

# MAKING THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE

## How African RENs are Contributing to SDGs

Harold Bowa (UbuntuNet Alliance), Effah Amponsah (WACREN), Yasmeen Alkouz (ASREN) and Silvia Fiore (GÉANT)

**W**ith only seven years left to attain the 17 SDGs, the interests of policy makers and funding organisations have heightened. National (NRENs) and regional (RRENs) Research and Education Networks have been contributing their best efforts to the achievement of the SDGs by helping tackle urgent social issues and thereby creating value in the fields of education, climate change, gender equality, economic growth, and innovation.

### 4 QUALITY EDUCATION



For more than a decade, NRENs have been providing affordable and high-speed internet connectivity and advanced services to over 5 millions of students and researchers in 1900+ institutions in 35 African countries. From offering connection to eduroam in hostels, libraries, airports, and hospitals to providing access to video conferencing tools and platforms for Learning Management Systems, NRENs have become a lifeline for learners.

### 5 GENDER EQUALITY



RENs in Africa are increasingly providing opportunities to level the playing field. WOMEN-in-WACREN is an example of RRENs systematically ensuring that women are included and supported in their pursuit of ambition in STEM. At an NREN level, Eko-Konnnect in Nigeria has run the ICT4Girls Hackathon for many years now.

### 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



RENs actively provide online training and workshops to raise the capacities of their staff. More training means equipping more people with the right tech-related skills to have better employment opportunities. For example, the Ugandan NREN, RENU, runs a hands-on Industrial Training Program for undergraduate students to immerse them into REN operations and activities.

### 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



By leveraging on economies of scale made possible through the EU co-funded AfricaConnect3 and its global links, RENs provide advanced digital infrastructure and reliable and secure connectivity to their local beneficiaries in the African research and education environment. In addition, at the national level, NRENs foster the spirit of innovation through various cutting-edge initiatives in higher education institutions and research centres.

### 13 CLIMATE ACTION



Through providing increased internet connection to research institutes, RENs supports research in the field of sustainability and climate change. Also, NRENs have been adopting greener ICT policies to reduce the carbon footprint of their networks by decreasing energy consumption through the use of solar panels and promoting sustainable practices.

### 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



To ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of African e-infrastructures and continue to contribute to SDGs, RENs enable cross-continental, cross-sector collaborations. RRENs also collaborated to review the Africa Union's Continental Educational Strategy for Africa, which calls for 54 NRENs by 2027 to accelerate the continent's digital transformation.



### MULTIPLIER EFFECT

NRENs and RRENs represent an excellent action for contributing to the SDGs by enabling global research collaborations and promoting innovation within the African research and education environment.

They connect and provide internet services to hospitals working on combating health diseases (SDG3) and research institutes addressing food insecurity (SDG2), water management (SDG6) and soil mapping (SDG15).

[Click here to learn more](#)