will discuss great achievements in education in Ethiopia, while in afterwards we will argue that these official figures hide serious problems persisted over time. The next part will briefly present the overview of educational structure and history before the collapse of socialist regime, the Derg. Later, we will briefly describe the political change, while in the following part we will evaluate the Transitional Government Education and Training policy that happened due to the collapse of the regime in 1991 and its consequences. The last part concludes with a list of references that this analysis was based on.

Brief story of Ethiopian success in education

Over the last decades it can be seen that achievements of Ethiopia in educational sector are successful and one of the most prominent in Africa. Not so many governments spend such a big portion of their revenues on education as Ethiopian one. Between 2000 and 2013 Ethiopia nearly doubled the proportion of its budget dedicated to education, namely, from 15% to 27%. Moreover, the primary education is free and exhibit one of the highest enrollment rates in Africa. In particular, there were nearly three times greater amount of primary schools in 2015 compared to 1996 with the number of students enrolled rocketing from 3 million to 18 million. Likewise, youth literacy increased from 34% in 2000 to 52% in 2011 (Gardner, 2017).
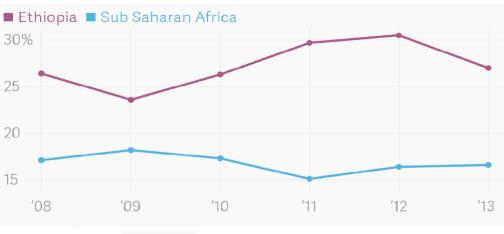
Figure 7. Ethiopia's education spend as a share of
government expenditure, 2019

Source: WorldBank

"Education For All" Development Index comprised by the UN also highlights tremendous achievements of Ethiopia. Namely, it took the second place after Mozambique in terms of size of the last decade improvements in educational sector and fastest expansion of universal primary education. In addition to that, the number of children not enrolled or out of school went down by more than 60 % between 2001 and 2008.
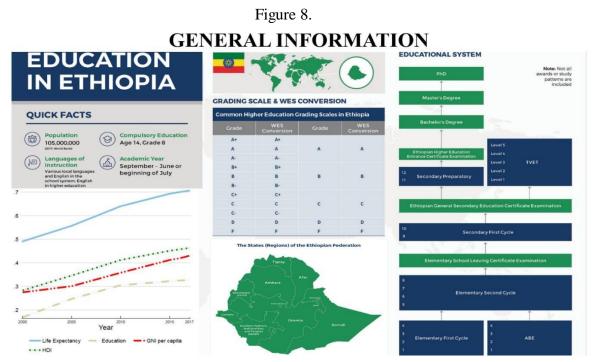
Problems behind the great statistics

The main criticism of the achievements mentioned above lies in the inability to rely on governmental statistics, since the ruling party manipulates parts of international surveys and makes regional level comparison hard. Also, when we dig deeper than the general statistics results, we could see that for every 1000 children starting school, only 50% went till the 5th grade without any interruptions, while merely 20% completed the 8th grade. In addition, rocketing enrollment at the secondary level in the capital city is an extreme situation when compared with less than 1/10th in much less populated and mostly pastoralist region of Afar. Other examples provided by Gardner (2017) include the results of National Learning Assessments each four years period, which show lack of progress. Namely, students at the grade 4 have average performance constantly below 50% country-wide except for the capital. In addition, UK-based charity organization Young Lives compared children finishing secondary school in 2009 and 2016 and found no striking difference in their performance. Mentioned examples are just glimpses of the existing problems. The roots of them may lie in the teachers' quality. Gardner (2017) highlighted that the brightest and best students do not want to become teachers or even if they do, they quit the profession very fast. The only region where being a teacher is an indication of the social respect is northern Tigray, otherwise, the profession is de-professionalized, especially after the Derg, period of the Marxist regime. Nowadays, mostly poor performers become teachers. Students at the top 30% in grade 10 join grade 11, in the tier below join police and the rest goes to the teacher training college. Adding the low pay for the job, the overall state of teaching quality and status remain strikingly bad. This problem is, undoubtedly, common for many countries. However, Gardner (2017) also stressed another problem of Ethiopian educational sector that is peculiar. This is problem of the language, which partially is a result of Ethiopian federal constitution which grants nine regional government to decide about their

respective educational policies including the language of instruction. As a consequence, children are educated in the local language at primary level across regions and then suddenly switch to English. This transition is very steep in many places and the quality level tends to be very poor even at the university level. However, overall government tries to address the problems by increasing teacher's wage and improve their training, since young generation is a future of the country and hopeless future tends to provide unrest in present.

Educational Sector

In this section the general information (refer to Figure 2) about educational sector of Ethiopia is presented. It can be seen that the level of education is growing over the last years along with income and human development index. The age of compulsory education is 14 which corresponds to the grade 8. Language of instruction varies across regions that you could observe on the map at Figure 2 and English is compulsory in higher education. Grading is quite similar to the US scale. Moreover, the education is homogenous till the general secondary education examination, afterwards, students may choose their tracks, academic, professional or entering the labor market.

Figure 8.

Source: World Education Services. Available at: wenr.wes.org

The interesting feature about the history of Ethiopian education is that both the Orthodox Church and the Mosque were two major institutions bringing education to the mass. It was restricted to religious education only, but enabled the country to develop its own written script and to become the only in Subsaharan Africa with the written script of its own. However, religion and aristocracy were stumbling blocks in the way of government's educational reform in the beginning of the 20th century. Despite their resistance, the introduction of public education helped Ethiopians to become more literate and open doors to girls by establishing schools for girls in around 1931. Unfortunately, the attempts of the Emperors to modernize education sector by Western approach got perturbated by Italo-Ethiopian war in 1935. During the occupation, schools were closed down and educated Ethiopians were killed. After the liberation the educational system had a British touch with 4 years

of primary, 4 years of intermediate and 4 years of secondary. It was noticed that everything was important and foreign, however, worked well. In the 50s the influence of British faded away and Americans play a greater role in shaping policies. The system was changed to 6 years of primary, two of junior high school and 4 years of senior high school and Amharic became the language of instruction at primary level. However, problems remained, such as following: only few could get access to education, it was elitist; curriculum was academic oriented, neglecting vocational-technical education, which gave a rise to educated unemployment; it was not successful in bringing students to the university, only 6% of first graders eventually made it there; it was urban and male biased; not much of Ethiopian in the curriculum; it was suffering from bloated bureaucracy and stopping local initiative and efficiency. Another phase of Ethiopian education started in 1974 with the Derg regime and socialist overtone. During this regime, the country experienced serious policy reforms that also affected educational developing. It includes nationalized all private schools, reorganized Hialeselassie I University, and renamed it Addis Abeba University. Moreover, there were also interests to reform the education system based on the military regime's socialist ideology (Tefera, 1996).

After the overthrow of the Derg regime, the transitional government also introduced several reforms, including the education sector. We plan to focus on a very particular policy, namely, Transitional Government's Education and Training (hereafter, TGET) policy which was a successor of socialist regime.

Political change: collapse of the socialist regime in 1991

The socialist regime was overthrown in Ethiopia in May 1991, when Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) succeed in a coup against military Derg. This change was not only a result of the military victory and power of EPRDF, but also the beginning of the new chapter and identity of Ethiopian statehood. As Bach (2014) highlighted, the new regime is a byproduct of the Ethiopian student movement and aimed to establish completely different nation-building strategy from what was used before. Especially the Derg conception of nationhood was heavily condemned. New government led to the new constitution of 1995 that recognizes the "Rights of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples" and tried to promote decentralization, which was particularly important step in the realm of highly ethnically diverse Ethiopian state. In order to build a new nation with democratic views and ideas, new government should have started with education sector among the first reforms. Therefore, they attempted to completely change the Derg discourse in education and establish new trends to improve the current state of educational system.

Concept of the policy and its consequences

In the end of a socialist era, according to Tefera (2016), the relevance of educational curriculum was heavily questioned. Alongside the problems of equal access and educational opportunity and decreasing quality. After the Transitional Government was established in 1991, the reform in educational sector was also apparent. This policy articulated the importance of democratic values, for instance, equality, liberty, justice, truth and respect for human rights. The new policy was designed by 42 members mostly coming from the Ministry of Education and Addis Ababa University. There were also members of Ministries of Culture, Agriculture, Industry, Health, Science and Technology Commission and the Institute of Agricultural Research including representatives of 22 government organizations. The discussion of the draft policy was held not only in the capital, but also in seven other regions in the attempt of increasing awareness. The gathered feedback revealed the

absence of novel suggestions or constructive comments. At this point, Ethiopian Teachers' Association got divided into opposing groups which made the work on the policy harder. Despite the attempt to establish accessibility and awareness, policy makers got criticized for the absence of national debate claiming that the participation was driven artificially and teachers were not directly or broadly involved. The reform was implemented by top-down approach. However, TGET policy unlike its predecessors had made a noticeable progress in bringing openness and transparency to the process of educational policy decision making. Another difference lied in the introduction of cost-sharing mechanism for under graduate and graduate studies, which means that after Seconday School study parents and/or students will share the burden of financing education. This introduction became a stumbling block in fulfilling the vow of rural-openness, because rural people were hurt at the first place. The necessity of this mechanism seemed particularly ambiguous in the situation when most school leavers comprised an increasing army of young unemployed. The failure of the education to provide future wage earnings brought down the level of enrollment, especially in rural areas. Another critique of TGET policy is unclear distribution of financing. It was supposed to be financed by regional governments with the support from Central government and foreign aid. However, most of foreign aid was going to the Eastern European countries and it was hard to generate enough funds to cover educational expenditures (Tefera, 1996).

One of the most striking result of TGET policy was the introduction of mother-tongue as a language of instruction at the primary level. Due to the fact that Ethiopia is very multilingual country, it is beneficial for children to learn in their mother tongue. At the same time, pilot testing and other methods to ensure successful implementation were completely neglected. Another crucial input of this policy was decentralized management of the educational system. This was a clear attempt to deal with bureaucracy and inhibiting local initiatives. This decentralization is a great achievement, however, it suffered from the lack of experienced trained subordinates to carry out reforms and make necessary decisions. The similar argument of lack of transparency could be applied to the initiative of creating more private educational institutions. Another important result of TGET policy is bringing the problem of low socio-economic status of the teacher at the light spot. It targeted the professional enhancement of teachers as one of the primary goals and seeking immediate action. Moreover, this policy draws attention to the role and contribution of women in development and respective reorientation of society's attitudes and values (Tefera, 1996).

Conclusion

Long lasting problem of Ethiopian educational system is addressing symptoms instead of solving causes of the problems. Acknowledging success that has been made it is important to address all critical points of TGET policy and to attempt to improve transparency in decision making, privatization, development of initiatives, to make it clear which responsibilities have different educational bodies at all levels, what are the main guidelines developed by the Ministry of Education. The attempts that have been made are correct however, more attention should be given to getting the trust of the public and addressing its needs. It is crucial to remember that educational reforms without socio-economic transformation won't become effective.

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3. Conclusion

This paper presented the results of the preliminary investigation within the topic of education in several African countries: Ghana, South Africa, Tunisia and Ethiopia. Maintaining a close connection with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the UN in 2015, we attempted to illustrate cases of four countries through the prism of general targets, defined within Sustainable Development Goals.

Our primary focus has been directed toward education, as a standalone goal within the set of SDGs, and one of the fundamental priorities, presented in the UN agenda within the last decades. The complex of 17 goals in total, as a set of SDGs, was adopted with various labels, such as indivisible, integrated, global and universal, meaning that the goals are strongly linked with each other, and should be applied to all countries in the world. Implementing these goals in designing a national policy will promote to shaping direction towards sustainability on the global level.

Driving on the idea of the global partnership for sustainable development, the UN placed a particular focus on needs of the most vulnerable and poorest countries. African countries are listed among those, which require a profound support and attention, taking into account differences "in national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities" (p.6, UN, 2015).

Education is the area, which development affects national well-being and wealth in the far-reaching perspective. The priority of education within SDGs agenda aimed to provide its availability to all social groups on different levels and territories. Additional emphasis has been placed on eliminating disparities based on gender, health condition, access to the facilities, the level of income and social vulnerability. This is particularly relevant to the context of certain African countries, as the most vulnerable ones, where governments face numerous challenges in attempts to find solutions for major problems.

In this paper, which has a format of a short report, we aimed to illustrate briefly the current situation and to critically evaluate the education system in Ghana, South Africa, Tunisia and Ethiopia. Although each country has its own specificity in terms of geographical, social, economic, political characteristics, we were interested to understand whether they can be somehow comparable and, more importantly, whether there is anything, what they can learn from each other in terms of experience in attempts to provide positive changes in education on the national level.

Within this report we considered education in a close connection with the political changes, assuming, that political decisions to transform the education system had impact on the outcome of education service provision. Moreover, we were interested to know which way had been chosen by governments to address relevant issues and what kind of results they obtained eventually. Each case has been illustrated through the prism of "the main political change" and a brief comparative analysis of the situation before and after.

For instance, in Ghana there was not a single political change, but numerous reforms, which implementation provided creature of new schools across the whole country, strengthening the qualified trainings for teachers and extending the access to education for citizens over the past decades. Through the reforms started in 1950s till 2017, the post-colonial Ghana has been maintaining the path of transition toward improving national education system. The results of this transformation had been described as impressive, due to clearly positive changes in literacy rate and improved accessibility to the school facilities among children. Therefore, it facilitated progress in the economy in Ghana, which currently is the second-fastest growing one in Africa after Ethiopia's.

In case of South Africa, the situation was different, since the major changes were related to the end of Apartheid, new constitution and radical changes in the education system, in purpose to promote racial and gender equality. Before 1994, there were considerable discrepancies based on the racial criteria, supported by the dictatorial position of the government. However, with the birth of liberalism, previously implemented policies had been dropped, and the new era of governance opened up opportunities for education, available for all groups of citizens. These dramatic changes generated the growth in number of university students, and induced decline in amount of uneducated population. However, those positive transformations are not identical to all countries, which we selected for the analysis. In this respect, the long-lasting problems in Ethiopian education system have been more "diagnosed", rather than solved.

Ethiopia is the leading country in Sub-Saharan Africa, where education sector attracted a considerable amount of government spending. Although, the story of reforming education throughout Ethiopian history is a case of success, there are hidden sides which are crucial to take into account. For instance, unreliable statistics due to manipulations of the ruling party in international surveys, as well as the lack of transparency in decision- making are among the main critics of the system. However, the progress that has been made after overthrown socialist regime in 1991 should not been neglected. Decentralization of education, growing quantity of investment, expanding private educational sector, trials to make reforms more transparent and discussible, education – more accessible by various social groups – all these attempts are worth to be acknowledged and evaluated in order to develop next priorities and use resources and funds more efficiently. Government should bear in mind that successful expansion and accessibility of education is not possible without sufficient complementary reforms in other dimension of socio-economic life.

In Tunisia there was a radical transformation in government, however it did not provide a significant effect on the structure of the education system. Revolution in January, 2011, carried out through the intensive and bloody campaign, was caused by the exposed problems of corruption, high rates of unemployment and other socio-economic issues. Eventually, it had led to democratization of the country and free democratic elections.

The results of statistics showed trends of decreasing amount of expenditures to the education sector, as well as decline in the number of students during the period of revolution. The main reasons may be extensive national economic crisis and vulnerability of the political system, however, to make a final conclusion there is a need to conduct more detailed analysis.

To sum up, results of the cases, as brief illustrations of education in the analyzed countries, are quite heterogeneous. Every country has its own history and background which has had a considerable impact on the education system and policy, both in past and at the current moment. Nevertheless, we believe there is a common ground to compare and learn more from the cases described. To be able to make more comprehensive conclusion, there is a need to carry on further studies. There are various directions how it may be done in the perspective: through more in-depth analysis, through including additional criteria and elements to consider, or alternatively through extending the number of countries to increase the variety of cases. Many questions remain open. Within this paper providing a short historical perspective, we aimed to illustrate the key features of a path, chosen by each country, main elements of various political changes and education transformations within the particular national context.

We are aware, that this report has certain limitations, however we considered this study as an initial step towards more detailed investigation. Future research may allow to see a comprehensive picture, through conducting more thorough analysis. It could be done for the aim of extracting implications either for designing a policy or for educational purposes only. In the latter case, country

descriptions may be used as brief illustrations for transforming them into case studies for students or public servants within educating programs, as one of the possible options.

What would be the appropriate and the most suitable way for directing this experimental joint project? What kind of implications may we obtain, continuing this type of research in the future? Which directions should be chosen for further studies, encompassed by targets within sustainable development goals? Would it be relevant for various groups of stakeholders to take part in the project and what kind of roles they would prefer to choose? What would be the profound implications (academic and practical) possible to extract? Numerous questions should be addressed to determine clearly the further way to proceed. This report does not give the complete answers to all questions; however, it can illustrate the first step in the project journey which would be interesting and important to continue. We believe this paper provides critically assessed contribution to the SDGs agenda, and highlights the importance of global collaboration.

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