

Joint Master in Global Economic Governance and Public Affairs

*Partnerships for Sustainable
Development - How do civil
society organizations contribute
to the delivery of the SDG?
Working for Wasa case study*

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ABSTRACT

This thesis delves into the crucial contribution made by civil society organizations (CSOs) in accomplishing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of CSO partnerships and collaborations towards advancing the SDGs. By including *Working for Wasa* as an international cooperation project case study, it provides practical evidence of the findings. The research employs a mixed-methods approach using qualitative analysis by reviewing existing literature to garner detailed insights that help with comprehending sustainable development concepts' historical background. Additionally, the significance of critical tools such as crowdsourcing and other aspects of global governance frameworks are thoroughly examined, including measurement indicators that could impact CSO. It highlights Goal 17 – Partnerships for the goals – undeniably essential towards successful SDGs achievements. This emphasizes effective collaboration among various stakeholders with collective effort aimed at achieving shared goals. Decolonization is also a topic under consideration, deliberating implications regarding an effective global strategy implementation diverse enough to capture all nations worldwide, not just North-South collaborations. This research's ultimate goal is to evaluate how *Working for Wasa* resulted in positive impacts on its beneficiaries via practical information grounded in evidence-based research and ground-level data. The theoretical analyses aim towards supporting these positive effects on partnership cooperation resulting in achieving sustainable development objectives effectively.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	05
Methodology	07
Chapter 1 – Sustainable Development	09
1.1. The historical trajectory leading to the SDGs.	11
1.2. Shaping the Agenda 2030	17
1.3. Crowdsourcing as a meaningful tool to address global governance	20
1.4. Guiding assumptions	24
Chapter 2 – Global Governance	25
2.1. Measuring the impact through indicators	27
2.2. SDG 17 – Partnerships for the goals	31
2.3. Culture matters: decolonialisation debate	34
2.4. Guiding assumptions	37
Chapter 3 – <i>Working for Wasa</i> Case Study	38
3.1. The operational context of <i>Working for Wasa</i>	40
3.2. How does <i>Working for Wasa</i> aligns with the SDGs	42
3.3. Measuring the impact	45
Conclusion	48
List of acronyms	50
Bibliography	52
Annexes	62

INTRODUCTION

The pursuit of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals has become a global imperative, requiring concerted efforts from governments, international organizations, and civil society. Amongst these actors, civil society organizations play a vital role in delivering sustainable development outcomes at the grassroots level. This thesis aims to investigate the contributions of CSOs in advancing the SDGs, with a specific focus on the partnership dynamics and funding challenges faced by small CSOs. By examining the case of *Working for Wasa*, the main project abroad of Students for Humanity ODV – a non-profit organization operating in the village of Wasa, Tanzania – this study seeks to shed light on the significance of bottom-up approach in achieving sustainable development goals, particularly in the context of SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals.

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) served as a necessary precursor to tackling global sustainable development challenges. However, implementations suffered due to limited participation and a top-down approach that excluded key actors like CSOs and local communities, essential for sustainable development drives efficacy. In contrast to MDG's shortcomings, SDGs' inclusive participatory framework focuses on developing more ambitious objectives across social environmental-economic spheres. It recognizes that partnerships between diverse stakeholder's importance is conducive to leveraging essential sources. Those, such as expertise proficiency knowledge, pivotal for effecting transformational positive change – progress, is direly needed since we're on the so-called *Decade of Action* timeline. Achieving the targets necessitates adopting bottom-up, participatory, and multi-stakeholder approaches compared to traditional top-down approaches. In this scenario, CSOs are playing fundamental roles centring on their grassroots-level structures and knowledge of local needs. These organizations play a crucial role in implementing sustainable development projects, mobilizing communities, and advocating for policy changes that address the root causes of social and environmental issues.

The primary research question driving this study is about how do civil society organizations contribute to the delivery of the SDGs, particularly when faced with limited funding? By examining the case of *Working for Wasa*, this research aims to demonstrate

that despite the financial constraints experienced by small CSOs, their ability to achieve sustainable development goals and create a huge impact where they operate, is greatly enhanced through robust partnerships and collaborations among CSOs, governments, private sector entities, and other stakeholders. Horizontal partnerships, which involve collaborations among CSOs, facilitate the exchange of knowledge, resources, and best practices, enabling collective action towards shared goals. Vertical partnerships, on the other hand, involve collaborations between CSOs and government agencies, enabling policy advocacy, resource mobilization, and the integration of grassroots perspectives into decision-making processes. By examining the interplay between funding sources, partnerships, and the achievement of the SDGs, this research aims to contribute to the existing literature on civil society's role in sustainable development. The findings of this study will provide insights into effective strategies for small CSOs to overcome funding limitations and maximize their impact.

As an embedded researcher within *Working for Wasa*, the author's extensive knowledge and experience within the organization may influence the findings of this study. Acknowledging this potential bias, it is important to emphasize that the research design and methodologies employed in this thesis are carefully crafted to ensure objectivity and rigor in data collection and analysis. However, the embedded research approach offers a unique opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of the organization's operations, challenges, and achievements, enabling a comprehensive exploration of the research question.

METHODOLOGY

The author's dual role as a student in GEGPA and a part-time project manager for *Working for Wasa* represents an exciting prospect. The opportunity for academic analysis of the author's own work allows for a thorough investigation of concerns that are frequently ignored by outside observers. This study about the importance of civil society organizations in the delivery of the SDGs is the natural consequence of a two-years' experience in this field.

The methodology for addressing the importance of partnerships for sustainable development and the role of *Working for Wasa* in the delivery of the SDGs will involve a thorough research process. Firstly, a comprehensive literature review will be conducted to establish how modern society has come in touch with sustainable development and its implementation from a global governance perspective. Furthermore, it will be addressed the role of civil society organizations in delivering the SDGs through participatory democracy, with particular focus on SDG 17 – partnerships for the goals. This review will draw from a range of sources, including academic journals, reports from international organizations, and relevant Students for Humanity documents. Secondly,

The methodology employed in the case study involved conducting interviews to gather data and insights related to the research question. The interviews were designed to capture both qualitative and quantitative information from various stakeholders involved in the *Working for Wasa* project, including local staff and beneficiaries of the project. A stakeholder analysis was conducted in order to provide a clearer understanding of the case study's environment to the reader (Figure 1). The interviews will explore their perspectives on the importance of partnerships, the challenges faced in collaborative efforts, and the outcomes achieved through cooperation.

The first survey (Table 1, 2, and 3) consisted of 30 questions and was administered to a sample of 84 students. It aimed to gather information about their knowledge and perceptions the impact of the *Working for Wasa* project. The survey responses were initially collected in Swahili, the local language, and later translated into English with the precious assistance of Sporah, the school's secretary. This language translation was crucial in understanding the nuances and perspectives shared by the participants,

highlighting the challenges associated with conducting research in developing countries with cultural and language barriers.

The second questionnaire (Table 4) was administered to five key community members in Wasa. Notably, they are Baba Stanislaus, the head of the village, Baba Moussa, the vice-Baba, David, the school's principal, Mr. Alphons, the engineer and Beroti, the seminarist who helps volunteers in loco with translations. This survey aimed to capture the perceived impact of the *Working for Wasa* project on the village and its inhabitants. The survey focused on gathering qualitative data about changes in living conditions, community development, and overall well-being resulting from the project. Those questions provided a substantive assessment of the project's outcomes and the community's perspective on its effectiveness.

Throughout the interview process, significant effort was made to overcome the challenges of working remotely and navigating the cultural barriers. Despite the distance, the author ensured effective communication and collaboration with the participants. Additionally, cultural sensitivity and understanding were prioritized to ensure the interviews were conducted in a respectful and meaningful manner. Overall, the interview process in this research project required meticulous planning, translation efforts, and cultural sensitivity to ensure accurate data collection and interpretation. The author recognizes the importance of adapting research methodologies to the local context, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the project's impact on the community.

It is important to acknowledge some limitations of this study. The findings may be specific to the context of Students for Humanity ODV and the *Working for Wasa* project, limiting generalizability to other CSOs or sustainable development initiatives. Additionally, self-reporting biases and limited sample size may influence the findings. These limitations will be considered when interpreting the results and drawing conclusions.

CHAPTER 1 – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The key concepts of sustainable development and global governance have grown in importance in the field of development studies. This following chapter will review the existing literature about these notions and how they connect to one another, offering a theoretical framework for comprehending how they apply to the case study of *Working for Wasa*. Furthermore, we will explore how Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are designed to work together towards sustainable development, and how the implementation of these goals requires effective global governance.

The concept of sustainable development (SD) has emerged from the recognition that development cannot be pursued at the expense of future generations, which has always been the central objective of development (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). SD has been defined as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Brundtland, 1987). According to its definition, SD is based on the principles of environmental protection, social equity, and economic development and it has become increasingly important in the context of global governance, as it is recognized that the achievement of sustainable development requires the cooperation and coordination of multiple actors, including governments, International Organizations (IOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and the private sector (Bäckstrand, 2006).

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were adopted in 2000 by the United Nation (UN) as a global framework for development. They served to focus global attention on key development goals and to build consensus on priorities. However, the MDGs have also been criticized for their limited focus on generating results and addressing root causes of problems. By 2015, it was clear that significant progress had been made towards some of these goals, but others remained unfulfilled. For example, the goal of reducing maternal mortality by three-quarters was not met in many regions, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa (Kyei-Nimakoh et al., 2016). Similarly, while access to primary education improved significantly, there were still disparities in enrolment rates, particularly for girls and marginalized groups (Bulman, 2015). As a result, the UN developed a more ambitious

agenda for sustainable development, known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which aim to be achieved by 2030.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015, represent a significant step forward for SD, as they are more comprehensive and more ambitious than the MDGs. They cover a broader range of issues, ranging from poverty eradication to environmental sustainability, and they aim to address the structural causes of poverty and inequality. A universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure peace and prosperity for all. The SDGs comprise 17 goals, 169 targets, and 230 indicators that aim to address the interconnected global challenges of poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, and social injustice (Sachs et al., 2019). Numerous studies have explored the potential of the SDGs to promote sustainable development. For instance, one study found that the SDGs can provide a framework for integrating environmental, social, and economic dimensions of sustainability, and for fostering multi-stakeholder engagement and cooperation (Nilsson, Griggs & Visbeck, 2016). Another study emphasized the importance of aligning national development strategies with the SDGs to ensure that they are locally relevant and effective (UNDP, 2016).

However, despite the potential benefits of the SDGs, several challenges remain in their implementation. The SDG agenda has been heavily criticized for its limited focus on generating results and addressing root causes of problems, among other things. The quality of the SDGs as a global governance instrument has also been questioned, particularly in terms of its ability to drive transformative change. One issue is the lack of political will and commitment to the SDGs, which can limit their impact and effectiveness (Stiglitz, Sen & Fitoussi 2009). Additionally, the SDGs face challenges related to data availability, quality, and comparability, which can hinder monitoring and evaluation efforts (UNSD, 2017). Overall, the SDGs represent a significant step towards a more sustainable future, but their success depends on concerted efforts by governments, civil society, the private sector, and other stakeholders. By prioritizing sustainable development, we can work towards a more equitable, just, and prosperous world for all.

Part of this study is about the SDG 17 – partnerships the goals – which is an essential element of the 2030 agenda for SD. It is probably the key to success for the

implementation of the goals. It emphasizes the importance of cooperation and collaboration among all stakeholders, including governments, civil society, private sector, academia, and international organizations, to achieve SD. Especially in developing countries, where access to resources and knowledge is frequently restricted, partnerships may aid in resource mobilization, capacity building, information sharing, and the promotion of innovation and technology transfer. By strengthening partnerships, actors involved also boost democratic government by promoting accountability and openness (Maltais et al., 2018).

1.1. The historical trajectory leading to the SDGs

In contemporary era it was Truman who first spoke about development (Truman, 1949). It is therefore a recent concept and begins with the era of cooperation for the development of countries more backward than others. Truman identified production as an instrument of promoting welfare, but above all peace. This has been belied by reality, growth in income is not always accompanied by a better level of widespread well-being. There is therefore a close link between the beginnings of development economics and the liberal-capitalist ethos: the countries that see a greater productivity are in fact the capitalist ones. This has created the idea of a single model to follow: one out of backwardness by imitating the richer and more productive countries, through urbanisation and industrialisation. Several authors emphasise the link between development and growth (Solow, 1956).

If wealth is identified with the level of economic activity, it is natural that the prevailing goal of any country should be to expand economic growth and aim for the highest possible GDP per capita growth rate. President Truman's 1949 inaugural speech, which attributes the origin of the term "underdevelopment" to economically disadvantaged areas, highlights the potential for significant industrial growth, improved living standards, increased production as the key to prosperity and peace, and leveraging scientific and industrial progress in advanced nations to enhance the development of underprivileged regions (Truman, 1949). Between underdevelopment and development, one sees a continuity: underdevelopment is the initial condition of development,

identified with economic growth, and the acceleration of production appears to be the instrument to reduce the gap between underdevelopment and possible development. Underdevelopment is defined in terms of the measurable distance between the situation in rich and poor countries, and development consists of reducing this distance through a process of imitation whereby the Western model of society is the one to follow. The experience of post-war reconstruction in Western Europe, the resulting improvements in living conditions and the development of Keynesian thinking, affects development policies even for economically backward areas. Such policies must be aimed at the growth of the national product that increases the availability of material goods. The success of the Marshall Plan in reconstruction helped to spread the idea that the welfare conditions can be improved through economic growth facilitated by foreign aid, planning and cooperation. The condition of underdevelopment is fundamentally blamed on low capital accumulation of capital and the low productivity of resources. According to this interpretation, the condition of underdevelopment could be overcome by an increase in capital accumulation to accelerate the growth of the industrial sector. Fundamental to the take-off of underdeveloped countries is help from industrialised countries with financial transfers, technical assistance and expansion of trade (Sen, 1984).

In the 1960s, the situation of economic stagnation and struggles for independence, common to many Third World countries, makes it clear that the prospect of an imminent take-off for these countries is not near and that the Western model of development is not automatically applicable everywhere. The theory of development based on growth is questioned and even challenged. The characteristics of underdevelopment, such as low incomes, low savings, unemployment, monoculture, economic and social inequalities, marginalisation and dependency, begin to be considered no longer as initial stages of the development process or deviations that can in any case be eliminated by growth that is inadequate to break vicious circles of underdevelopment. Above all, some economists and sociologists of the economic commission for Latin America of the United Nations argue that underdevelopment would not be an original stage but would depend on the interrelationships between countries. Development and underdevelopment are interrelated phenomena. The integration of backward countries into the international system would not only prevent their development, but even increase their backwardness. This structuralist approach criticises the possibility of the Western model of development

to break the vicious circle of underdevelopment and proposes policies of planning and state intervention, industrialisation as a function of import substitution, autonomous development and economic integration. Statistical evidence shows that the benefits of growth do not accrue to many strata of the population: rapid growth at national level does not reduce poverty or inequality, nor does it provide sufficient productive employment. And where poverty persists, it becomes even more dramatic as average living standards rise. To translate into development, growth must be aimed at improving the well-being of the population and thus be accompanied by a poverty reduction, increased employment, education, participation.

Mahbub ul Haq (1977), who inspired the reports later published by the United Nations human development programme (UNDP), states that we were been taught to focus on the national product, because then this would cure poverty, but one must instead deal with poverty to “cure” the national product. In 1974, a highly influential work titled “Redistribution with Growth” (Jolly, 1976) was published, resulting from joint research by the World Bank (WB) and the University of Sussex. It emphasized the simultaneous possibility of promoting economic growth and reducing inequalities. Also in 1974, a United Nations resolution called for the establishment of a new international economic order based on greater equity, increased financial assistance to developing countries, enhanced self-sufficiency and participation of developing nations in global trade, and better protection of their resources through regulation of multinational corporations.

In the 1970s, after more than two decades of sustained economic growth, the international economic system entered a recession. In that period saw the suspension of the dollar’s convertibility into gold and the energy crisis with major consequences on the industrial sector of industrialised countries. The growth proposed by the western model highlights serious complications inherent in the model itself: there were shortages of the necessary resources and dangers for the balance of planet earth. A new ecological conscience focuses on the interdependence between the economic system and the ecological system, and the sustainability of the model followed, drawing attention to the existence of limits to development. The energy crisis, the slowdown in the growth of industrialised countries and the emergence of environmental problems draw attention to the exhaustibility of natural and environmental capital. It is no longer only the land of the

classical economists that determines situations of scarcity, but gradually other resources: first mineral and energy resources, then the environmental ones.

It was precisely the focus on the environment that leads to the introduction of the ecological dimension into the concept of development. In 1972, the UN Conference on the Human Environment was held in Stockholm, which constitutes an important global reflection on human future, economic growth and environmental protection. On this occasion, debating the problems that now clearly threaten the entire planet, it was confirmed that maintaining and restoring the earth's capacity to produce renewable resources and the appropriate planning and management of natural resources are indispensable conditions for the well-being of present and future generations. The UN assembly's policy document "What now" (Dag Hammarskjöld, 1975) incorporates and deepens many previous analyses, proposing the following requirements for a development defined as "different": satisfaction of basic needs, freedom and justice, self-sufficiency, harmony with the environment, participation. According to Galtung, development must not entail dependency, but equality, both between and within countries (Galtung, 1986). Thus, must not be based on competition, but on solidarity, enabling competition, allowing individuals maximum freedom and opportunities for realisation based on their own strengths. In 1976, the World Tripartite Conference on Employment, Income Distribution and Social Progress took place, organised by the ILO. In this occasion an approach to development was promoted that, in contrast to the theories that consider the fulfilment of the basic needs of individuals as a consequence of the growth process, argues that it is by starting from basic needs that this process can be promoted (ILO, 1976).

The movement for the creation of a new international economic order led to the formation of an independent commission, chaired by former German Chancellor Willy Brandt, to discuss and analyse the development situation and issues worldwide. This commission published the widely resonating report "North-South: A Program for Survival" (Brandt, 1980), which called for stabilizing the prices of primary commodities, promoting profit growth, eliminating protectionism, adopting an international code of conduct to regulate the activities of multinational corporations, and substantially increasing development aid. Official assistance was urged to reach at least 0.7% of GNP by 1985 and 1% by 2000 (Brandt, 1980).

In 1983, the United Nations established the World Commission on Development and the Environment. The report of the commission (WCED, 1987), known by the name of President Harlem Brundtland, defines sustainable development as development that is able to meet the needs of the present generation, without compromising the ability of future generations to satisfy their own. The concept of sustainable development constitutes an important starting point from approaches based on limits to development, because it represents the possibility of combining economic and social progress with environmental protection.

In 1990, a new approach to development came into being, that of human development (UNDP, 1990), which focuses on people and what they do, or can do, during their lives (UNDP, 1990). Human development is the process of expanding the opportunities available to people, to all men and women. Those opportunities do not only concern the economic sphere and therefore cannot be summarised in the possibility of a higher income. The ability of a person to have access to an income, not as an end, but as a means to increase well-being, represents one of these opportunities, but it is certainly not the only one. There are other opportunities such as living a long and healthy life, acquiring knowledge, having political freedom, personal security, guaranteeing human rights.

The end of the twentieth century marked a pivotal moment in the global efforts towards development, as international organizations and governments joined forces to finance numerous projects aimed at steering towards sustainable development. The defining element is the collapse of the USSR and the opening up to trade of the states born from this dissolution. There are great disparities in growth performance with serious marginalisation phenomena. Claiming a universal development model proves to be an inadequate choice, which is why individual countries are invited to prepare their own development strategies. In this period there is a worsening poverty and hunger, human development indices are falling. This is very worrying because we had always seen a growth in the human development index (HDI). The concentration of countries that show these negative results is in Sub-Saharan Africa, also under the influence of the spread of AIDS. The other area strongly characterised by countries where there has been a reduction in the HDI is the former Soviet Union where the change in economic rules and the opening to the market led to a reduction in incomes.

During the Millennium Summit, leaders from around the world gather in New York to examine the challenges of the future and the role of the United Nations in addressing them. The special session of the United Nations General Assembly defines the development goals that the international community must pursue and acknowledges a collective responsibility for their achievement (United Nations, 2000). UN member states commit to eliminating extreme poverty and hunger, ensuring universal primary education, promoting gender equality, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, ensuring environmental sustainability, and developing a global partnership for development. These goals are translated into quantitatively measurable targets, to be mostly achieved by 2015. With this approach, development policies are assessed based on the measurable results they produce. However, as the target date for achieving the MDGs approached, it became evident that these goals were limited in scope and failed to adequately address the complexity and interdependence of various development dimensions. Consequently, the global community embarked on a transformative journey to formulate a more ambitious and all-encompassing framework, leading to the emergence of the SDGs.

One of the primary reasons for the transition from the MDGs to the SDGs was the limited coverage of the MDGs. The eight MDGs focused predominantly on social issues such as poverty, education, health, and gender equality, but paid relatively less attention to environmental sustainability, economic growth, governance, and peace-building (Griggs et al., 2013). This narrow focus failed to capture the multidimensional nature of development challenges and hindered comprehensive progress. While the MDGs achieved notable successes in certain areas, they fell short of achieving the desired outcomes across all regions and sectors. Unequal progress and persistent gaps persisted, particularly in areas such as income inequality, environmental degradation, and access to essential services (United Nations, 2015). The MDGs' fragmented approach and the absence of an integrated framework hindered efforts to address interconnected challenges and achieve sustainable development. The world experienced significant shifts in the global landscape since the formulation of the MDGs. Emerging issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, increasing inequality, and the rise of new technologies demanded a more holistic and forward-looking approach. The SDGs aimed to integrate social, economic, and environmental dimensions of development while taking into

account emerging challenges and opportunities in a rapidly changing world (Sachs, 2012). The process of formulating the SDGs was far more inclusive and participatory compared to the development of the MDGs. Extensive consultations involving governments, civil society organizations, academia, and private sector stakeholders contributed to a broader consensus on the global development agenda (United Nations, 2014). The inclusive nature of the SDG process ensured that a wider range of perspectives and priorities were considered, making the goals more relevant and representative of diverse needs and aspirations.

1.2. Shaping the 2030 Agenda

The process of defining the 2030 Agenda has witnessed a high level of participation not only from the United Nations system and its member states but also from actors in international civil society, resulting in a wide array of proposals and documents that have made the synthesis into a unified text complex. The adoption of the United Nations Global Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 represents a historic event from multiple perspectives. It has provided a clear verdict on the unsustainability of the previous development model, not only environmentally but also economically and socially. Consequently, the notion that sustainability is solely an environmental matter has been surpassed, and an integrated vision of the different dimensions of development has been affirmed. All countries, without distinction between developed, emerging, and developing, are called upon to contribute to the necessary effort to steer the world toward sustainability. Therefore, every country must commit to defining its own national strategy for sustainable development (NSSD), which enables the achievement of the respective objectives while being accountable for the results attained within a process coordinated by the United Nations. The implementation of the Agenda requires a strong involvement of all societal components, ranging from businesses to the public sector, from civil society to philanthropic institutions, from universities and research centres to media and cultural operators.

The comprehensive and coherent financial framework aligned with the achievement of the SDGs was outlined in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. Signed in July 2015 by the

193 member states of the United Nations during the Third International Conference on Financing for Development held in the Ethiopian capital (UN, 2015). The Agenda identifies over a hundred concrete measures to address the economic, social, and environmental challenges that the world must face. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda highlights the integration of financing plans at the national level as a necessary condition to facilitate the flow of all financial resources, both public and private, towards achieving sustainable development goals. Based on this, the Agenda delineates a new model of sustainable development centred on good governance and shared responsibilities at all levels. It emphasizes the priority of national-level action, including resource mobilization, the importance of developing favourable and consistent policies, and the role of the private sector. Regarding the latter aspect, the document repeatedly emphasizes the importance of aligning private investments with the achievement of the SDGs. Countries are urged to implement measures to improve tax systems and counter both tax evasion and illicit financial flows.

The United Nations General Assembly adopted the agenda on July 27, 2015, through Resolution 69/313, as an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. One notable analysis of the implementation provisions of the Agenda and the broader international development financing framework is the Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2020, prepared by the United Nations in collaboration with 60 agencies of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development, which brings together UN agencies and partner international organizations (UN, 2020). Published on April 4, 2020, the report takes into account the severe economic, social, and health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. It urges governments to swiftly adopt appropriate measures to address immediate needs and prevent a global debt crisis with potentially devastating consequences. In particular, the 2020 Report highlights the gravity of the situation faced by poor countries, which were already at risk of per capita income contraction prior to the pandemic, and urgently appeals to governments to take a series of measures, including: suspending debt payments for least developed countries and other low-income countries upon their request; maintaining financial stability through liquidity provision and strengthening the global financial safety net; mitigating the sharp contraction of economic activity and supporting the most vulnerable countries through a coordinated global response that includes expanding public health spending, paid sick

leave, public transfers, debt reduction, and other national-level measures; increasing concessional financing from international sources; removing trade barriers that affect supply chains to encourage international trade and stimulate inclusive growth (UN, 2020). Furthermore, it emphasizes the need for donor countries, despite domestic pressures, to reverse the trend of reducing official development assistance, which is even more essential for least developed countries at this stage. The Report also presents policy proposals aimed at harnessing the potential of digital technologies, which have been prominently highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic as they have facilitated teleworking and enabled the continuity of various economic and educational activities. However, access to digital technologies still suffers from significant gaps, with nearly half of the global population estimated to lack internet access (UN, 2020).

At the global level, the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) is assigned the central role in monitoring the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the outcomes of policies implemented for that purpose, with governments being primarily responsible (UN, 2015). The HLPF comprises all United Nations member states and members of specialized agencies. The main task of the HLPF, which serves as the principal UN platform on sustainable development, is to assess progress, achievements, and challenges for all countries and ensure that the Agenda remains “relevant and ambitious” (Miola & Schiltz, 2019). The modalities and timing of progress and outcome assessment (follow-up and review) were defined in General Assembly resolution 70/299 on July 29, 2016. The document highlights that the objective of the platform, developed by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), is to gather and publish Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) in order to “facilitate the sharing of experiences, successes, challenges, and lessons learned”. The decision to establish the HLPF was made at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro (Rio+20, June 20-22, 2012), which aimed to define a sustainable development agenda for the post-2015 period, following the completion of the Millennium Development Goals phase. The composition and organizational aspects of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development were determined by subsequent General Assembly resolution 67/290 on July 9, 2013. The HLPF convenes annually at the ministerial level under the auspices of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), while every four years, the meeting, with the participation of Heads of State

and Government, takes place under the auspices of the General Assembly. The Forum can adopt intergovernmental negotiated political declarations. The 2016 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the first since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, took place in New York from July 11 to July 20, 2016 (ministerial days on July 18-20), with a focus on the theme “Ensuring that no one is left behind”. During the session, voluntary reviews (VNRs) were conducted by 22 countries, along with thematic reviews of progress on sustainable development goals. Additionally, a series of side events were centred around partnership and capacity building.

Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) are part of the follow-up and review mechanisms of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Paragraph 79 of the Agenda itself encourages member states to “conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels” on a voluntary basis. Subsequent paragraph 84 states that the reviews should be led by the country under review, with the involvement of multiple stakeholders. VNRs aim to facilitate the sharing of experiences and serve as the basis for the periodic reviews conducted by the HLPF, which in turn aim to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Countries undergoing VNRs present written reports made available in the VNR database, where data on achieved results are also included.

1.3. Crowdsourcing as a significant tool to address global governance

In recent decades, the international system has undergone significant changes due to the presence of environmental challenges that transcend national borders and require comprehensive solutions. Additionally, the rise of non-state actors has played a crucial role in shaping decision-making processes (Haas, 2004). Global governance, which encompasses both formal and informal mechanisms employed by governments and communities to address common global objectives (Speth & Haas, 2006), has been seen as a way to tackle these issues while including the perspectives of actors beyond nation-states (Ford, 2003). However, while global governance institutions have enhanced the influence of non-state actors in shaping the political system (Biermann & Pattberg, 2008),

there are inherent limitations in this complex endeavour that continue to generate debates, particularly regarding its alignment with the conditions necessary for global democracy. Scholars have identified three types of deficiencies within global environmental governance — namely, the democratic deficit, governance deficit, and implementation deficit (Bäckstrand, 2006).

This chapter primarily focuses on the democratic deficit, which pertains to the lack of legitimacy characterized by insufficient and representative participation and accountability within global governance. Legitimacy, in this context, refers to the extent to which political power is derived from valid rules, rooted in shared beliefs regarding the authority source and structure of the governing system, and established with the consent of those being governed (Saward, 2000). Global governance raises legitimacy concerns because sustainable development policymaking affects various non-state actors who have not explicitly consented to be governed by rules formulated in international forums (Bernstein, 2004). Therefore, a crucial question that motivates this study is: how does the participation of CSOs in global governance impact the pursuit of democracy at the global level? Indeed, meaningful engagement in the global arena necessitates participation and influence (Fisher & Green, 2004). Moreover, the quality and extent of participation directly influence the perceived legitimacy of global governance institutions.

Global civil society is defined as a network of relationships that provides opportunities for political involvement (Warkentin, 2001). While scholars have suggested that increasing the participation of civil society, particularly non-governmental organizations (NGOs), in global decision-making processes can help overcome the democratic deficit (Bernauer & Betzold, 2012; Scholte, 2002), it is crucial to ensure that such participation is constructive and effective (Gemmil et al., 2002). However, the involvement of civil society alone may not be sufficient to address democratic shortcomings. Non-state actors may lack legitimacy, as they are not directly accountable to an electorate that selects them to represent their interests (Bernauer and Betzold, 2012). There is also a concern that global civil society actors may replicate socioeconomic imbalances found in other international institutions, serving the interests of the industrialized world (Biermann and Pattberg, 2008). To foster inclusivity and fairness in environmental governance, mechanisms for participation need to be viewed as fair by all

stakeholders (Biermann, 2007). Managing power differentials within participation activities is crucial, and creative techniques can enhance perceptions of fairness and validity (Reed, 2008). Crowdsourcing, a process where tasks are outsourced to a larger network of people, has emerged as an innovative approach to expanding participation. By leveraging information technology and broadening the pool of potential participants, crowdsourcing combines top-down management with bottom-up open innovation (Prpic et al., 2014). Thus, can be an effective tool to address the democratic deficit in global governance, specifically in the context of post-2015 sustainable development policy.

Crowdsourcing has been widely utilized throughout the policy cycle, covering various phases such as agenda-setting, problem definition, policy design, implementation, enforcement, and evaluation. However, the majority of studies have primarily focused on its application in agenda-setting (Prpic et al., 2015). Although the concept of governments seeking citizen assistance in service delivery is not new (Dutil, 2015), advancements in information technology have significantly expanded government's capacity to engage the public, leading to potential improvements in governance (Spiliotopoulou et al., 2014). Research on crowdsourcing and governance has highlighted how the use of information technology can influence participation and overall governance quality.

Crowdsourcing, on one hand, can enhance the legitimacy of political processes by providing new avenues for participation, enhancing inclusiveness in decision-making, and increasing transparency (Lehdonvirta & Bright, 2015). It serves as a platform for argumentation, idea generation, and microtasking, allowing individuals to contribute their input (Aitamurto & Landemore, 2015). Inclusiveness, in terms of the size and diversity of contributors, is considered a best practice in policy crowdsourcing and can result in more input, better ideas, and a stronger sense of ownership over the outcomes (Aitamurto & Landemore, 2015). Transparency, often employed in global environmental governance, plays a crucial role in informing and empowering stakeholders while improving environmental conditions (Gupta, 2010). Increased transparency can enhance trust in political institutions, facilitating deference to authority. Therefore, crowdsourcing presents new opportunities to address governance issues, strengthen communities, empower marginalized groups, and foster civic participation (Bott et al., 2011).

On the other hand, although crowdsourcing can enhance participation, it may not necessarily lead to greater deliberation (Aitamurto, 2012). Deliberation involves reasoned debate and discussion where participants are willing to revise preferences based on new information and claims from fellow participants (Chambers, 2003). With increased inclusiveness, there is a potential for more noise in the system without the guarantee that marginalized voices will emerge, and contributions will be reasonable and well-informed. It is important to acknowledge that civil society is not a society of equals and is not entirely independent of official authority (Somerville, 2011). Additionally, questions persist about the quality of decisions made through crowdsourcing as a participation platform. Issues related to self-selected contributors can hinder efforts to obtain diverse perspectives unless administrators actively strive to include a broad array of participants (Radu et al., 2015). The design and management of crowdsourcing activities also play a significant role in achieving quality deliberation.

To enhance fairness and promote wider participation in crowdsourcing efforts, future initiatives should address the challenges associated with unequal access to technology, commonly referred to as the “digital divide”. Limited prior experience with information technologies and the absence of a culture of openness pose significant barriers to embracing electronic forms of participation. Overcoming the digital divide requires infrastructural and financial support, particularly in developing countries, to ensure web-based contributions are not privileged over other forms of participation. Offline outreach efforts, such as paper ballots and on-the-ground surveys, have proven to be essential in engaging individuals living in extreme poverty, women, indigenous groups, rural populations, and those with disabilities. Furthermore, it is crucial to consider the relationship between the source of participation and the specific crowd it attracts.

Participatory platforms should allow for multiple submission pathways, accommodating diverse electronic communication preferences. Allowing stakeholders to engage through their preferred means of communication, such as text messaging, would encourage broader and more inclusive participation, particularly from underrepresented regions. Integrating contributions from various channels into a unified interface ensures that no form of participation is marginalized. Crowdsourcing in global governance represents a novel and relatively unexplored approach to fostering global civic engagement. It offers a unique opportunity to expand participation in agenda-setting and

policy development processes more rapidly and inclusively than ever before. However, significant challenges persist in achieving truly equitable, global, and representative participation. Further research is necessary to understand the factors influencing variation in participation, the effects of crowdsourcing across different stages of the policy process, the experiences of crowdsourcing participants, and its impact on policy outcomes. Through continued study of this technological innovation, we can assess whether crowdsourcing contributes to the democratic legitimacy of global governance or merely perpetuates power imbalances within the international system.

1.4. Guiding assumptions

This section aims to provide an overview of the underlying assumptions that guide the research and analysis conducted throughout this study. It serves as a guiding framework for understanding the perspective and approach taken in addressing the research question. The first chapter revolves around the belief that participatory approaches are essential for achieving sustainable development goals. The first two sections (chapter 1.1. and 1.2.) provide the theoretical framework where *Working for Wasa* operates and its limitations, while the third one, gives a reasonable solution to the problem. It is assumed that crowdsourcing, as a participatory approach, has the potential to enhance global governance and decision-making processes. By harnessing the collective intelligence and diverse perspectives of a wider audience, crowdsourcing can generate innovative solutions, foster inclusivity, and empower individuals to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs. *Working for Wasa* lacks trust from governmental agencies, except for the Italian embassy in Tanzania and the Tanzanian embassy in Italy. When it comes to public funding, it is truly difficult to be included in the list of beneficiaries unless one is a large organization, which ultimately channels the funds to a select circle of elite CSOs. This “institutionalizes” the larger CSOs and leaves out the smaller ones, which, precisely because they are less structured, have a significant impact on smaller communities. Due to this, CSOs are often in conflict with governments preventing the achievement of the SDGs. In the so-called *Decade of Action*, global governance shall improve vertical cooperation directing the funds directly on the ground, where sustainable development projects are being implemented.

CHAPTER 2 – GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

Global governance refers to the collective management of global issues that transcend national borders. It involves the coordination and cooperation of multiple actors, including states, international organizations, civil society organizations, and the private sector (Bernstein & Cashore, 2007). The concept of global governance has become increasingly important in the context of sustainable development, as it is recognized that the achievement of sustainable development requires the cooperation and coordination of multiple actors at the global level (Biermann & Pattberg, 2008). Scholarly debates around global governance focus on the role of international organizations, states, civil society, and other actors in shaping global governance processes (Keohane & Nye, 2000). The literature also discusses the challenges and opportunities posed by globalization, economic interdependence, and geopolitical transformations (Held & McGrew, 2007). Several paradigms and analytical frameworks are used to examine the effectiveness, legitimacy, and accountability of global governance, including the neo-liberal, critical, and global governance perspective. Overall, the literature highlights the importance of global governance in addressing complex global challenges such as climate change, human rights, and global health.

The relationship between SD and global governance is complex and multifaceted. On the one hand, SD requires effective global governance mechanisms that can coordinate and regulate the actions of multiple actors. On the other hand, global governance mechanisms are themselves subject to the principles of SD, as they must ensure that their actions do not compromise environmental, social, or economic sustainability. One key challenge in the relationship between SD and global governance is the tension between economic development and environmental protection. Some scholars argue that economic development is necessary to achieve SD, while others argue that economic growth should be limited to ensure environmental sustainability (Kates et al., 2005). This tension is particularly evident in debates surrounding climate change, where economic growth is often seen as a barrier to the adoption of effective climate policies (Victor, 2011).

The aim of this thesis is to examine the role and impact of the SDGs in the global governance arena, with a particular focus on civil society participation in the delivery of

the 2030 Agenda. The emphasis of this literature review is on the contribution of civil society to the SDGs, notably through participatory governance and democracy. This study makes the case through a critical examination of pertinent literature that participatory democracy and governance may aid in the localization and implementation of the SDGs and that civil society engagement is a crucial component of SDG delivery.

By providing a forum for public participation, advocacy, and accountability, civil society organizations (CSOs) play a crucial part in achieving the SDGs. Kanyongolo and Pachai (2018) claim that CSOs may help marginalized communities participate in the SDG implementation process by ensuring that their needs are met and that their views are heard. CSOs may also mobilize resources, develop capacity, and track advancement toward SDG objectives through their networks and collaborations (Kanyongolo & Pachai, 2018). Their knowledge and experience are useful to create indicators, benchmarks, measurements, and other tools to track progress toward SDGs. This data may be used to pinpoint regions that require more effort and to hold governments and other stakeholders responsible for meeting SD targets. Participatory democracy and governance are essential because they give the civil society a way to participate in decision-making. Citizens must actively participate in the policymaking process in order for them to influence the creation, execution, and assessment of policies and programs (Gaventa, 2006). On the other hand, participatory governance entails working together with the government, civil society, and other stakeholders to manage public affairs (Sintomer et al., 2012). The SDGs' localization entails tailoring the global objectives to the regional setting while taking into consideration the unique requirements, priorities, and capabilities of various communities. By ensuring that the needs of local communities are addressed, their voices are heard, and their engagement is encouraged, participatory democracy and governance may aid in the localization and implementation of the SDGs (Hertog & McNeill, 2018).

Finally, finding an all-encompassing definition of the phenomenon of decolonisation can be a tough challenge, due to its many facets and the fact that it has become a relatively recent subject of study which authors are still questioning. Starting this analysis from a wide definition shared by a majority of scholars the term “decolonisation” refers to that process of “questioning and unpacking how colonial and hegemonic structures of power continue to produce contemporary inequalities, and reflecting on how these highly unequal structures can be addressed” (Krauss, 2018). In other words, decolonising means

to eradicate the idea of the atavistic superiority and privilege of the West which continues to vitiate certain sectors, first and foremost that of education. Indeed, a test bench to verify the continuity of colonial structures, if any, is to scrutinize postcolonial studies (Haas, & Moinina, 2021). As a corollary, the focus of the debate that has raged since the second half of the last century has endeavoured to demonstrate the existence of a correlation between education decolonisation and the achievement for sustainable development (Uleanya, Rugbeer, & Olaniran, 2019). For the purposes of the analysis that follows, a very relevant aspect to be investigated is represented by the critic perspective of development aid, which - some authors argue - can be seen as an expression of persisting colonialism. Hence, a crucial role can be played by international nongovernmental organization (INGOs) and international volunteering cooperation organizations (IVCOs) in adopting decolonising approaches. More specifically, the decentralization of decision making, the diversification of leadership and target groups and the creation of programmes *in loco* are just some examples of decolonising implementation.

2.1. Measuring the impact through indicators

For decades, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has been the conventional metric used to gauge the economic development and progress of nations. Since its inception, GDP has played a pivotal role in assessing economic performance, as it quantifies the total value of goods and services produced within a country over a specific period. It offers a useful snapshot of a nation's economic output, allowing for comparisons and policy decision-making. However, relying solely on GDP as a development indicator has its limitations. It has become evident that GDP alone is an insufficient measure for capturing the multidimensional aspects of development (Sen et al., 2009). In response to this limitation, the international community initiated a paradigm shift and engaged in a broader discourse on alternative indicators.

In February 2008, French President Nicholas Sarkozy established a body known as the “Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress” (CMEPSP). The primary objective of this commission was to address the limitations of GDP as an indicator of economic performance and social progress. This involved

examining the issues associated with GDP measurement, identifying the need for additional information to develop more relevant indicators of social progress, exploring the feasibility of alternative measurement tools, and determining the appropriate presentation of statistical information (Sen et al., 2009). Recognizing the need for a broader approach to development measurement, the CMEPSP marked a significant turning point. The conference brought together policymakers, researchers, and experts to explore alternative metrics that could complement or replace GDP as the primary measure of progress.

The approach used to aggregate indicators is by combining several elements to represent each nation's general position. This strategy draws inspiration from what people can accomplish and what social indicators reveal. Depending on what is deemed significant, either objectively or subjectively, the blend can be weighted. It is an easy strategy that does not require a lot of information (Sen et al., 2009). This may be seen in the Human Development Index published by the UNDP, which has distinct ranks from conventional economic indicators. However, there are certain issues with this method. It does not take into account unique situations or demonstrate how some groups may have disadvantage over time. The weights assigned to different factors are subjective and have a significant impact on the outcomes. Changes in the GDP factor have a significant long-term impact on how these combined indicators change. Last but not least, this strategy disregards the fact that individuals have different opinions on what matters most in life. These variations are disregarded if everyone uses the same weights. It would be more difficult to compare countries if different weights were used for each one, which would further confuse matters (Sen et al., 2009).

While MDGs have promoted increased health and well-being in many countries by recognising and deliberating on the possible constraints of the MDG framework, they showed uneven progress due to their structure, content and implementation (Manning, 2009). Scholars criticize the MDGs for being led by a limited number of stakeholders, lacking sufficient involvement from developing countries, and disregarding previously agreed-upon development objectives (Fehling et al., 2013). Some argue that the MDGs are considered unachievable and oversimplified, as they do not cater to specific national needs, fail to specify accountable parties, and reinforce top-down interventions. According to Easterly, the targets and indicators used in the MDGs are deemed "unfair to

poor countries”, especially in Africa, due to their construction (Easterly, 2009). The author suggests that the MDGs pose greater challenges for the most impoverished countries, resulting in a more negative assessment of progress in those regions. Easterly argues that measuring changes in proportions makes it more difficult for countries with lower starting points to demonstrate progress (Easterly, 2009). Various authors cite concerns over specific MDG targets and indicators. The arbitrary choice of a poverty line is criticised as well as the general use of average and proportions, making it harder to achieve measurable progress in worst-off countries (Fehling et al., 2013). This suggested that a more “one-world” approach encouraged policy-makers in every country to give greater weight to tackling systemic global issues, of which absolute poverty was only one. It needed to be tested against the strategy of considering a set of indicators linked to absolute poverty. Such a broader approach, which would have been truly global, would have fit issues surrounding inequality, the global commons, security, global governance, etc., more naturally (Manning, 2009).

Relative to the formulation of the MDGs, the process of devising the SDGs was far more participatory, involving consultation with civil society, the private sector and the governments of a far greater number of countries. The result is a far more comprehensive list of goals which included many of the issues that the MDGs were criticised for not addressing (Feeny, 2020). The SDGs are a series of 17 goals, each one including several targets and indicators. Targets specify the goals, and indicators represent the metrics by which to track whether targets are achieved (Ritchie & Mispy, 2018). The monitoring of progress towards achieving the SDGs is based on a panel of 232 global statistical indicators, known as the global indicator framework, designed to measure the 169 SDG targets (UNSD, 2017). These indicators are developed by the Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs), which includes representatives from member states and observers from regional and international agencies. The indicators are developed by the member states. The overall results of actions towards achieving the SDGs are summarized and analysed in the annual report called the “Sustainable Development Goals Report”. The SDGs provide a forum for international discussion and suggest methods of evaluation for progress in a variety of cultural contexts and sustainable development fields. The availability of universally comparable data for SDG monitoring has significantly improved: from 115 indicators in 2016 to 217 indicators in

2022, according to the global SDG database (UNSD, 2022). To properly understand the pace of development toward the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, disparities among areas, and who is being left behind, it is difficult to fully understand the data gaps that still exist in terms of geographic coverage, timeliness, and amount of disaggregation.

However, in order to improve coherence between research and policy, it is necessary to define clear, unambiguous, and measurable targets that can be used to assess the success or failure of a policy (Donohue et al., 2016). While the goals outline what is desirable in a specific area of sustainable development, proper targets and indicator selection – where there are significant interconnections among the SDGs – are ultimately what determine synergy and consistency among the SDGs. In this bottom-up and top-down approach to integration, numbers (i.e., the indicators) correctly reflect what is identified by words and symbols (i.e., the goals), and vice versa. To provide evidence that are compatible with the goals, an in-depth understanding of the goals, targets, and indicators is essential. Goals and indicators will quickly become inconsistent if the latter do not use the same language as the former, or if the former are unclear or use poorly defined words. At the intersection of indicators and goals, targets should specify or make references to quantifiable policy objectives.

The level of ambition of the SDGs has been a topic of debate. Critics argue that the MDGs lacked ambition (Haileamlak, 2014), while others believe that the SDGs are overly ambitious. For instance, the first SDG aims to eradicate poverty, and the second SDG aims to end hunger and discrimination against women and girls worldwide. While these goals are commendable, there are concerns that they may set countries up for failure if they cannot be achieved. Moreover, the SDGs' ambitious nature may be unrealistic, especially considering the ongoing impacts of climate change and the complexity of measuring poverty. Achieving a world without poverty and hunger by 2030 seems virtually impossible, and it is crucial to acknowledge and commend countries that make valuable progress in reducing poverty, rather than labelling them as failures for not completely eradicating it.

Unlike the MDGs, where the responsibility primarily fell on developing countries, the SDGs emphasize the shared responsibility of all countries worldwide. However, the lack of legal binding for the achievement of the SDGs and their targets raises concerns

about accountability (Allen et al., 2016). With multiple governments, the private sector, and civil society involved, accountability becomes challenging, and finger-pointing may occur if the goals are not achieved. While the SDGs improve upon the MDGs by explicitly addressing inequality and aiming to “leave no one behind”, reducing inequality remains a significant policy challenge, and some argue that the proposed targets do not go far enough. According to a 2016 analysis by the Centre for Global Development, the SDG implementation may be substantially hampered because the availability of data was not taken into account when choosing the goals and targets. Only 42% of the 230 SDG indicators have a methodology that is well-established and frequently available, and only 25% of the indicators may be found in the public domain online, according to the report (Dunning & Kalow, 2016). As a result, it becomes hard to gauge development without knowing the starting point. In many circumstances, it would not be possible to determine in 2030 if an SDG has been accomplished. This is particularly relevant for the poorest countries, which lack the resources required to conduct substantial data collection. Even when data are available, how can a certain SDG’s achievement be determined when it has many different targets? If they succeed in all but one of the goal’s targets, will it be considered a failure?

The cost of achieving the SDGs is substantial, with estimates ranging from \$3.3 trillion to \$4.5 trillion per year for developing countries alone (UNCTAD, 2014). Private investment needs to increase alongside public investment and foreign aid to bridge the funding gap. While there is greater engagement from the private sector compared to the MDGs, financing the SDGs remains a significant challenge.

2.2. SDG 17 – Partnerships for the goals

SDG 17, the final Global Goal, focuses on establishing partnerships to support the achievement of the other Sustainable Development Goals SDGs. It includes targets related to overseas development assistance, debt sustainability, technology transfer, capacity building, and international trade (Cooper & French, 2018). Similar to the MDGs, where the final goal emphasized global partnership, SDG 17 recognizes the importance of cooperation and partnerships in sustainable development. However, it also exposes the

contradictions within the voluntarist nature of the international community's approach to development. Progress on translating the goals and visions of the SDGs to reality has been slow and uncoordinated (Wekgari, 2019).

This section examines key challenges that may impede the realization of the 2030 Agenda in general as well as Goal 17 of the SDGs in particular addressing three main issues. Firstly, it examines whether the targets within the goal will genuinely contribute to effective partnerships despite its non-binding nature, or if institutional hurdles hinder progress. Secondly, it questions the extent to which the achievement of SDG 17 is tied to political commitment in implementing it. Good governance issues may prove to be a major obstacle to its realisation. Lastly, to address the *Working for Wasa* case study, it explores the challenges to form and require concerted actions from businesses and non-state actors for SDG implementation. The chapter concludes that while SDG 17 promotes partnerships, it lacks sufficient guidance for states to effectively implement them. The voluntary nature of cooperation supporting the Global Goals poses a risk to their successful achievement, emphasizing the need for supportive legal frameworks.

The SDGs lack concrete mechanisms to ensure responsibility and accountability for progress, as they are generally non-binding on countries (Patterson, 2015). Monitoring and evaluating progress at the national level is crucial, measuring both inputs (e.g., investments in addressing issues) and outcomes (e.g., poverty eradication, improved health). However, due to the non-binding nature of the 2030 Agenda, achieving Goal 17 in all countries is unlikely, especially considering the resource constraints faced by less developed countries (LDCs). Goal 17 relies on global partnerships for finance, technology, and capacity building, but developed countries often fail to fulfil their promises, leading to a prediction that many countries may not achieve the SDGs (Wekgari, 2019). To overcome these challenges, there is a need to transform the SDGs from political documents into legally binding agreements or protocols that provide concrete and measurable action plans. For instance, achieving the goal of ending poverty worldwide by 2030 requires the cooperation of all stakeholders, including the provision of Overseas Development Assistance (ODA). However, the voluntary nature of the SDGs makes it difficult to measure the extent to which countries are providing ODA. The United Nations should develop a unified approach to partnerships and engage more effectively

with the public-private sector, including establishing consistent due diligence standards based on existing best practices to revitalize partnerships.

The positive relationship between good governance and sustainable development underscores the importance of strong leadership and accountability. Without good governance, it becomes challenging to engage relevant stakeholders, such as civil society, individuals, and businesses, to address complex poverty and sustainability issues. Strengthening leadership and governance is crucial to foster effective partnerships. Good governance, based on democratic values and norms, is essential for achieving the SDGs, but many developing countries lack effective governance structures. Governance failures, such as weak financial safeguards and coups against elected governments, hinder progress (Grindel, 2017). In autocratic regimes, foreign aid meant for promoting the SDGs may not be utilized as intended, further jeopardizing partnerships (Ansell & Grash, 2007). Governance challenges must be addressed to ensure the success of the SDGs. The emergence of issues like Brexit and isolationism under the presidency of Donald Trump has undermined the spirit of global partnership envisioned by the SDGs. This shift towards narrow nationalism contradicts the commitment to partnership for global development, posing a challenge to goal 17 and the overall achievement of the SDGs. Lack of political commitment is the main obstacle to realize the global partnership commitments outlined in goal 17. Progress has been slow, and many commitments related to trade, aid, investment, and financing for developing countries have not been met significantly (Wekgari, 2019). Conflicting interests among countries often hinder the fulfilment of promises made at global forums. Despite growing protests over climate change, government commitment to the SDGs, particularly Goal 17, does not appear to be increasing. This lack of political commitment can impede the achievement of the SDGs.

The SDGs, as outlined in the 2030 Agenda, prioritize the well-being of people and the protection of the planet. Achieving the SDGs not only improves people's lives but also ensures environmental sustainability. Therefore Goal 17, which is crucial for the realization of other SDGs, includes 19 targets that can contribute to the promotion of human rights, such as the right to development, international cooperation, self-determination, and access to scientific progress. However, seven years into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, progress in forming partnerships to achieve the

SDGs has been slow. Challenges such as weak governance, lack of political commitment, narrow nationalism, and the non-binding nature of the SDGs hinder the achievement of Goal 17.

NGOs come in a variety of sizes, shapes, architectural configurations, and goals. Even if they have certain features in common, they also have peculiarities that make them unique. Their stance towards the commercial sector is one important factor in this regard: NGOs may have a hostile or helpful attitude toward corporations. The choice of whether NGOs work with businesses has significant effects on their reputation, their access to resources, and their ability to manage relationships (Bäckstrand, 2006). NGO-business collaborations are typically seen as exchanges that aim to go beyond philanthropy by combining knowledge and resources in the sustainability sector. They are a particular form of cross-sectoral cooperation that has been frequently used as a strategy to deal with complicated social and environmental issues that no one party can resolve on their own (Van Tulder & Fortanier, 2009). As social and environmental issues have risen in size and complexity over the past few years, these arrangements have become more varied and prevalent (Van Tulder et al., 2016). By using integrated and innovative techniques to forge synergies and go around governments' failure to address societal problems, interactions between businesses and NGOs are thought to have the potential to bring about social change (Clarke & Macdonald 2016). The majority of empirical research to date – on NGO-business collaboration for sustainability – have been conducted in developed nations and from the viewpoint of the enterprise (Guo & Acar, 2005). However, interest in NGO involvement tactics is still rising, particularly in developing nations. Previous studies have specifically looked at the kinds of connections NGOs make with other networks or stakeholders, the specific projects NGOs work on with the commercial sector, and the formation and management of partnerships (Bäckstrand, 2008).

2.3. Culture matters: decolonialisation debate

According to the previous findings of this study, the SDGs have achieved some progress in comparison to the MDGs since they have expanded in scope and legitimacy as a result of addressing global issues like climate change (de Milly, 2015). In addition,

according to the SDGs, the richest countries must act on their own territory and not merely on abroad, as is the case with foreign aid (de Milly, 2015). The 2030 Agenda further varies from the MDGs in that each SDG and its targets link to other Goals, recognizing the interconnectedness of development's various components (Nilsson et al., 2016). As a result, the SDGs have demonstrated that they may be effective tools for implementing the notion of transversality at all different action scales. When one considers the method used to frame them, the SDGs also stand out. Unlike the MDGs, which appeared to be the result of a quick and highly selective process involving very few actors, those in charge of drafting the SDGs chose to take their time and be inclusive, which ultimately resulted in 10 million participants from a variety of organizations (Caron & Châtaigner, 2017; Kamau et al., 2018; ONU, 2015; Sénit, 2020). The negotiations presented a number of countries and organizations from the Global South with an opportunity to advance their agendas (Sénit, 2020).

Despite the intention of the 17 SDGs and their 169 targets to enhance the quality of life and promote sustainability, there have been criticisms regarding their universal and inclusive nature, as well as the methods employed to accomplish them. The 2030 Agenda focus on goals to achieve rather than guaranteeing individuals' rights (Belda-Miquel et al., 2019). Thus, fails to address the underlying power imbalances that contribute to the issues they aim to tackle (Clements & Sweetman, 2020). These perspectives emphasize the importance of valuing local knowledge, decolonizing development practices, and facilitating bottom-up approaches to promote dialogue and respect for communities. Furthermore, some question whether the stated goals can be attained without challenging existing norms, regulations, and underlying systems. The deterioration of various environmental, economic, social, and political contexts also raises doubts about the feasibility and long-term sustainability of the progress being made. The relations in which the SDGs are embedded are fundamentally asymmetric. The activities of international aid find their roots in the systems of oppression that perpetuate racist, colonial and sexist relations (Clements & Sweetman, 2020). The SDGs do not tackle the root-causes of inequalities and do not hold the potential to deeply transform the vectors of oppression and dependence into channels of equity and genuine collaboration. The SDGs do not include specific action for the most vulnerable groups.

States should seize opportunities to advance the anti-racism agenda, prioritize attaining racial equity in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and ensure that people of African descent are not left behind.

Paragraph 23 of the former High Commissioner's 2021 Report calls on Member States to integrate the elimination of systemic racism and racial/ethnic discrimination in their implementation of the SDGs (UN, 2021).

The intent of this study is to demonstrate how *Working for Wasa* tackles decolonization-related issues and contribution to deliver the SDGs by its community-led initiative (CLI) approach. Their actions are based on the experienced and concrete practice of sustainability, which is rooted in particular local and regional settings and supported by the necessary social institutions and cultural viewpoints. Along with many other guiding assumptions of the dominant paradigm that the SDGs implicitly or explicitly perpetuate (separation of people and nature, quality of life as a function of material accumulation, gender and racial blindness), they question the necessity and desirability of perpetual economic growth, which is a key internal barrier for achieving most of the SDGs. *Working for Wasa* offers practical, replicable examples of systemic alternatives that represent integrated and (at least aspirational) developing holistic understandings of environmental and social challenges, together with continuing attempts to develop these alternatives. However, in accordance with research on young volunteering abroad, it may be that the advantages for the volunteer are prioritized over those of the local community. Young volunteers may not have the necessary knowledge, capacity for reflection, skills, international experience, time, or altruistic intentions, which may cause these projects to have a negative impact on the local community (Palacios, 2010; Brown & Hall 2008); or they may be more interested in gaining employability skills than making a meaningful contribution. Even though it is done through long-term placements, research on youth volunteering has shown that it is crucial for organizations to not heavily rely on international youth volunteers; instead, they should place a greater emphasis on encouraging national youth volunteering with elements of reciprocity (Scott-Smith, 2011).

2.4. Guiding assumptions

The measurement of impact is crucial in assessing the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at achieving the SDGs. The first section of this chapter assumes that a robust and realistic measurement framework is necessary to evaluate the progress made and identify areas that require further attention. We live in a rapidly changing world; technologies are substantially drafting daily life at every level. This means that the use of reliable and up-to-date indicators is crucial. Reality often differs from what even the most accurate indicators show. This is the reason why MDGs were not successful. By preventing a broad and multi-level participation in their creation and implementation, the result has been extremely limited and, according to many scholars, unsuccessful. The debate on decolonisation also encapsulates this aspect: often, the indicators involved reflect the needs of citizens in the Global North rather than understanding the difficulties of those suffering in the Global South. It is also because of the quality and reliability of the indicators that it is not possible to understand the real achievement of the SDGs. In this way, there is a risk of investing funds and energy in areas where it is not a priority to do so, leaving behind what should be solved more urgently. The method used by *Working for Wasa* as a CLI – which deliberately chooses to remain a small project – allows for effective control of what progress is being made in order to reduce the waste of fundings and to truly give voice to the needs of the local community. A key point of this chapter is the importance of not bringing the welfare model of western society to LDCs, but rather allowing them to realise their own development model based on their particular needs. Fostering and simplifying both horizontal and vertical partnerships would allow to increase the impact and to facilitate the achievement of the SDGs by 2030.

CHAPTER 3 – THE CASE STUDY

Students for Humanity ODV is a volunteering organization, formed by students and recognised by the Italian government, which is committed to the promotion of voluntary work and development on a national and international level. What makes this reality peculiar is its being an entirely student project: indeed, the organization was born from the will of Bocconi University in Milan who, on their return from a voluntary work experience in Tanzania, they felt the need to set up an organisation that would be able to continue the mission they had started. In this sense it is impossible to separate the origin of Students for Humanity from its main project abroad: *Working for Wasa*. It is an international cooperation project involving numerous figures, active both from Italy and locally, working towards its ultimate goal: enabling the self-sufficiency of the Saint Joseph Vocational Training Centre (VTC) in the village of Wasa. The latter is located 80 kilometres south-west of the city of Iringa, Tanzania, stands on a plateau 1,500 metres above sea level and has almost 6,000 inhabitants, rising to 10,000 if the surrounding villages are taken into account. The diocese of Iringa has been present in Wasa since 1929. Here it is represented by the parish priest, the Baba, a central figure, not only because of the enormous social importance accorded him by the community, but the needs and interests of all the inhabitants of the area. Attention that has led him to actively collaborate with Students for Humanity ODV since 2011.

A passionate and committed workforce of 35 student volunteers supports *Working for Wasa* as they collaborate to fulfil the organization's objective. These individuals selflessly contribute their time and efforts to the project, driven by their commitment to creating positive change in the students. Two heads who assume different responsibilities in maintaining the project's smooth operation are in charge of it. In order to encourage direct collaboration between the employees at the school and the organization, one head is primarily involved in the main project: education. Its priority is to uphold solid connections with the local community and students, comprehend their demands, and put practical solutions in place to meet those needs. The other head oversees and coordinates the various divisions while managing the project from afar, engaging potential sponsors, partner organizations, and the Tanzanian embassy in Italy. Working hand in hand with the latter, the project manager plays a crucial role in overseeing all sections of the project. He

is directly involved in each section, ensuring effective project management and coordination. Moreover, the project manager has the important responsibility of maintaining communication with the Baba, the local community leader. This role involves keeping the Baba informed about the projects' progress, discussing community needs and priorities, and fostering a strong partnership between *Working for Wasa* and the local community.

Furthermore, five divisions compose the project, each of which has distinct roles to play and contributions to make. The marketing team, which consists of six members, works hard to promote *Working for Wasa's* goals and achievements on various social media platforms. They are essential in spreading awareness about the mission and in keeping supporters, sponsors and donors informed of any new information or developments. A team of 14 members constitutes the fundraising division. They work tirelessly to assure the project's sustainability and its ongoing development, participating in a variety of fundraising activities and initiatives which will be better explored in the next section. Three local project teams are also present: one for food resources, one for health, and one for infrastructures and services. The food resources team manage the agricultural projects, striving to meet the nutritional needs of the students through farming and other food production initiatives. The health team is dedicated to improving healthcare access and services for the local community. They work towards enhancing medical facilities, providing necessary equipment and medications, and implementing health education programs. The infrastructure and services team is responsible for maintaining the essential facilities and infrastructure required for the smooth functioning of the project. They ensure that the school and its premises are well-maintained and equipped with the necessary resources to support the educational and developmental needs of the students. Three people make up each team, and they each concentrate on their own fields of competence.

The involvement of just students in every aspect of the project highlights the enthusiasm and dedication of Students for Humanity ODV's mission to create a positive impact on the lives of other disadvantaged students living in Wasa. The volunteers themselves are hosted by the Baba and this allows them to come into close contact with the social fabric of Wasa and understand the needs and shortcomings of the village from the inside, while respecting its culture and value system. The organization's action in

Wasa is based on five pillars: education, health, food resources, infrastructure and services with the ultimate goal of the VTC's economic self-sufficiency.

3.1. The operational context of *Working for Wasa*

Since the beginning, the focus of the project has been on the development of the educational sphere. During the summer of 2011, the first groups of volunteers built, together with the local population a kindergarten in the village of Makongomi. This currently accommodates 24 children and has achieved complete self-sufficiency, which allowed them to focus on the creation of a new school, more precisely a technical institute. This is how the Vocational Training Centre (VTC) was born, a school able to guarantee a high-quality vocational training and above all, accessible to all families in the area and beyond. Located in the heart of Wasa, the VTC currently accommodates about 70 students between 14 and 23 years old. In the early days of the project, in 2011, the desks in our school were occupied entirely by male students, while since 2018, after a necessary revision of the project, an increasing number of girls have been admitted to study. Indeed, today among the VTC students, half are girls. The *Working for Wasa* project has a clear end goal: to help the VTC to achieve adequate and satisfactory conditions in every intervention field, with the aim of leaving Wasa once they have achieved self-sufficiency.

The pupils live in the school ten months per year and follow a course of study lasting three years, in which they are asked to choose between three different workshops, respectively for specialisation in carpentry, masonry and tailoring. In the workshops theoretical lessons focus mainly on learning technical language and safety at work, combined with actual workshops where students practise and learn the profession. The success of this teaching method is ascertained by the various works that the pupils have carried out in and for the community: masons participate in the construction of various houses in the village, fulfilling a role of great responsibility, while the carpenters work on external commissions, often also received by the organization itself. The tailoring workshop focuses instead on making uniforms for the Santa Monica secondary school, located within the mission, either on the production of items and gadgets with the aim of reselling them in Italy to raise funds to be reinvested entirely in the project. During the

summer, *Working for Wasa* guarantees the presence of four groups of volunteers on site, who, in addition to monitoring and ensuring the continuity of the various projects, support local teachers with intensive courses in English, mathematics and geography. This provides a basic level of general culture to all students from a different perspective.

As part of a non-profit organization, the project relies on various sources of funding to support its initiatives. These funding sources enable the organization to provide essential resources and opportunities. This section will explore the different funding channels that contribute to *Working for Wasa* and highlight the associated costs involved according to Students for Humanity ODV's balance sheet provided by the latter.

Private Donations constitute a significant portion of *Working for Wasa's* funding, accounting for 19.5% of the organization's income. Generous contributions from private donors, including studios and companies, play a crucial role in supporting the development of the project. These donors demonstrate their commitment to the cause either through monetary donations or active participation in initiatives like the 'Christmas Wishlist'. Their support enables *Working for Wasa* to carry out its mission and make a positive impact on the lives of the people in Wasa. Another vital funding stream is the 5 x 1000 contribution, which contributes 23.1% of the overall income. This financial support is made possible by individuals who choose to allocate a portion of their income tax to the organization. The 5 x 1000 contribution allows for a sustainable and reliable source of funding, ensuring the continuation of essential projects and programs in Wasa. The 44.3% of the funds come from fundraising activities. These activities include organizing events such as *Wasa's Got Talent*, where the proceeds directly benefit the organization's projects in Tanzania. The engagement of the community in these events not only raises funds but also raises awareness about the organization's goals and achievements. Additionally, *Working for Wasa* establishes partnerships with companies interested in sponsoring their brand to a target audience of young students and beyond. Merchandising initiatives, particularly the production of tailoring accessories made by the VTC's tailoring students themselves, provide an additional source of revenue for the organization. Furthermore, a considerable portion, 13.1%, of the organization's funding comes from successful applications in response to call for proposals. This indicates that *Working for Wasa* actively seeks opportunities to secure grants and funding from

governmental and non-governmental entities interested in supporting projects aligned with their mission.

3.2. How does *Working for Wasa* aligns with the SDGs

This section will explore three across the five pillars of *Working for Wasa* – education, health and food resources – in order to understand how the project aligns with the SDGs. The aim of this section is to prove that every *Working for Wasa*'s project would not be possible without partnering with other CSOs, following Goal 17 – partnerships for the goals. The local partner of *Working for Wasa* is the Diocese of Iringa, which is led by Bishop Tarcisius Ngalekumtwa who commissioned Baba Stanislaus to Wasa's parish. He is the man in charge to represent the Diocese and who carries its interests. The Baba has a main role in *Working for Wasa* because he co-manages the entire project.

The education project started with the creation of the VTC with the masonry and carpentry workshops in 2014. In 2018 the tailoring workshop was added, enabling girl's student to adhere the education project. Today the VTC's population is composed of half girls and half boys. In the summer of 2022, with the start of the school's registration process, it was necessary to dedicate efforts to internal reorganization by meeting the government agency VETA (Vocational Education and Training Authority) requirements. This allows the delivery of school diplomas recognized by the Tanzanian government and the job market upon completion of the third year of studies. This project required significant investments since the requirements set by VETA are numerous and not always easily attainable. However, the volunteers have worked tirelessly to ensure that the VTC meets all the requirements. Those were about creating the school administrative block consisting of a principal, a secretary, an accountant, and teacher coordinator. Staff members receive monthly salaries of 200,000 TZS (approximately 85€), while the headmaster receives 500,000 TZS. The teachers must possess a diploma that enables them to teach in all three years of the course. Each workshop requires appropriate and safe tools and machinery of good quality. In 2022, in order to provide them, *Working for Wasa* has made investments of 7,000€ to purchase 50% of the necessary school materials, machinery, and equipment. Furthermore, the school's structure must meet specific requirements in terms of space, functionality, and safety. The organization is actively engaged in renovating the spaces to align with standards and provide better living

conditions for the students. Through these efforts, *Working for Wasa* aims to create a conducive learning environment that adheres to the necessary administrative, teaching, and infrastructure standards in order to enhance the educational experience and opportunities for the students in Wasa. The project aligns with the Goal 4 – quality education – and Goal 10 – reduce inequalities.

The food resources project started in 2019 with the ultimate goal of achieving food self-sufficiency for all students and, at a later stage, entering the market to sell the products grown in order to make this project more sustainable. To feed its students, *Working for Wasa* started cultivating several fields of different sizes scattered around the village. The main crop cultivated is maize, as is common in the village of Wasa. Beans, sunflowers, and a few vegetables are cultivated on a much smaller scale. Labour is carried out by VTC's students, mainly using their hands or buckets. This labour is carried out under the supervision of the headmaster and teachers who have no specific farming expertise. Despite these initial efforts, the result was not enough. In summer 2022, the volunteers decided to give this project a new impetus.

Motivated by the goal of improving the students' diet quality by making it more varied and balanced with all the appropriate nutritional elements, *Working for Wasa* started to invest in new lands for growing vegetables, currently almost completely absent from the students' daily diet. Over the years, the organization has increased the acres of today arable land achieving 24 available acres. As the students live in the VTC for 10 months a year, *Working for Wasa* faces the challenge of agricultural production not meeting their needs, requiring additional financial support to bridge the gap. The cost of food supply for the students amounts to ca 22,000€ per year, with the food resources project covering approximately 50% of the annual food requirements at a cost of 1,500€ for its management. As a land and plantation management plan was needed to reduce costs and diversify the students' diet, *Working for Wasa* approached Wageningen University as part of its academic consultancy training (ACT) programme. The food resources project was submitted and approved so that a team of 6 students from different Masters' programmes at Wageningen University was created to provide technical advice to *Working for Wasa*. This collaboration resulted in the development of a sustainable agriculture project in eight weeks, which will create an impact on soil management, wasting less water and increasing and diversifying the agricultural production of the food

resources project. The main output will aim to improve the current crop production systems through which food security can be achieved once successfully implemented. In this case the SDG involved are Goal 2 – zero hunger – Goal 12 – responsible production and consumption – Goal 15 – life on land.

Working for Wasa built a dispensary in cooperation with Mwendo which was completed in 2014. The aim of the health project is to guarantee free access to treatment and basic medicines for the students, as well as to raise awareness of the importance of hygiene and prevention. The current medical facilities within the Wasa mission include a dispensary, a doctor's office, an analysis laboratory, a maternity ward (with a room for deliveries), a room for medical devices and hospitalisation. The staff consists of a doctor, a nurse, and a pharmacist. *Working for Wasa* has always tried to introduce a holistic approach, also engaging in health projects focusing on prevention.

Currently, *Working for Wasa* has a partnership with *Dare Women's Foundation*, a Tanzanian NGO that works with local communities to empower and train mainly women and girls with formal and informal education and support groups. This project stems from the desire to deal with how female students deal with the issue of menstruation; *Dare Women* holds sewing workshops to teach girls how to produce washable sanitary napkins that can bring them closer to the issue of menstruation and – at the same time – be sustainable and pro-environmental. The role that awareness-raising has within the medical sector is recognised: students are not very aware of the risks of their actions, so the school tries to educate them by including lessons on occupational safety and seminars on hygiene and health. In addition, there is an educational focus on sexuality, affectivity, and the menstrual cycle, through seminars and the distribution of brochures. *Working for Wasa* ensures a supply of medicines through partnerships with pharmaceutical corporates and health-related CSOs that can provide concrete help in the development of the dispensary and act as a reference point for the treatment of more complex cases. In this case the SDGS involved are Goal 3 – good health and well-being – and Goal 4 – quality education.

3.3. Measuring the impact

Working for Wasa aims to create a positive impact on the lives of the Saint Joseph VTC's students and the community of Wasa through various interventions. In order to measure the perceived impact of *Working for Wasa*, a comprehensive survey was conducted among 84 students enrolled in the VTC. The survey included questions related to their experiences, well-being, and the effectiveness of the program in delivering the SDGs. Due to the context, students are not acknowledged about what is sustainable development and the SDGs, therefore, those concepts were never mentioned in the survey.

Table 1 provides valuable insights into the students' demographics and their engagement with the program. The data reveals that the average age of the students is 16.28 years, indicating a young and dynamic cohort. The gender distribution shows a relatively equal representation, with 52.38% male students and 47.62% female students. One significant aspect of the survey was to understand the students' level of satisfaction and engagement with the workshops offered by *Working for Wasa*. The majority of students (47.62%) participate in the tailoring workshop, followed by 38.09% in masonry and 14.28% in carpentry. The survey findings indicate that students generally enjoy the workshops, with an average rating of 6.81 out of 10. Moreover, it was found that the morning theoretical classes, which are a crucial component of the school program, were highly enjoyed by the students, as evidenced by an average rating of 8.05 out of 10. This suggests that the program is successful in providing engaging and meaningful learning experiences for the students, fostering their skills development and potential for future employment. The survey also delved into the students' well-being and perceived impact on their lives. Moreover, the students reported low tiredness levels after the morning classes, with an average rating of 2.86 out of 10. These findings reflect the positive impact of the program on the students' overall educational experience and their motivation to actively participate.

In addition to the students' perspectives, the survey aimed to capture the impact of *Working for Wasa* on their access to food resources. Table 2 focuses specifically on the students' food survey, shedding light on their meal patterns and satisfaction with the provided meals. An encouraging finding was that 80.76% of students reported having

three meals per day at school. Moreover, the most relevant data, is that 87.32% among the 2nd and 3rd year's students believe that there is more food availability rather than the previous year, indicating an improvement in their food security and nutrition. This was made possible since *Working for Wasa*, in 2022, took in charge their food supply. Previously the Baba was providing them food, and apparently, it was not sufficient. Furthermore, the majority (76.19%) expressed enjoyment in eating the provided dishes, suggesting that the program is successful in addressing their dietary needs and preferences.

Health issues and nutrition are strictly connected. According to *Working for Wasa*'s reports, the student's diet is based on ugali, which is a maize flour dish, mixed and boiled just with water. Side dishes are basically beans and a few local strains of vegetables, but in a very low percentage relate to the main dish. An excel sheet provided by *Working for Wasa* listed the student's daily foods consumption. After dividing these information, a daily consumption of the following foods was calculated per person: 570g of maize flour (wholegrain and white), 7g of sunflower oil, 200g of peas, 7g of onion and 14g of salt (Excel Sheet VTC Food Consumption). Based on the given units of the vegetables – referred to as one piece each – it was not possible to calculate any vegetable consumption. However, the number of pieces, for instance for cabbage was so marginal, that it would be around 10g of cabbage per day for the students which does not make a nutritional difference. The nutritional needs of the students are not being met, which not only exposes them to illnesses and disease, but also hampers their ability to reach their full potential, both physically and intellectually. The collaboration with the Wageningen University in their ACT programme, aimed to find a solution in order to increase student's well-being reducing nutrition-related diseases.

Working for Wasa provides as a convincing example of how CSOs may contribute to the delivery of the SDGs, as shown by the data gathered from the key community member questionnaire (Table 4) and our prior arguments. The project's noteworthy relationships and efforts demonstrate their capacity to work cooperatively with other CSOs and stakeholders. The replies to the questionnaire demonstrate the very beneficial effect that the *Working for Wasa* project has had on meeting the requirements of the students at the VTC. The project's success in giving the children more educational chances and recognition is demonstrated by the high rating of 8,2. for the overall impact. This

achievement is not only crucial for their present development but also holds promise for their future prospects. Beyond merely students, the project's wide-ranging advantages have a beneficial impact on the entire community. In addition to ensuring the students' food security, the development of a 24-acre field with new sustainable agricultural techniques has encouraged the local population to adopt similar cultivation methods.

A key component of CSOs' contribution to achieving the SDGs is their capacity to collaborate with other CSOs and stakeholders. The project's partnership with the Baba Stanislaus-led Parish of Wasa has significantly increased its influence. The co-management of the VTC and the diocese's assistance serve as examples of how important partnerships are to accomplishing sustainable development goals. *Working for Wasa* is an example of a CSO that may increase its effectiveness and bring about long-lasting change by utilizing the knowledge and resources of various stakeholders. Collaborations with educational institutions like the VETA agency and Wageningen University illustrate the effectiveness of group efforts in accomplishing the SDGs without investing enormous amount of funding. CSOs bring a variety of viewpoints, skills, and first-hand knowledge to the table, allowing them to solve difficult problems thoroughly and contextually.

The linkage with the SDGs is also made clear by the different sustainable development activities it has put in place. These initiatives include promoting quality education, inclusivity, enhancing nutrition, expanding access to healthcare services, and creating local relationships. *Working for Wasa* serves as an example of how CSOs may contribute holistically to the SDGs by tackling several facets of sustainable development. Additionally, the participation of community members in decision-making processes highlights the value of collaboration and partnerships. CSOs make certain that their activities are in line with the needs and ambitions of the community by actively involving local leaders and stakeholders. Through this participatory process, communities are given the tools they need to promote sustainable development in their local environments.

CONCLUSION

The case study of *Working for Wasa* and its connection to sustainable development's global governance emphasizes the crucial role of civil society organizations (CSOs) in addressing and resolving global challenges. The information provided and the interviews conducted shed light on the significance of fostering the work of CSOs, giving them more funds, voice, and importance in order to enhance their participation in achieving the SDGs. *Working for Wasa* exemplifies how CSOs can make a tangible and positive impact on local communities. The organization's efforts in education, healthcare, food security, and infrastructure development demonstrate the transformative potential of grassroots initiatives.

In light of the discussions on global governance and the limitations of the MDGs, the emphasis on CSOs and their work becomes even more critical in the current era. The SDGs encompass more ambitious and holistic targets, requiring comprehensive strategies and multi-stakeholder collaborations. CSOs, with their unique perspectives, on-the-ground experiences, and direct community engagement, are well-positioned to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs. By focusing on Goal 17 - Partnerships for the goals - *Working for Wasa* exemplifies the importance of collaboration and cooperation among various stakeholders, in order to find valuable solutions without millionaire fundings. The interviews conducted with individuals involved in the project further reinforce the significance of supporting CSOs' activity. Their first-hand experiences and insights highlight the challenges faced by these organizations and the innovative solutions they employ to overcome them. It becomes evident that CSOs often operate with limited resources and face financial constraints, making it essential to provide them with increased funding opportunities. This financial support enables CSOs to expand their reach, enhance their impact, and create sustainable change in the communities they serve. Moreover, enhancing CSOs' participation is another key aspect for effective global governance. These organizations often work directly with communities and possess invaluable knowledge and understanding of local contexts. By empowering CSOs and giving them a stable platform to voice their perspectives, policies and interventions can be designed with greater inclusivity and effectiveness. They bring diverse perspectives, local expertise, and grassroots insights to the table, enabling comprehensive and context-

specific approaches to addressing global challenges and increase disadvantaged people's well-being.

As seen in the case of *Working for Wasa*, student volunteers play a vital role in driving the project forward. Their active engagement not only contributes to the project's success but also nurtures a sense of ownership and responsibility among the younger generation. Global South's underdevelopment has been caused by Western countries in the past centuries and keeps being perpetrated nowadays. Raising youth awareness should be a crucial challenge for developed countries, in order to allow future generations to not commit same mistakes of their ancestors. By involving individuals at an early stage, CSOs foster a culture of participation, empowering younger generation to become active agent of change. Through collaboration, participation, and meaningful partnerships, we can harness the collective power of CSOs and pave the way for a more equitable and sustainable world.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACT	Academic Consultancy Training
CLI	Community-Lead Initiative
CMEPSP	Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress
CSO	Civil Society Organization
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
HDI	Human Development Index
HLPF	High Level Political Forum
IAEG-SDGs	Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators
ILO	International Labour Organization
IO	International Organization
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IVCO	International Volunteer Cooperation Organization
LDC	Less Developed Country
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSSD	National Strategy for Sustainable Development
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SD	Sustainable Development
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference for Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

VNR	Voluntary National Review
VTC	Vocational Training Centre
VETA	Vocational Education and Training Authority
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
WB	World Bank

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ANNEXES

Table 1. General students' survey

Questions	Answers	Results
1) Age (years)		Mean: 16.28
2) Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male • Female 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 52.38% • 47.62%
3) How many years have you spent in the VTC?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 • 2 • 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 52.38% • 19.04% • 28.57%
4) Workshop done in the afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tailoring • Masonry • Carpentry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 47.62% • 38.09% • 14.28%
5) How much do you enjoy the workshop?	(1 = not at all, 10 = a lot)	Mean: 6.81/10 Mode: 10
6) How tired are you after the workshop?	(1 = not at all, 10 = a lot)	Mean: 6.43/10 Mode: 10
7) How much do you enjoy the classes in the morning?	(1 = not at all, 10 = a lot)	Mean: 8.05/10 Mode: 10
8) How tired are you after the morning classes?	(1 = not at all, 10 = a lot)	Mean: 2.86/10 Mode: 1
9) Where you in contact with any volunteers in the past year?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 66.67% • 33.33%
10) Do you think that the volunteers are of any help for the students?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • Sometimes • No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 42.86% • 47.62% • 09.52%

Table 2. Students' food survey

Questions	Answers	Results
1) How many meals per day do you have at school?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 • 1 • 2 • 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 00.00% • 00.00% • 19.24% • 80.76%
2) Do you enjoy eating these dishes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 76.19% • 23.81%
3) In what moments of the day do you feel most hungry?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning • Afternoon • Evening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 38.09% • 57.14% • 04.76%
4) Have you ever missed a meal?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 09.52% • 90.48%
5) Have you ever felt sick after eating your meals?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14.39% • 85.71%
6) Do you have access to the kitchen?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, with permission • Yes, without permission • No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 71.43% • 09.52% • 19.05%
7) Are you helping with preparing the meal?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • Sometimes • No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 28.57% • 66.67% • 04.76%
8) Are you willing to try food cooked with new cooking methods or ingredients?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • Maybe • No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 66.67% • 09.52% • 23.81%
9) For 2 nd and 3 rd year's students only: do you have more food availability than last year?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • Maybe • No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 87.32% • 09.66% • 04.02%

Table 3. Students' health survey

Questions	Answers	Results
1) Do you wash your hands before eating?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90.48% • 09.52%
2) Do you struggle with seeing during the day or night?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, every day • Sometimes • Never 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 04.76% • 52.38% • 42.86%
3) Do you have dry eyes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • Sometimes • No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19.04% • 19.04% • 61.92%
4) Do you have cold hands and feet?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • Sometimes • No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14.29% • 19.04% • 66.67%
5) Do you have chest pains, shortness or breath and a fast heartbeat?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • Sometimes • No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 00.00% • 09.52% • 90.48%
6) Do you have problems with focussing during the day?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, always • Sometimes • No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 28.57% • 14.29% • 57.14%
7) Have you ever experienced those symptoms? Vomit or diarrhea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 52.38% • 47.62%
8) Are you drinking water only from the tanks?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 58.03% • 31.97%
9) Do you have free access to Wasa's Mission dispensary?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • Maybe • No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90.48% • 09.52% • 00.00%
10) How many times per month you need medical assistance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 • 1 • 2 • 3 or more 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 39.51% • 32.09% • 12.35% • 16.05%
11) Are you satisfied of the dispensary service?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • Sometimes • No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 83.95% • 13.58% • 02.47%

Table 4. Key community members' questionnaire

Questions	
1)	On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the overall impact of the Working for Wasa project in addressing the needs of the VTC's students?
2)	How many community members have directly benefited from the initiatives implemented by the Working for Wasa project?
3)	Can you provide specific examples of positive changes or improvements in Wasa that can be attributed to Working for Wasa's efforts?
4)	are there any local partnerships or collaborations that Working for Wasa project established to enhance its impact?
5)	What percentage of the project's objectives have been achieved thus far?
6)	How many sustainable development activities or interventions has the Working for Wasa project implemented in alignment with the SDGs?
7)	How many students from Wasa have received educational support or scholarships through the project?
8)	Can you quantify the increase in access to healthcare services and nutrition in Wasa as a result of the project's efforts?
9)	How many community members have been actively involved in decision-making processes related to the project

Figure 1. Stakeholders diagram analysis

