



STATE OF THE SDGs
by SOUTHERN VOICE





Presentation

Southern Voice's 'State of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)' is a conceptually innovative, policy relevant empirical research initiative. It is a bottom-up exposé of a holistic and complex global agenda.

The initiative unpacks some of the critical relationships underpinning the 2030 Agenda. The aim is to identify those who are 'left behind' within diverse contextual realities, to reveal the complex relationship of trade-offs and synergies among specific SDGs, and to explore the global governance factors affecting implementation within a country.

Our conceptual and empirical analysis focuses on specific goals: quality

education (SDG 4), access to decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), and access to affordable and clean energy (SDG 7). The common thread of revitalising the global partnership (SDG 17) runs through the whole project. These goals, and the relationships and consequences linked to them, were explored in the context of six countries: Bolivia, Ghana, India, Nigeria, Peru, and Sri Lanka.

With this kind of research, Southern Voice hopes to move away from the traditional SDGs discourse. This publication outlines the key highlights from the six country studies and provides an exclusive preview for global thinkers.

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The influence of global systemic issues on SDG implementation

Global systemic issues are aspects of development that are outside the scope of individual governments. And yet, they can shape their ability to implement the SDGs at the national level. They affect each country's ability to ensure that no one is left behind. Issues including financial flows, international agreements, migration, terms of trade or technology transfers have cross-border effects.

The effects of these global forces vary from one location to another.

Countries and sectors that are more integrated into global value chains may be affected first by advances like automation. **Global systemic issues can also disturb seemingly unconnected policy areas.** Arms proliferation is one example, where it is affecting Nigeria's chances of achieving peace. It also has an influence on children's likelihood of attending school and receiving quality education.

A first step to tackle these cross-border forces is to **build a strong global partnership for sustainable development.** Such a partnership would support the achievement of targets on poverty reduction and sustainable economic growth. It is also vital for addressing global threats, such as pandemics, climate change and even financial crises.



Violent conflict affects the provision of quality education in Nigeria



The provision of quality education is highly dependant on external factors. Conflict and violence severely undermine the state's ability to provide access to quality education.



2.8
million children

in three conflict-affected states are in need of education-in-emergencies support



More than
2,295
teachers

have been killed and 19,000 displaced since 2009 due to armed conflict



More than
57%
of schools

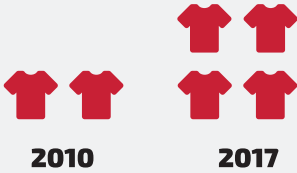
in northeastern Nigeria are closed



The adoption of automation and new technologies shapes the garment industry in Sri Lanka



The fourth industrial revolution, with its promise of advanced technology, is upending traditional notions of work in Sri Lanka. The adoption of technology at the global level impacts the labour market at the national level.



The apparel sector doubled its exports



As the apparel sector grows, labour and wages decline



The provision of clean energy in Ghana is a global issue



Access to clean energy is vital if Ghana is to reduce CO₂ emissions and improve the quality of life for its citizens. The provision of clean energy at the national level also has global implications. It directly affects the world's ability to fight climate change. Global partnerships are key to achieve this.



Limited access to clean energy



caused

11,500

deaths in Ghana due to air pollution from cooking fuels



could lead to an increase of

11.3 to 13.3 million

metric tons of CO₂ emitted from 2010 to 2030. This means Ghana could be contributing to global temperature rises

Trade-offs, where synergies are expected

Synergies are situations where policies or actions in one area support the achievement of interrelated goals. A **trade-off** is when policies or actions in one area negatively affect the possibility of achieving other goals and targets. **Progress in one policy area does not always lead to improvement in another.**

The constraints preventing people from accessing opportunities and achieving equal levels of wellbeing are different in each setting.

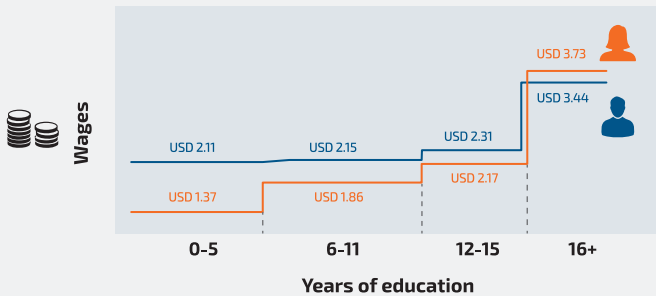
An elusive link between education and productive employment

Worldwide, education systems should focus on catalysing forces for change and progress for all. This is only possible with better, rather than more, education. Schools should be sensitive to the context-specific needs of students. The quality of education matters.



Widening gaps in educational performance at a young age can have a significant impact on employment decades later

Wages according to years of education



For young, urban, non-indigenous males in Bolivia, the first 15 years of education make practically no difference to their hourly wages. Women generally earn less than men.



Children with lower academic achievement in Peru



14%

more likely to work precariously

Gender discrimination affects women's access to employment

Across the world, women's access to decent employment is still strongly determined by gender expectations and social norms. Although in many countries being a woman no longer has a negative effect on access to education, it still directly affects their ability to access employment in decent and equal conditions.



Care-related responsibilities and social expectations are excessively placed upon women in Peru and India



Women in Peru, who have a child under 5 years old are

40%

more likely to be precariously employed in comparison to men with no children



Peruvian men who have a partner or child in the household are

7%

less likely to work precariously.



46%

because they got married.



22%

because they had children



10%

because of domestic work



9%

because family asked to leave



Indian women stopped working.



The absence of gender-sensitive infrastructure and non-parental childcare services in India limits women's access to the labour market



39%

of women feel unsafe in all areas outside of the home



Highlights

The empirical evidence from the country case studies reveals a set of shared experiences, as well as results distinctive to each country and setting. What this means for the success of the 2030 Agenda is that:

- 1.** The SDGs demand a common but differentiated approach in each country. While the general principles are meaningful to all countries, their practical implementation differs across locations.
- 2.** A stronger global partnership is essential. It should support a national implementation of the SDGs and ensure the provision of global public goods. To achieve this, we must understand the multiple ways in which global systemic issues affect countries' efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda.
- 3.** Effective public policies must consider how synergies and trade-offs among goals play out in a particular setting. Synergies cannot be taken for granted and do not occur automatically. To guarantee they are achieved, policies must consider the interlinkages between SDGs.
- 4.** To prioritise those who are being left behind is complex. The root causes of exclusion are different across goals and sectors. The interconnected nature of the Agenda means that a person left out in one area of sustainable development can easily be excluded in others as well.

The full set of research outputs of our 'State of the SDGs' initiative also includes three regional surveys and a global report.

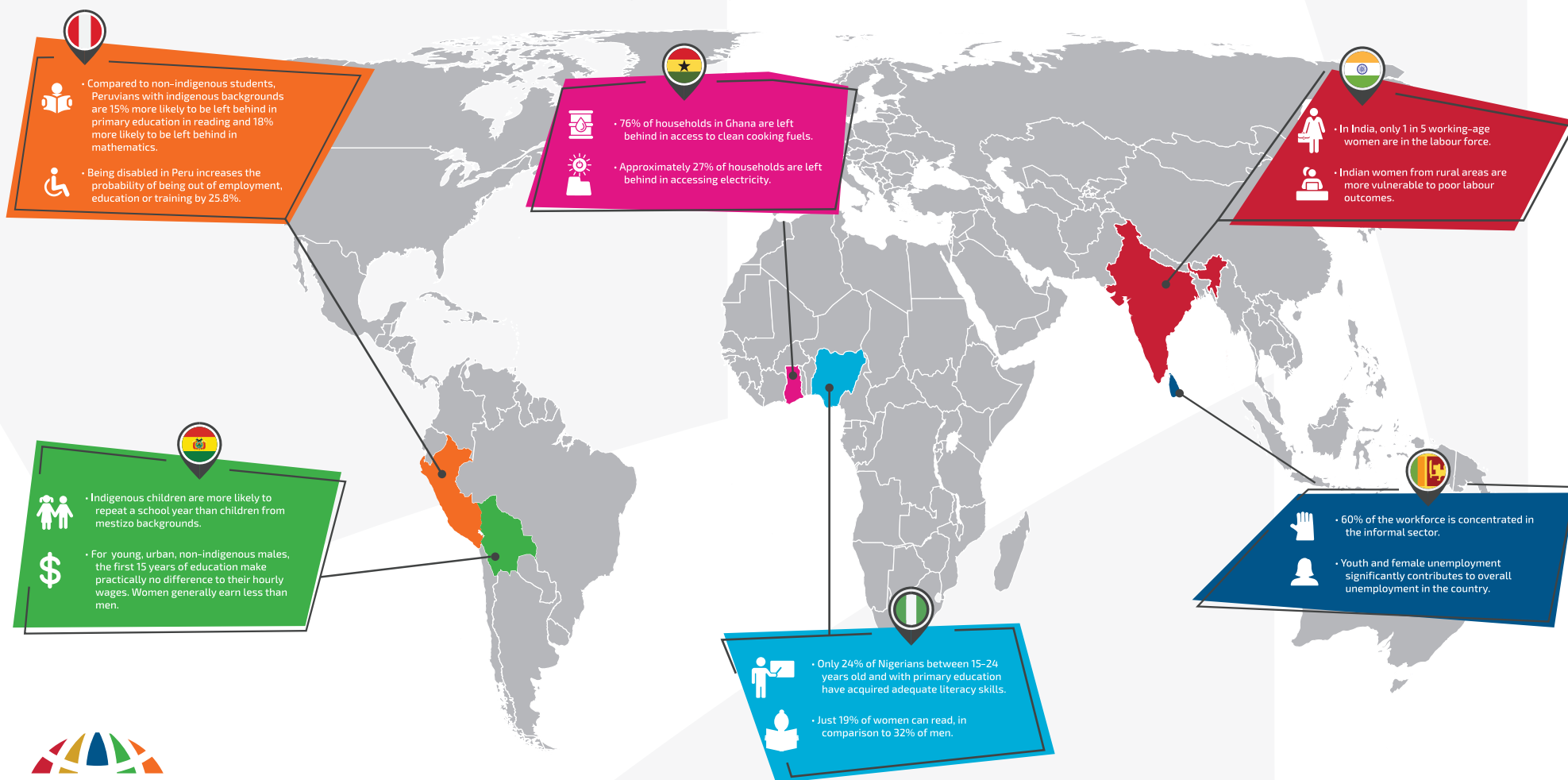
For more information, visit www.stateofsdgs.org.

How does it look like to be left behind around the world?

The 2030 Agenda recognizes that **group-based inequalities can shape people's experiences of poverty and exclusion**. This means that we need to address non-income-based disparities beyond monetary poverty.

To achieve this, identifying those who are left behind is critical. **The excluded and vulnerable will have different characteristics depending on the context they are in**. So, to avoid leaving anyone behind, the international community needs to move from only tackling issues such as literacy rates or mortality. It also needs to consider broader dimensions of exclusion and inequality.

The existence of **synergies and trade-offs across SDGs** means that **identifying those at risk is more complex than expected**. It is no longer possible to talk solely about those left behind from getting education. We now need to assess whether or not education is allowing people to attain decent employment or if education is really contributing to closing gender gaps. Making such dynamics visible will reveal other groups who might currently be excluded.





SOUTHERN VOICE

Southern Voice is an open platform for think tanks that contributes to the global dialogue on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It does this by disseminating evidence-based policy analysis by researchers from the Global South.

This brief summarises the findings from case studies conducted for our 'State of the SDGs' initiative. The case studies were conducted by six Southern Voice members: Fundación ARU (Bolivia), Centre for Poverty Analysis – CEPA (Sri Lanka), Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa – CSEA (Nigeria), Grupo de Análisis para el Desarrollo - GRADE (Peru), Institute of Statistical, Social, and Economic Research – ISSER (Ghana) and Public Affairs Centre – PAC (India).

The concept, design and preparation of the text was conducted by the Southern Voice Secretariat.



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