

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

Inspiring local action

Communication Strategy for the SDG Localization Project

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Context

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development sets out 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that aim to address complex challenges still faced by a large share of the world population. These goals involve issues such as fighting poverty and hunger, decreasing maternal and child mortality, promoting gender balance, fighting climate change, promoting peace and justice and attaining more equitable development outcomes, among others. Its universal character, arising from its unanimous approval by all UN Member States the fact that it commits countries both North and South, and its wide thematic reach brings the potential of a radical positive change in billions of lives by the year 2030. We must bear in mind that the approval of this agenda at the international level must not preclude action at the local level. In fact, actions carried out by a wide range of local stakeholders from multiple sectors are essential building blocks for every country to achieve its goals individually and, by consequence, for the Agenda to achieve success at the international level.

In recognition of the previous premises, the SDG Localization Project was conceived to support local actors in Maputo and Cabo Delgado Provinces to formulate and implement integrated public policies, programmes and projects for the promotion of sustainable development. This initiative is the product of a collaboration between UNDP Mozambique, UNDP ART Initiative-Hub for Territorial Partnerships and the Agencia Andaluza de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo (AACID). SDG localization refers to the process of co-designing, co-implementing and co-monitoring inclusive SDG implementation strategies in full alignment with sub-national priorities and opportunities.

At the national level, Mozambique has demonstrated considerable progress in terms of the SDGs since 2015, even though it has been impacted by the slowdown in the economy that took place in the last years. Considering the subnational level and Maputo and Cabo Delgado Provinces specifically, it is possible to identify considerably diverse realities that will entail specific actions in order to achieve the proposed goals. Maputo Province is a highly urbanized area (71,2% of the population lives in cities) what contrasts with the reality of both Cabo Delgado and the country, where only 23,1% and 33,4% of the population lives in cities, respectively (Censo, 2017). This urban character also conforms the problems faced by the Southern Province, where the population enjoys better conditions of habitation and access to water and sanitation – even though there still is a large room for improvement. Internet connection in Maputo Province is also considerably higher: almost ¼ of the population has internet access while in Cabo Delgado it is less than 4%. Waste management and pollution gain a particular dimension in Maputo given the presence of the most important industrial complex, located at Matola city. However, most of the domestic waste is inadequately treated throughout the country.

The incidence of poverty and undernourishment is higher in Cabo Delgado and its economy is highly dependent on natural resources (timber, precious stones and natural gas) extraction and export. The Northern Province has also been marked by grave episodes of violence against the civil population since 2017 that led to an estimated number of 700 deaths and 250.000 people displaced. The response against the perpetrators also generated accusations of widespread human rights violations.

Main objective and principles

The main objective of the Communication Strategy for the SDG Localization Process is to inspire action at the local level, strengthening the role that SDGs can have at orienting public policies, development projects and everyday actions of every individual. The attainment of this objective rests on four key premises:

First, in order to achieve this objective, our intervention starts with information and awareness raising actions that will rely on multiple platforms, both online and offline, listed ahead in this document. The territorial approach that characterizes this project also brings some specificities to this strategy: its focus on the local level, its degree of proximity with the local population and their possibility to interact with the process.

Second, the effective implementation of this communication strategy requires tailoring all actions to the local context and local reality that people in Maputo and Cabo Delgado provinces face on a day-to-day basis. Only that way, can this strategy translate into meaningful actions that contributes to address that challenges and opportunities that communities in these two provinces face in attaining sustainable development.

Third, the notion of *leaving no one behind*, at the core of the 2030 Agenda, will also guide the project and its strategy. We list in the following sections measures that will be taken to enable wide participation in the process, including of groups that have been marginalized in other opportunities. Beyond their participation, special attention will be given to the degree to which the benefits generated by SDG-oriented policies are also reaped by those groups.

Fourth, meaningful social change is perceived to be the product of the constant mobilization of local efforts. Therefore, this strategy is a supplementary tool to guarantee local/national ownership vis-à-vis the 2030 Agenda. The COVID-19 pandemic imposed considerable obstacles that stress the need for innovative ways of sending our messages and mobilizing the population. Even though a combination of multiple platforms is already foreseen in this document, the collaboration of local actors regarding the necessary and appropriate adaptations due to the pandemic will certainly be valued.

Audience and key messages

The project combines a multi-stakeholder and multisector approach that can be translated in communication actions aimed at reaching the following audiences:

- Government: national, provincial district and municipal-level officials will be mobilized to incorporate the 2030 Agenda into their Plans and public policies, guaranteeing wide participation and accountability
- Civil Society Organizations: even though the SDGs already seem to be reflected in the projects carried out by several organizations, we can contribute in the coordination among all projects vis-à-vis the 2030 Agenda and the governmental Plans
- Private Sector: local and multinational companies that have activities in Maputo and Cabo Delgado Provinces will be approached and invited to be part of the process. They can, for example, incorporate of SDG-related topics in their operations and social corporate responsibility actions
- International and decentralized cooperation: agencies responsible for direct implementation or support to projects in Maputo and Cabo Delgado Provinces can also contribute in the discussions and the mobilization of partners and additional resources
- Academia: this project can play an enabling role by connecting academia and other actors in the development field. Whilst sometimes academic knowledge is limited to the university's walls and incapable of generating informed action, in the case of the 2030 Agenda their contribution is invaluable. Researchers and professors will be invited to work side-by-side with other actors in order to guarantee a holistic approach to the challenges embodied in the SDGs

Continuous efforts will be destined to strike the right balance between the complexity that characterizes the 2030 Agenda and the need to involve every individual in this process. Having that in mind, this communication strategy has the following underlying key messages:

- Local and global levels are completely intertwined: the fact that the SDGs emerged from a global agreement between United Nations member States must not prevent people from realizing that improving their local reality is a step towards promoting change in the whole world. While the 2030 Agenda is a global initiative of a universal dimension, it addresses (and must address) local issues that affect the day to day life of people across the planet.
- Every action counts: regardless of how small and spatially limited an action may seem to be, it is still extremely relevant to promote meaningful change. Large-scale impacts are obtained through the aggregation of actions at the local level, creating true possibilities for local ownership. External interventions are not capable of considering particularities and disregard the fact that the local population is the best positioned actor to construct what is desired and the best way to achieve it. Practically by principle, a territorial approach such as this project's will rely on small-scale actions, which by their turn can have a catalytic effect
- Leave no one behind: promoting inclusiveness and fighting against inequities requires not only an attitude of openness towards marginalized groups, but also recognizing that supplementary efforts are necessary if we are supposed to provide equal conditions of participation. In addition, besides the possibility to participate, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda must also benefit everyone and overcome inequities
- Every actor counts: Provided with the proper conditions and inspired to act, everyone can contribute: women and men, girls and boys, people with or without disabilities, people from the countryside or the cities, people from the Northern or Southern part of the country, workers, businesses, social entrepreneurs, and so on. In fact, the 2030 Agenda commits all to take action to achieve SDGs. This is not an Agenda for governments or for civil society organizations alone. We **all** bear a responsibility in its implementation. Obviously, guaranteeing that previously marginalized groups are also part of the process requires a careful effort to overcome discriminatory actions. Additionally, the notion that specific groups are limited to deal with certain subjects will be replaced by including every actor willing to contribute in any issue-area they are inclined to

Media, tools and resources

The SDG Localization project assumes that the success of the 2030 Agenda in Mozambique can only take place once local actors, from a wide range of sectors, take the lead of the process in Maputo and Cabo Delgado Provinces. In order to achieve this ambition, the communication strategy reflects upon both the tools and the actions capable of promoting local/national ownership and generating engagement online and in real life.

The fast pace that characterizes our daily life, marked by an ever-changing environment and unprecedented interconnectivity requires a communication with a high degree of adaptability. In addition, the challenges imposed by the COVID 19 pandemic reinforces the need of innovative ways of social mobilization. By recurring to the following platforms and tools, we believe that the previous issues are addressed, and local population can lead the profound social change embodied in the SDGs.

SDG Action Campaign

SDG Action Campaign is an initiative from the UN Secretary General aimed at ensuring greater visibility to activities related to SDGs. The initiative compiles publicity material (of free use), good practices and offers a platform for amplifying the message. In addition, they recognize actions through the SDG Action Awards. The SDG Action Campaign provides guidelines to produce materials such as pins, “wheel of the SDGs”, flags of the SDGs, among others. It also shares digital material that can be used on social networks to raise awareness.

Several factors demonstrate that this initiative can add great value to the SDG Localization Project: its dynamic logic; the fact that it benefits from contributions from an online global community; the visibility that the experiences shared in its platform enjoys, among others. Besides, the SDG Action Campaign demonstrates great adaptability to the ever-changing scenario mentioned earlier, considering the participatory feed-in process that maintains the platform updated.

For example, once varied local actions with great potential to achieve SDGs have been identified either in Maputo or Cabo Delgado Provinces, the project can at first offer support to frame their narrative in terms of the 2030 Agenda and elaborate publicity and awareness materials. In a second moment, this material can gain the world stage through the contribution of the SDG Action Campaign platform.

Media, tools and resources

Having in mind that the SDGs involve a rather large amount of data, it is key to find the right channels in order to reach our audience, guaranteeing engagement and accountability. The risk of oversimplification will also require a response, which could be the possibility of maintaining the logic of a toolbox and recurring to different packages of information depending on the audience.

Internet connection in Mozambique still is very limited according to the Census 2017. Even though a larger share population of Maputo Province enjoys internet connection, it does not reach ¼ of people. In Cabo Delgado the situation is considerably worse: less than 4% of men and women have internet connection. In both Provinces, people rely mostly on cellphone to access the internet, what also limits their online experience. Hence, our communication strategy must combine traditional – television, radio, newspaper – and social media – internet platforms in general – to convey the localization message. Resources such as SMS and offline forms can also play a complementary role.

In order to guarantee access to the project’s materials and any information elaborated or framed in terms of SDGs during the localization process, the project will rely both on online and offline solutions. Online options could be a preexisting platform (e.g. INE, Provincial Government or UNDP websites; Facebook) or a dedicated website that would be fed-in by governmental partners in the medium term. This material will have the greatest degree of interactivity possible (e.g. allow aggregation and disaggregation of data, online surveys). An extended reach will be obtained with the distribution of physical copies of those materials.

Besides the channels themselves, a message capable of generating engagement must be innovative in terms of the language it uses and be as interactive as possible. First, the SDG localization process will recur to well produced short films, what proved to be very effective both in terms of attracting interest and by its “shareability”. That is, they can be conveyed on TV, online (YouTube, Facebook or embedded in a website) or could be shared through messaging apps (WhatsApp, Telegram, and on). Local recognition will be obtained by using testimonials from local people and institutions from a varied range of sectors, possibly using local languages, as well as local images. The core objective of these movies is to inspire action by example.

Second, audio spots are also convenient for the Mozambican context, where radio still plays an important role in informing the population. Radio broadcasts have the advantage of providing a simpler possibility of interaction with the audience, that can call the radio station and participate in a debate or give its testimonial. In addition, audio recordings can be shared online (podcasts, embedded in websites) or through messaging apps. The length of these recordings will be adapted to the channels through which we intend to share them.

Third, while keeping the same aesthetic of the SDGs in general, sensitization materials such as poster and leaflets can be effective at reaching even more people and reinforcing the call for action. They constitute good materials that can be distributed to the population in general and to attendees of events organized in the cadre of the SDG Localization project. Like other resources mentioned in this strategy, the message itself must combine the capacity to simplify a complex subject such as the SDGs while highlighting that all actions matter regardless of how small they seem to be.

Finally, competitions that enable wide participation are usually good tools to mobilize people around specific topics. Considering the COVID 19 pandemic, innovative solutions must be adopted if we are to implement a competition with the SDG localization as its subject. The adoption of an online platform can represent a mitigation measure to the contagion risk, while it may limit participation. Therefore, a combination of online and offline solutions can still allow the use of a competition that may, for example, identify successful initiatives in Maputo and Cabo Delgado Provinces.

Strategy

Goal 1 – 2030 Agenda on everyone’s minds

Messages:

- 2030 Agenda framework can lead to radical positive change at the local level and in the whole country
- Every action counts

Tactics:

- Use a multitude of channels and platforms to sensitize as many people as possible
- Adapt the message depending on the desired degree of complexity of information and targeted audience
- Adopt a careful language that is accessible and appealing
- Create opportunities for local actors contribute in the process (propose actions, provide feedback, share experiences) and give visibility to their contribution
- Coordinate, with Provincial government’s support, the policies, programmes and projects for the promotion of sustainable development

Goal 2 – Leave No One Behind

Message:

- SDGs are as good as the impact it causes on the lives of the most vulnerable

Tactics:

- Include the contribution of marginalized groups in the process and take active measures to mitigate any form of prejudice
- Avoid limiting these contributions to pre-established issues considered to be of their “natural” interest
- Enable wide participation in every issue area that actors consider themselves capable of offering positive contribution
- Tracking progress in indicators related to inequality in its different dimensions (SDGs 5, 10 and 16)

Goal 3 – Success through local/national ownership

Messages:

- Everyone can contribute in the process
- Actors not traditionally associated with coordinated development processes must have their voices heard (marginalized groups, private sector, academia)

Tactics:

- Sensitize and orient Provincial governments to align policies and development plans with the 2030 Agenda
- Sensitize and orient civil society organizations to align projects with the 2030 Agenda
- Sensitize and orient private sector actors to align operations and corporate social responsibility with the 2030 Agenda
- Incorporate academic actors in the localization process, who can contribute in the orientation of aligning policies, programmes and projects in general with the 2030 Agenda
- Enable the alignment of projects carried out by international and decentralized cooperation agencies with the 2030 Agenda
- Appoint institutions that may work as “local champions” and inspire other actors