



ECOWAS 2030

Human Capital Development Report



2021
ANNUAL REPORT

Note on this report

This document presents the progress made since the ECOWAS 2030 Integrated Regional Human Capital Development Strategy was defined in 2021. This document is based on the analysis of the same set of indicators for all fifteen Member States, but also on qualitative inputs from stakeholder consultations from the ECOWAS Commission or Member States.

This document is the annual report updating the perspective from the initial 2020 report. This is part of a yearly effort that ECOWAS has committed to in order to ensure that we continuously monitor HCD evolution in the region and shed a light on the key challenges. The report provides an overview of the successes of the past years, but also highlights the challenges that are still to be addressed by the ECOWAS Commission and Member States. It provides useful elements to foster respective HCD strategies in Member States and define how the ECOWAS Commission can support them further.

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FOREWORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

Human Capital Development (HCD) is of utmost importance to ensure both an inclusion of every citizen in the society and their well-being, but also to drive economic growth. However, West African countries have been facing challenges in the past decade such as a lack of common vision, funding constraints, and limited execution capabilities and mechanisms preventing them for unleashing their full social and economic potential. HCD has been particularly at risk due to the COVID-19 pandemic, hindering the achievements that were already made before the sanitary crisis.

ECOWAS Member States have to address common challenges and hence ECOWAS Commission reckoned that a common action to tackle those challenges would act as an accelerator of HCD in the region through the implementation of common initiatives and enablers. As a result, an ambition and strategy has been defined for 2030 with the main objective of becoming the best regional economic community in Sub-Saharan Africa in terms of human capital development. The ambition aims to improve HCD metrics by 5% annually across all dimensions. To reach these ambitious objectives, the ECOWAS Member States have approved an integrated HCD strategy translated into four intervention levers (Advocacy, policies and communication, Monitoring and Evaluation, Capability

building and knowledge sharing, resource mobilization) and 10 concrete programs to support this effort.

Overall, the assessment of the current HCD performance using the ECOWAS Integrated HCD Index shows a slight improvement at the regional level, but behind its target. This small evolution is driven by an improvement in Health and nutrition and Entrepreneurship, financial and digital inclusion and a stagnation in Education, skills, and labor participation. These results show that ECOWAS is going in the right direction, but still has to keep its efforts.

The ECOWAS Commission is committed to keep supporting its Member States in their efforts to make our societies more economically prosperous and socially inclusive. All Member States can learn from the initiatives undertaken since the beginning of the HCD strategy to build on successes and overcome challenges preventing Member States from achieving their goals.

Through this common effort and strong collaboration of the ECOWAS Commission and Member States, we will strengthen the foundations for sustainable growth in our region. We can and must do this for the shared happiness and well-being of all.



Jean-Claude Kassi BROU

President of ECOWAS Commission

FOREWORD FROM THE VICE-PRESIDENT

Human capital development is a crucial ingredient for our region's progress on economic and social issues. That is why I was personally eager to set it as a priority for ECOWAS.

The year 2019 marked a turning point in our HCD journey when the ECOWAS Commission committed to adopting a regional HCD vision and strategy to achieve our growth targets. Our journey has since continued with the launch of concrete programs and initiatives, and has been strengthened by the involvement of hundreds of international experts and local stakeholders from the public and private sectors of Member States.

So far, we have seen mixed, but encouraging progress in all our actions despite a multifaceted global crisis context, with the results broken down as follows:

- ECOWAS has shown improvement across Health and Nutrition indicators with the exception of government health expenditure. However, we have not reached all of our expected targets;
- Average government expenditure on Education, Skills, and Labor participation has significantly increased and is currently above target. However, ECOWAS experienced declining performance overall here, although with the notable exception of schooling and literacy rates;

- Finally, access to internet and funding has helped improve our performance in Entrepreneurship, Financial Inclusion and Digital Economy, though ECOWAS is still lagging on the ease to start a business.

Some challenges remain in the successful implementation of HCD initiatives. In collaboration with Member States, the ECOWAS Commission is committed to finding effective ways of overcoming these challenges through the reinforcement of the regional strategy at the level of the fifteen (15) Member States.

Looking forward, we must continue this journey. These are important steps towards a better society, a more prosperous economy, and improved prospects for everyone. We must monitor initiatives already launched and adjust them where necessary. We must also continue to launch new initiatives to fill the gaps that we identify along the way.

We proved together that our partnership can enable us to achieve our vision. Now, we look forward to improving our region's social and economic prosperity for the long term.



Madam Finda E.M. KOROMA

Vice-President of ECOWAS Commission

QUOTES FROM MEMBER STATES



“We are together for the Human Capital Development for the growth of our respective countries, but also the whole of Africa”

– HCD representative in Benin



“Burkina Faso has already launched several HCD initiatives and is committed to continue on this path”

– HCD representative in Burkina Faso



“We have actively collaborated with ECOWAS in improving the HCD and are committed to deepening this collaboration in the future”

– HCD representative in Cabo Verde



“Côte d'Ivoire has made HCD a national priority and is eager to work hand in hand with ECOWAS towards a common vision”

– HCD representative in Côte d'Ivoire



“We had wonderful interactions with the ECOWAS focal points and appreciated the time spent together working on HCD”

– HCD representative in The Gambia



“A core team has been constituted in Ghana to focus on the improvement of HCD in the country”

– HCD representative in Ghana



“We are willing to build on this diverse network of expertise from the focal points for the harmonization of national HCD strategies”

– HCD representative in Guinea



“The Guinea-Bissau focal points are delighted to be part of this community of experts working for the development of our region”

– HCD representative in Guinea-Bissau



“Liberia’s focal points are committed to working with experts in the region to promote a mutually beneficial exchange of experience”

– HCD representative in Liberia



“Mali is engaging in HCD through a multi-sectoral approach and a strategic plan”

– HCD representative in Mali



“We are grateful that we have now built a community of focal points working together for HCD across ECOWAS”

– HCD representative in Niger



“We now have a clear vision for the future of HCD and have started to work towards the achievement of this vision”

– HCD representative in Nigeria



“HCD is already at the heart of our national strategy, thanks to the ‘Plan for an Emerging Senegal’ and we are working to take it forward”

– HCD representative in Senegal



“Sierra Leone was pleased to host the HCD seminar in April 2022 and looks forward to continuing this collaboration within ECOWAS”

– HCD representative in Sierra Leone



“The government already adopted the ‘2025 road map’ acting on three priority areas: the strengthening of inclusion, social harmony, and the consolidation of peace that will foster HCD”

– HCD representative in Togo



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Human capital development is at the foundation of building sustainable social and economic growth. Nurturing a healthy, well-educated population that has the means to fully participate in the economy is essential to not only to ensure economic growth in the present, but also to set the prerequisites for future growth. This objective is a core priority for governments across the globe and is part of the UN SGDs for 2030 as well as the efforts by the World Bank with the HCI program (started in 2018). This is furthermore important in the current context as multiple shocks have affected lives and livelihoods of the populations in ECOWAS. COVID-19 has put pressure on health and education systems as well as populations' livelihoods, political unrest and insecurity, migrations due to climate change and food insecurity are emphasizing the need for every state to invest in Human Capital Development.

The ECOWAS Commission has put the Human Capital Development at the center of its priorities and built a common vision for 2030 as part of its 2030 HCD integrated strategy. This ECOWAS 2030 HCD integrated strategy does not replace national strategies, but provides a common vision, ambition, and commitment by Member States to make HCD a priority. Furthermore, it gives support to define national HCD visions, mobilize resources and foster collaboration, and allow sharing of respective experience. ECOWAS has set the ambitious objective to become Sub-Saharan Africa's top-performing regional economic community in HCD by 2030. In 2021, this ambition was refined towards an aspiration for all Member States: achieve an annual HCD improvement of +5% on average for a set of HCD indicators common to all ECOWAS Member States¹. To support ECOWAS Member States to achieve this aspiration, the 2030 HCD integrated strategy approved by the 15 Member States establishes four levers:

1. Advocacy, Policy, and Communication
2. Monitoring and Evaluation
3. Capability Building and Knowledge Sharing
4. Resource Mobilization

The first priorities of the ECOWAS Commission since the validation of the ECOWAS 2030 Integrated Regional Human Capital Development Strategy has been (i) to advocate for the importance of HCD, make it a priority in all Member States in the long run, (ii) to push for monitoring and evaluation of the progress to be able to measure the evolution of indicators and adapt priorities to the results, and (iii) to build capabilities in order to enable the implementation of the HCD strategies and allow information sharing. In this sense, the ECOWAS Commission has already undertaken several initiatives between 2021 and 2022:

- **Mobilization of frontline stakeholders** with a HCD squad created in the ECOWAS Commission and a community of national focal points built.
- **Monitoring and evaluation** of HCD by maintaining the indices, the report and improving data collection on the ground
- **Update of the ECOWAS Integrated HCD Index** to measure the evolution of indicators around the 3 dimensions of HCD: Health and nutrition, Education, skills, and labor participation, and Entrepreneurship, financial inclusion and digital economy.
- **Update of the ECOWAS HCD Gender Index** to have a granular view on gender parity performance in the Member States on several indicators, but also on its evolution in the past years.
- **Creation of the HCD Monitoring and Evaluation Dashboard** to track progress made at national level and enforce accountability.
- **Organization of trainings and fostering of exchanges** by facilitating common workshops and exchange forums for both members of HCD squads and focal points to provide them the ability to become capability building relays in their respective countries.

This new impetus at the level of the ECOWAS Commission and the Member States has slightly started to borne fruit, but the results of the ECOWAS Integrated Human Capital Development Index are mixed. Overall, the progression on the three dimensions is not consistent. Health and

¹ For each of the indicators of the ECOWAS Integrated HCD Index a specific annual improvement rate target has been set

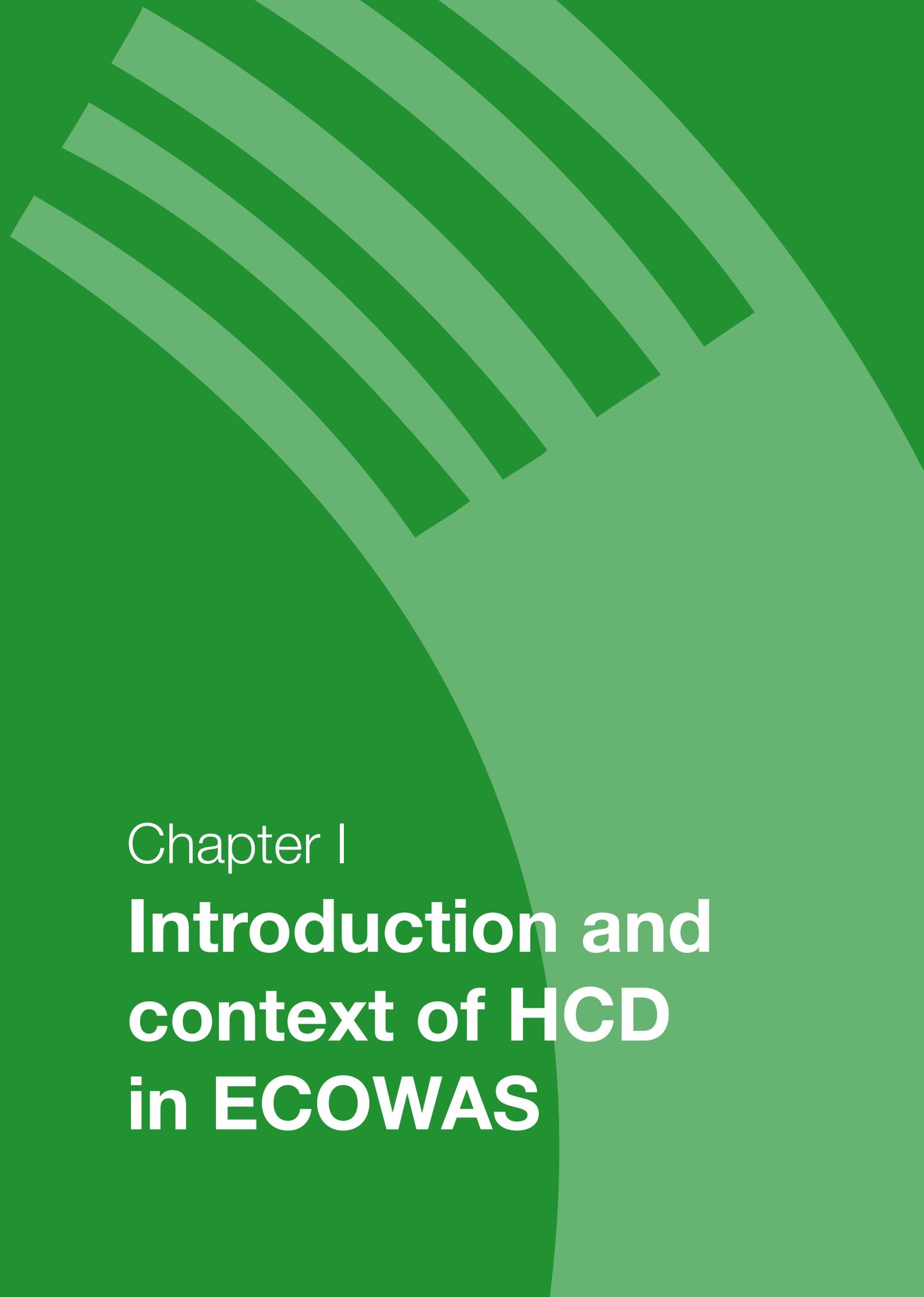
nutrition and Entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, and digital economy have evolved more rapidly than Education, skills, and participation of labor force where the results are still evolving slowly consistent with the longer term investment needed in this dimension. For Health and Nutrition, slight progress is to be noted across most Member States, but targets are still not met due to a lack of funding for most countries (-0.12pts on government health expenditure vs. +0.5 pts increase target). Education, skills, and labor participation dimension shows stagnation explained by the rise in expenditure (+0.5pts above target), but the decline in most of other indicators (e.g., children out of school, harmonized test scores). This indicates that there is a true will to improve Education, skills, and labor participation, but the spending allocation needs to be optimized and results need to be monitored in a longer time frame. The biggest progress of the index is visible in the Entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, and digital economy dimension where the increase of indicators is higher than the targets, mainly driven by internet and financial access which is supported by the banking and telecom private sector dynamism. This shows that ECOWAS could be even more ambitious in that dimension and can partner with the private sector to drive change. Thus, the ECOWAS Integrated Human Capital Development Index shows that progress on most dimensions has to be accelerated, especially, as the effect of COVID-19 on the indicators is not visible yet, experts expect a hit on metrics in the future.

To accelerate progress on HCD, the ECOWAS Commission and the Member States still have to address one main challenge: limited execution capabilities and mechanisms that hinder the implementation of the strategies developed and prevent countries from unlocking funds. However, the past efforts have already participated in building a strong awareness and fostered a will for each Member State to work on the development of their national HCD strategies or refine them. Over the 15 Member States, multiple states have invested significant time and resources in their HCD initiatives. As examples, Benin and Burkina Faso introduced free healthcare for pregnant women and children under 5, while in Nigeria, The National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy (NDEPS) was implemented to fast-track the development of the digital economy and help increase access to internet to all Nigerians.

The groundwork has been laid through advocacy, including with the publication of this report, the updating of the indexes, the efforts for better monitoring and evaluation, especially through the introduction of the dashboard and the mobilization of staff through further engaging with focal points. Member States are fully aware of the importance of HCD and have the will to work towards HCD improvement with the elaboration or refinement of strategies. However, these strategies are to be translated into the implementation of concrete programs. The ECOWAS Commission could therefore launch the next wave of initiatives to further support Member States in implementing the strategies on the ground. The immediate next steps for 2023 could prioritize tackling limited execution challenge through:

- Capability building and best-practice sharing (e.g., peer learning sessions to share implementation best practices, centers of excellence for unserved thematic areas, development of tools and resources to support Member States on resource mobilization).
- The use of the dashboard to urge countries to act and to monitor the progress of initiatives (e.g., to reduce implementation times and increase accountability).
- Public-Private Partnership (PPP) to take advantage of the dynamism of the private sector in the continent.

Moving forward with these priorities could unlock ECOWAS full potential in terms of Human Capital Development in the next decade.

The background is a solid green color. In the top-left corner, there is a decorative graphic consisting of several curved, parallel lines that sweep from the top-left towards the center-right. These lines are in various shades of green, from a very light, almost white-green to a dark forest green. The lines are of varying lengths and thicknesses, creating a sense of movement and depth.

Chapter I

**Introduction and
context of HCD
in ECOWAS**

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT OF HCD IN ECOWAS

Importance of HCD in ECOWAS

Human Capital Development (HCD) is globally acknowledged as a driver of long-lasting socio-economic development. Governments recognize that a healthy, educated, and skilled workforce, fully capable of taking part in a modern economy, is a crucial factor for competitiveness in the 21st century. As a result, it has become a growing priority around the world, with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030 listing the development of education and skills, health, and economic inclusion as key elements of their program.

As a social investment, HCD pays significant economic dividends. As much as 30% of per-capita differences in GDP across countries are explained by differences in human capital¹. According to the World Bank, in countries with the lowest levels of human capital investment, workforce productivity would more than double if people received high-quality education and healthcare². Schooling and job training programs can match skills and capabilities to immediate employment needs, making a direct positive contribution to a country's workforce productivity and output. Quality healthcare ensures people learn more efficiently, work more productively, and for longer periods of time. Moreover, living in an inclusive economy with access to digital communications, entrepreneurial funding, or even gender parity, ensures people can contribute their full potential to society. This may mean starting a business, gaining a promotion, or even training others to succeed on their own terms.

HCD has the potential to power the ECOWAS region's growth over the next decade and beyond. Member States could enroll 5 million more children in school annually, offer quality healthcare to 13 million more women and children, and provide access to financial services and credit to 123 million more people than today. These numbers

would make ECOWAS Sub-Saharan Africa's top-performing economic community in HCD.

Investing public and private funds into physical assets like infrastructure and equipment could be beneficial only with corresponding developments in human capital. This is even more urgent as the nature of work evolves, as new technologies become the norm, and new dynamics come into play. West African countries can stay ahead and capture the opportunities that these new dynamics bring by driving HCD to take their place in the global economy.

This global and regional context is also relevant to the resilience that ECOWAS Member States could build for their health and education systems. When the COVID-19 hit, many schools shut down and hospitals overflowed. The region was not prepared to face the pandemic. These shuttered schools could cause long-term damage to educational results for the next 30 years with a permanent legacy of higher dropout rates, especially for girls. Moreover, shifting public policy priorities due to political unrest also continue to disrupt the HCD effort. Building resilience by tackling fragilities (e.g., political unrest, climate change) and achieving gender parity are essential to preserve and foster HCD over the longer term.

That long-term view is a key part of success for HCD. Human capital is built gradually over time through patient investment and forward thinking. The payback often trickles in over years and decades, yet it forms a critical foundation to build upon for success. HCD is the cornerstone of the ECOWAS Vision 2050 for a regional society that is inclusive, empowered, and built as a borderless, peaceful, and cohesive region. Prioritizing HCD could enable ECOWAS to pave the region's path to prosperity and shape a lasting legacy for future generations.

1 Hsieh, C. T., & Klenow, P. J. (2010). Development accounting. *American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics*

2 World Bank Group. (2018). *World development report 2019: The changing nature of work.*

Harnessing the potential of the Demographic Dividend

Even if the fertility rate has decreased by 3% between 2017 and 2019 (with a particularly strong drop of 4.6% in Sierra Leone between 2017 and 2019), ECOWAS has had a strong demographic growth over the last years. Overall, fertility rate is of 4.7 in the ECOWAS region (data between 2017 and 2019) with highest rates in Niger (6.8) and lowest in Cabo Verde (2.2).¹

The demographic evolution has a direct impact on HCD. Demographic growth puts pressure on HCD, especially on health and nutrition, with an increasing need for infrastructures and health professionals as well as Education, skills, and labor participation rates with more and more young people to train. However, it can also be an opportunity for higher economic growth if well harnessed by investing in HCD.

To mitigate the challenges and take advantage of demographic evolution, several countries have put in place levers such as:

- Empower women and girls, raise awareness about early marriage and pregnancy as well as invest in family planning in order to further slow demographic growth.
- Support employment through investment in education for both girls and boys but also leveraging labor-intensive sectors (e.g., in Asia, labor-intensive export-led growth created employment opportunities and supported the transition into sectors with higher total factor productivity).
- Encourage entrepreneurship to create new value pools to leverage and create jobs of tomorrow especially for the youth (e.g., taking advantage of the digital economy).

In a nutshell, ECOWAS could invest in HCD in order to take advantage of demographic growth instead of letting demographic growth be a burden for social and economic development.

¹ Figures from the ECOWAS Integrative HCD Index detailed in Chapter III

ECOWAS HCD strategy aspirations and objectives

The initial ECOWAS 2030 Integrated Regional HCD Strategy report set out a clear agenda to improve human capital results in the region. It focused on (i) creating a baseline of current HCD actions and plans in all Member States to build a common vision and ambition; (ii) defining levers to support the strategies of Member States; and (iii) developing an action plan to reach this ambition.

The ECOWAS 2030 Integrated Regional HCD Strategy defines the ECOWAS Integrative HCD Index and a related set of focused indicators to evaluate HCD performance across three thematic areas: Health and Nutrition; Education, Skills, and Labor Participation; and Entrepreneurship, Financial Inclusion, and the Digital Economy. These areas were complemented by a cross-cutting enabler around gender inclusion and break down into 19+1 metrics (N.B. These indicators were reviewed in 2022 and are detailed in chapter III). The metrics track country and region progress and can also be used to set aspiration targets.

A baseline performance assessment was conducted across these indicators. The result provided a common fact base to discuss HCD in the region and reveal the significant opportunities for improvements.

Overall, there are significant differences in performance across Member States. Although every country is unique, countries can be categorized into archetypes to understand the broad types of situations, challenges, and strategic imperatives facing different groups. The ECOWAS country archetypes are based on both HCD performance and economic competitiveness – the latter as an overall proxy for a country's capacity for economic opportunity and sustained growth.

1. The “pack leaders” (Cabo Verde, Ghana, Senegal, and Côte d’Ivoire) have relatively stable and competitive economies, and they outperform their peers across the HCD indicators.¹ These countries have remained competitive by successfully translating economic gains into stronger and broad-based HCD.
2. The “rising stars” (Togo, Benin and Burkina Faso) perform well across the HCD indicators but only have moderately competitive economies.
3. The “HCD-constrained states” (The Gambia, Niger, Nigeria and Mali) have moderately competitive economies but lag behind their peers on HCD performance.
4. The “late starters” (Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Guinea Bissau) have had economic challenges (including conflict and recent Ebola outbreaks) and lag behind their peers on HCD performance.

The HCD archetypes show that ECOWAS countries face different categories of challenges and opportunities. Indeed, every country is in a different starting position with unique circumstances. This reinforces the importance and primacy of country HCD strategies that consider this context. Following the baseline performance assessment, country and stakeholder consultations took place. Alignment was then reached towards an aspiration

of 5% annual improvement for the region by 2030 that was deemed both ambitious and achievable.

Beyond analyzing performance data of all Member States, ECOWAS conducted hundreds of stakeholder interviews to gather qualitative insights from Member States. The diagnostic focused on identifying common regional challenges.

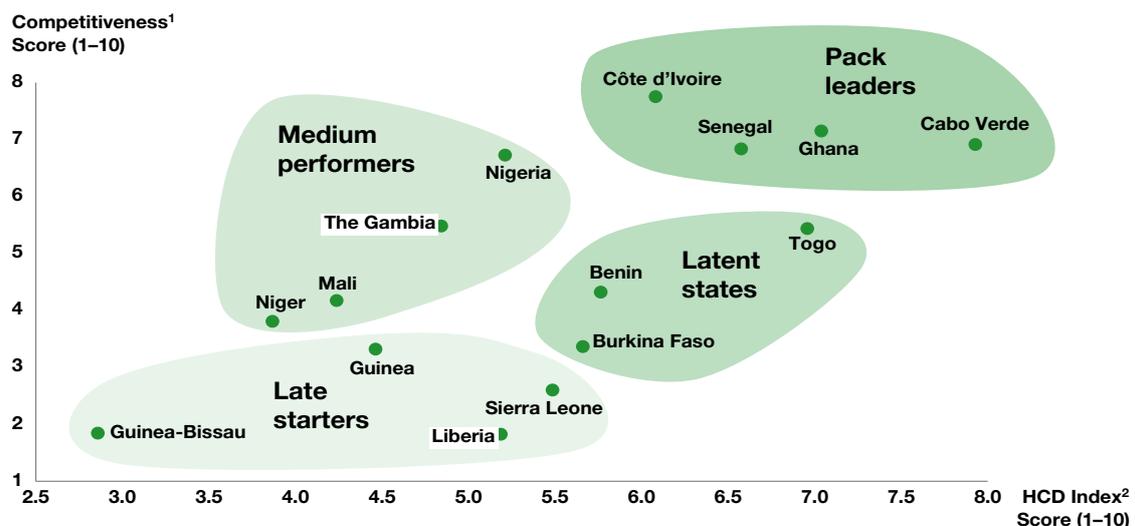
Seven such challenges emerged: 1) Missing regional vision and prioritization; 2) Funding constraints; 3) Limited execution capabilities and mechanisms; 4) Inconsistent priorities; 5) Limited coordination mechanisms; 6) Limited local capabilities to support implementation; and 7) Resistance to change.

To address these challenges, the ECOWAS Commission committed to support its Member States through four intervention levers:

1. **Advocacy, Policy, and Communication:** Aligning stakeholders on a common vision and spreading best practices within the region.
2. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Tracking progress and providing standardized data to inform decisions.
3. **Capability Building and Knowledge Sharing:** Facilitating cooperation and transfer of talent across Member States and providing targeted technical support to members.

1 Source: World Bank

Exhibit 1: ECOWAS country archetypes based on economic competitiveness and HCD performance



1 Competitiveness index based on: Ease of Doing Business index (2020), GDP per Capita, infrastructure, labor productivity, access to finance, and market size from Global competitiveness Index. Missing data has been calculated through regression modelling when possible;

2 HCD Index includes 15 indicators across the 3 thematic areas for the advancement of the HCD agenda in the region

4. **Resource Mobilization:** Supporting fundraising efforts and coordinating partner support for a shared HCD vision.

Across the four areas, 10 concrete programs have been mapped out to support HCD and country efforts. These programs cover 24 specific initiatives, each drafted in detail for successful execution.

Purpose of the report

This report aims to present an assessment of progress made since the 2021 publication of the ECOWAS 2030 Integrated Regional Strategy for Human Capital Development strategy report.

The analysis within this document is based on four inputs:

1. The evolution of the ECOWAS Integrative HCD Index and its common set of indicators for all 15 Member States;
2. The performance of the HCD Gender index, as an indicator of gender parity performance in Member States;
3. The qualitative assessment of strategies and initiatives undertaken by both the ECOWAS Commission and the Member States, based on inputs from stakeholder consultations;
4. Inputs from external experts on select thematic areas essential to HCD (e.g., COVID-19, youth employment, digital dividends).

This report provides an overview of achievements that Member States can build on and draws lessons to consider in the future as they move forward. It forms part of a process of competence sharing between Member States.

This report also highlights challenges that the ECOWAS Commission and Member States could still address. Overcoming these challenges could pave the way towards fully implementing each country's HCD strategy with common solutions.

Key themes affecting HCD, such as demographic growth and fragilities, are also addressed here with a singular perspective. This defines the broader challenges and best practices in the region that inform the ECOWAS Commission and its Member States when elaborating or implementing their HCD strategies.

Overall, this report outlines important lessons learnt globally and locally and their implications on local and regional HCD strategies. It aims to define how ECOWAS can support its 15 Member States further in the coming months to implement these strategies.

Exhibit 2: Indicative annual improvement required across 19+1 indicators to achieve different levels of HCD aspiration for the ECOWAS region by 2030

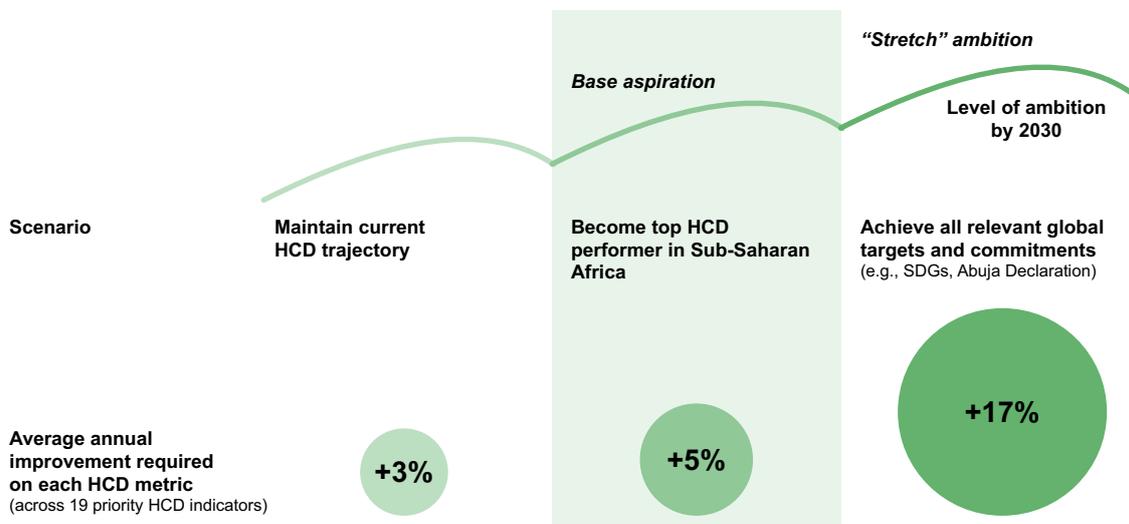
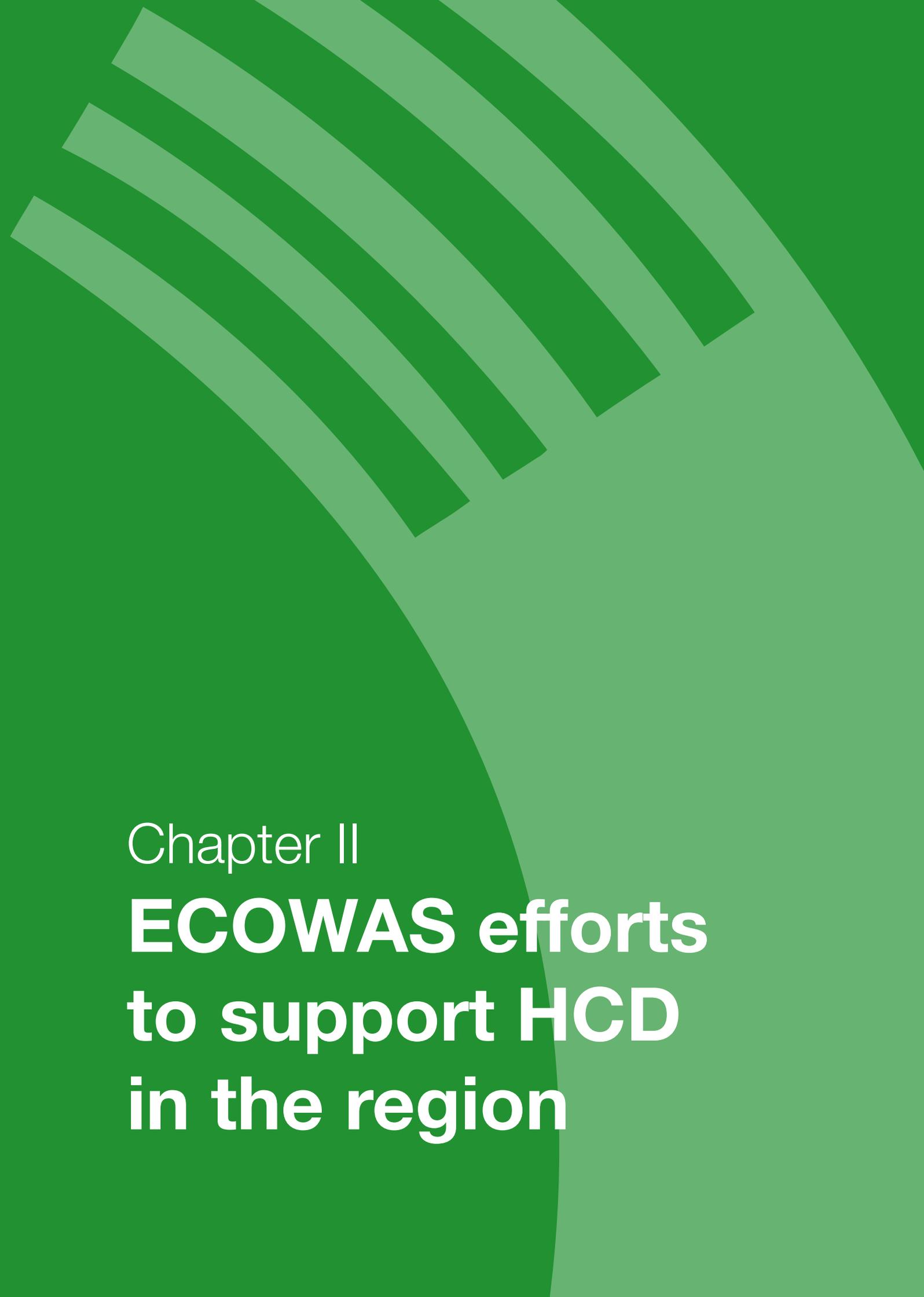


Exhibit 3: Summary of ECOWAS Integrated Regional Strategy for Human Capital Development structured around 4 strategic levers and 10 concrete programs

Lever	Program	Initiatives		
Advocacy, policies and communication	1	Create an integrated regional HCD vision 1A – Create an integrated view on the performance of HCD in the region		
	2	Communicate on HCD with key stakeholders	2A – Publish periodic reports on HCD	
			2B – Elevate HCD agenda at all Heads of States summits	
			2C – Communicate on ECOWAS's efforts and areas of focus (HCD thematic areas)	
	3	Promote the adoption of HCD best practices	3A – Set regional standards across HCD thematic areas	
			3B – Champion legislative changes	
			3C – Run targeted advocacy campaigns	
	Monitoring and evaluation	4	Track and evaluate progress on HCD	3D – Facilitate dialogue between governments, donors and private sector players to encourage collaboration towards advancing HCD
				4A – Develop HCD data center and dashboard for West Africa
Capability building and knowledge sharing	5	Facilitate peer learning & knowledge sharing	4B – Organize regular meetings with implementing units to track progress of ECOWAS HCD initiatives	
			5A – Create a website for knowledge sharing	
			5B – Organise peer learning sessions to share implementation best practices	
	6	Build regional centers of excellence for skills development, research and innovation and entrepreneurship	5C – Create rotational programs among countries' implementation units	
			6A – Set-up bootcamps for decision makers	
			6B – Organize year-long training programs for education and health professionals	
	7	Facilitate skills reinforcement and talent transfer	6C – Orchestrate the launch of additional centers to bridge capability gaps	
			7A – Finalise harmonization of curriculums & certificates for education systems	
7B – Grant targeted scholarships				
8	Provide on the ground technical HCD support	7C – Offer exchange opportunities for short-term rotations in any of the ECOWAS member states for civil servants		
		7D – Rebalance labour skills across countries		
Resource mobilization	9	Lead coordination between donors for resource mobilization and deployment	8A – Build an HCD capability building & assistance taskforce	
			8B – Provide strategic support to decision makers	
	10	Support fundraising actions to deploy more resources	9A – Create transparency on countries resource needs to drive partnerships	
			9B – Create a coalition and resource mobilization strategy for the region	
			10A – Develop tools & resources to assist member states on mobilization of funding and technical support	

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Chapter II

**ECOWAS efforts
to support HCD
in the region**

CHAPTER II

ECOWAS EFFORTS TO SUPPORT HCD IN THE REGION

Highlights from the journey so far

The ECOWAS Commission began its efforts in July 2019 with a drive to build a regional vision and corresponding strategy for advancing HCD. In 2020 and 2021, it solicited hundreds of experts and stakeholders in public and private sectors as well as civil society to help support the definition of the overall ambition and strategy to advocate for HCD and push for regional action.

The baseline for HCD in the region was built in two waves. The first wave took place in 2020 across the nine Member States of Ghana, Ivory Coast, Niger, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Guinea, Cabo Verde, Togo, and Burkina Faso. The second wave was rolled out in 2021 across the six Member States of The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Senegal, and Benin.

ECOWAS used the conclusions to map out its main objectives for the region, published in the ECOWAS 2030 Integrated Regional Human Capital Development Strategy. That report gathered over 600 people across 14 Member States to conduct over 250 interviews and engage with over 200 organizations including governments, international organizations, donors, civic institutions, and private sector groups. 23 syndication events were organized to align on the first draft of the ECOWAS HCD strategy. The syndication event that took place during the Heads of States Summit set the foundation for the common HCD vision that ECOWAS finally adopted.

This common vision enabled a reflection at the national level where people acknowledged the importance of HCD. ECOWAS supported the creation of indices to track progress for a clearer view of HCD performance. This push for better monitoring and evaluation also led to the will to create a dashboard to track the progress of strategy implementation. Meanwhile, several training sessions were held to build capabilities among the ECOWAS Commission and focal points.

ECOWAS Member States have already launched several initiatives based on existing or developing strategies. Senegal, for example, started improving access to health services, particularly in rural areas. This local effort drove large reductions in maternal and neonatal mortality rates and also improved the country's performance in health metrics. Overall, however, indicators are showing only slight improvements and are below the targets.

In the meantime, Member States had to cope with COVID-19 and political unrest. These factors derailed the implementation of several new HCD strategies and initiatives. Today, momentum has returned but remains fragile.

New angles on the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on HCD in the region

There has been significant progress on the HCD front over the past few years. However, health and education systems across Africa have been tested through the pandemic as millions of lives were affected, both across the world and specifically in the ECOWAS region.

The long-term effects may be more profound than initially thought. School closures have affected learning cycles to this day, with more pupils dropping out. After the Ebola pandemic, 13% of students in Sierra Leone and 25% of students in Liberia left school permanently, with girls and low-income students the most affected. 194 countries were forced to close their schools and switch to digital, online teaching. This could prove detrimental for education over the next few decades.

On the health side, other public health programs like bed-net distribution and immunizations have been put on hold to cope with COVID-19. Unemployment, both in the formal and informal sectors, has increased dramatically as a result of the ensuing economic shock, something the region is particularly vulnerable to. Therefore, ECOWAS may continue to drive HCD as a priority while it supports Member States through this pandemic and beyond.

Gender inclusion, particularly opportunities for girls, forms a key enabler across all dimensions of HCD. It has immense impact on HCD when it comes under threat, like it did during the Ebola epidemic in West Africa between 2014 and 2016. Lockdowns and disruptions suffered then, like the ones seen during COVID-19, have greater consequences for women and girls. Fewer women can use antenatal care or give birth at health facilities, which impacts mortality rates for both mothers and infants. Since girls have lower school re-enrolment rates due to higher rates of pregnancy, they tend to be more affected by school closures. It is, therefore, important to preserve access to health and education for women and girls of West Africa to maintain the momentum of HCD in the region.



There are other more intrinsic vulnerabilities that deserve attention over the coming years. There are less than two doctors for every 10,000 people in West Africa, while there are 16 in Latin America and 30 in OECD countries.¹ Even before COVID-19, almost a third of West African children would not complete primary school, compared to 2% of children in OECD countries.²

These factors prompted an urgent reevaluation of HCD as a top priority for years to come, specifically on the health, education, and social protection fronts. As countries are adjusting to COVID-19, and over the next few years, ECOWAS Member States could work to secure and defend the gains achieved in HCD over the last decade. They would benefit from keeping education and economic inclusion, as well as health, as a top priority. This is important to keep commitments to the current and next generation of young adults who will soon enter the job market. Multiple countries have put in place initiatives to mitigate the effect of COVID-19.

For example, in Health and Nutrition:

- Citizens expect a higher-quality health care system in the context of the health and social challenges.
- Developing epidemic prevention systems to accelerate the epidemiological transition, raising the awareness of hygiene among the population (e.g., with education not only in schools but also through media campaigns), and furthering access to clean and safe water are crucial.
- Long-term challenges such as building health care infrastructures, accelerating the care of the population, and developing digital technologies for the health care system (e-learning and telemedicine) were also exacerbated.

In Education, Member States can take advantage of guiding principles in response to COVID-19 by capitalizing on past lessons and structural trends:

- Promote equity, including for the most vulnerable learners, by eliminating inequalities and supporting more personalized teaching models.
- Further strengthen the central role of teachers in the system by providing the best conditions for their success and increased competence, as well as reskilling in new technologies.
- Review the pedagogical methods and curriculum by recognizing the diversity of the local systems and by integrating the local context, and address the growing inequalities in the quality of education between public and private schools, wealthy and vulnerable populations, and urban and rural areas.
- Use technological tools to improve the overall performance of the system, in particular by using data to detect difficulties and plan targeted actions.
- Reprioritize ongoing projects, taking into account budgetary restrictions due to the reallocation of financial resources in COVID-19 response measures (e.g., health measures to reopen schools).
- Give even more importance to the correlation between training and jobs in order to readapt to the most dynamic sectors after COVID-19; focus on job creation after a period of job losses.

1 Source: World Bank, latest available year

2 Source: *ibidem*

Key priority initiatives launched after 2020

Following the approval of the strategy by Member States, ECOWAS focused the first wave of implementation on setting up advocacy tools and raising awareness around the importance of HCD as well as fostering capability building in the countries through the focal points. This first wave of implementation is materialized through:

- 1. Human Capital Report 2021:** Through this document, the ECOWAS Commission and Member States can examine the successes and challenges to date. They can then adapt their priorities and take appropriate decisions to implement national strategies in the next months and years. The report is to be updated annually through a collaboration between the ECOWAS Commission and the focal points to monitor progress based on the index and qualitative inputs. Complementary to this report, a report specific to gender parity is also published in order to reinforce the importance of gender parity for HCD.
- 2. ECOWAS Integrated Human Capital Development Index:** With this index, tracking both current and historical data, Member States can measure their performance and identify areas for improvement. The index is built along three dimensions of Health and Nutrition; Education, Skills, and Labor Participation; and Entrepreneurship, Financial Inclusion and the Digital Economy. This index will be monitored through a dashboard at Member States and regional levels (Detailed in initiative 5).
- 3. ECOWAS HCD Gender index:** These metrics use several indicators to provide a granular view of parity performance in Member States. Since the cornerstone of a successful HCD strategy lies in the inclusion of women and girls, it is crucial to closely and continuously track the metrics in this index in addition to monitoring the ECOWAS Integrated Human Capital Development Index.
- 4. Human Capital Development Monitoring and Evaluation Dashboard:** This tool is designed to support the implementation of Member State strategies. It enables to update the ECOWAS Integrated HCD Index and the ECOWAS HCD Gender index. This dashboard tracks progress, lists any obstacles, and allows the attribution of tasks along initiatives to ensure timely and effective delivery by the relevant teams.
- 5. Training of HCD focal points:** These training sessions are designed to build capabilities of people acting as Member State focal points. They are also designed to enable members of the ECOWAS Commission HCD Squad and focal points to train other resources in their respective countries and to strengthen the teams working on initiative implementation. Some of these trainings were held in person and others were delivered as online webinars. They focused on three cross-cutting themes of strategic thinking, problem-solving, and effective communication. They approached five key topics: Health and nutrition, Gender Parity, Digital, Education and competencies, and Financial inclusion. All the sessions allowed participants to interact with each other and share their respective field experiences.

All Member States are encouraged to build on these initiatives and use them as enablers in their respective countries.

Exhibit 4: Five priority initiatives to support HCD

<p>1</p> <p>2021 Human Capital Report</p> <p>2021 edition of an annual regional HCD report that provides an overview of the region's performance and insights at a subnational level as a tool for advocacy at the heads of states level</p>	<p>2</p> <p>ECOWAS Integrated HCD Index</p> <p>Creation of an aggregated index measuring the progress of each ECOWAS member state towards its HCD goals (capturing the 18 sub-indicators)</p>	<p>3</p> <p>ECOWAS Gender Transformative HCD Index</p> <p>Creation of an aggregated index measuring the advancements in gender inclusion in HCD in each ECOWAS member state</p>	<p>4</p> <p>HCD monitoring and evaluation dashboard</p> <p>Regional dashboard allowing for full transparency on HCD performance across indicators in ECOWAS countries and providing updates on ongoing efforts</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Training of HCD focal points in HCD thematic areas</p> <p>Training program to strengthen the capabilities of HCD focal points on HCD thematic topics (e.g., Health and nutrition, Education, etc.), as well as cross-cutting skills (e.g., strategic thinking, problem solving)</p>
<p>Sustainability enablers</p>	<p>Continuous engagement of the ECOWAS HCD Squad</p>	<p>Syndications and anchoring implementation in the countries</p>	<p>Handover and support to the leadership transition</p>	

The digital dividend and HCD in ECOWAS

Digital creates value across all industries, due to the combined effects of value transfer to consumers, obsolescence of products and services, and reduction of barriers to competition. The UN estimates the contribution of the digital sector at 4.5% to 15% of GDP in 2019.

Digital dividend can also be captured from the impact on government, citizens, and companies. For instance, public services digitalization can generate up to +12% in global productivity with a potential of ~ \$1 billion per year¹ besides improving citizen's access to health, education, and welfare services through digital portals.

Digital transitions on a national scale are often carried out around three dimensions:

- **Digital demand:** In order to better capture the full potential of digitization, countries focus on understanding the level of interest of local markets to estimate the expected demand for digital and technology sectors including public services, social and economic sectors digitization
- **Offer and ecosystem:** Digitization requires combined efforts from IT companies, investors, and R&D actors
- **Enablers:** Adequate set of policies and regulation need to be implemented and infrastructures, talents, and capabilities need to be developed and regularly updated to keep pace with change.

However, countries often face challenges when implementing their digital strategies in the areas of:

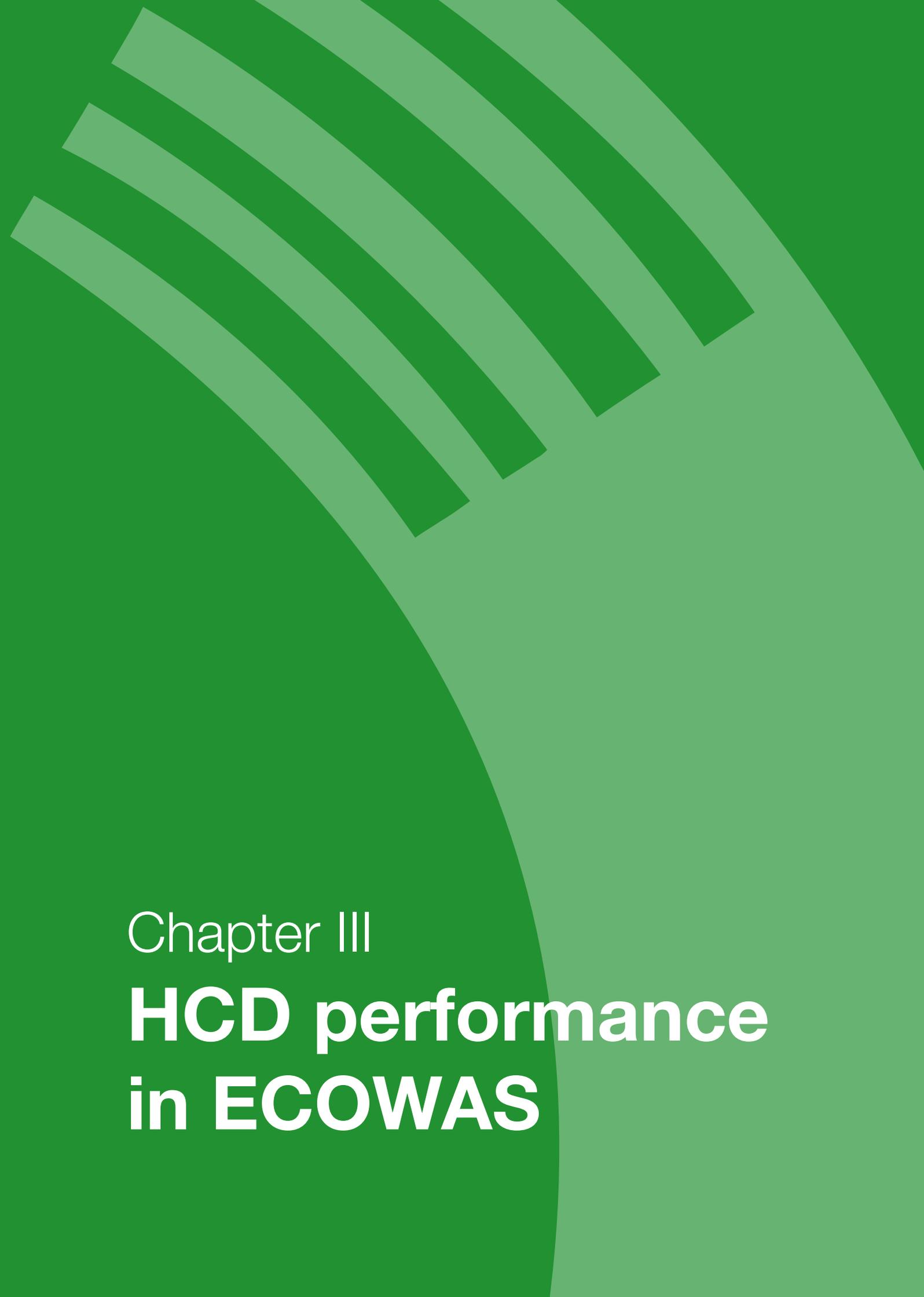
- Advocacy and change management to build global consciousness and trust
- Access and use of adequate infrastructure and devices
- Training talents and building capabilities
- Digital governance to create synergies
- Securing regular and sufficient funding

In ECOWAS, digital has been a major driver for progress on the HCD index. Member States have leveraged digital tools to improve access to financial health and public services for their populations. For example, Togo set up a mobile app to disburse monthly cash transfers to the most vulnerable during the pandemic crisis. Many other public and private sectors led initiatives have been launched across the region showing that there is still room for progress and countries can still fully capture the digital dividend in HCD dimensions.

¹ Source: A Statistics; OECD Statistics; McKinsey



Trainings of country focal points and members of the ECOWAS Commission in Sierra Leone in April 2022

The background is a solid green color. In the top-left corner, there is a decorative graphic consisting of several curved, parallel lines that sweep from the top-left towards the center-right. These lines are in various shades of green, from a very light, almost white-green to a dark forest green. The lines are of varying lengths and thicknesses, creating a sense of movement and depth.

Chapter III

**HCD performance
in ECOWAS**

HCD PERFORMANCE IN ECOWAS

ECOWAS Integrative HCD index

Methodology update

The Index was designed to be the North Star of all initiatives. It was crafted according to the ECOWAS ambition across three main dimensions. It sets out clear targets defined in 2021 and will be updated each year to monitor the progress of the Member States. Monitoring HCD index progress is key in maintaining the focus on and momentum of HCD. The index allows Member States to understand their HCD performance granularly as well as celebrate successes and point out negative trends to address.

It is critical for the success of the strategy that the annual HCD index is updated regularly with the support of focal points.

The objective of this section is to detail the methodology of the HCD index update as well as the findings of the first round on the HCD index review of 2021.

Updating the index requires four steps:

1. On each of the three dimensions of HCD, a list of indicators is defined to capture the evolution on inputs (e.g., government expenditure) as well as outputs (e.g., teacher-student ratio) and outcomes (e.g., youth literacy).
2. Each value for each country is normalized on a 0-1 scale to allow for comparison and a normalized read. The 0-1 maximum values are set to ensure that the values are comparable over time.
3. The indicators are then aggregated by theme, and adjustments are made to account for any correlation between indicators with linked outcomes evolution, such as child mortality and maternal mortality; then, the index is integrated at a national level. The method used to compute the average by theme, is the sum of squares of indicators – an arithmetic mean – to reflect the distance to ideal target performance. The square of the variation (or distance

to target) is computed for each indicator, with the variation defined as the spread between each individual value and the mean, in order to reduce potential statistical effect of any outliers.

4. A fully integrated HCD Index is then compiled for the region across each of the three dimensions and is finally integrated overall as an average of all Member States.

The aggregated index includes data from baseline (2017 or 2016 depending on data availability) and latest values mostly from 2020. It allows to assess the current HCD context as well as understand its evolution over the past 2-3 years.

The performance observed includes only partially:¹

- The effect from the COVID-19 pandemic or recent political unrest, disrupted health systems, school closure, or threatened livelihood.
- The impact of the ECOWAS 2030 HCD integrated strategy

The exhibit below shows the list of selected indicators. Since 2021, 4 out of the 19 initial indicators related to doing business have been discontinued due to data reliability issues (No. of procedures to start a business, Business start-up costs, Adult with account ownership, Fixed internet tariffs). These indicators have been replaced for the update of the ECOWAS Integrative HCD index by 3 new indicators: Penetration of financial outlets, Internet penetration, Registered new businesses

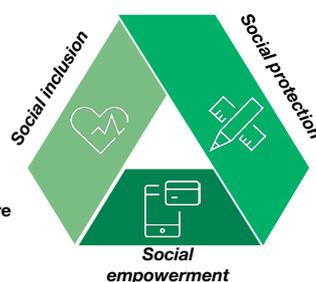
The current index is calculated with the data available but does not fully cover all countries for all indicators. In the future, Member states have expressed the need for support for improve data collection on the ground to represent with more granularity Human Capital Development across the continent.

¹ Data from 2018 to 2020

Exhibit 5: Three dimensions of HCD and reviewed priority indicators

Health and Nutrition

1	Fertility rate
2	Maternal mortality rate
3	Under-five mortality rate
4	Under-five stunting rate
5	Life expectancy at birth
6	Government health expenditure
7	Child marriage



Education, skills and labor participation

8	Government expenditure on education as % of GDP
9	Pupil-to-trained teacher ratio in primary education
10	Children out of school
11	Mean years of schooling
12	Harmonized test scores
13	Youth unemployment
14	Literacy rates for population 15-24 years old
15	Number of country citations in international publications

Entrepreneurship, financial inclusion and digital economy

16	Penetration of financial outlets
17	Internet penetration

Overall HCD index results

Current performance

Overall, ECOWAS HCD index in 2020 shows room for improvement for the region. This is consistent with the analysis made on the 2017 data as the strategy and its effects are not yet seen on the indicators. Overall Health and Education dimensions are below ambition while Entrepreneurship is above ambition:

- Health and Nutrition is the dimension where Member States do best (with the highest score of 0.70 for this dimension for Cabo Verde) even though there is still major progress to be achieved. Although government expenditure is below the ambition, the outcomes are driving up the index average (e.g., maternal mortality rate, under-5 stunting rate). These indicators showcase the investment made by countries in previous programs on health and more specifically on female and maternal health.
- On education front, the index shows that governments are investing in the sector and pushing for more professors and bringing more children to school. Results on literacy and test scores are still below ambition given the time needed for these indicators to be affected. The values taken into account in this index do not reflect fully the impact of COVID-19, which has put a tremendous pressure on schools and education systems. We do expect this area to continue to be highly affected in the next few years.

- Although Entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, and digital economy are showing the lowest value in the index, it is above ambition for 2020. In fact, the financial inclusion in the region as well as the internet penetration are driving the index up. This dimension celebrates the role of the private sector as a partner in improving HCD in the region; in fact, banks, financial institutions, and telco companies have been the main drivers, along with the government in deploying access to internet across the countries as well as facilitating and promoting access to the financial system. Be that as it may, the index is impacted by a low number of new registered businesses which does not translate fully the dynamism of the local private sector as the data in 2020 is impacted by lockdowns and economic challenges linked to the pandemic.

Evolution and trend

Looking at the evolution of the HCD index, an improvement is to be celebrated driven mainly by Entrepreneurship where the evolution is above expectation. On the Health dimension, the improvement is low whereas Education shows a stagnation of the indicators.

This improvement is mainly driven by a fast-paced evolution on the Entrepreneurship, Financial Inclusion, and Digital Inclusion (+50% in 3 years) translating the efforts across the region to improve financial inclusion as well as access to internet. On the Health and Nutrition front, the evolution stems

from the efforts made in the past 5-10 years on maternal health with impacts starting to show on the key outcome indicators. This improvement is despite the decrease of government expenditure which might impact outcomes in the longer term. Eventually on the Education, Skills, and Labor Participation dimension, the evolution is flat. This evolution is driven by an increased investment in the sector by the government as well as a push to put more children in school whereas outcomes have evolved negatively and will need a few years to show the impact of this increased investment.

At a more granular level and by dimension, the evolution differs:

- **In Health and Nutrition,** over ECOWAS improvements are driven by the improvement on key outcome indicators (decrease of fertility, under-5 mortality and under-5 stunting rates). These improvements are fragile as the government expenditure on health has decreased (-1.1%) despite population growth. As government investment is not stable, the trend on this dimension will have to be monitored closely especially given the potential impacts of the pandemic.

Deep-diving into health expenditure per capita, over half of the Member States are investing

below regional average (in % of GDP). Looking into historic data, the correlation is clear between government expenditure and outcomes in health. Assuming a good execution, strong government expenditure is the main driver in improving health outcomes. This reinforces the benefit to maintain or improve government expenditure in the sector all the while strengthening the performance monitoring.

Overall, the Health and Nutrition index shows that governments in the region would benefit from prioritizing the sector in their expenditure further as the correlation with outputs has been proven across most of the countries in the region.

- **In Education, Skills, and Labor Participation,** average government expenditure on education has significantly increased (+6.9%) and scored 0.05 pts above target. By contrast, education performance such as number of children out of school, harmonized test scores, or Youth Neet has declined. The only exceptions are schooling and literacy rate. Overall, ECOWAS displayed a flat performance in this segment.

The stagnation on the Education, Skills, and Labor participation despite a progress in

Exhibit 6: ECOWAS HCD performance evolution

	 Integrated HCD Index	 Health and nutrition	 Education, skills, and labor participation	 Entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, and digital economy
Baseline	0,22	0,38	0,24	0,09
Progress made	+0,02	+0,02	0,00	+0,05
Latest value ¹	0,24	0,35	0,24	0,14
Difference to target	-0,01	-0,03	-0,04	+0,03
2019-20 target ²	0,26	0,38	0,28	0,11
2030 target	0,45	0,61	0,44	0,29

¹ Year valid for all indicators except maternal mortality ratio and adult account ownership which had no publication since 2017

² Target year is equal to latest year except for countries for which no update has been conducted since baseline. In that case, baseline year is assumed to be 2019

Note: Following indicators and countries, baseline years can vary from 2016-18 while target and latest data from 2018-20

Source: ECOWAS integrated index, expert input, World Bank, WHO, ILOSTAT, Scimago, UNESCO

government expenditure can be linked to two factors:

- Building infrastructure, training teachers, or improving students' test score take time before their impact shows – results should be monitored over a longer time frame before seeing any results.
- Other concerns revolve around the link between expenditure and results. Historical data shows that the government expenditure has not systematically translated into improved outcomes. In fact, execution issues, lack of capabilities in country as well as issues with access that go beyond the scope of the sector (e.g., infrastructure) hinder the evolution of its outcomes. This confirms that education has ramifications beyond the direct scope of the sector and as much as the government spend is a positive foundation for growth, it could still need to be reinforced with stronger capabilities to execute and factors beyond the sector.

Education, Skills, and Labor Force is by far the dimension requiring the most consistent efforts and a strong focus on implementation to ensure progress. The index performance shows that time is required before seeing positive results but on the other hand deterioration can be very quick. Comparing rankings in terms of Education performance on baseline vs. latest values show a limited pace of progress (mostly gains of 1 position) but significant dropping rankings in the case of Benin or Nigeria (respectively -7 and -3 positions).

- **In Entrepreneurship, Financial Inclusion, and Digital Economy**, progress seen can be linked to the positive contribution from the private sector proven by the strong improvement in internet and financial access. While ECOWAS is lagging behind on the number of registered new businesses, it still achieved a strong positive overall performance in this segment.

This positive performance is often enabled by government measures on this dimension. Looking at Ghana with the steepest progress on the dimensions, the state introduced various measures, e.g., regulations on the cost and quality of Internet (e.g., Gambian national broadband policy), regulation on the access to finance with:

- The Gambia Youth Empowerment Project (YEP), started in 2017 supporting youth employment and entrepreneurship and developing microfinance schemes that meet the needs of young entrepreneurs in a form of loans or grants.
- The ROOTS Project targeting smallholder farmers and micro entrepreneurs to provide better access to financing.

These results show that ECOWAS could benefit from a stronger private sector contribution as well as from Public-Private Partnerships to tap into private sector dynamism while maintaining a strong support from the public sector to facilitate, steer, and accelerate private sector progress on the financial and internet access indicators.

On the new business density efforts, no progress was achieved across the region demonstrating a decline in the sector's dynamism, particularly with COVID-19, and the benefit of stimulating and facilitating entrepreneurship

Overall, the main challenges hindering HCD progress are the limited execution capabilities and mechanisms as well as the limited local capabilities to support implementation. However, Member States are also facing funding constraints, inconsistent priorities due to the lack of integrated HCD national strategies in some Member States and limited coordination mechanisms at a national and regional level. However, The ECOWAS 2030 HCD integrated strategy has already had a positive effect to celebrate on two challenges mentioned in the past by Member States, namely advocacy and lack of vision.

Exhibit 7: ECOWAS HCD latest performance



1 Year valid for all indicators except maternal mortality ratio and adult account ownership which had no publication since 2017

2 Target year is equal to latest year except for countries for which no update has been conducted since baseline. In that case, baseline year is assumed to be 2019

Note: Cabo Verde, Ghana, Senegal, Togo, and The Gambia are consistent stronger performers. They can potentially provide success stories to support the progress of other ECOWAS member states. Niger, Nigeria, Guinea-Bissau, and Mali have significant improvement potential compared to their regional peers

Country comparison

Data shows an overall progress of Member States on their HCD index with eight Member States reaching their targets.

Looking at all Member States' performance across indicators, there is no emerging recipe for success and no-one-size-fits-all approach.

Cabo Verde and Ghana are consistent stronger performers across dimensions. Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Senegal, and Togo are strengthening their performance but have very heterogenous behaviors and strengths across indicators and dimensions. Senegal and The Gambia are the two countries that show the highest acceleration and progress vs. baseline.

Monitoring each country's evolution as well as the evolution of its performance relative to the region over the upcoming two to three years is key, especially to monitor the impact of COVID-19. It could help ECOWAS clarify and identify what are the systematic initiatives or focus areas that could be prioritized to develop the Human Capital performance and develop the best-practice sharing among countries for a global and united progress leaving no country behind.

We see several key implications emerging from this first HCD performance review:

- Country competitiveness and HCD performance are two components of a virtuous cycle. Member States with strong competitiveness have been leveraging it as a fuel to develop their Human Capital strengths and performance. On the other way around, HCD is a main driver of economic growth.
- Progress of HCD could be accelerated to close the gap to the target and strengthening ECOWAS implementation muscle could be key to achieve the required acceleration, particularly since current data do not fully reflect the full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and overcoming the pandemic impact could require to double down on the execution of initiatives.

- Lagging Member States with fragile contexts and social constraints could benefit from a higher support from ECOWAS as a correlation can be seen between fragility, including the political unrest aspects and negative HCD performance.
- Monitoring and evaluating on a granular level, countries and regional performance across dimensions and indicators is a must to further clarify the underlying factors of HCD progress and help ECOWAS refine its support on a set of initiatives and guidelines that can be shared among Member States and even beyond the ECOWAS region.
- Among all the indicators measured, the strongest improved has been Internet access. This positive performance could be leveraged and extended to other dimensions through expanding its use in both Education and Health. The regions' rapid progress on this indicator shows a great enthusiasm from all Member States to Digital usage. The example of Niger can be noticed on leveraging digital usage across dimensions where the Ministry of Health launched a 2017-21 Health Development Plan addressing health services challenges and set up an eHealth strategy, in collaboration with the National Agency of Information Society to launch several tools and solutions including scaling up telemedicine, launching a coding academy, and encouraging health related startups.

Fragilities, e.g., politic unrest, climate change, and their impact on HCD in ECOWAS

There is a correlation between a country's HCD performance and its fragility. Countries under stress due to fragile security and political contexts experience the detrimental impacts of violence, armed conflicts, and forced displacement of human capital.

- ECOWAS top performers on the HCD integrated index are also the less fragile states of the region, e.g., Cabo Verde, The Gambia, Ghana and Senegal.
- Several countries show a medium performance on HCD despite their higher level of fragility, e.g., Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, and Togo.
- Some countries lag behind on their HCD performance but do not benefit from their low levels of fragility, e.g., Benin, Sierra Leone.

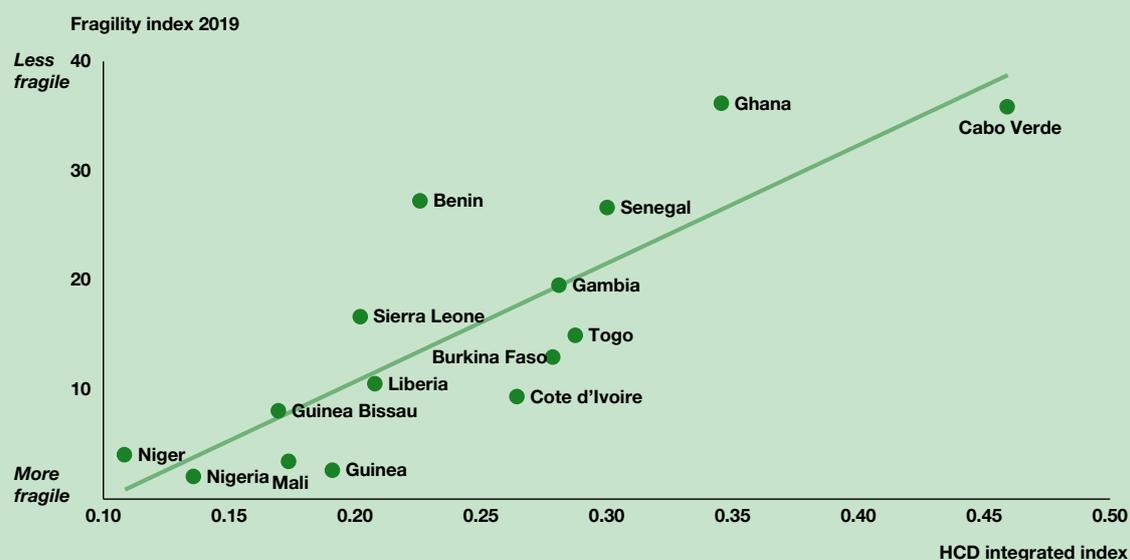
Fragile contexts impact HCD progress heavily especially on Education and Health dimensions and consequently on Labor participation. Negative impacts can be seen across the value chain:

- Inputs: Steady financing and funding mechanisms are prevented from reaching their targets, infrastructures are weakened, and properly trained and adequately paid workforce become scarce.
- Execution: Government resources are diverted from executing HCD strategies that require a heavy mobilization for long periods of time before reaching the results and pace of execution is slowed down.
- Outcomes: Negative impacts on Education and Health affect youth and young adults immediately resulting in lower workforce participation and consequences are long-term and could require years/generations to overcome.

Key focus areas to mitigate the effect of fragilities can be:

- Prioritizing health can be a catalyst for a broader virtuous cycle of growth and can affect both human capital development and political stability as it fosters individuals' well-being at all stages of life.
- Early investment in education lays strong foundations for the future of individuals and communities as high-quality education fosters the development of cognitive and socio-behavioral abilities making skills acquisition more resilient to uncertainty which helps to address poverty and inequality and improve intergenerational mobility.

Exhibit 8: Link between fragility and Human Capital development index



- Social protection plays an increasingly significant role in supporting human capital as protection interventions have the potential to reduce poverty in fragile and conflict-affected contexts if they are well implemented. Although community-based social protection can serve as an important form of support for human capital, government-led social protection schemes remain important for supporting the needs of the most vulnerable and for protecting populations against shocks and crises.

Beyond current impacts, in the future, multiple threats hinder the development of HC in the region

Security threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict affected areas undergo attacks targeting health, education and public services infrastructures • Countries that are prey to security threats focus all efforts on rebuilding social safety nets instead of investing in HCD • Terrorist groups invest states where there is limited service offer thus pushing populations to turn to their own facilities
Climate change and displacement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Droughts and changing rainfall patterns lead to crop failures and rising food prices, putting pressure on food and health security • States with a prevailing agricultural sector also suffer the impact of unemployment • Latent states in Ecowas often undergo the ripple effects of forced displacement and climate risks from neighboring countries
Transhuman and migrations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Armed conflicts are concentrated in fragile context and tend to expand to neighboring countries thus creating new migration routes and disrupting transhumancee routes weighing even further on fragile social contexts and limited infrastructures
Political unrest/governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of political trust and political unrest turn countries into preys to violence and security attacks on their public service infrastructures • Limited governance of states in rural regions or marginalized territories create a void that can be filled by terrorist groups • Lack of governance prevents states from being able to implement and monitor progress of HCD initiatives
Pandemics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pandemics have severe and immediate impact on HC including School closures and dropouts, Health system strains, Unemployment • Public budget is put under pressure to address pandemic crisis and HCD programmes get severely disrupted

Country comparison shows as well that several countries are also hindered by their fragile contexts such as Mali, Niger, and Nigeria that are both the bottom 3 performers of the region and also the Member States with a higher rate of fragility and political instability. Mali, Niger, and Nigeria rank, respectively, 200, 203, and 205 over 213 on Political stability index of 2020 published by the World Bank. These countries could benefit from further support in the upcoming years to maintain the efforts on HCD and avoid deteriorating their achievements to date.

ECOWAS HCD Gender index

Relevance of Gender-related analysis to support ECOWAS HCD Strategy

ECOWAS HCD Index and strategy caters to the whole population of Member States, the index and initiatives shared in this report are gender agnostic and focus on assessing Member States overall HCD performance.

While some indicators included are specific to the experience of women in the region, such as “Fertility rate”, there is a need to assess more comprehensively how the efforts on HCD impact outcomes differently based on gender. In fact, there is a strong potential in harnessing the full potential of our population by making sure all women and

girls fully participate in our economies. This is only enabled by ensuring that in all initiatives linked to HCD, specific efforts are made to include, support, and help women reach outcomes that are, at least, on par with their male counterparts.

In this regard, it is essential to assess the region's baseline and address all shortcomings with specific initiatives. This is translated into the HCD Gender Index. A tool to measure female performance in comparison to their male counterparts along Human Capital Development outcomes in the three thematic areas.

Methodology and approach

This index uses several indicators to provide a granular view of parity performance in Member States. Since the cornerstone of a successful HCD strategy lies in the inclusion of women and girls, it is crucial to closely and continuously track the metrics in this index.

We followed a five-step approach methodology:

- Identify outcome indicators that allow us to capture HCD outcomes where gender is a source of difference
- Identify for each selected indicator if a higher rate of female (vs. rate of male) was showing a favorable situation towards women or not
- Calculate for each selected indicator:
 - The female-to-male ratio when a higher rate of women is showing a positive outcome for women (e.g., girls' literacy rate divided by boys' literacy rate)
 - The male-to-female ratio when a higher rate of women is showing the opposite (e.g., share of girls out of school divided by share of boys out of school)
- For each Member State, calculate the arithmetic average of the ratios across the three thematic areas

- Calculate the weighted average of the ECOWAS region according to Member States share in the total region population. This is driven by the need to give the same weight to every woman or girl in the ECOWAS region

Our results are based on twelve indicators:

- Health and Nutrition: Maternal mortality rate, Under-5 mortality rate, Under-5 stunting rate, Life expectancy at birth
- Education, skills, and labor participation: Children out of school, Mean years of schooling, Harmonized test scores, Youth NEET, Youth literacy rate
- Entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, and digital economy: Internet penetration
- We added two other indicators to better assess Gender gaps at the later stages of life: Women in managerial positions and Saving at a financial institution

When reading the results of the HCD Gender Index, a number below 1 shows a situation less favorable for women. When the number is above 1, women have better outcomes than men on the indicator and/or dimension.

Overall results in ECOWAS

Overall, the ECOWAS region still has room for improvement on gender parity, and performance in the region shows more gender disparity on Entrepreneurship, financial inclusion and digital

economy, followed by Education, skills, and labor participation.

On Health and nutrition, women are in similar if not better health than men, ECOWAS reaches

Exhibit 9: Overview of ECOWAS HCD Gender performance among the three thematic areas



a score of 1.09. Females live longer than their male counterparts and face less mortality and stunting risk before the age of 5. This is coherent with global status quo and studies (mentioning a mix of genetic, social and environmental factors as well as nutrition habits explaining why young girls have better health than boys). However, maternal health remains a challenge. While ECOWAS countries have been pushing their efforts to implement health initiatives promoting better access and quality improvement of maternal health services (e.g., free health care programs for pregnant women in Burkina Faso), most countries are still lagging behind and women are heavily impacted.

Gender disparity becomes more important at later stages of life and the lack of opportunity offered to girls despite having the same capacities is impacting labor participation. When given the opportunity females perform as well as males as shown on their test score across the education curriculum. Accordingly, on Education, skills, and labor participation, ECOWAS reaches a score of 0.84.

In many Member States, girls are less likely to go to school than boys. A few exceptions can be

noted as some countries have made great efforts on the matter, such as Ghana and The Gambia especially with NGO and associations support. Among many others:

- In Ghana, UNICEF is training education professionals and teachers on gender issues such as inclusion, gender-based violence, menstrual hygiene management
- In The Gambia, gender parity in primary schools has been supported by the Education for All initiative implemented by UNESCO in 2004

Data also shows that women remain in school for a shorter period. Consequently, young women have a lower literacy rate and are less likely to be employed, in education or in training.

Finally, the gender gap is widening in Entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, and digital economy with a score of 0.53 for the ECOWAS region. Disparity is the most important when it comes to achieving leadership positions, with a female-to-male ratio 0.39 in the region.

Exhibit 10: ECOWAS Member States HCD Gender performance

Thematic Area	GM	GH	GW	CV	NG	SN	SL	BF	TG	GN	LR	NE	CI	BJ	ML	ECOWAS
Health and nutrition	1.10	1.09	1.08	1.10	1.07	1.16	1.05	1.10	1.07	1.10	1.07	1.06	1.09	1.10	1.06	1.09
Rank	4	8	9	3	10	1	15	6	12	2	11	14	7	5	13	
Education, skills, and labor participation	1.04	1.32	0.89	0.95	0.85	0.84	0.88	0.78	0.73	0.63	0.72	0.69	0.66	0.66	0.71	0.84
Rank	2	1	4	3	6	7	5	8	9	15	10	12	14	13	11	
Entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, and digital economy	0.85	0.56	No data	0.89	0.56	0.48	0.54	0.59	0.55	0.60	0.52	0.50	0.45	0.41	0.32	0.53
Rank	2	6	-	1	5	11	8	4	7	3	9	10	12	13	14	
HCD Integrated index ranking	5	2	13	1	14	3	10	6	4	11	9	15	7	8	12	

Note: Parity Performance is the female-to-male ratio of gendered indicators when they are showing positive outcomes (e.g., life expectancy) and the male-to-female ratio when gendered indicators are showing a negative outcome (e.g., youth NEET)

Source: ECOWAS HCD Gender index, expert input, World Bank, UNESCO, International Labour Organization, Afrobarometer

Country comparison

When looking at Member States performance, there is no observable link between higher gender parity and stronger overall HCD performance. Member states invest into gender parity in different ways and correlation with their performance on HCD was not clear. Indeed, some countries put specific efforts to commit towards women when investing in HCD resulting in a similar performance on the HCD index vs. the Gender index (e.g., Ghana), while others tend to leave them behind

Some countries are leading the region across dimensions in terms of gender parity, such as Ghana. This performance is driven by a higher rate of schooling for girls vs. boys as well as the best performance, in the region, regarding women in leadership positions (with a female-to-male ratio of 0.59). Cabo Verde and The Gambia are also good performers within the region ranking among the top 5 performers in every dimensions. Especially, Cabo Verde achieved parity on youth NEET and literacy rate (with 1.01 female-to-male ratio on both indicators)

On the other hand, some Member States managed to stand out on one dimension but are still facing important disparities on others. For instance, Senegal is ranked 6th in Education, skills, and labor participation and 11th in Entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, and digital economy out of the 15 ECOWAS Member States, meanwhile the country has the highest Health and nutrition score. This applies also to Cote d'Ivoire, the country performs in line with regional average in Health and nutrition but among the lowest performers on Education and Entrepreneurship. This situation worsens when combined with financial inequalities, consequently according to the Agence Française de Développement, 2% of girls from poor families in rural areas can hope to complete secondary education, against 49% of rich urban boy. Specific efforts and initiatives are thus required to change society mindset and create opportunities for girls.

Finally, some Member States are lagging behind, with some of the lowest scores in multiple dimensions, hindered by their fragile context.



Focus on Member States progress

Member States have fully recognized the importance of HCD and are committed to work towards HCD improvement. A proof of that are the strategies that have been already elaborated and the concrete initiatives that have been already launched. Sharing of experiences and best practices among Member States is crucial to take advantage of synergies in the region. This section showcases some of the initiatives that were implemented. Detailed findings for all Member States can be found in appendix.

Benin



Benin achieved progress in Health and Nutrition as well as in Entrepreneurship, financial inclusion and digital economy

- On the Health and Nutrition dimension, Benin registered a slight progress driven by the decrease of under 5 mortality and stunting rates as the government introduced free health care for pregnant women and under 5 children. The country is also launching project ARCH to provide citizens with health insurance coverage
- In the Entrepreneurship, financial inclusion and digital economy, the country achieved significant progress as both access to financial services and to internet increased. Efforts by the government in this area started in 2015 notably with the program Mobile Money for the Poor (MM4P)

Burkina Faso



Burkina Faso achieved progress in overall HCD performance vs. baseline thanks to a series of initiatives:

- The President implemented free health care programs for pregnant women and children under five years old. He also worked to enhance general access to health services, particularly in rural areas of the country. These initiatives led to significant reductions in maternal and neonatal mortality rates despite other Health and Nutrition performance indicators still remaining below target.
- The government also rolled out a positive discrimination campaign to promote access to primary education for girls. A national fund for literacy and nonformal education was launched to improve the literacy rate among young people.
- A technical secretariat took steps to significantly increase access to internet and financial services in the country as part of a national strategy to promote financial inclusion.

Cabo Verde



Cabo Verde is overall the lead performer of the region in both HCD integrated index and Gender index. The country benefits from high starting point in performance across all HCD dimensions especially in the health and education areas.

- Cabo Verde maintained its top position in the Health and Nutrition area as all citizens are entitled to a basic package of services covering antenatal care, emergency treatment, and treatment and prevention for HIV, tuberculosis and malaria
- Performance in the education field is related to historic efforts by the government to keep schooling free, universal, and compulsory for students aged from 7 to 13 and to improve the quality of integrated basic education and to strengthen training and availability of educational human resources
- The country also significantly increased internet access for its population

Côte d'Ivoire



Côte d'Ivoire has achieved good overall progress in HCD and ranks above ECOWAS average on HCD integrated index

- On the Health and Nutrition dimension, the government has significantly invested into access to health services, renovation and building of medical facilities leading to progress in all underlying indicators of this dimension. Improvement is also linked to the expansion of the universal health coverage (CMU) rollout to the broader population in October 2019
- Good performance in the Entrepreneurship, financial inclusion and digital economy dimension was driven by substantial increase in access to financial services as the government launched the Agency for the Promotion of Financial Inclusion, in 2018 to enhance the provision of financial services for low-income populations and SMEs

The Gambia



Gambia achieved good overall progress leveraging on several HCD thematic targeted initiatives to develop each one of the dimensions

- The country progressed on the health and nutrition where efforts helped decrease under 5 mortality rate
- Several education-oriented interventions, helped improve performance in this area notably through the decrease of the number of out-of-school children, for example:
- The Early Childhood Education policy improved access and quality of basic and secondary level learnings
- TVET program aims at enhancing technical and vocational education and supply of teaching and learning materials to young people
- Financial inclusion and digital economy performance increased above target mainly due the increase of internet usage

Ghana



Ghana ranks among top performers in both HCD integrated index and Gender index. The country has achieved good overall progress in HCD performance

- On the Health and Nutrition dimension, Ghana reached target as all maternity mortality, under 5 stunting and mortality rates were decreased
- In the education field, mean years of schooling has been raised and youth NEET was decreased
- Significant progress was made on the Entrepreneurship, financial inclusion and digital economy dimension driven by an increase of internet access level in the population

Guinea



Guinea reinforced its efforts to support HCD development objectives throughout an ambitious wide national strategy incorporated in the PNDES (Plan National de Développement Economique et Social) which aims at carrying out the structural transformation of the country based on four pillars.

- The third pillar of PNDES is dedicated to HCD development with 7 defined priorities among which : population and development, health and HIV/AIDS, education and training, domestic living conditions, employment and empowerment of vulnerable groups.
- The country has progressed similarly in the three dimensions and performance was driven by the three following indicators:
 - Decrease of under 5 mortality rate

- Slight progress in number of schooling years
- Enhancement of access to internet

Guinea-Bissau



Guinea-Bissau overall performance has increased in HCD integrated index driven by significant progress in two dimensions:

- On the Health and Nutrition dimension, Guinea-Bissau improved on all indicators and results can be linked to the reform of the National Health plan in 2017 with the aim of reaching the highest attainable standard of health
- In the Education, skills and labor participation, progress is driven by slight increase in mean years of schooling and public expenditures in the sector, as the government is focused on reinforcing faculty capabilities and funding technical training along with improving educational infrastructure

Liberia



Liberia has activated several initiatives based on the Pillar 1 of its Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development for 2018 to 2023 (PAPD) in order to improve opportunities in education, health, youth development, and social protection

- Main achievements are related to Health and Nutrition development as government health expenditures considerably increased during the past years
- Efforts to enhance access to health services, especially in rural areas, drove significant reduction in maternal and neonatal mortality rates, improving the country's performance on health

Mali



Mali overall HCD performance has increased since baseline, but the country is still lagging behind in the 3 dimensions, also due to the fragile context

The country improvement in HCD performance is driven by strong progress in Entrepreneurship, financial inclusion and digital economy (+0.11) and stagnation in Health and nutrition (+0.00)

- In particular, there has been a sharp increase in the penetration of financial services and Internet
- In Health and nutrition, performance remains low and has stagnated globally, but there are notable improvements regarding the health of children under the age of 5 (mortality rate for under-5 has decreased by approximately 7% compared to baseline, driven by various initiatives such as the strengthening of health structures and equipment provided in newborn resuscitation services)

Niger



Niger has slightly progressed overall in HCD index performance

- Highest progress was achieved on the Health and Nutrition dimension as the Ministry of Health launched a 2017-2021 Health Development Plan to address health services challenges and set up an eHealth strategy, in collaboration with the National Agency of Information Society to launch several tools and solutions including scaling up telemedicine, launching a coding academy and encouraging health related start-ups
- Progress in the education field is related to government efforts to increase expenditures allocated to this area along with the SNRV/SE strategy that aims to strengthen the resilience of the education system and adopt prevention to emergency situations impacting education in Niger.

Nigeria



Nigeria overall HCD performance has declined however the government has appointed a Human Capital Steering Committee and Core Working Group established by the National Economic Council to accelerate the development in the three main areas

- The government implemented the Basic Healthcare provision fund which increases equitable access to basic health services like antenatal and post-natal care, access to drugs and nutrition supplement
- The National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy (NDEPS) was implemented to fast-track the development of Nigeria's digital economy and help increase access to internet to all Nigerians

Senegal



Senegal registered good overall progress vs. baseline towards HCD targets ranking among the region best performers

- This is mainly attributable to the country's initiative 'Plan for an Emerging Senegal' which activates reforms within the 3 dimensions
- Efforts to enhance access to health services, especially in rural areas, drove significant reduction in maternal and neonatal mortality rates, improving the country's performance on health
- Government's initiative to increase education spending also helped achieving more sustainable progress in education (increased number years of schooling, harmonized test scores)

Sierra Leone



On HCD integrated index

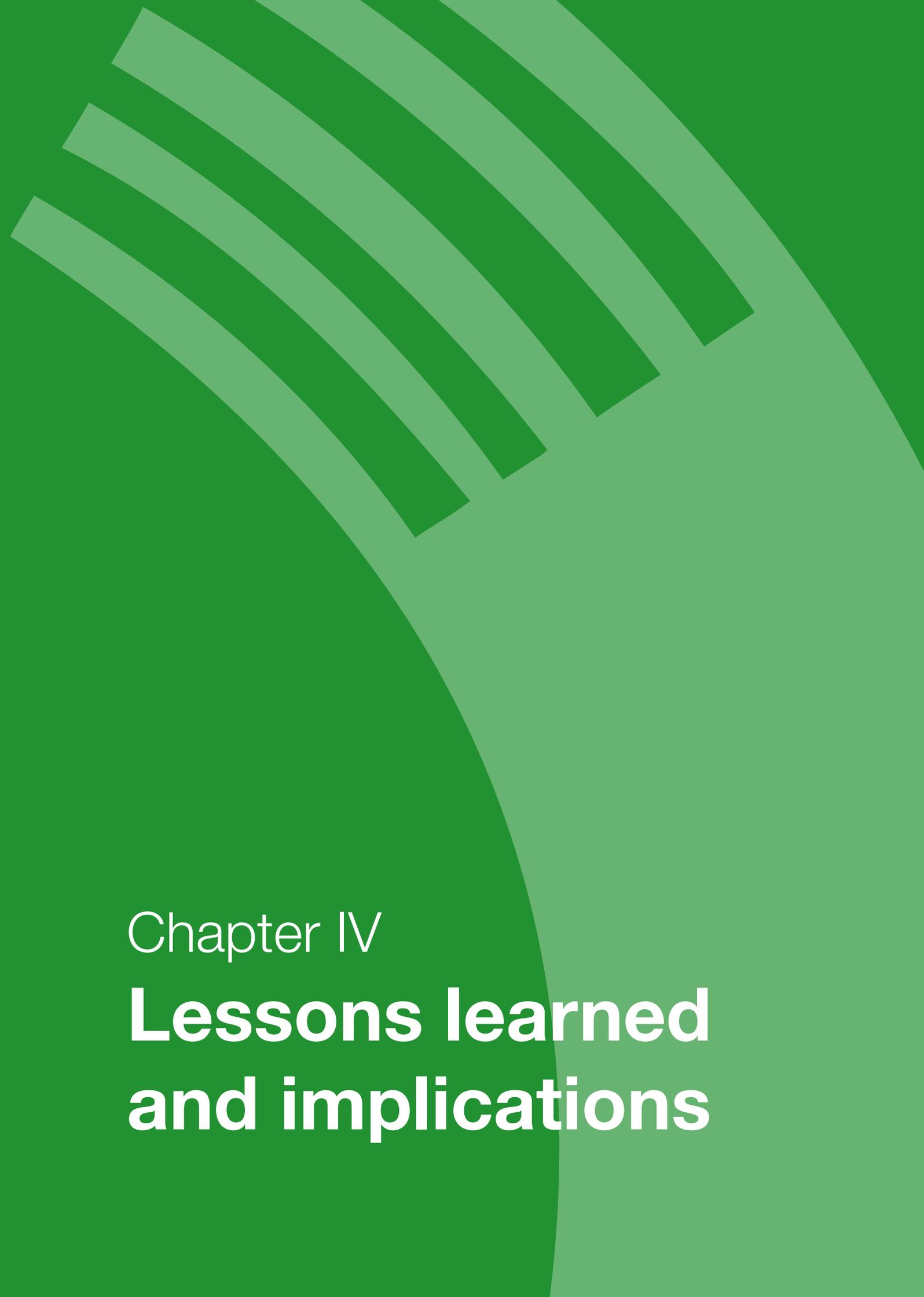
- Sierra Leone achieved good overall progress on the health and nutrition dimension driven by the significant decrease of under 5 mortality and stunting rates. This is linked to the government's initiatives to improve access to health services including the launch of the National Health Promotion Strategy in 2017 with a focus on enhancing resources for health promotion
- The country slightly increased number of individuals using internet achieving target on this indicator, as the government launched a 10-year National Innovation and Digital Strategy (NIDS) (2019-2029) with a focus on increasing access to connectivity

Togo



The government of Togo adopted the "2025 roadmap" acting on three priority areas: the strengthening of inclusion, social harmony and the consolidation of peace.

- Strengthening of high-impact interventions in Maternal and Child Health (SONU, SDMNR, SAA, CBD, SM, JPO, Fight against obstetric fistulas) with the support of Technical and Financial partners (UNFPA, WHO, USAID, etc.)
- Significant improvement in education performance since 2010 is linked to efforts to increase duration of schooling even though education quality has remained stable and increased governmental expenditures on this area
- The new governmental strategy also aims at creating of jobs for young people leveraging on a strengthened and modernized economy

The background is a solid green color. In the top-left corner, there is a decorative graphic consisting of several curved, parallel lines that sweep from the top-left towards the center-right. These lines are in two shades of green: a darker shade and a lighter shade, creating a sense of depth and movement.

Chapter IV

**Lessons learned
and implications**

LESSONS LEARNED AND IMPLICATIONS

Lessons learned from the 2021 HCD Review

HCD is a crucial ingredient of economic growth and social inclusion. After years of advocacy there is now a palpable acknowledgment of this importance but also a strong commitment from all ECOWAS Member States to accelerate HCD improvement as one of their top priorities. The HCD squad and focal points have been demonstrating a true determination and dedication to HCD in the ECOWAS region.

The ECOWAS Integrative HCD index offers several lessons to draw from. Overall, the entire region is progressing. Those Member States that have progressed the most are those heavily investing in HCD paths. The thematic area that has shown the most improvement is Entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, and digital economy driven by private sector investment into better financial and internet access for local populations. The strong dynamism in that dimension gives hope for a positive outlook. Health and Nutrition dimension has also progressed across all indicators except health expenditure. While Education, skills and labor participation is stagnating with longer time frame is required to reap return on investment.

The progress is encouraging but there is still room for improvement especially given the potential future impact of COVID-19 on indicators. Member States have not reached their targets on Health and Nutrition, on Education, skills and labor participation they face strong risks on initiatives execution and lastly, on the Entrepreneurship, financial inclusion and digital economy dimension they show disparity in results.

There is no one single way to improve the HCD as the situation is very diverse between Member States. However, common challenges can be overcome with the support of ECOWAS. The key unlocks for an acceleration of the progress is execution to ensure concrete initiatives are implemented and improved resilience. Member States that face pressure on their stability in a context of fragility could seek support on their HCD journey to reinforce their resilience and prevent their volatility affecting the wider region. In fact, nurturing HCD journeys in these states can help mend those weaknesses by giving hope to the local population and to young people in particular.

Implications for the ECOWAS HCD 2030 vision

As the ECOWAS Commission and Member States continue on their HCD journey, they could implement the next wave of implementation and HCD strategies could benefit from stronger focus on five key areas::

- **Mobilization of frontline stakeholders** – ultimately HCD efforts need to happen at country level. In order to translate the ambition into initiatives on the ground as well as improvement of indicators it is essential to mobilize and expand the community of focal points. HCD progress is enabled by a clear commitment of local stakeholders who are also accountable for the progress of initiatives and indicators.
- **Monitoring and evaluation** – In the future, it is crucial to keep monitoring and evaluating the

HCD performance. This monitoring should be continuously refined to add more granularity by improving data collection. ECOWAS can facilitate this data collection through a combination of harmonization of local data and targeted survey on the 3 dimensions of HCD. Accordingly, the ECOWAS dashboard could evolve in the future to go beyond visualization and be a tool for data collection across the 15 Members States.

- **Capability building** – the HCD ECOWAS Squad and focal points commitment can be even further enhanced thanks to new methods and tools on how to monitor indicators, update the report, implement skills. and lean on local stakeholders to carry out their mission. This can be done through training sessions but also

Perspective on PPPs and success stories

Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) offer numerous advantages to emerging economies. PPPs are a key financing lever and thus a great way to limit the increase in public debt. PPPs also provide better operational excellence and split the risk of the project between public and private stakeholders.

They are increasingly used for HCD-related deals in emerging countries, particularly for education and health projects. For example, vocational training programs are developed with funding from both governments and private companies to meet the business needs of the local economy. In fact, ECOWAS Member States have already implemented PPPs. For example, in Benin, a PPP has been signed between the Ministry of Economy and Finance and the Société Générale des Banques du Bénin for the construction of the Abomey-Calavi University Referral Hospital, which will be completed by 2023. Intended to become the reference hospital in Benin, the CHU will have a capacity of approximately 430 beds and places spread over two levels. This modern and innovative infrastructure of more than 40,000 m² will include six large hospital units, including a high-level technical platform comprising three day hospitals, an emergency room, a laboratory, medical imaging, radiotherapy, and nine operating theatres. It will also include teaching areas, staff accommodation, a funeral home, and medical, hotel, and technical logistics units.

To develop PPPs in ECOWAS countries, several elements could be incorporated into each project. Legacy staff handling could be mapped out properly to adopt a sustainable approach when public sector staff is deployed in places where services are run by the private sector. Local market capacity could be carefully assessed to ensure that a healthy pool of private sector players is available to deliver high-quality results. Legal and regulatory frameworks are essential and they both expedite needed approvals and regulate local markets. Finally, the right organizational setup could be designed and put in place to shape, enable, oversee, and execute the PPP strategy.

Emerging countries with a successful track record in the PPP space have learned to prioritize their PPP projects according to their complexity. This enables local governments to manage their execution capacity and their internal expertise. They usually start with one PPP on commoditized types of projects and gradually ramp up the complexity and pace of subsequent PPP projects.

These attractive advantages, when used under the right conditions, make PPPs a valuable proposition to push an HCD agenda.



by HCD regional champions sharing best practices to implement flagship initiatives within the focal point community.

- **Execution** – ensure proper execution and monitor this execution is critical to reach the ambition but also to disburse funds. To do so, there is an opportunity to rely on monitoring tools and on the support of partners such as:
 - **Public sector** – governments are the main contributors to HCD initiatives especially through funding, grants, and appropriate laws, like making it compulsory for children to be enrolled in school until a certain age.
 - **Private sector** – private investment and actions can make a real difference for HCD, including through PPP. Thus, HCD could benefit from the dynamism of Africa’s private sector. For example, such partnerships could offer vocational training by teaming up with schools and building programs that teach skills that companies are actually after.
 - **Civil society** – associations, community based organizations and opinion leaders can be leveraged to reach HCD progress and implement initiatives. These entities and leaders can, for example, change opinions regarding gender parity and can also steer communities towards HCD objectives, like promoting community health infrastructure.
- **Strengthened resilience** – in order to ensure that the gains made are not lost due to fragilities, but rather that progress is made despite these fragilities the ECOWAS Commission could play a role in building resilience to these fragilities through presentive actions e.g.,
 - Reactive alert systems, raising awareness on potential threats and support to increase collaboration among countries
 - Push for democratic election to support strong national governance
- **Advocacy** – it is important to continue sustained communication campaigns that showcase success stories. This will ensure HCD remains a top priority for the ECOWAS Commission and its Member States.

These actions could all lead to a continuously more impactful HCD journey for all ECOWAS Member States and the ECOWAS Commission is committed to support them in their respective journey.



The background features a dark green area on the left and a lighter green area on the right, separated by a curved boundary. In the top-left corner, there are several curved, parallel lines in a lighter shade of green, creating a sense of motion or a stylized graphic element.

Appendix

APPENDIX

Detailed findings by Member State

 **Health and nutrition**

1st quartile 2nd quartile 3rd quartile 4th quartile

Indicator	Cabo Verde	Ghana	Senegal	The Gambia	Burkina Faso	Togo	Liberia	Cote d'Ivoire	Benin	Guinea-Bissau	Guinea	Mali	Sierra Leone	Niger	Nigeria	ECOWAS
Fertility rate , births per woman	0.89	0.60	0.46	0.35	0.35	0.51	0.51	0.45	0.42	0.49	0.44	0.23	0.53	0.03	0.31	0.44
Maternal mortality rate , # of deaths/100,000 live births	0.97	0.74	0.73	0.48	0.73	0.66	0.42	0.46	0.66	0.41	0.50	0.51	0.00	0.56	0.18	0.53
Under-5 mortality rate , # of deaths/1,000 live births	0.93	0.66	0.67	0.61	0.30	0.48	0.33	0.37	0.28	0.38	0.21	0.25	0.12	0.36	0.05	0.40
Under-5 stunting rate , % of children under 5	0.94	0.83	0.75	0.78	0.54	0.58	0.48	0.73	0.40	0.48	0.44	0.54	0.51	0.01	0.30	0.55
Life expectancy at birth , # of years	0.65	0.35	0.48	0.28	0.26	0.24	0.35	0.13	0.27	0.15	0.26	0.18	0.03	0.29	0.03	0.26
Government health expenditure , % of general government expenditure	0.45	0.22	0.09	0.10	0.36	0.09	0.15	0.14	0.02	0.02	0.08	0.16	0.27	0.33	0.10	0.17
Child Marriage , % of women ages 20-24 married before 18	No data	0.81	0.53	0.71	No data	0.67	0.67	No data	0.52	0.65	0.12	0.00	0.55	No data	0.20	0.49
Aggregate score	0.70	0.50	0.45	0.39	0.39	0.38	0.37	0.34	0.30	0.29	0.27	0.25	0.25	0.20	0.15	0.35

 **Education, skills, and labor participation**

Indicator	Togo	Cabo Verde	Sierra Leone	Burkina Faso	Cote d'Ivoire	Ghana	Senegal	Guinea	Liberia	Benin	The Gambia	Nigeria	Guinea-Bissau	Niger	Mali	ECOWAS
Government Education expenditure , % GDP	0.63	0.58	1.00	0.82	0.34	0.41	0.70	0.00	0.02	0.17	0.15	No data	0.17	0.30	0.28	0.40
Pupil-to-trained teacher ratio in primary education , # of pupils per trained teacher	0.11	0.99	0.00	0.40	0.42	0.53	0.29	0.00	0.67	0.17	0.40	0.18	No data	0.00	No data	0.32
Children out of school , % of primary school age children	1.00	0.82	No data	0.29	0.95	0.87	0.28	0.60	0.39	0.85	0.66	No data	No data	0.00	0.00	0.56
Mean years of schooling , # of years	0.26	0.37	0.16	0.00	0.29	0.44	0.12	0.09	0.25	0.17	0.18	0.40	0.16	0.04	0.00	0.20
Harmonized test scores , score out of 625	0.40	No data	No data	0.50	0.35	0.01	0.55	0.53	0.14	0.40	0.24	0.02	No data	0.00	0.01	0.26
Youth NEET , % of youth not employed, in education or in training	0.79	0.16	0.79	0.35	0.00	0.15	0.04	0.79	0.65	0.00	0.00	0.31	0.36	0.33	0.25	0.33
Youth literacy rate , % in 15-24 year old population	0.52	No data	0.27	0.18	0.47	0.58	0.31	0.12	0.14	0.21	No data	0.37	No data	0.00	0.03	0.27
Number of country citations in international publications , # of citations in thousands	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01
Aggregate score	0.41	0.35	0.33	0.31	0.27	0.27	0.26	0.26	0.22	0.21	0.19	0.17	0.16	0.10	0.09	0.24

 **Entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, and digital economy**

Indicator	Cabo Verde	Ghana	The Gambia	Senegal	Cote d'Ivoire	Mali	Benin	Burkina Faso	Nigeria	Togo	Guinea-Bissau	Guinea	Liberia	Sierra Leone	Niger	ECOWAS
Penetration of financial outlets , # of financial services outlets/10,000 people	No data	No data	No data	0.44	0.44	0.54	0.43	0.42	No data	0.14	0.00	No data	No data	No data	0.08	0.31
Internet penetration , % of the population	0.33	0.27	0.26	0.19	0.17	0.10	0.12	0.05	0.15	0.06	0.11	0.08	0.08	0.04	0.00	0.13
Registered new businesses , New registrations per 1,000 people ages 15-64	0.32	No data	No data	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.02	No data	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.04
Aggregate score	0.33	0.27	0.26	0.19	0.19	0.18	0.17	0.14	0.08	0.07	0.06	0.05	0.04	0.03	0.03	0.14

Benin's HCD performance shows slow progress especially on the Education dimension



1st quartile 2nd quartile 3rd quartile 4th quartile



**Integrated
HCD index**

**Health
and nutrition**

**Education, skills,
and labor
participation**

**Entrepreneurship,
financial inclusion,
and digital economy**

HCD integrated index performance

Baseline, 2016-18	0.21	0.28	0.26	0.09
Progress made	0.01	0.02	-0.05	0.08
Latest value, 2018-20	0.23	0.30	0.21	0.17
Distance to target	-0.03	-0.04	-0.10	0.06
Target value, 2019-20	0.25	0.33	0.31	0.11
Rank	8	8	9	7
Target value, 2030	0.43	0.55	0.47	0.27

Gender integrated index performance

Latest value	1.10	0.66	0.41
Rank	5	13	13

Success highlights

Benin's overall performance has stalled in HCD integrated despite setting ambitious targets as part of its PAG strategy (plan d'action gouvernementale)

- On the health and nutrition dimension, Benin registered a slight progress driven by the decrease of under 5 mortality and stunting rates as the government introduced free health care for pregnant women and under 5 children. The country is also launching project ARCH to provide citizens with health insurance coverage
- In the Entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, and digital economy, the country achieved significant progress as both access to financial services and to internet increased. Efforts by the government in this area started in 2015 notably with the program Mobile Money for the Poor (MM4P)

Challenges

- Benin's overall performance has stalled in HCD integrated index and the country could benefit from further alignment of the multiple strategies toward an integrated Human Capital development approach
- Performance in Education, skills, and labor participation significantly decreased as children out of school and youth NEET increased and government expenditures decreased. Decline in this field can be partially attributed to covid-19 impact on schools' closure
- Benin lags in gender parity especially in the 3rd dimension as women have less access to internet usage or financial services and have limited access to managerial positions

Burkina Faso achieved slight progress in HCD performance and ranks among top performers



1st quartile 2nd quartile 3rd quartile 4th quartile



**Integrated
HCD index**

**Health
and nutrition**

**Education, skills,
and labor
participation**

**Entrepreneurship,
financial inclusion,
and digital economy**

HCD integrated index performance

Baseline, 2016-18	0.25	0.38	0.32	0.06
Progress made	0.03	0.01	-0.01	0.08
Latest value, 2018-20	0.28	0.39	0.31	0.14
Distance to target	-0.01	-0.05	-0.04	0.07
Target value, 2019-20	0.29	0.44	0.35	0.07
Rank	5	4	4	4
Target value, 2030	0.46	0.71	0.45	0.22

Gender integrated index performance

Latest value	1.10	0.78	0.59
Rank	6	8	4

Success highlights

Burkina Faso achieved a slight progress in overall HCD performance vs. baseline

- President decreed a health policy to provide free health care to pregnant women and children under five years old, yet health and nutrition indicators remain below target. Also, efforts to enhance access to health services, especially in rural areas helped improve the country's performance on health
- Access to internet and financial services in the country significantly increased mainly due to the development and implementation of a national strategy to promote financial inclusion and a technical secretariat
- The government also implemented a gender positive discrimination to promote girls' access to primary education along with a national fund for literacy and non-formal education has been created to improve the literacy rate of young people

Challenges

- Despite efforts to improve health coverage and access especially for women and children, maternal and under five mortality rates remain stable
- Education related performance has declined due to the increase of the number of unschooled children and the pupil-teachers ratio. The government lacks sufficient implementation capabilities to translate education initiatives into concrete results

Cabo Verde maintains its leading position in overall performance on HCD index



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Integrated HCD index

Health and nutrition

Education, skills, and labor participation

Entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, and digital economy

HCD integrated index performance

Baseline, 2016-18	0.46	0.70	0.35	0.35
Progress made	-0.01	0.01	0.00	-0.02
Latest value, 2018-20	0.46	0.70	0.35	0.33
Distance to target	-0.05	-0.03	-0.04	-0.09
Target value, 2019-20	0.51	0.73	0.39	0.41
Rank	1	1	1	2
Target value, 2030	0.73	0.95	0.51	0.73

Gender integrated index performance

Latest value	1.10	0.95	0.89
Rank	3	3	1

Success highlights

Capo Verde is overall the lead performer of the region in both HCD integrated index and gender index

- The country benefits from high starting point in performance across all HCD dimensions especially in the health and education areas
 - Cabo Verde maintained its top position in the health and nutrition area as all citizens are entitled to a basic package of services covering antenatal care, emergency treatment, and treatment and prevention for HIV, tuberculosis and malaria
 - Performance in the education field is related to historic efforts by the government to keep schooling free, universal, and compulsory for students aged from 7 to 13 and to improve the quality of integrated basic education and to strengthen training and availability of educational human resources
 - The country also significantly increased internet access for its population
- Cabo Verde has also been able to translate its HCD progress for both Women and men, showing ratios close to parity across dimensions

Challenges

- The country has not taken advantage of its high starting position on HCD to deepen development on the entrepreneurship dimension driven by the decline of new businesses registrations. However, this can be attributed to covid-19 economic and social fallouts

Cote d'Ivoire has shown good overall progress among HCD dimensions



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**Integrated
HCD index**

**Health
and nutrition**

**Education, skills,
and labor
participation**

**Entrepreneurship,
financial inclusion,
and digital economy**

HCD integrated index performance

Baseline, 2016-18	0.23	0.32	0.26	0.12
Progress made	0.03	0.02	0.01	0.07
Latest value, 2018-20	0.26	0.34	0.27	0.19
Distance to target	-0.01	-0.03	-0.04	0.05
Target value, 2019-20	0.27	0.36	0.31	0.14
Rank	6	6	7	8
Target value, 2030	0.47	0.57	0.47	0.36

Gender integrated index performance

Latest value	1.09	0.66	0.45
Rank	7	14	12

Success highlights

Côte d'Ivoire has achieved good overall progress in HCD and ranks above ECOWAS average on HCD integrated index

- On the health and nutrition dimension, the government has significantly invested into access to health services, renovation and building of medical facilities leading to progress in all underlying indicators of this dimension. Improvement is also linked to the expansion of the universal health coverage (CMU) rollout to the broader population in October 2019
- The country significantly decreased children out-of-school rate beyond target
- Good performance in the Entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, and digital economy dimension was driven by substantial increase in access to financial services as the government launched the Agency for the Promotion of Financial Inclusion, in 2018 to enhance the provision of financial services for low-income populations and SMEs

Challenges

- Despite good progress on HCD index's third dimension, number of individuals using internet has decreased below target
- Cote d'Ivoire's registered progress was not inclusive for women as the country underperforms on parity vs. HCD performance especially in education area, as girls are over-represented among out of school children (~5:1 female to male ratio)

The Gambia achieved good overall progress leveraging on strong improvements across dimensions



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**Integrated
HCD index**

**Health
and nutrition**

**Education, skills,
and labor
participation**

**Entrepreneurship,
financial inclusion,
and digital economy**

HCD integrated index performance

Baseline, 2016-18	0.22	0.37	0.16	0.14
Progress made	0.06	0.02	0.03	
Latest value, 2018-20	0.28	0.39	0.19	0.26
Distance to target	0.02	-0.03	-0.01	
Target value, 2019-20	0.27	0.42	0.20	0.18
Rank	7	7	7	7
Target value, 2030	0.46	0.66	0.35	0.36

Gender integrated index performance

Latest value	1.10	1.04	0.85
Rank	4	2	2

Success highlights

Gambia achieved good overall progress leveraging on several HCD thematic targeted initiatives to develop each one of the dimensions

- The country progressed on the health and nutrition where efforts helped decrease under 5 mortality rate
- Several education-oriented interventions, helped improve performance in this area notably through the decrease of the number of out-of-school children, for example:
 - The Early Childhood Education policy improved access and quality of basic and secondary level learnings
 - TVET program aims at enhancing technical and vocational education and supply of teaching and learning materials to young people
- Financial inclusion and digital economy performance increased above target mainly due the increase of internet usage
- Gambia is among the leaders in the region in terms of gender parity and specially across Education, skills, and labor participation

Challenges

- Despite registered progress in health and nutrition index performance, maternal mortality rate remains high, below target and above region average which calls for reinforced efforts to promote women health services

Ghana ranks among top performers on HCD integrated and gender index



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**Integrated
HCD index**

**Health
and nutrition**

**Education, skills,
and labor
participation**

**Entrepreneurship,
financial inclusion,
and digital economy**

HCD integrated index performance

Baseline, 2016-18	0.31	0.47	0.28	0.18
Progress made	0.04	0.03	-0.01	0.10
Latest value, 2018-20	0.35	0.50	0.27	0.27
Distance to target	-0.01	-0.01	-0.06	0.05
Target value, 2019-20	0.35	0.51	0.33	0.22
Rank	2	2	2	6
Target value, 2030	0.55	0.72	0.54	0.38

Gender integrated index performance

Latest value	1.05	1.32	0.56
Rank	8	1	6

Success highlights

Ghana ranks among top performers in both HCD integrated index and gender index.

- The country has achieved good overall progress in HCD performance
 - On the health and nutrition dimension, Ghana reached target as all maternity mortality, under 5 stunting and mortality rates were decreased
 - In the education field, mean years of schooling has been raised and youth NEET was decreased
 - Significant progress was made on the Entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, and digital economy dimension driven by an increase of internet access level in the population
- Ghana's performance on HCD is also one of the most gender inclusive in the region especially in providing Education where parity ratio is in favor of Women

Challenges

- Ghana could leverage more its strong starting position to further accelerate its progress across dimensions
- Despite having high parity ratios on health and education, Ghana could still improve women inclusion and participation in the labour force, data shows that women are not able to leverage their education to fully participate in the economy

Guinea's HCD performance was driven by good progress across dimensions



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Integrated HCD index

Health and nutrition

Education, skills, and labor participation

Entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, and digital economy

HCD integrated index performance

Baseline, 2016-18	0.16	0.23	0.23	0.01
Progress made	0.04	0.04	0.03	0.04
Latest value, 2018-20	0.19	0.27	0.26	0.05
Distance to target	0.00	-0.03	0.01	0.03
Target value, 2019-20	0.19	0.30	0.25	0.02
Rank	12	11	12	10
Target value, 2030	0.38	0.55	0.38	0.21

Gender integrated index performance

Latest value	1.10	0.62	0.60
Rank	2	15	3

Success highlights

Guinea reinforced its efforts to support HCD development objectives throughout an ambitious wide national strategy incorporated in the PNDES (Plan National de Développement Economique et Social) which aims at carrying out the structural transformation of the country based on four pillars.

- The third pillar of PNDES is dedicated to HCD development with 7 defined priorities among which : population and development, health and HIV/AIDS, education and training, domestic living conditions, employment and empowerment of vulnerable groups.
- The country has progressed similarly in the three dimensions and performance was driven by the three following indicators:
 - Decrease of under 5 mortality rate
 - Slight progress in number of schooling years
 - Enhancement of access to internet
- Investments on health improvement seem to have been beneficial to women helping decrease the maternal mortality by half. Women are also benefiting from improved access to internet

Challenges

- The real challenge for Guinea is to effectively translate the political commitment of authorities to catch up with regional average through the achievement of investment priorities notably in the health and nutrition area, where it still lags behind target
- Development initiatives on the Education front could focus on women inclusion as the country has lower means years of schooling for female vs. males as well as almost half fewer literate women than men

Guinea-Bissau ranks second to last in the region, but has been progressing on both Health and Education



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**Integrated
HCD index**

**Health
and nutrition**

**Education, skills,
and labor
participation**

**Entrepreneurship,
financial inclusion,
and digital economy**

HCD integrated index performance

Baseline, 2016-18	0.02	0.12	0.26	0.13
Progress made	n.a	0.04	0.03	0.04
Latest value, 2018-20	0.06	0.16	0.29	0.17
Distance to target	n.a	0.02	-0.01	0.01
Target value, 2019-20	0.04	0.14	0.30	0.16
Rank	13	10	13	14
Target value, 2030	0.13	0.36	0.49	0.32

Gender integrated index performance

Latest value	1.08	0.89	N/A
Rank	9	4	N/A

Success highlights

Guinea-Bissau overall performance has increased in HCD integrated index driven by significant progress in two dimensions:

- On the health and nutrition dimension, Guinea-Bissau improved on all indicators and results can be linked to the reform of the National Health plan in 2017 with the aim of reaching the highest attainable standard of health services
- In the Education, skills, and labor participation, progress is driven by slight increase in mean years of schooling and public expenditures in the sector, as the government is focused on reinforcing faculty capabilities and funding technical training along with improving educational infrastructure

Challenges

- Despite achieved progress on HCD dimensions, Guinea-Bissau is among low performers and late starters of the region on the HCD integrated index as the country still bears consequences of past political instability and forced population displacement

Liberia's progress is hindered by historic political unrest



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**Integrated
HCD index**

**Health
and nutrition**

**Education, skills,
and labor
participation**

**Entrepreneurship,
financial inclusion,
and digital economy**

HCD integrated index performance

Baseline, 2016-18	0.02	0.24	0.31	0.19
Progress made	0.02	-0.03	0.06	0.02
Latest value, 2018-20	0.04	0.22	0.37	0.21
Distance to target	0.01	-0.06	0.01	-0.01
Target value, 2019-20	0.03	0.27	0.36	0.22
Rank	9	8	9	9
Target value, 2030	0.23	0.41	0.57	0.40

Gender integrated index performance

Latest value	1.07	0.72	0.52
Rank	11	10	9

Success highlights

Liberia has activated several initiatives based on the Pillar 1 of its Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development for 2018 to 2023 (PAPD) in order to improve opportunities in education, health, youth development, and social protection

- Main achievements are related to Health and nutrition development as government health expenditures considerably increased during the past years
- Efforts to enhance access to health services, especially in rural areas, drove significant reduction in maternal and neonatal mortality rates, improving the country's performance on health

Challenges

- Liberia still lags behind the region in all HCD areas despite efforts. Years of civil conflicts, crises, internal displacement, outmigration of skilled labor slow down country's efforts towards target performance
- Overall education performance decreased despite initiatives in this area such as the Accelerated Quality Education (AQE) program that was implemented to address the problem of over-age and out-of-school children and to identify and train teachers to improve quality instruction
- Liberia lags behind on gender parity for the three thematic areas – within some of the lowest score among the ECOWAS Member States. Disparity is the more important when it comes to managerial positions

Despite the progress made, Mali still has significant room for improvement in HCD



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**Integrated
HCD index**

**Health
and nutrition**

**Education, skills,
and labor
participation**

**Entrepreneurship,
financial inclusion,
and digital economy**

HCD integrated index performance

Baseline, 2016-18	0.14	0.25	0.11	0.07
Progress made	0.03	0.00	-0.02	0.11
Latest value, 2018-20	0.17	0.25	0.09	0.18
Distance to target	-0.01	-0.05	-0.06	0.09
Target value, 2019-20	0.18	0.31	0.15	0.09
Rank	13	13	13	13
Target value, 2030	0.38	0.57	0.30	0.26

Gender integrated index performance

Latest value	1.06	0.71	0.32
Rank	14	12	10

Success highlights

- Mali overall HCD performance has increased since baseline, but the country is still lagging behind in the 3 dimensions, also due to the fragile context
- The country improvement in HCD performance is driven by strong progress in Entrepreneurship, financial inclusion and digital economy (+0.11) and stagnation in Health and nutrition (+0.00)
 - In particular, there has been a sharp increase in the penetration of financial services and Internet
 - In Health and nutrition, performance remains low and has stagnated globally, but there are notable improvements regarding the health of children under the age of 5 (mortality rate for under-5 has decreased by approximately 7% compared to baseline, driven by various initiatives such as the strengthening of health structures and equipment provided in newborn resuscitation services)

Challenges

- Despite the progress made overall, Mali is among the ECOWAS countries with the lowest performance
- The country experiencing a decline in performance in education, skills and participation in the workplace despite a slight increase in Harmonized tests scores and the rate of youth without employment, education or training
 - In particular, the government spent in the sector (as a percentage of GDP), schooling rate, length of schooling and literacy rate have decreased

Niger ranks last of the region in terms of HCD performance



1st quartile 2nd quartile 3rd quartile 4th quartile



**Integrated
HCD index**

**Health
and nutrition**

**Education, skills,
and labor
participation**

**Entrepreneurship,
financial inclusion,
and digital economy**

HCD integrated index performance

Baseline, 2016-18	0.08	0.16	0.07	0.03
Progress made	0.02	0.05	0.03	0.00
Latest value, 2018-20	0.11	0.20	0.10	0.03
Distance to target	-0.01	-0.02	-0.01	-0.01
Target value, 2019-20	0.12	0.23	0.10	0.04
Rank	15	15	15	15
Target value, 2030	0.30	0.53	0.24	0.14

Gender integrated index performance

Latest value	1.06	0.69	0.50
Rank	14	12	10

Success highlights

Niger has slightly progressed overall in HCD index performance

- Highest progress was achieved on the health and nutrition dimension as the Ministry of Health launched a 2017-2021 Health Development Plan to address health services challenges and set up an eHealth strategy, in collaboration with the National Agency of Information Society to launch several tools and solutions including scaling up telemedicine, launching a coding academy and encouraging health related start-ups
- Progress in the education field is related to government efforts to increase expenditures allocated to this area along with the SNRV/SE strategy that aims to strengthen the resilience of the education system and adopt prevention to emergency situations impacting education in Niger.

Challenges

- Despite the achieved progress in health and nutrition, development in this area is hindered by high rates of maternal, neonatal and child mortality; weak health coverage and insufficient human, material and financial resources along with weakness of partnership, coordination and intersectoral collaboration
- Niger performance in the 3rd dimension has stalled as financial services and internet access has decreased due to prohibitive costs, perceived cumbersomeness of banking documentation requirements and lack of proximity with banks
- The country's performance on the Gender index reflects its HCD performance leading to further difficult situation for women

Nigeria's ranks among bottom 5 countries driven by a decline on the education dimension



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**Integrated
HCD index**

**Health
and nutrition**

**Education, skills,
and labor
participation**

**Entrepreneurship,
financial inclusion,
and digital economy**

HCD integrated index performance

Baseline, 2016-18	0.17	0.15	0.30	0.07
Progress made	-0.04	0.00	-0.13	0.02
Latest value, 2018-20	0.14	0.15	0.17	0.08
Distance to target	-0.08	-0.06	-0.19	0.00
Target value, 2019-20	0.22	0.22	0.36	0.08
Rank	11	11	11	11
Target value, 2030	0.46	0.49	0.59	0.31

Gender integrated index performance

Latest value	1.07	0.85	0.56
Rank	10	6	5

Success highlights

Nigeria overall HCD performance has declined however the government has appointed a Human Capital Steering Committee and Core Working Group established by the National Economic Council to accelerate the development in the three main areas

- The government implemented the Basic Healthcare provision fund which increases equitable access to basic health services like antenatal and post natal care, access to drugs and nutrition supplement
- The National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy (NDEPS) was implemented to fast-track the development of Nigeria's digital economy and help increase access to internet to all Nigerians
- Nigeria achieves medium performance on gender parity performance mostly on Entrepreneurship, financial inclusion and digital economy because of joined political, social and private sectors efforts to narrow the gender gap

Challenges

- Despite extensive works being done to increase universal primary and secondary school education (enrolment to completion), the country registered a significant regression in the education performance and especially a rise in youth NEET among COVID-19 fallouts, driving the overall performance down

Senegal reaps the reward of governmental economic and social reforms



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**Integrated
HCD index**

**Health
and nutrition**

**Education, skills,
and labor
participation**

**Entrepreneurship,
financial inclusion,
and digital economy**

HCD integrated index performance

Baseline, 2016-18	0.10	0.23	0.44	0.25
Progress made	0.09	0.03	0.01	0.05
Latest value, 2018-20	0.19	0.26	0.45	0.30
Distance to target	0.07	-0.02	-0.03	0.01
Target value, 2019-20	0.12	0.28	0.48	0.29
Rank	4	4	4	4
Target value, 2030	0.34	0.49	0.65	0.49

Gender integrated index performance

Latest value	1.16	0.84	0.48
Rank	1	7	11

Success highlights

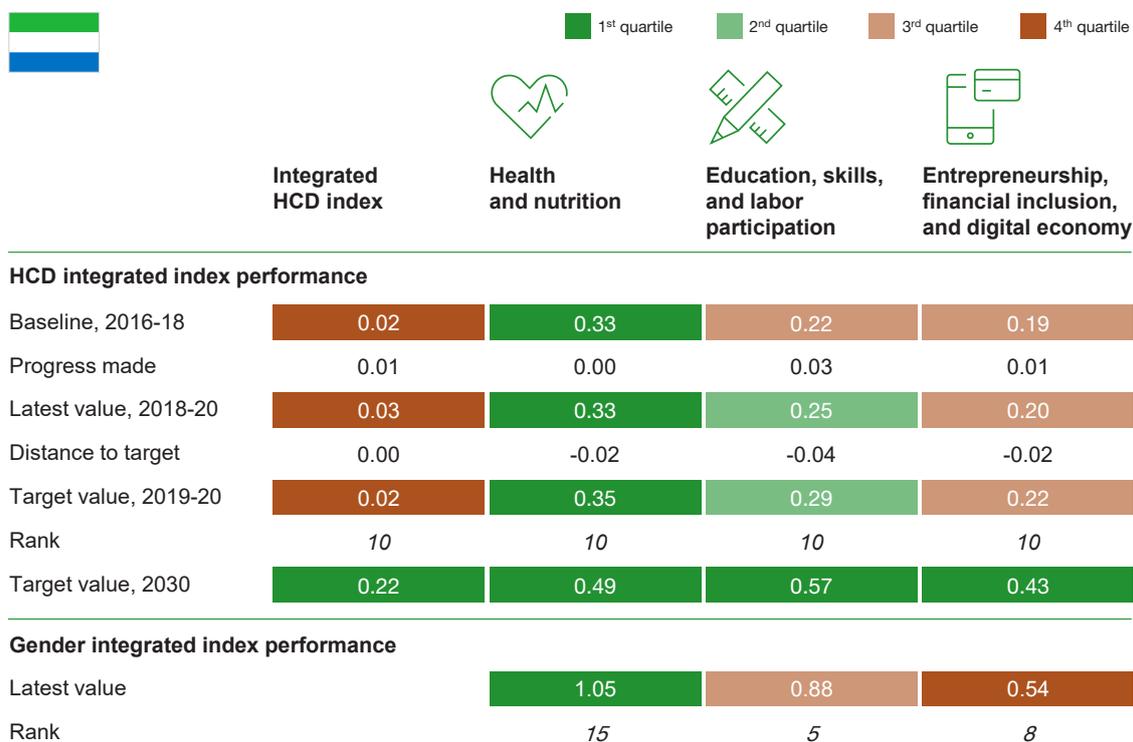
Senegal registered good overall progress vs. baseline towards HCD targets ranking among the region best performers

- This is mainly attributable to the country's initiative 'Plan for an Emerging Senegal' which activates reforms within the 3 dimensions
- Efforts to enhance access to health services, especially in rural areas, drove significant reduction in maternal and neonatal mortality rates, improving the country's performance on health
- Government's initiative to increase education spending also helped achieving more sustainable progress in education (increased number years of schooling, harmonized test scores)
- Senegal is one of the top performers on gender parity for Health and nutrition

Challenges

- Despite the significant progress achieved in expanding access to internet as well as financial services the country is still underperforming in Entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, and digital economy
- Progress achieved on the entrepreneurship and education dimensions is not inclusive for women who still lack access to internet and education programs as they have lower literacy rates and a higher ratio among children out of school
- On gender parity, Senegal is among the middle performers of the region on Education, skills, and labor participation and consistently lags in the Entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, and digital economy where progress was not inclusive towards women

Sierra Leone shows stagnation vs. baseline in HCD performance



Success highlights

- On HCD integrated index:
 - Sierra Leone achieved good overall progress on the health and nutrition dimension driven by the significant decrease of under 5 mortality and stunting rates. This is linked to the government's initiatives to improve access to health services including the launch of the National Health Promotion Strategy in 2017 with a focus on enhancing resources for health promotion
 - The country slightly increased number of individuals using internet achieving target on this indicator, as the government launched a 10-year National Innovation and Digital Strategy (NIDS) (2019-2029) with a focus on increasing access to connectivity
- Sierra Leone ranks among top performers in gender parity, on the Education dimension and in youth NEET and harmonized test scores with a strong advocacy initiatives for girls schooling

Challenges

- Sierra Leone overall performance has stalled in HCD integrated index
- Despite achieved progress, Sierra Leone underperforms on the health and nutrition dimension as it stills suffers from inadequate infrastructure and lack of qualified human resources
- Performance in Education, skills, and labor participation has stalled and didn't reach target as both teacher's ratio and youth NEET increased
- On the gender integrated index, Sierra Leone performs weakly on the 3rd dimension as entrepreneurship and economic opportunities are still not inclusive for women, and inequality persists in managerial positions

Togo is one the region's top performers in the three thematic areas



1st quartile 2nd quartile 3rd quartile 4th quartile



**Integrated
HCD index**

**Health
and nutrition**

**Education, skills,
and labor
participation**

**Entrepreneurship,
financial inclusion,
and digital economy**

HCD integrated index performance

Baseline, 2016-18	0.05	0.38	0.35	0.26
Progress made	0.02	0.04	0.03	0.03
Latest value, 2018-20	0.07	0.41	0.38	0.29
Distance to target	0.01	0.01	-0.01	0.00
Target value, 2019-20	0.07	0.40	0.39	0.29
Rank	3	3	3	3
Target value, 2030	0.21	0.52	0.59	0.44

Gender integrated index performance

Latest value	1.07	0.73	0.55
Rank	12	9	7

Success highlights

The government of Togo adopted the “2025 roadmap” acting on three priority areas: the strengthening of inclusion, social harmony and the consolidation of peace

- Strengthening of high-impact interventions in Maternal and Child Health (SONU, SDMNR, SAA, CBD, SM, JPO, Fight against obstetric fistulas) with the support of Technical and Financial partners (UNFPA, WHO, USAID, etc.)
- Significant improvement in education performance since 2010 is linked to efforts to increase duration of schooling even though education quality has remained stable and increased governmental expenditures on this area
- The new governmental strategy also aims at creating of jobs for young people leveraging on a strengthened and modernized economy

Challenges

- Despite progress on increasing access to primary education, there is a high dropout rate from lower secondary education due to a limited school offer, high cost of secondary schooling
- Togo's good performance on HCD integrated index does not extend to the gender parity area where it performs below the region average, especially on Health and nutrition and Education, skills, and labor participation

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- [International Telecommunication Union](#)
- [Afrobarometer](#)
- Experts inputs
- Stakeholders consultations



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