MAINSTREAMING MIL IN AFRICA'S EDUCATION SYSTEMS

A 2018 GLOBAL MIL WEEK PRESENTATION, KAUNAS, LITHUANIA

BY: WALLACE GICHUNGE

CMIL-KENYA, NAIROBI

INTRODUCTION

- Enhancing MIL and intercultural competencies among education policy makers, teachers, students, youth organizations, and indeed all citizens has been identified as a key action of UNESCO's strategy to promote knowledge societies and foster the development of free, independent and pluralistic media and universal access to information and knowledge for good governance.

INTRODUCTION

- While MIL has been a subject of considerable discourse in other continents (particularly Europe and North America) for some time, it is a relatively new area of engagement in Africa.

- In parts of the world where it has been adopted, MIL has provided a strong platform for citizens to contribute to social, political, and economic development, give expression to cultural and religious pluralism, learn about the issues in other environments that are different from their own, and promote democratic process.

- Africa cannot afford to isolate itself from these lofty goals as it gears towards the aspirations of Agenda 2063 as espoused by the African Union

BACKGROUND

- Despite low levels of adaptation in the continent, MIL has the potential to become a powerful and positive force in Africa's transition to peace, democracy, and development. It has the ability to reach across the continent's many cultures and help bridge its economic, social, technological and political gap.

- The development in ICT gives young people in Africa opportunities and avenues to express their views and disseminate information and materials about issues that affect them, and also to inspire active civic participation and engagement.

BACKGROUND

- In view of this background, Africa needs to facilitate and motivate its citizens access to this huge platform and new cultural and political communication tool through both the formal and informal education processes to promote greater awareness and understanding of the various issues in the continent and the globe; exposing issues and facts that will excite young people and help them make informed decisions and contribute to the development of the continent towards Agenda 2063 aspirations.

- The Continental Education Strategy for Africa (2016-2025) offers a great opportunity for advocacy on MIL among policy makers in the continent.

- More importantly, it lays a great foundation for integration of MIL into the education systems in Africa through which the majority of present and future African citizens can acquire the requisite 21st century skills associated with MIL.

CESA 2016-2025

- The Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA2016-2025) has been developed in an effort to re-align the continent's education and training systems in a bid to create a new African citizen capable of being an effective change agent for the continent's sustainable development as envisioned by AU Commission's Agenda 2063.

- The strategy, inter alia, envisions to "re-orient Africa's education and training systems to meet the knowledge, competence, skills, innovation and creativity required to nurture African core values and promote sustainable development at the national, sub-regional and continental levels"

CESA 66-25 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Adaptation of MIL into Africa's education systems and curricula will confer to the continent a generation of citizens with various competences and skills that directly support the following CESA's stated guiding principles:

- Creation of knowledge societies called for by Agenda 2063 that are driven by skilled human capital;

- Achievement of holistic, inclusive and equitable education with good conditions for life-long learning for sustainable development; and

- Quality and relevant education, training and research which is core for scientific and technological innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship.

CASE STUDY: CURRICULUM REFORMS IN KENYA

- The Kenya Basic Education Curriculum Framework (2017) seeks to develop various competencies so that all Kenyans can thrive in the 21st century knowledge societies. The seven (7) envisaged competences in the curriculum have a bearing in the MIL framework, viz:

- **Communication and Collaboration** - focuses on how people use messages to generate meanings within and across various contexts, cultures, channels, and media. The discipline promotes the effective and ethical practice of human communication.

- **Self-efficacy** - A learner with a strong sense of self-efficacy will be courageous and bold enough to set and pursue personal educational, family, community, entrepreneurial, professional, and career goals in all forms of employment that will lead to personal accomplishment.

MIL COMPETENCES

- **Critical Thinking and Problem Solving** - It helps learners to have an open mind and be ready to listen and appreciate information and opinions that may sometimes conflict with their earlier held beliefs and positions.

- **Creativity and Imagination** - In educational terms, creativity and imagination refers to the ability of learners and their teachers to form images and ideas in their minds, and turn them into real, visible creations. Learners who are imaginative and creative are able to make life interesting for themselves and others around them.

MIL COMPETENCES

- **Citizenship** – A sense of citizenship to equip young people to deal with situations of conflict and controversy knowledgeably and tolerantly. Also Global citizenship as a way of living which recognizes that our world is an increasingly complex web of connections and interdependencies.

- **Digital Literacy** – Defined as having the knowledge, skills and behaviours which are necessary to effectively and safely use a wide range of digital content and devices. Digital literacy skills also include being able to use computer communication networks, being able to engage in online communication and social networks, being aware of and adhering to ethical behaviour protocols, being aware of societal issues raised through digital media, and being able to search, evaluate and use information channeled through digital platforms (KICD, 2017).

- Learning to learn (Lifelong learning)

MILESTONES

1) December, 2017:

CESA Implementation Framework:

Media and information literacy is described, together with other 21st century life-skills in section 4 of this objective, thus: *(10.4) Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development, including gender equality and human rights, (iii) Peace, Life Skills, Media and Information literacy education are mainstreamed in: (a) national education policies, (b) curricula, (c) teacher education and (d) student assessment.*

MILESTONES

2) April, 2018,

The Nairobi Declaration by Ministers for Education in Africa ratified a recommendation for adoption of media and information literacy in the following statement: "Leveraging digital opportunities by strengthening the development of digital skills and competencies at all levels through partnerships in support of ICT in education, including adoption of Media and Information Literacy (MIL) and Internet safety within curricula, and integrating ICTs into education policies, incorporating Open Educational Resources and assistive technology, and creating mobile and online education and training platforms providing equitable access to all learners regardless of their circumstances"

CONCLUSION

- Advocacy for elaborate Media and Information Literacy initiatives in Africa needs to be stepped up to bring the various citizen groups – including children and youth – up to speed with the rapid development of digital technologies through media and information literacy awareness creation and capacity building.

THE END