

**Sustainable Development Solution Network (SDSN) Public Consultation on
Indicators for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

**NORRAG commentaries related to livelihoods and skills for employment in the
proposed indicators**

March 2014

Commentary # 6. By Stephen Vardigans, Independent TVET Consultant.

In this brief summary I have noted what appear to be a number of non sequiturs - Goal to Target to Illustrative Indicator – and a lack of emphasis on the importance of skills training for sustainable employment (Decent Work).

Starting with Goal 02 (Achieve Development within Planetary Boundaries), we have a combined Target 02a which states: Each country reaches at least the next income level AND promotes decent work. The term decent work seems to be added as an afterthought and does not seem to fit with the goal statement.

Decent work, or rather Decent Work, is a very specific and well-defined ILO term which captures some extremely important issues relating to employment/livelihood. I think that the key reference to Decent Work should first appear under Goal 03 (Ensure Effective Learning for All Children and Youth for Life and Livelihood), and be glossed somewhere in the document with the full definition:

‘Work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men.’

The references to the labor market and the illustrative indicators under Goal 02a would be, I feel, better located under Goal 03.

Moving to Goal 03 (Ensure Effective Learning for All Children and Youth for Life and Livelihood), it seems that critical references to ‘skills development’ and ‘adults’ have been omitted.

Perhaps a better goal statement might be: Ensure Effective Learning and Skills Development for All Children, Youth and Adults for Life and Livelihood. This would answer the question, learning what? (Ans.: Skills of all kinds for life and livelihoods.)

I think Target 03a (All children under the age of 5 reach their developmental potential through access to quality early childhood development programs and

policies.), should have the word ‘children’ replaced with ‘girls and boys’. This would make it consistent with the follow-on target statements which are clearly written, girls and boys, to emphasise both sexes.

Target 03c (Ensure that all youth transition effectively into the labor market), seems to cry out for a reference to Decent Work and I think this is where Decent Work is better placed. (See above.)

It could read something like: Ensure that all youth transition effectively into the labor market and Decent Work. The Decent Work indicator, perhaps managed by ILO under the Decent Work Agenda, could then disaggregate those in employment and decent employment.

Given that effective transition to Decent Work is more likely for those who have acquired appropriate life and livelihood competencies, I think that an additional, clear indicator stating the % of 15-25 year olds (say) having at least notional Level 2-3 education and/or TVET skills certification could be added under Goal 03.

Finally a comment about Goal 07: Empower Inclusive, Productive and Resilient Cities.

It seems that the word ‘empower’ is not really appropriate. As I understand it one can facilitate the empowerment of individuals, but I am not sure how it relates to cities. Terms like ‘create’ or ‘develop’ might be clearer. (Maybe cities should be citizens. Then it would make more sense, but it would still have to refer to facilitation of some sort.)

Target 07a (End extreme urban poverty, expand employment and productivity and raise living standards, especially in slums), also seems *not* to need ‘especially in slums’. I would suggest that a more concise, sequenced statement, and one which again links to the critical nature of Decent Work, might be: (Expand employment and productivity, raise living standards through training and Decent Work and end extreme urban poverty).

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On 14th February 2014, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) released [a draft report for public consultation](#) on proposed indicators for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We asked several NORRAG members to comment on these proposed indicators; these commentaries are the views and opinions of individual NORRAG members and are not intended to represent the view of all NORRAG members.

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