

## Chapter 2

# Boosting Socio-Economic and Political Development in Sub-Saharan Africa through Information and Knowledge Management

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### Abstract

Nations of the world have predominantly been socio-economically stratified into variously named categories. In many instances, they are categorized into developed and developing countries, rich and poor countries, or first and third-world countries. The categorization of countries into such clusters is usually based on differences in their socioeconomic and political situations. Most of the geographical regions considered for and classified as developing, poor, or third world, are countries in Africa, and East, South, and Western Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Some of the developed, rich, and first-world countries include Norway, New Zealand, Switzerland, Canada, the USA, etc. Using literature review as research method, this chapter examined the global indices and indicators of development leading to the variety of classifications assigned to various countries, established the phenomenological symptoms of the sub-Sahara African countries specifically that consign them into the class of the poor, third world or less developed nations of the world, and also explored the literature in an attempt to gain an appreciation of the potential of effective information and knowledge management for boosting the socio-economic and political development in sub-Saharan Africa. The chapter also assessed various economic growth, poverty level, education level, and human development indicators as information and knowledge drivers. The paper takes a cursory look

at the adoption of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) among member States and establishes that the central and transformative promise that ‘no one will be left behind’ might not be realized with poverty and economic downturn pervading sub-Saharan Africa. The findings revealed some correlation of socio-economic and political developments with information management (IM) and knowledge management (KM). In order that sub-Saharan Africa would not be perpetually and economically debarred from the global socio-economic value chains, the paper asserts that IM and KM are two critical forces that can and should be systematically employed to boost the social and economic fortunes of, catalyze, or boost the upward trajectory of economic and socio-political developments in sub-Saharan Africa.

**Keywords:** Developing countries, Sub-Sahara Africa, Economic growth and development, Socio-political development, Information management, Knowledge management

## **1 Introduction**

World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) (2014) classifies all countries of the world into three broad categories, namely: developed economies, economies in transition, and developing economies. Nevertheless, in many instances, they are categorized into developed and developing countries, or rich and poor countries, or first and third-world countries. Developed countries are generally known to have developed economies and cutting-edge technological infrastructures. This is as asserted by Cheprasov (2021) who described developed countries as high-income countries that have more advanced technological and industrial activities and infrastructure, characterized by comparatively high standards of living, where most people have enough money to buy the things they need. Thus, IGI-Global (2022) affirms that a developed country is highly industrialized, and has a mature and sophisticated economy, measured by size of gross domestic product (GDP) and/or average income per resident. IGI-Global further states that a developed country provides high quality of life to its residents because of already established advanced technological infrastructures, good management of natural resources and manpower. Among such developed, rich and first world countries include Norway, New Zealand, Switzerland, Canada, USA, etc.

Conversely, a developing country is perceived as one with less developed economy. Kuepper (2021) states that a developing country is one with comparatively low total economic output measured by gross domestic product (GDP) per person and tend to rely on agriculture as the prime industry, adding that such countries have not quite reached economic maturity. In an International Monetary Fund (IMF) Working Paper, on the Classifications of Countries Based on Their Level of Development, Nielsen (2011) affirms that developing countries are categorized as low-income (with Gross National Income (GNI) per capita of US\$250 or less). Gross national income (GNI), according to Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2022), is defined as gross domestic product, plus net receipts from abroad of compensation of employees, property income and net taxes less subsidies on production. Educational Pathways International (EPI) (2022) appears to be more comprehensive in its description when, alluding to the United Nations, asserts that a developing country is a country with a relatively low standard of living, undeveloped industrial base, and moderate to low Human Development Index (HDI). EPI explains further that HDI is a comparative measure of poverty, literacy, education, life expectancy, and other factors for countries worldwide. In his attempt at differentiating between the two worlds, Cheprasov (2021) also observes that the economies of the developed countries tend to be more stable and prosperous, and well known for lots of technological innovations than developing nations which, in comparison, have less industrialization, higher population growth, and higher unemployment. Among the geographical regions considered and classified as developing, poor or third world are all the countries in Africa, and countries in East Asia, South Asia, Western Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

The notion that the concepts of socio-political development and economic development of a nation are intertwined has been extensively examined in the social and behavioural sciences. Filgueira and Filgueira (2002) observed that both concepts encompass at least three related connotations developed in the sociological literature. These authors observed that in its most basic form, it is defined as improvement in the standard of living of a population. The second connotation is associated with the economic variables and dynamics, thereby recognizing that the economic wealth creation and distribution are powerful factors in social development. The third less economic perspective identifies social development with the social differen-

tiation arising from the capitalist and industrial transformations that gave rise to the modern world.

In a release on social development, Government of the Province of New Brunswick of Canada (2009) report stated that the success of society is linked to the well-being of each and every citizen and therefore asserts that social development is about improving the well-being of every individual in society so they can reach their full potential. The report argues that social development means investing in people and requires the removal of barriers so that all citizens can journey toward their dreams with confidence and dignity. It is about refusing to accept that people who live in poverty will always be poor. It is about helping people so they can move forward on their path to self-sufficiency. Rahman (2009) also subscribes to the assertion when he states that the ultimate objective of social development is to bring about sustained improvement in the well-being of the individual, groups, family, community, and society at large. In the same vein as social development, the end result of the economic development of a nation points to the same direction. Government of British Columbia (2022) confirms that economic development deals with programs, policies or activities that seek to improve the economic well-being and quality of life for a community. Hill (2022) lends credence to the assertion when he also claims that economic development is usually the focus of governments to improve the standard of living through the creation of jobs, the support of innovation and new ideas, the creation of greater wealth, and the creation of an overall better quality of life of people. Hill expands on this by identifying three major areas for economic development. Firstly, governments working on big economic objectives such as creating jobs or growing an economy. Secondly, programs that provide infrastructure and services improvements such as more highways, community parks, new school programs and facilities, public libraries or swimming pools, new hospitals, and crime prevention initiatives. And thirdly, job creation and business retention through workforce development programs to help people get the needed skills and education they need, including small business development programs that are geared to help entrepreneurs get financing or network with other small businesses. Rahman (2009) submits that socio-economic development incorporates public concerns in developing and implementing both social policy and economic initiatives. He underscores his belief that the concept involves sustained increase in the economic standard of living of a country's population, normally accomplished by increasing its stocks of physical and human capital and improving its technology.

Thus, a number of authors have identified several factors as instrumental to socioeconomic development. Almuraqab (2021) affirms that M-government is essential for socio-economic development of a country, trusting that without such support a government cannot efficiently operate. Almuraqab observes that in many countries, mobile services such as m-payment and m-banking are available as determinants of the successful acceptance of M-government that expedites the successful establishment of smart cities. Irungu and Kimencu (2016) also identify higher education as an important part of any country's socio-economic development. They declare that in order for Kenya and the rest of Africa to advance their development agenda, higher education must be taken seriously, and barriers to access to higher education must be addressed. Oxford University Press (OUP) (2022) explains that political development enhances the state's capacity to mobilize and allocate resources to process policy inputs into implementable outputs; it also assists with problem-solving and adaptation to environmental changes and goal realization, and the contemporary notion of good governance dwells on efficient, effective and non-corrupt public administration.

## **2 Statement of the Problem**

The main goal of the clamour for socio-economic and political development is to upgrade the welfare of populations. Nations are encouraged to operate in liberal democracy so that non-performing governments and leaders can be voted out of power and replaced with another. Chatham House (2021) argues that the importance of liberal democracy is two-fold: the right to free expression of political preference; and progress promotion through peaceful competition between different interests and ideas.

As if to remind the leaders of various nations, especially sub-Saharan Africa, on what they ought to do in government for the socio-economic and political developments of their nations, United Nations Organisation has over the years made a number of interventions. In the main, the goal of every intervention, among others, is to eradicate or reduce poverty and boost the economy of member countries. For instance, one notable intervention was the United Nations Millennium Declaration. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) launched in the year 2000, came to a close at the end of the year 2015, whilst 2016 ushered in the official launch of another transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The MDGs emphasized three

areas: human capital, infrastructure, and human rights (social, economic and political), with the intent of increasing living standards (Wagle 2019). The first of the eight MDGs was to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. But in a review of the performance of the efforts made on MDGs, a World Bank blogger, Wadhwa (2018) raised an alarm that the number of people living in extreme poverty is on the rise in sub-Saharan Africa, comprising more than half of the extreme poor in 2015.

In its recognition that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and address a range of social needs including education, health, social protection, and jobs, the United Nations inaugurated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a successor to the MDGs in 2016. The UN asserts that the SDGs are a call for action by all countries – poor, rich, and middle-income – to promote prosperity while protecting the planet (United Nations 2016). The SDG agenda incorporated quite a number of the MD goals with the determination to end poverty in all its forms everywhere, achieve zero hunger, ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages (United Nations 2018), among others. In its ambitious and historic agenda for development and eradicating poverty, the UN pledged to leave no one behind in the ongoing SDG plan. Though the year 2030 when the SDG agenda is to close is not here yet, the signal being received is currently ominous. For instance, Wadhwa (2018) appeared to raise more depressing news when he hinted that forecasts indicate that by 2030, nearly 9 in 10 extremely poor people will live in sub-Saharan Africa. With about 7 years now before 2030, the terminal date of the UN's SDGs, whose first goal is to end poverty in all its forms everywhere, the fear is being expressed that poverty is still clearly visible and there is no end in sight. The problem appears exacerbated not only by the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic but also the Russian-Ukraine war which brings about an economic downturn, heralds a new season of hunger and drives many more into poverty. African Development Bank (AfDB) (2015) observed with apprehension that eradicating extreme poverty for all people everywhere by 2030, measured by people living on \$1.25 a day was a laudable goal. However, in examining the feasibility of this goal for sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and cross-checking several studies on eradicating poverty globally, the AfDB observed that under plausible assumptions extreme poverty will not be eradicated in SSA by 2030. Whilst some progress was recorded in some areas, improvements have been unevenly distributed between and within different regions (World Health Organization 2018). In a recent report jointly published

by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO), a grim picture of the economy and poverty was further painted. For instance, WHO (2022), in the published report, highlights that as many as 828 million people were affected by hunger in 2021 – 46 million people more than a year earlier and 150 million more than in 2019. The report further notes that after remaining relatively unchanged since 2015, the proportion of people affected by hunger jumped in 2020 and continued to rise in 2021, to 9.8% of the world population. This compares with 8% in 2019 and 9.3% in 2020.

The foregoing shows that the clear universal conviction now is that all hands must be on deck to eliminate poverty, and hunger and increase the standards of living for populations, particularly the currently poor. But it is also evident that despite the commitment of the member states towards implementing policies to achieve the various United Nations development goals and the support and collaboration of various international organizations, there is still a fairly long way to go to achieve the goals. This study believes that one possible way of boosting socio-economic and political development and overcoming the poverty and underdevelopment malaise prevalent in sub-Saharan Africa is through effective information and knowledge management.

### **3 Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of the study was to assess the possibility of boosting the socio-economic and political development of sub-Saharan Africa through effective information and knowledge management policies at national and sub-national levels in the region. The study aimed to:

- Determine the indices and indicators of development in the world, leading to the variety of classifications assigned to different countries;
- Establish the nature and global indices of development of information and knowledge management in the world and how they correlate with indices of development;
- Investigate the phenomenological symptoms depicting that sub-Saharan African countries are less-developed nations lagging behind other regions of the world; and

- Explore the possibility of improving information and knowledge management to boost the socio-economic and political development of nations in sub-Saharan Africa.

#### **4 Indices and Indicators of Development**

The term ‘development’ as a salient descriptor in this essay is believed to be complex and ambiguous, laden with a multitude of meanings and has consequently been associated with various other terms, words and phrases. Such related words or phrases as noted by the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) (2022) include change, economic development, social development, economic growth, positive change, poverty reduction, production, progress, and reducing vulnerability, among others. Thus, over the years, as the agenda of the international bodies focused on development, many authors, professionals and researchers advanced a number of definitions for the term ‘development’. In attempting to simplify it, SOAS states that development can be defined as bringing about social change that allows people to achieve their human potential. Society for International Development (SID) (2021) defines development as a process that creates growth, progress, positive change or the addition of physical, economic, environmental, social and demographic components. SID claims the purpose of development is a rise in the level and quality of life of the population, and the creation or expansion of local regional income and employment opportunities, without damaging the resources of the environment. The SID organization further states that development is visible and useful, not necessarily immediately, but also includes an aspect of quality change and the creation of conditions for a continuation of that change. Rabie (2016) asserts that development is basically an economic concept that has positive connotations involving the application of certain economic and technical measures to utilize available resources to instigate economic growth and improve people’s quality of life. But in what appears to be a concept more relevant to developing countries than the developed ones, Rabie explains the essence of development as a comprehensive societal process to move the underdeveloped nations from their state of economic backwardness and slow socio-cultural change to a dynamic state characterized by sustained economic growth and socio-cultural and political transformation that improves the quality of life of all members of society. But the Center for Global Development (CGD) (2012) was of the view that defining development as an improvement in



people's well-being does not do justice to what the term means. The CGD therefore argues that development also carries a connotation of lasting change. This probably prompts Rabie to subscribe to the argument that development is about transforming the lives of people and not only transforming economies. In its analogy of the need for lasting change being advocated for, CGD maintains that providing people with a bed net or a water pump can often be an excellent, cost-effective way to improve their well-being, but if the improvement ends when we stop providing the bed net or pump, we would not normally describe that as development. According to the CGD, development should also convey something about the capacity of economic, political and social systems to provide the circumstances for that well-being on a sustainable, long-term basis.

The question of how to measure development brought about the issue of indicators and indices of development that economists and social scientists as well as non-government organizations (NGOs) and policy-makers have engaged in. Salami, Tilakasiri and Ahmed (2017) acknowledge that indicators and indices are both used in measuring the wealth and levels of economic growth and development. These authors declare that indicators are used to illustrate the progress of a country in meeting a range of economic, social and environmental goals. Santos and Santos (2014) identify three indices to measuring development which according to them emerged more or less sequentially over time but now co-exist. The first approach according to them considers that development can be measured with some specification of a monetary indicator: Gross National (or Domestic) Product (GNP and GDP, respectively), usually in per capita terms, and typically with special attention to its growth rate. The second approach considers GNP per capita as having too many deficiencies as an indicator of well-being and that it does not always correlate well with development goals; therefore, a portfolio or dashboard of social indicators (including but not limited to monetary indicators) should be used to measure development. The third approach, they argue, arises from the need for a summary measure that combines some of the indicators into a single number, which has given rise to the construction of composite indices of development. Santos and Santos contend that a composite index is a function of variables and weights that maps attainments in a variety of attributes into a single real number, which may have cardinal meaning or be merely ordinal.

In another discourse akin to the above postulation by Santos and Santos, Aziz *et al.* (2015) in their discourse of the subject, argue that historically, GNP has been thought of as a key indicator in measuring the development level of a

nation. They however insist that over the years, researchers have found that the single GNP indicator is not sufficient to be used to measure development. As such numerous efforts have been put in place to create other composite indicators that could serve as complements or alternatives to the traditional measure. In order to calculate and categorise countries' levels of social and economic development, the Centre for Global Development (2012) and Weir and Collins (2021) among other authors, affirm that the United Nations through one of its arms, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), introduced Human Development Index as a composite statistic to provide an overall indication of quality of life and opportunity, incorporating human health (life expectancy), education level, and per capita income. Subsequently, the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) was introduced, which together with the HDI aim to measure development in broader sense.

Human Development Index, or HDI, is a metric compiled by the United Nations and used to quantify a country's average achievement in three basic dimensions of human development namely: a long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living (World Population Review 2022). Economic Times (2022) states that the HDI is a statistical tool used to measure a country's overall achievement in its social and economic dimensions. The Economic Times further adds that social and economic dimensions of a country are based on the health of people, their level of education attainment and their standard of living. It notes that HDI is one of the best tools to keep track of the level of development of a country, as it combines all major social and economic indicators that are responsible for economic development. Tutor2U (2021) also perceives the Human Development Index as a tool with more than two or three measuring indices. Specifically, Tutor2U asserts that HDI is a composite statistic calculated from five indices from countries, which are iterated as Life expectancy index, Education index, Mean years of schooling index, Expected years of schooling index and Income index. World Population Review (WPR) (2022) apportion figures and confirms that the indicators are compiled into a single number between 0 and 1.0, with 1.0 being the highest possible human development. WPR proclaims that HDI is divided into four tiers: very high human development (0.8-1.0), high human development (0.7-0.79), medium human development (0.55-7.0), and low human development (below 0.55). It also affirms that countries are ranked based on their score and split into categories that suggest how well-developed they are. But the whole arguments and postulations appeared to have been laid to rest by the United Nations

Development Programme (2022) in a post where it clearly indicates that the HDI was created to emphasize that people and their capabilities should be the ultimate criteria for assessing the development of a country, not economic growth alone. Thus, every year UNDP ranks countries based on the HDI report released in their annual report.

In reflection on the other hand over the counterpart of HDI, the national Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) (2022) indicates that it is a country-specific poverty measure tailored to each country's unique situation. OPHI further observes that such measures generally take the dimensions of health, education, and living standards as their starting point, and supplement with different dimensions measured by locally appropriate indicators. At the global level, the MPI measures the complexities of poor people's lives, individually and collectively, each year. The World Bank (2022) in a briefing on the multidimensional poverty index appears probably more specific when it defines it as a measure of poverty that captures deprivations in education and access to basic infrastructure in addition to income or consumption at the \$1.90 international poverty line.

## **5 Global HDI at the End of 15 Years of the Millennium Development Declaration in 2015**

Table 1 presented below, is the excerpt of the highest rankings in the Human Development Index by Tutor2U (2021) at the close of the Millennium Development Agenda in 2015 and before the commencement of the Sustainable Development Agenda in 2016. It will be recalled the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals for member countries commenced in the year 1999/2000. The table shows that with five indices comprising: Life expectancy index, Education index, Mean years of schooling index, Expected years of schooling index and Income index considered, the seventeen listed countries were at the top of the 'Very High Human Development' category. The HDI for the seventeen countries ranges from 0.89 – 0.94 out of 1.0. The countries are classified as developed countries and no sub-Saharan African country could make the list in the computation of the indices.

Table 2 is also part of the compilation of the UNDP 2015 Human Development Index sourced from Tutor2U (2021). All the seventeen listed countries had the lowest rankings (below 0.55) out of all the countries that are members of the UN and they are all sub-Saharan African countries. Despite the various interventions of

the United Nations and other agencies around the world to float programmes that would prop up socio-economic and political developments, sub-Saharan Africa is still regrettably retaining its back seat. The Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED) (2022) affirms that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) works in about 170 countries and territories, helping to achieve the eradication of poverty, and the reduction of inequalities and exclusion. ACTED further claims that UNDP helps (needy) countries to develop policies, leadership skills, partnering abilities, and institutional capabilities and build resilience in order to sustain development results.

**Table 1: 2015 Human Development Index – Highest Ranking Countries**

**2015 Human Development Index – Highest Rankings**

Country	Human Development Index (HDI) Value	Life expectancy at birth (years)	Expected years of schooling (years)	Mean years of schooling (years)	Gross national income (GNI) per capita (2011 PPP \$)	GNI per capita rank minus HDI rank
Norway	0.944	81.6	17.5	12.6	64,992	5
Australia	0.935	82.4	20.2	13.0	42,261	17
Switzerland	0.930	83.0	15.8	12.8	56,431	6
Denmark	0.923	80.2	18.7	12.7	44,025	11
Netherlands	0.922	81.6	17.9	11.9	45,435	9
Germany	0.916	80.9	16.5	13.1	43,919	11
Ireland	0.916	80.9	18.6	12.2	39,568	16
United States	0.915	79.1	16.5	12.9	52,947	3
Canada	0.913	82.0	15.9	13.0	42,155	11
New Zealand	0.913	81.8	19.2	12.5	32,689	23
Singapore	0.912	83.0	15.4	10.6	76,628	-7
Hong Kong, China (SAR)	0.910	84.0	15.6	11.2	53,959	-2
Liechtenstein	0.908	80.0	15.0	11.8	79,851	-10
Sweden	0.907	82.2	15.8	12.1	45,636	-1
United Kingdom	0.907	80.7	16.2	13.1	39,267	9
Iceland	0.899	82.6	19.0	10.6	35,182	12
Korea (Republic of)	0.898	81.9	16.9	11.9	33,890	13

**Source:** Tutor2U (2021).

Apart from encouraging the protection of human rights and the empowerment of women, minorities, the poorest and most vulnerable, UNDP also focuses on helping countries to build and share solutions in three main areas, namely:

sustainable development, democratic governance and peace building and climate and disaster resilience (UNDP 2022). UNDP further draws attention to its mandate that includes administering the UN Capital Development Fund, which helps developing countries grow their economies by supplementing existing sources of capital assistance by means of grants and loans, and UN Volunteers.

**Table 2: 2015 Human Development Index – Lowest Ranking Countries**

**2015 Human Development Index – Lowest Rankings**

Country	Human Development Index (HDI)	Life expectancy at birth	Expected years of schooling	Mean years of schooling	Gross national income (GNI) per capita	GNI per capita rank minus HDI rank
	Value	(years)	(years)	(years)	(2011 PPP \$)	
Côte d'Ivoire	0.462	51.5	8.9	4.3	3,171	-24
Malawi	0.445	62.8	10.8	4.3	747	13
Ethiopia	0.442	64.1	8.5	2.4	1,428	2
Gambia	0.441	60.2	8.8	2.8	1,507	-2
DRC	0.433	58.7	9.8	6.0	680	11
Liberia	0.430	60.9	9.5	4.1	805	7
Guinea-Bissau	0.420	55.2	9.0	2.8	1,362	-1
Mali	0.419	58.0	8.4	2.0	1,583	-8
Mozambique	0.416	55.1	9.3	3.2	1,123	1
Sierra Leone	0.413	50.9	8.6	3.1	1,780	-16
Guinea	0.411	58.8	8.7	2.4	1,096	0
Burkina Faso	0.402	58.7	7.8	1.4	1,591	-13
Burundi	0.400	56.7	10.1	2.7	758	1
Chad	0.392	51.6	7.4	1.9	2,085	-22
Eritrea	0.391	63.7	4.1	3.9	1,130	-6
Central African Republic	0.350	50.7	7.2	4.2	581	1
Niger	0.348	61.4	5.4	1.5	908	-5

Source: Tutor2U (2021).

## 6 Global HDI in the Middle of the Sustainable Development Agenda in 2022

Table 3 presents the list of top ten countries of the UNDP 2022 Human Development Index about the middle of SDG agenda that started in 2016. Virtually all of the countries in the table scored more than 0.9 HDI, which falls

in the category of Very High Human Development. When the entire list of countries is considered, the observation is that most developed countries have an HDI score of more than 0.9 when the five indices namely, Life expectancy index, Education index, Mean years of schooling index, Expected years of schooling index and Income index, are considered. Most of the countries with 0.8 HDI score could not be shown in the table because the list is long. For the year 2022, there are 62 countries in the group. It should also be noted that most, if not all, countries in this category have stable governments, widespread affordable education and healthcare, high life expectancies and growing, powerful economies. In contrast to this are the world's least developed countries (LDC), which tend to have HDI scores below 0.55, in the 'low human development' category. LDCs are characterized by unstable governments, widespread poverty, lack of access to healthcare, and poor education. Additionally, these countries have low income and low life expectancies, coupled with high birth rates (World Population Review 2022). Standing conspicuously in the rear of the LDCs in Table 4 are ten countries listed – all of them in sub-Saharan Africa. Beyond this, there are 36 countries with less than 0.55 HDI score listed in the World Population Review table and categorized as 'low human development'. A scrutiny of the list reveals that this low human development group is largely dominated by countries in sub-Saharan Africa with thirty-three out of 36. Only Haiti, as well as war-torn Afghanistan and Yemen are the three non-sub-Saharan countries found in the list.

As earlier noted, the indicators are compiled into a single number between 0 and 1.0, with 1.0 being the highest possible human development. As the HDI is divided into four tiers, the very high human development (shown in Table 1 for 2015 and Table 3 for 2022) is between 0.8 and 1.0. Occupying the first ten positions in the 2022 HDI are the countries listed in Table 3 with their respective HDI and corresponding size of population. Altogether there are 62 countries in this category and Seychelles is the only sub-Saharan African country that managed to 'encroach' into the group carrying the last, sixty-second, position with 8.01 HDI score in 2022. The second tier in the categorization of HDI is High human development rated 0.7 – 0.79. There are 53 countries in this category as observed in the 2022 HDI review, and only four sub-Saharan Africa countries namely Mauritius, Botswana, South Africa and Garbon, made the group. Sadly, virtually all the ten lowest ranking countries found in the 2015 Human Development Index list are still unenviably occupying the lowest ranking list of the 2022 HDI.

**Table 3: Human Development Index (HDI) by Country 2022 – Highest Rankings**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Human Development Index</b>	<b>Population</b>
Norway	0.954	5,511,370
Switzerland	0.946	8,773,637
Ireland	0.942	5,020,199
Germany	0.939	83,883,596
Hong Kong	0.939	7,604,299
Australia	0.938	26,068,792
Iceland	0.938	345,393
Sweden	0.937	10,218,971
Singapore	0.935	5,943,546
Netherlands	0.933	17,211,447

Source: World Population Review (2022).

**Table 4: Human Development Index (HDI) by Country 2022 – Lowest Rankings**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Human Development Index</b>	<b>Population</b>
Mozambique	0.446	33,089,461
Sierra Leone	0.438	8,306,436
Burkina Faso	0.434	22,102,838
Eritrea	0.434	3,662,244
Mali	0.427	21,473,764
Burundi	0.423	12,624,840
South Sudan	0.413	11,618,511

Chad	0.401	17,413,580
Central African Republic	0.381	5,016,678
Niger	0.377	26,083,660

**Source:** World Population Review (2022).

## 7 Multidimensional Poverty Index

Multidimensional Poverty Index, otherwise known by its acronym MPI, join forces together with the HDI to measure development of nations in broader sense. In its appraisal of poverty rate by Country in 2022, World Population Review (WPR) (2022) declares that poverty is a state of being in which a person lacks the income (or other means of support) to reliably meet their basic personal needs, such as food, shelter, and clothing. The WPR observes that whilst poverty exists in every country in the world, it is a more pressing issue in some countries than in others. On determining how it is calculated the WPR affirms that the poverty rate is the number of people (usually expressed as a percentage) in a given demographic group whose income falls below the poverty line. According to OPHI (2022), multidimensional poverty encompasses the various deprivations experienced by poor people in their daily lives – such as poor health, lack of education, inadequate living standards, disempowerment, poor quality of work, the threat of violence, and living in areas that are environmentally hazardous, among others. As the world seeks to fight and end poverty, leaving no one behind, multidimensional poverty level is measured globally by world bodies and various national or country governments. According to World Bank (2022), ten countries with the highest poverty rates in the world are as shown in Table 5. As noticed in the table, all the countries in the list except Guatemala (a Central American country), are in sub-Saharan Africa. This displays the extent to which no effort should be spared to boost the socio-economic development of Africa.

**Table 5: Countries with Highest Poverty Rates in the World**

Serial No.	Country	Poverty Rates %
1.	South Sudan	82.3



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2.	Equatorial Guinea	76.8
3.	Madagascar	70.7
4.	Guinea Bissau	69.3
5.	Eritrea	69.0
6.	Sao Tome and Principe	66.7
7.	Burundi	64.9
8.	Democratic Republic of Congo	63.9
9.	Central African Republic	62.0
10.	Guatemala	59.3

**Source:** World Bank 2022

Apart from the countries in Africa that are lagging behind other countries of the world in socio-economic development, the regional computation of the multidimensional poverty headcount and monetary poverty headcount were not performing any better when compared with other regions in the world. The World Bank (WB) (2022) observes with regret that in sub-Saharan Africa, more than in any other region, shortfalls in one dimension go hand-in-hand with other deficiencies.

As noted in Table 6 of the Global Monitoring Database updated in April 2022, the monetary poverty and multidimensional poverty of sub-Saharan Africa were the highest of all the regions of the world. The WB however admonished that the figures in the table do not yet fully account for the impact of COVID-19 on the world's poor. The WB hints that the monetary headcount is based on the international poverty line \$1.90, whilst the multidimensional poverty measure headcount indicates the share of the population in each region defined as multi-dimensionally poor.

The number of economies in table (6) is the number of economies in each region for which information is available in the window between 2015 and 2021, for a circa 2018 reporting year. It is to be noted that the data covers as much as 73 percent of the population in sub-Saharan Africa and as little as 22 percent of the population in South Asia.

**Table 6: Monetary and Multidimensional Poverty Headcount, by Region and the World, circa 2018**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Monetary poverty, headcount ratio (%)</b>	<b>Multidimensional poverty, headcount ratio (%)</b>	<b>Number of economies</b>	<b>Population coverage (%)<sup>a</sup></b>
East Asia and Pacific	2.5	4.4	14	30
Europe and Central Asia	0.3	2.2	25	89
Latin America and the Caribbean	4.0	4.7	14	87
Middle East and North Africa	2.3	2.9	5	51
South Asia	7.8	17.3	5	22
Sub-Saharan Africa	37.2	55.2	35	73
Rest of the World	0.7	1.3	25	78
<b>All regions</b>	<b>9.6</b>	<b>15.0</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>51<sup>b</sup></b>

**Source:** Global Monitoring Database (April 2022).

## **8 Information and Knowledge Management**

Thus far, sub-Saharan African countries have remained stagnant or worse in HDI, MDI, and Poverty Index measures compared to most other countries of the world despite several attempts from within and without the sub-region to boost its social, economic, and political developments. The question remains whether there is the possibility of information and knowledge management assisting to boost the socio-economic and political development in the sub-region as noted in the third objective of the study.

Whilst tracing the development of information and knowledge management, Virkus (2010), cites Wilson (2002) acknowledging that the phrase ‘knowledge management’ is either used as a synonym for ‘information management’ or the ‘management of work practices’ which are to improve the sharing of knowledge in an organization. On the other hand, Virkus maintains that some authors see information management as a subset of knowledge

management, adding that knowledge management is also often positioned underneath information management. Virkus argues that since the mid-nineties the label knowledge management (KM) has attracted much attention while information management (IM) has been used much less. She claims that the phrase knowledge management came into popular usage in the late 1980s with conferences organized, business/oriented journals, and books published on KM.

Though related and often used interchangeably, the twin concept of information management (IM) and knowledge management (KM) have their peculiarities. An information management consultant, SSL2Buy (2021), in an attempt to explain what information management is states that for every organization, information is an important asset that includes both physical and digital forms. SSL2Buy indicates it is indispensable to create a process to collect, protect, store, and distribute the information within the organization in order to utilize the information. This process, according to the organization, is known as information management. Similarly, another organization, IBM Cloud Education (2020) in defining knowledge management and linking information to the concept states that knowledge management (KM) is the process of identifying, organizing, storing and disseminating information within an organization. The organization observes that when knowledge is not easily accessible within an organization, it can be incredibly costly to a business as valuable time is spent seeking out relevant information versus completing outcome-focused tasks.

Some other attempts have been made to separate the two concepts. For instance, Amsler (2020) describes IM as combining business processes, procedures, and technology to organize, secure and access an organization's data regardless of format, including digital data, paper documents, and audio and video files, whilst KM involves gathering, organizing, and sharing knowledge, adding that KM uses processes and tools to pass on wisdom and understanding of different subject matters. She further elucidates the connection between the two by noting that when information is put into the context of being used for greater understanding of a subject, it becomes knowledge, adding that knowledge assists employees in doing their jobs – making them more efficient.

Further drawing a comparison between the two, Unitonomy (2022) argues that IM ensures information is stored securely and transfers efficiently, whilst KM is the strategy and system behind capturing, sharing and understanding an organization's knowledge. Explaining the variance between the two further, Unitonomy avers that knowledge is one's output from ingesting information and that information transfer is about moving factual assets

between people, whilst knowledge transfer is about moving the collected output of knowledge between people. Hlatshwayo (2019) in a review of IM and KM claims that both notions denote managing (supervision, guiding, leading, governing, planning, organizing) methods and products of those methods. He affirms that knowledge is a method of information and KM is a method of 'IM' adding that KM is a more vital method of IM that delivers the administration of events not normally obtainable in 'IM'.

With the thin line separating them, the expediency or benefits of both information and knowledge management in an organization is overwhelming and has been well documented by authors including SSL2Buy (2021), Amsler (2020), IBM Cloud Education (2020), Hlatshwayo (2019). The benefits listed among others include: shrinking operational costs, raised returns, risk mitigation, enhanced productivity, sustained growth, and innovation in business. Other benefits iterated by authors include the identification of skills gaps, making better-informed decisions, maintenance of enterprise knowledge, operational efficiencies, increased collaboration and communication, and data security.

Extant literature suggests the definition of knowledge management would not be complete without identifying and categorizing the various knowledge types that need to be managed and their relative importance in various contexts. Whilst some authors claim there are only two types, others hinted there are three of them, yet other authors itemized any number between four and seven. It is however obvious that there are two broad types of knowledge that stand out and are common to all postulations of the authors. These are tacit and explicit knowledge. Tacit knowledge according to IBM Cloud Education (2020) is typically acquired through experience, and intuitively acquired and used practically over time by an individual, thus making it difficult to transfer it to other individuals or the rest of an organization. Alexander (2018) and IBM Cloud Education (2020) describe explicit knowledge as the type which can be easily articulated, recorded or codified, communicated and, most importantly in the context of knowledge management, stored and accessed. IBM Cloud Education declares that this form of knowledge is important to manage as intellectual capital within an organization to facilitate successful knowledge transfer to new employees.

## **9 Effective Management of Information and Knowledge**

In the words of Document360 (2022), a good system ensures that information

is available to those who need it when they need it and knowledge management is important because it can capture valuable information. The types of information and knowledge that can be included in a knowledge management system as Document360 suggests include standard operating procedure, comprising a set of instructions explaining how to complete a particular task, process and procedure, Human resources policies, training programmes and Webinars consisting recorded video sessions on a given topic. Beyond these, in this age of the UN Sustainable Development Agenda, with the scope of leaving no one behind, all institutions and organisations should assist and deploy information and knowledge management to accomplish the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aimed to transform the world. According to UNDP (2022) the SDGs, also known as the Global Goals, were a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

Further, in the new digital and big data age, the place and involvement of IM and KM is assured. For instance, Jacobson (2021), in establishing the benefits, declares that processing big data and disseminating it via a KM solution gives stakeholders fast and easy access to critical information. It helps to uncover and share insights that can improve nearly every facet.

## **10 Information and Knowledge Management and Socio-Economic Development**

In view of the nature and importance of information and knowledge management, types, sources, systems, institutions, and tools discussed above, how can more effective and robust IM and KM be applied to catalyze and sustain social and economic development in sub-Sahara Africa?

The world has already evolved and progressed through an information society, knowledge economy, and digital society and now increasing to big data and artificial intelligence-based society. Indisputably, information and knowledge change the nature of the economy and indeed the practice of local economic development. Jarboe and Alliance (2001) in a report to the US Economic Development Administration, admit that companies are changing how they operate and what drives their location decisions. They advocate that local economic development strategies must adapt to these changes. Jarboe and Alliance adhere to the view that the world is gaining a better understanding of how information and knowledge affect both the economy in general and the

economic success of specific localities. They therefore acknowledge that there is a rise in new theories of economic development, such as economic clusters, that can be useful in guiding local economic development activities. Oliinyk, Bilan, and Mishchuk (2021) argue that obtaining and using relevant knowledge today is a competitive advantage for organizations, industries, and economies in general. They acknowledge that currently, knowledge acts both as a necessary factor of production and as an independent product, but at the same time, effective knowledge management is a powerful factor in the high level of economic development of the world. In order to take full advantage of this opportunity, Oliinyk, Bilan, and Mishchuk (2021) subscribe to the advocacy of UNDP (2019) report that country leaders should focus on five main facets in their countries. These include: education (focus on curriculum quality, orientation on new technologies); research, development, innovation, and science (skills/ knowledge of researchers and organizations to stimulate the development of new technologies and the formation of necessary skills in the future); technologies (providing a high level of technological infrastructure and ICT needed to share knowledge, promoting the development of new technologies and teaching methods); economy (as a source of financial resources for the introduction of new technologies); and favourable environment (organisational support for entrepreneurship development and innovation).

Information, information management, knowledge, and knowledge management have jointly taken the centre stage and effected a great deal of alteration in virtually all areas of the undertaking of humanity. In their description of the proceedings book of the 2015 International Congress on Economics, Social Sciences and Information Management, Gaol and Hutagalung (2015) stress that information technology, in particular, has changed many aspects of our life, including how we communicate, work, socialize, education, and business. Extending the treatise to knowledge management and socio-economic development, Gaol and Hutagalung maintain that along with the improvement of the internet, KM is very important to keep the economy moving in a positive direction and to monitor social change in society.

Explaining the significance of knowledge in the scheme of development, Userhub (2022) confirms that knowledge is known to be the driving force for the development and definition of every organization's strategy, and for this reason it is a key determinant in the organizations competitiveness. They maintain that countries that do not support knowledge sharing and openness cannot realize the benefits of increased performance and productivity. Today

developing countries base their development approaches on expanding their knowledge base. In confirming that knowledge management has become a primary source of meeting the dynamically growing demands, Userhub (2022) acknowledges that the benefits of knowledge management have been growing constantly, over the years with the result that its effect is important for creating economic growth, development and competitive advantage. In view of the shift to knowledge-based economy in developing economy, Userhub believes that the transition to the knowledge economy and knowledge society will assume a controlled modernization of political, educational, cultural and economic development, cautioning that delay in dissemination of knowledge halts the performance of all government sectors because the only thing that connects all these sectors is the knowledge they share.

The World Bank (2007) in a report on ‘Building knowledge economies: advanced strategies for development’, highlights the view that knowledge has always been an essential force in economic development and describes the knowledge revolution, which is leading us into a post-industrial age in which brains, not brawn, are the best means of coping with intensified competition and new challenges, including those related to human development and the global environment. In the same vein, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) (2010) expresses the view that knowledge could act as the driver of competitiveness and productivity, as a facilitator of welfare and environment, and as an enabler of institutions and governance, hence contributing to economic and social development. ECLAC buttresses its argument on *Knowledge as the enabler of institutions and governance*, by stating that knowledge is crucial in the policymaking process and that it can be transformed into effective decisions and actions to solve development problems both in the short and long term. The Economic Commission avows that most development policies are based on the identification and dissemination of good policy practices to all aspects of public administration. In its argument on *Knowledge as the driver of competitiveness and productivity*, the Economic Commission states that an econometric study conducted by the World Bank concluded that close to two-thirds of the differences between the GDP of two countries (Ghana and the Republic of Korea), over a half-century, were explained not much by the accumulation of physical capital and labour but by other sources of growth and productivity in which knowledge was crucial. Concluding on *Knowledge as the facilitator of welfare and environment*, the Commission confirms that knowledge improves nutrition, cures epidemics, and protects against natural dangers.

Wickramasinghe (2019) acknowledges that in the developing world, the creation, accumulation, and strategic use of knowledge will play a big role in the survival, development, and advancement of any nation's economy, stressing that knowledge is very important for the economic growth of a country.

## **11 Information and Knowledge Management and Political Development**

Politics is about policies and policy making, legislation and governance. Whilst exploring the nature of 'governance' and the importance of information management to 'good governance', CEPAL (2001) alludes to the explanation of the concept of 'Governance' by Strassman (2000) in his observation that: Governance is what information management is mostly all about. The explanation further adds that information management is the process by which those who set policy guide those who follow policy. Governance concerns power, and applying an understanding of the distribution and sharing of power to the management of information technologies. Earlier, it was established that one good trait perceived of countries with high HDI is stable government, which comes with good governance. CEPAL alludes to the statement credited to Kofi Annan, the erstwhile Secretary General of the United Nations, who proffers the view that good governance entails a vast set of democratic processes and institutions at every level of society, from the local council to regional, national and international institutions, that allow the voices of the people to be heard, conflicting interests to be peacefully resolved, and a forging of consensus towards greater social progress.

In their exploration of the influence of knowledge management practices on e-government success, Abu-Shanab and Shehabat (2018) claim that KM practices and systems are necessary for the success of this process and the success of e-government projects. These authors hold to the belief that the KM practices (e.g. acquisition, sharing, creation, codification and retention) in public institutions will open opportunities for the success of e-government. Abu-Shanab and Shehabat (2018) further corroborate the view that managing knowledge in public sector is considered a challenging task because governmental departments actually create, capture, organize and manage huge knowledge resources. They acknowledge that the pressures related to the effective implementation of KM practices on government are related to some factors, namely: the way government manages and uses knowledge resources,



how the effective use of knowledge assets may affect decentralization, policy development, service delivery and other good governance practices.

CEPAL (2001) among others, had earlier indicated the view that information management is crucial to ‘good governance’ as it (IM) seeks to provide answers to the developmental areas as perceived by policy. CEPAL argues that policy makers, on the basis of their social and political orientation, develop a view of the world or an appreciation of what the society is as opposed to what it should be, giving rise to the identification of ‘problems’ and ‘development objectives’. They note that an information management system is then created to do the following, inter alia: (a) gather and process data on the strengths and weaknesses of the society through the examination of social and economic variables; (b) analyse the development over time of these variables to ascertain the direction of their evolution; (c) benchmark progress in the society against developments in one or more comparator societies; (d) inform the political directorate and civil society of the local situation so that consensus could be built as to what changes, if any, should be engineered; (e) identify a mechanism for digestion and filtration of the data collected to produce information to be considered by the administration and its planning structure; (f) receive feedback from top down and bottom up for modification of the next round of data gathering.

In what seems to be an advocacy to its treatise, CEPAL counsels that governance needs to be informed continually by information flows that are examined, digested, and evaluated against the intended direction of government policy.

## **12 Conclusion**

It is evidently clear with all the available indices and indicators that there is an existence of yawning gap between the two worlds of the rich and the poor, between the developed and developing nations, and between the first and the third world. Though international bodies and other government and non-governmental organizations have been making frantic efforts to bridge the gap or at least combat the inadequacies serving as hindrances to development in third world countries, especially, sub-Saharan Africa, it does not look like a lot has been achieved thus far. Rather, it appears that the gap does not relent in widening. The launching of eight goals of millennium development by the United Nations in September 2000, which committed world leaders to combat

poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation, and discrimination against women, though assisted, it could not go far enough after 15 years. As such, a more ambitious sustainable development agenda was launched in 2016 from the ashes of the MDGs with the promise to ensure no one is left behind. Unfortunately, the ominous signals currently being received thus far is that the SDGs and promises entailed would still be very much here with us unaccomplished when the tenure of the agenda ends on schedule in 2030.

Whilst developed countries are known to enjoy mature and sophisticated economies and high standards of living where many people have enough money to buy the things they need, the tragedy is that such benefits and opportunities are considered a luxury and beyond the reach of an average person in sub-Saharan Africa. As earlier mentioned, the Government of New Brunswick (2009) indicated that the success of society is linked to the well-being of each and every citizen and that social development is about improving the well-being of every individual in society so they can reach their full potential. One observable phenomenon perceived in the socioeconomic prosperity of the developed countries is, in most cases, the matured liberal democracy culminating in stability of government. At variance with this, in recent years, a wave of military coups has plagued Africa and occurred in at least six countries in sub-Saharan Africa namely, Burkina Faso (2022), two in Mali (2020 and 2021), Guinea (2021), Chad (2021) and Sudan (2019 and 2021). These coups contribute in no small measure to instability of government and bear direct impact on socio-economic development of those nations.

How long will the movement in sub-Saharan Africa to socio-economic emancipation and political maturity continue to be stagnated or at a snail speed? This study has shown that several world bodies and organizations are making frantic efforts which are yielding some dividends, though not as substantial as desired. This chapter has also demonstrated some correlation between information/ knowledge management and socio-economic and political development. For instance, as the driving force for development, information and knowledge can change the nature of the economy and indeed the practice of local economic development, that knowledge is the enabler of institutions and governance, that knowledge is the driver of competitiveness and productivity, and that governance is what information management is mostly all about, etc. In light of this and the ongoing sustainable development agenda of the United Nations and other world bodies' developmental programmes that may be introduced, the message should spread from companies and organizations at

national level, to state and local levels. Appropriate information and sharing of knowledge should blow out and be cascaded from urban (cities and towns) to rural (villages and hamlets) areas, ensuring that no one is indeed left behind in skilling and retooling all for an upgrade. It is submitted that while knowledge management solutions can be helpful indeed in facilitating knowledge transfer across teams and individuals, they also depend on user adoption to generate positive outcomes.

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