eLearning Africa Report 2019 reveals failure to meet education targets

African countries are still not doing enough to meet one of the UN's most important development targets, according to a new report to be published next week.

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The eLearning Africa Report 2019, which provides a snapshot of the state of education, training and development on the continent, interviewed more than 900 education professionals and technology experts about key issues, including progress towards the United Nations' goal of universal access to quality education by 2030.

The goal (UN SDG 4) is set out in the UN's list of sustainable development goals (SDGs), which every country should meet by 2030. However, the eLearning Africa Report's survey of education and training professionals, working in almost every country in Africa, shows that a substantial majority believe that African countries are still not doing enough to ensure universal access to quality education for all Africans.

Uncomfortable reading

The finding, which is among the results in a survey in the report, will make uncomfortable reading for African leaders. The achievement of UN SDG 4 is not only an important UN goal, but also a major plank in the African Union's plan for a 'transformed continent' by 2063. However, the survey shows that, by majorities of more than 12%, experts believe that, in every major area of education, insufficient progress has been made.

"SDG 4 is perhaps the most important of the UN sustainable development goals and the disappointment about the lack of progress towards realising it is striking," says the report. "It seems too that the further up the educational ladder you look, the greater the belief that insufficient progress is being made. 56% of respondents do not believe that African countries are doing enough to ensure that, by 2030, all girls and boys will complete free primary and secondary education. However, the percentage of those believing that not enough has been done to improve access to higher education and vocational training or further education is as high as 65%."

In spite of the gloom about progress towards meeting the UN SDGs though, there is a sense of optimism about overall progress. More than two thirds (72%) of the experts questioned said they think that the African Union's 2063 vision is "realistic."

"If our youth are empowered, believe in their own self-worth and think creatively," said one of the experts, "Africa will be an inspiration to other continents with new inventions and original African solutions benefitting all."

Report contributions

The eLearning Africa Report, which has been sponsored by GIZ, the German organisation for international cooperation, on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), makes fascinating reading. With contributions from experts, practitioners, advisers, entrepreneurs and even students and artists, it provides an insight into how technology assisted learning and training are leading change and development throughout Africa. As businesses assess the implications of a 'fourth industrial revolution', it looks at the state of education, training, development and technology at this moment of unparalleled change.

Available free to download online, it combines features and profiles of leading figures with controversial opinion columns, detailed country reports, a guide to finding funding and the first ever directory of African edTech companies.

Highlights include:

- The 'Father of the African Internet,' Nii Quaynor, on improving access to education
- Presidential adviser Ibrahima Guimba-Saidou on transforming Niger into an African digital state
- Futurist Dr Njeri Mwagiru on how a 5th industrial revolution could begin in Africa
- African philosopher and education expert, Ndri Thérèse Assié Lumumba, on the challenges for African education
- Kofi Annan's former aide Max Bankole Jarrett on key decisions for African leaders

There are also special features on plans for an African free trade area, agriculture, the 4 As, entrepreneurship, lifelong learning and eLearning for wildlife training. And a Sudanese high school student, Mahid Abdulkarim, explains how he managed to keep studying during a revolution.

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The report will be published next week ahead of the eLearning Africa conference, Africa's largest event on technology assisted learning and training, which opens in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire on 23 October. A full programme for the event and its accompanying exhibition, which showcases education and training solutions providers from around the world, is available at www.elearning-africa.com.