

# **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

## **GOAL 10**

### **REDUCED INEQUALITIES**

#### **Teacher's Manual**



### Lead authors: UNISA South Africa

1. Rudi Pretorius and Melanie Nicolau

### Contributing authors for the sections on Africa

2. Rudi Pretorius
3. Melanie Nicolau
4. Lindokuhle Sibiya
5. Zongho Kom

### Contributing authors for the sections on Latin America and the Caribbean

6. Luciana Londero Brandli
7. Amanda Lange Salvia
8. Janaina Mazutti

### Contributing authors for the sections on Europe

9. Prof Dr Andrzej Raszkowski
10. João Henrique Paulino Pires Eustachio
11. Jennifer Pohlmann

### English language editing

12. Sharonne van der Merwe

### Translation to IsiZulu

13. Unisa: Directorate Language Services

### Translation to Sesotho sa Leboa

14. Unisa: Directorate Language Services

### Translation to Portuguese

15. Gabriela Rodrigues

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### Project leaders:

Prof. Dr. mult. Walter Leal Filho (Hamburg University of Applied Sciences), Prof. Dr. Luciana Londero Brandli (University of Passo Fundo), and Prof. Dr. Rudi Wessel Pretorius (University of South Africa).

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Teachers (readers) will be empowered to

1. provide the link between the (Sustainable Development goals) SDGs and the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs).
2. explain the origin and overall aim of the SDGs.
3. name and briefly discuss the five priority areas of the SDGs.
4. position SDG 10 within the framework of Agenda 2030.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the central component of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as agreed on by the United Nations (UN) in September 2015. The 2030 Agenda consists of a set of 17 interlinked goals (United Nations, 2015), with associated indicators and targets which are to be achieved by 2030.

The 2030 Agenda was developed as an action plan with the purpose of boosting the development of humanity in five priority areas: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnerships (referred to as the “five Ps”), as well as continuing the progress made with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were in force during the years 2000 to 2015. The MDGs consisted of eight international development goals and were supported with 21 individual targets. Compared to the MDGs, the SDGs have a more comprehensive scope, rely more on collective action and are more detailed, with the message very clear that success will depend on the active support and participation of every nation (Feeny, 2020).

The SDGs provide a framework within which global approaches can be planned and implemented to secure a fair, healthy, and prosperous future for the current and future generations (Morton et al., 2017). A key element is that all the SDGs are closely interconnected, and that failure to take this into account will lead to a highly ineffective way to address the sustainability dilemma the world is facing (Van Soest et al., 2019). According to Van Soest et al. (2019), key interactions exist across all areas of critical

importance for the SDGs but lie especially within the area of “people”, as well as between the areas of “people” and “prosperity”, and between the areas of “people” and “planet”. Figure 1 presents the set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda.



**Figure 1. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals** (Source: United Nations, n.d.)

In a certain way, the SDGs emerged from the MDGs and with the intention of going beyond them. For instance, while the MDGs had no specific goal for inequality and was criticised for its disregard of, for example inequalities within countries (World Health Organisation, 2015), Agenda 2030 addressed this limitation by adding a specific goal dedicated to reducing inequalities, namely SDG 10.

This manual specifically deals with SDG 10 – reduced inequalities, which is one of the SDGs within the area of “prosperity”. Officially SDG 10 is formulated as “Reduce inequality within and among countries” (United Nations, 2022a). By providing a space

for inequality on the global agenda, SDG 10 creates opportunity for engagement and innovation to take steps to address this issue on the global level (Doidge and Kelly, 2013).

The inclusion of SDG 10 as one of the global goals can largely be seen as a reaction to the increasing disparities of wealth observed around the world over the past decades, as well as the political reaction to these disparities (Oestreich, 2018). An example is the public debate which arose in 2017 when Oxfam concluded from aid figures published by the OECD that just eight men owned the same wealth as the poorest half of the world (Oxfam, 2017). However, SDG 10 is not limited to economic parameters only, but includes consideration of a variety of legal, social, and economic changes which are required within and between countries, to reduce inequality in terms of both material position and social standing.

#### **Supplementary readings**

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2. Oestreich, J.E. 2018. SDG 10: Reduce inequality in and among countries. Social Alternatives, 37(1), 34-41
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#### **Examples of questions for assessment**

##### **Introduction**

1. Name the five areas of critical importance to which the 17 SDGs are linked and explain why this is referred to as the five Ps.
2. Explain the link between the MDGs and the SDGs.
3. Explain how the SDGs differ from the MDGs.
4. Where does SDG 10 fit into the five Ps?

5. Which area/s of concern is/are primarily addressed by SDG 10?

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World Health Organisation. 2015. *Health in 2015: From MDGs to SDGs*. WHO Press, Geneva. Available at: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241565110> Accessed 11 June 2023.



## 2. DEFINING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 10

Teachers (readers) will be empowered to

1. define SDG 10 and list its targets and indicators.
2. explain the significance of SDG 10 with reference to inequalities within and between countries.
3. list and explain five advantages of SDG 10.
4. reflect on the interdependencies between SDG 10 and the other SDGs.
5. comprehend the implications of the interdependencies between SDG 10 and the other SDGs.
6. understand the challenges involved to achieve SDG 10 and discuss examples of actions to address these challenges.

SDG 10 consists of ten targets through which UN member states have found consensus on the following broad range of topics relating to inequality (Kuhn, 2020):

1. achieving and maintaining income growth among the bottom 40% of the population at a higher rate than the national average (SDG 10.1)
2. actively working toward the social and political inclusion of all (SDG 10.2)
3. advocating equal opportunities while working to reduce inequalities of outcome (SDG 10.3)
4. adoption of policies to progressively achieve greater equality (SDG 10.4)
5. improved regulation and monitoring of global financial markets and institutions while also strengthening the implementation of regulations in this regard (SDG 10.5)
6. working towards an enhanced representation and voice for developing countries in decision making in global international economic and financial institutions (SDG 10.6)
7. facilitation of orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration and mobility of people (SDG 10.7)

8. special and differential treatment for developing countries (SDG 10.a); official development assistance and financial flows to states where the need is the greatest (SDG 10.b), and reduction of transaction costs of migrant remittances to less than 3% by 2030 (SDG 10.c)

**Table 1. Targets and indicators for SDG 10**

	<b>Targets</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
<b>10.1</b>	By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average by 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average.	10.1.1 Growth rates of household expenditure or income per capita among the bottom 40 per cent of the population and the total population
<b>10.2</b>	By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic, and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.	10.2.1 Proportion of people living below 50 per cent of median income, by sex, age and persons with disabilities
<b>10.3</b>	Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies, and action in this regard.	10.3.1 Proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months based on a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law
<b>10.4</b>	Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality.	10.4.1 Labour share of GDP, comprising wages and social protection transfers
<b>10.5</b>	Improve the regulation and monitoring of global financial markets and institutions and strengthen the implementation of such regulations.	10.5.1 Financial Soundness Indicators
<b>10.6</b>	Ensure enhanced representation and voice for developing countries in decision-making in global international economic and financial institutions in order to deliver more effective, credible, accountable and legitimate institutions.	10.6.1 Proportion of members and voting rights of developing countries in international organizations
<b>10.7</b>	Facilitate orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies	10.7.1 Recruitment cost borne by employee as a proportion of yearly income earned in country of destination. 10.7.2 Number of countries that have implemented well-managed migration policies
<b>10a</b>	Implement the principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, in accordance with World Trade Organization agreements.	10.a.1 Proportion of tariff lines applied to imports from least developed countries and developing countries with zero-tariff
<b>10b</b>	Encourage official development assistance and financial flows, including foreign direct investment, to States where the need is greatest, least	10.b.1 Total resource flows for development, by recipient and donor countries and type of flow (e.g., official development assistance, foreign direct

	developed countries, African countries, small island developing states and landlocked developing countries, in accordance with their national plans and programmes.	investment and other flows)
<b>10c</b>	By 2030, reduce to less than 3 per cent the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 per cent.	10.c.1 Remittance costs as a proportion of the amount remitted.

Source: United Nations (2022a)

SDG 10 furthermore addresses three different types of inequality, namely horizontal inequalities (i.e., inequalities between social, ethnic, linguistic, or population groups); vertical inequalities (i.e., inequalities of wealth, income, or social outcome); and inequalities between countries (MacNaughton, 2017). Target 10.1 focuses on income growth and addresses vertical inequality, while the focus of targets 10.2, 10.3 and 10.4 are on horizontal inequalities as per the non-discrimination clauses associated with human rights. Targets 10.5, 10.6 and 10.7 emphasize global and South-North dimensions, while the last three targets also focus on inequalities between countries.

Within country	Between countries	Implementation
<p>Targets 10.1, 10.2, 10.3 and 10.4 address within-country inequalities.</p> <p>These targets transcend social, economic, and political dimensions, thereby aiming to expand prosperity, inclusion, and social protection.</p> <p>The spread of COVID-19 has intensified structural and systemic discrimination and pervasive inequalities.</p> <p>From 2017-2021 ± one in five people have experienced some discrimination prohibited under international human rights law.</p> <p>Women are twice as likely as men to experience discrimination based on their gender.</p>	<p>Targets 10.5, 10.6 and 10.7 address inequalities between countries.</p> <p>These targets give attention to cross-border flows of finance and people and the distribution of voice in global institutions.</p> <p>While decreasing with 3.8% from 2013 to 2017, it is estimated that between-country income inequality rose with 1.6% from 2017 to 2021.</p> <p>This increase is largely due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, may become entrenched and affect households in low-income countries disproportionately.</p> <p>This halts the steady decline in income inequality observed since 1988.</p>	<p>Targets 10.a, 10.b and 10.c address means of implementation.</p> <p>These targets propose steps for attaining greater equality by directing resource flows toward those most in need.</p> <p>In terms of progress, there is a decline in the labour share of income from 2014-2019.</p> <p>Europe and North America is driving this decline, while Oceania, Central and South-ern Asia also show significant declines, which exacerbate income inequality.</p> <p>However, sub-Saharan Africa , Latin America &amp; the Caribbean, and Eastern &amp; South-Eastern Asia are showing in-creases, although occurring from a lower</p>

## Figure 2. Observations and trends on the three main thematic areas of SDG 10

(Source: Authors' compilation, United Nations, 2022b)

It is convenient to conceptualise SDG 10 in terms of three thematic areas: i) within country inequalities, ii) between country inequalities, and iii) means of implementation. These thematic areas serve as illustration of the wide-reaching scope, comprehensiveness, and associated significance of SDG 10. Figure 2 provides a diagrammatic representation and overview of some important aspects associated with each of these three thematic areas of SDG 10.

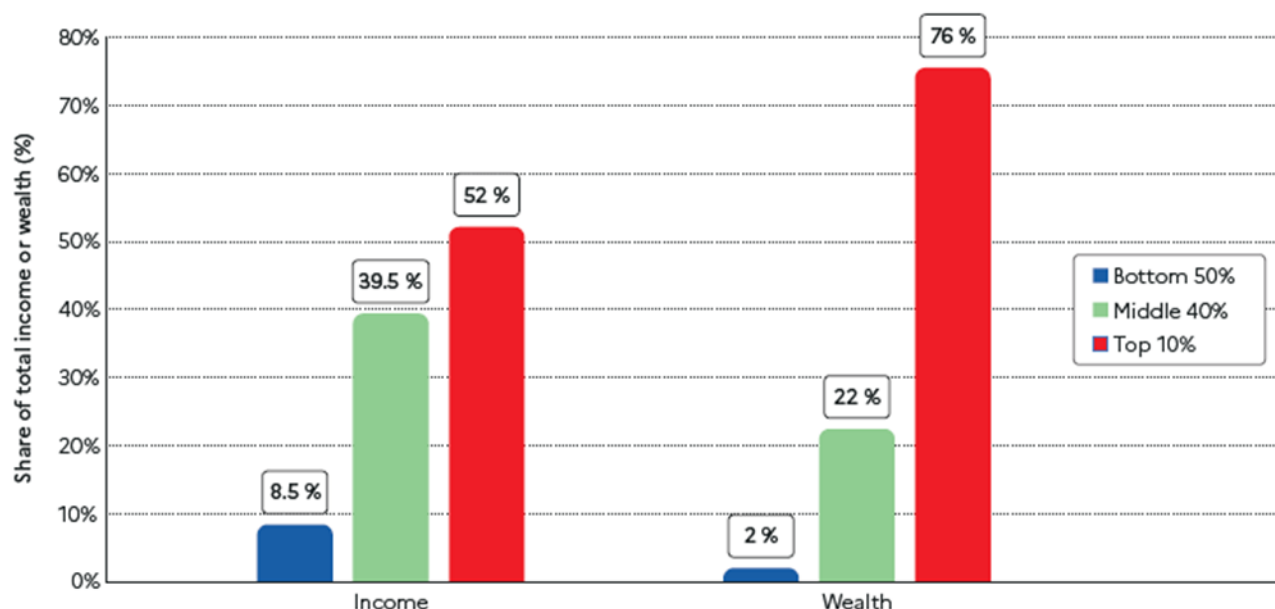
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2. MacNaughton, G. 2017. Vertical Inequalities: Are the SDGs and Human Rights Up to the Challenges? International Journal of Human Rights, 21(8),1050.

### 2.1 Significance of SDG 10

Inequality has been rising over the past few decades, remains unacceptably high across all main dimensions of human life, and presents a threat to the attainment of sustainable development (Cullet, 2022; United Nations, 2022b). This firstly refers to inequalities in income and wealth, which are generally accepted as severe and continue to widen globally (Oxfam, 2023). In this regard the World Inequality Report 2022 (Chancel et al., 2022) reveals that the richest 10% of the world population currently earns 52% of the global income, whereas the poorest half of the population earns only 8.5% of it. Global wealth inequalities are more pronounced, with the poorest half of the world population barely owning any wealth (2% of the total) while the richest 10% owns 76% of all wealth. Refer to Figure 3 for a graphic representation of global income and wealth inequalities in 2021. The prevalence and impact of inequality in income and wealth became worse during the COVID-19 pandemic, with rising food and fuel prices (Oxfam, 2023). The World Bank (2022) reports that during the worst phase of the COVID-19

pandemic, income losses experienced by the poorest 40% of the world population were twice as large as for the richest 20% of the population, and that globally inequality in both income and in wealth has shown increases for the first time in many decades.



**Interpretation:** The global bottom 50% captures 8.5% of total income measured at Purchasing Power Parity (PPP). The global bottom 50% owns 2% of wealth (at Purchasing Power Parity). The global top 10% owns 76% of total Household wealth and captures 52% of total income in 2021. Note that top wealth holders are not necessarily top income holders. Incomes are measured after the operation of pension and unemployment systems and before taxes and transfers. **Sources and series:** [wir2022.wid.world/methodology](https://www.wir2022.wid.world/methodology).

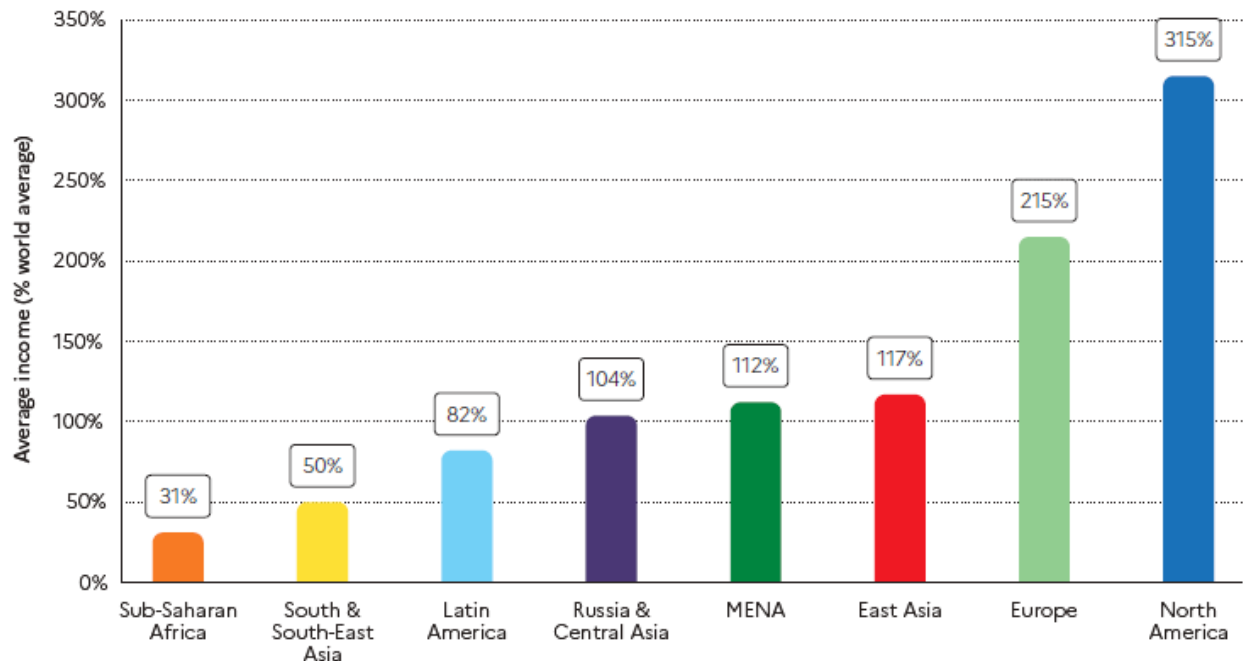
**Figure 3. Global income and wealth inequality, 2021** (Source: Chancel et al., 2022; License: Creative Commons 4.0)

Global income and wealth inequality between individuals have two components: inequality between countries and regions and inequality within countries. Figure 4 shows the average income across different world regions, expressed as a percentage of the global average income estimated at €16,700 per year. Average income varies from as low as 0.31, that is, 31% of the global average for Sub-Saharan Africa, to as high as more than three times the global average for North America. The average North American therefore earns 6 to 10 times more than Sub-Saharan Africans (Chancel et al., 2022). A further observation is that wealth disparities between rich and poor regions are greater than income disparities. For example, Sub-Saharan Africans, South and

Southeast Asians and Latin Americans own just 20% to 50% of the global average for wealth (compared to 50% to 100% for income).

Regarding economic inequality within countries and regions, the picture revealed by the World Inequality Report (Chancel et al., 2022) is equally worrying. In no country or region, the poorest 50% of the population captures more than 20% of the national income, while it can be as low as 9% to 12% in Latin America, MENA, Sub-Saharan Africa and South and Southeast Asia. This can be explained by the presence of dual societies within these regions, where the affluent economic and political elite enjoys high levels of prosperity, living next to individuals in extreme poverty. In other world regions, the bottom 50% is not as poor, either relatively or absolutely, with Europe serving as example. Here the bottom share can be as high as 19%. At the other end of the scale, the richest 10% of the population captures on average 36% of the national income in Europe, while this figure jumps to 55% to 58% in the world's most unequal regions. As a rule, regions with very low bottom 50% shares usually have very high top 10% shares.

SDG 10, however, not only calls for the progressive and sustained reduction of economic inequality, within and between countries, but in addition also acknowledges that a variety of legal, social, and economic changes are required to reduce inequality in terms of material position as well as social standing (Oestreich, 2018). In this way the focus must also be on the political and moral questions associated with equity and the requirement to empower the poor with access to the full spectrum of political and social rights. The disparities in income and wealth which have been highlighted so far in the section have several obvious implications for human rights. These disparities can frequently be linked to violations of basic human rights, such as associated with the legacy of colonialism and economic exploitation, and with political repression. Significant disparities in income and wealth stand in the way of access to such rights as the right to health care, food, and a clean environment. They affect the right to life, liberty, political participation, and other civil rights (Ibid).



**Interpretation:** In 2021, the average income of North America is 315% of world average wealth (at Purchasing Power Parity). **Sources and series:** [wir2022.wid.world/methodology](https://wir2022.wid.world/methodology)

**Figure 4. Average Income across world regions, 2021** (Source: Chancel et al., 2022; License: Creative Commons 4.0)

### Supplementary readings

1. Chancel, L., Piketty, T., Saez, E., Zucman, G. et al. 2022. *World Inequality Report 2022*. World Inequality Lab. Available at <https://wir2022.wid.world> Accessed 16 June 2023.
2. United Nations. 2022b. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022*. Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Available at: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/2022/07/sdgs-report/> Accessed 13 June 2023.

## 2.2 Interdependencies of SDG 10

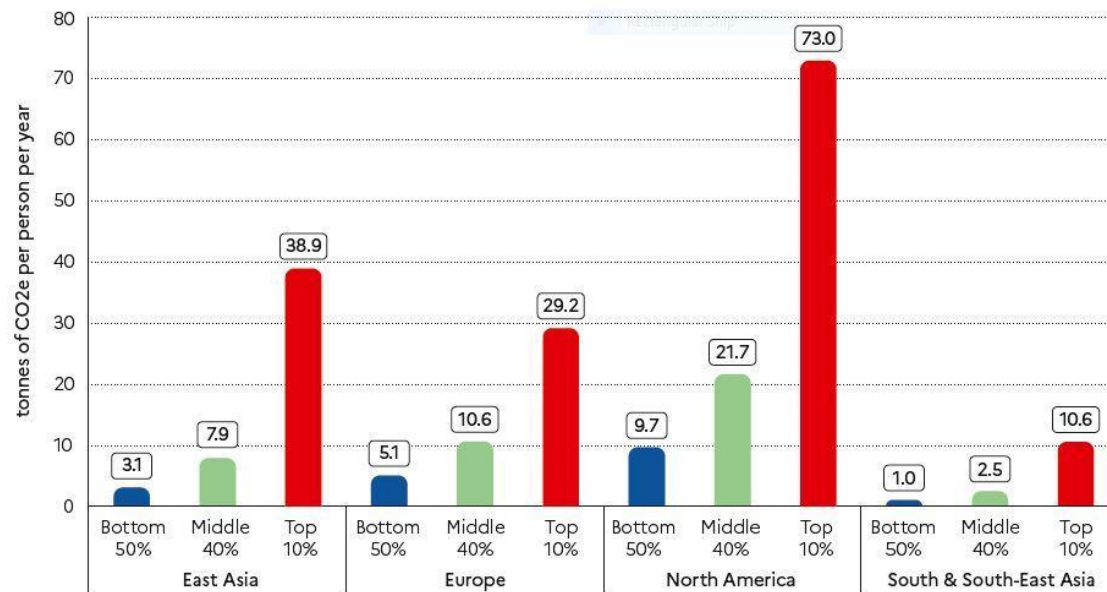
Although SDG 10 was among the last of the 17 SDGs to be added to the 2030 Agenda, it is of great importance due to the widespread occurrence of increasing income and wealth disparities around the world, as well as the different ways in which political, economic, and social factors interact with these disparities (Cojocaru et al., 2022). While



there is general agreement that SDG 10 addresses one of the most important issues facing the world today, namely the reduction of inequality in its various manifestations within and between countries, it is regarded as an extremely difficult and complex goal, but also the most interesting and wide-ranging global target, addressing a range of inequality issues (Holger, 2020). As the SDGs can be regarded as a complex, continuously interacting system that must ensure a safe and equitable operating space for all people, SDG 10 cannot be implemented and/or act in isolation, and therefore the attainment of its targets depends on how the various synergies and trade-offs at play between the different SDGs are considered (Oestreich, 2018).

Despite the importance of the issues addressed by SDG 10, Early (2019) observes that the progress measured against the SDG 10 targets remains slow, and in some cases even appears to be going backwards. Along the same lines Early (2019) states that one of the main issues leading to the lack of progress with SDG 10, is that this SDG is one of the so-called “foundational goals”. This is because progress with the achievement of the SDG 10 targets would speed up progress across the entire sustainable development agenda. Guidelines supplied by the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) elaborate further on some of these interdependencies (UNGC, 2018). For example, if inequality continues to exist, it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to meet SDG 1 (to eradicate poverty). Several connections between SDG 10 and SDG 5 (on gender equality) are also evident, and which are closely correlated. SDG 10 also supports SDG 8 (on decent work and economic growth) through enhancing the potential of the population to join the work force and through increasing diversity of thought. Progress with SDG 10 should also contribute to building more stable and peaceful economies in line with SDG 16 by lessening social tensions. This, in turn, will contribute to a reduction in hunger (SDG 2), to tackle ill-health (SDG 3), and lastly to improve access to education (SDG 4). (UNGC, 2018)





**Interpretation:** Personal carbon footprints include emissions from domestic consumption, public and private investments as well as imports and exports of carbon embedded in goods and services traded with the rest of the world. Modeled estimates based on the systematic combination of tax data, household surveys and input-output tables. Emissions split equally within households. **Sources and series:** [wir2022.wid.world/methodology](https://www.wid.world/methodology) and Chancel (2021).

**Figure 5. Per capita emissions across some world regions, 2019** (Source: Chancel et al., 2022) (License: Creative Commons 4.0)




Although the interdependencies of SDG 10 referred to so far cover the SDGs related to “People”, “Prosperity” and “Peace”, several interdependencies also exist between SDG 10 and the SDGs related to “Planet”. In this regard the UNGC has noted that many of the environmental goals can directly benefit from a reduction in inequality (UNGC, 2018). An example is the incorporation of marginalized communities into the formal economy, thus contributing to a reduction in their dependence on activities such as logging, which are harmful for the environment. Another example is the indirect link between SDGs 10 and 13, in that it will be challenging to garner public support to meet carbon reduction targets in the context where people are struggling to cope with issues such as poverty and discrimination (Early, 2019).








The World Inequality Report 2022 (Chancel et al., 2022) provides insightful observations on the interdependencies between global income/wealth inequalities and ecological inequalities, as well as inequalities in contributions to climate change. These

inequalities, however, cannot simply be reduced to differences between rich and poor countries since there are high carbon emitters in low- and middle-income countries and low carbon emitters in rich countries. The graph in Figure 5 shows that while the bottom 50% of the population in Europe emits around five tons of carbon per year per person, the bottom 50% in East Asia emits around three tons and the bottom 50% in North America around 10 tons. This stands in sharp contrast to the carbon emissions of the top 10% in these regions, namely 29 tons per year per person in Europe, 39 in East Asia and 73 in North America.

To achieve the main objective of SDG 10, the many interdependencies between this SDG and the other goals (Table 2) can be leveraged to enhance the impact of policies and actions to reduce inequality. For example, the promotion of inclusive and equitable quality education (SDG 4) can contribute to reduce income and opportunity gaps between different groups of people (UNESCO, 2016). Providing access to sustainable energy (SDG 7) can improve the living standards and productivity of poor and marginalized people, thereby reducing inequality as well (IEA, 2017). Strengthening global partnerships for development (SDG 17) can also contribute, through fostering international cooperation and solidarity which will help to address the causes and consequences of inequality (UNDP, 2018). By exploiting these interdependencies, more effective and integrated strategies can be designed and implemented to reduce inequality and achieve the other goals and targets set by Agenda 2030.

**Table 2. Interdependencies between SDG 10 and the other SDGs**

 <p>1 NO POVERTY</p>	<p>Poor people generally experience challenges to access basic resources such as food, water, healthcare, education, and employment. This often leads to their social exclusion and marginalization, which further exacerbate poverty and inequality.</p>
 <p>2 ZERO HUNGER</p>	<p>As for poverty, when people are hungry or malnourished, they experience challenges to access basic resources, which contribute to their social exclusion and marginalization, thus further exacerbating poverty and inequality.</p>
 <p>3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING</p>	<p>The relationship between income-based inequality and health indicates that people earning more are better equipped to protect themselves against diseases. Inequalities in access to health services are exacerbated in poor countries and populations.</p>

<b>4</b> <b>QUALITY</b> <b>EDUCATION</b> 	<p>Inequality, especially in term of income, can be reduced by education, which enables upward socioeconomic mobility and is regarded as a key to escaping poverty, Education is also important to raise awareness of the inequality and the need to address it.</p>
<b>5</b> <b>GENDER</b> <b>EQUALITY</b> 	<p>Increased gender equality can increase access to education and employment for women and girls, thus initiating greater economic equality. Addressing gender inequality is an important step towards reducing economic inequality and achieving SDG 10.</p>
<b>6</b> <b>CLEAN WATER</b> <b>AND SANITATION</b> 	<p>Marginalised peoples are affected disproportionately by unequal access to clean water and sanitation. As inequality reduction in health, education and economic opportunities depends on equal access to clear water and sanitation, SDG 10 cannot be achieved without SDG 6.</p>
<b>7</b> <b>AFFORDABLE AND</b> <b>CLEAN ENERGY</b> 	<p>Provision of access to sustainable energy can improve living standards and productivity of poor and marginalized people, thereby supporting a reduction in inequality.</p>
<b>8</b> <b>DECENT WORK AND</b> <b>ECONOMIC GROWTH</b> 	<p>Economic growth can be compromised through income inequality, especially if the lower income quintiles of the population suffer poor health and low productivity as a result, which could threaten public confidence in future economic policies.</p>
<b>9</b> <b>INDUSTRY, INNOVATION</b> <b>AND INFRASTRUCTURE</b> 	<p>While inclusive, sustainable industrialization, supported by innovation and infrastructure, can stimulate dynamic, competitive economic forces that generate employment and income, the unequal levels of development in different countries make this impossible,</p>
<b>10</b> <b>REDUCED</b> <b>INEQUALITIES</b> 	<p>SDG 10 is one of the so-called “foundational goals”, since progress with the achievement of its targets would speed up progress across the entire sustainable development agenda.</p>
<b>11</b> <b>SUSTAINABLE CITIES</b> <b>AND COMMUNITIES</b> 	<p>Inequality manifests massively in urban areas, housing not only the largest part of the world population, but also with increasing slums or slum-like conditions. Addressing income inequality at this level will therefore notably impact on the achievement of SDG 10.</p>
<b>12</b> <b>RESPONSIBLE</b> <b>CONSUMPTION</b> <b>AND PRODUCTION</b> 	<p>Since inequalities carbon emissions between and within countries, can in some cases be linked to inequalities in income, and level of development, reduction of emissions associated with consumption and production will not always be economically viable, unless incentivised.</p>
<b>13</b> <b>CLIMATE</b> <b>ACTION</b> 	<p>Reducing inequalities can help to combat climate change by initiatives and actions to ensure that vulnerable populations are better equipped to deal with the impacts of climate change.</p>
<b>14</b> <b>LIFE</b> <b>BELOW WATER</b> 	<p>Reducing inequalities can help protect marine life by reducing overfishing. For example, poverty reduction and improved access to education can reduce overfishing through provision of alternative livelihoods for people dependent on fishing as their only income.</p>
<b>15</b> <b>LIFE</b> <b>ON LAND</b> 	<p>The achievement of SDG 10 supports the achievement of SDG 15 through initiatives to ensure that marginalized communities can access natural resources and are not excluded from decision-making related to land-use.</p>

16 PEACE, JUSTICE  
AND STRONG  
INSTITUTIONS



SDG 10 should contribute to building more stable and peaceful economies in line with SDG 16 by the lessening of social tensions due to a reduction in levels of inequality worldwide.

17 PARTNERSHIPS  
FOR THE GOALS



Fostering international cooperation and solidarity will help to address the causes and consequences of a range of inequalities.

Source: Prepared by the authors based on Breuer et al. (2019), Pradhan et al. (2017), and Wong (2021)

### Supplementary readings

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### 2.3 Advantages of SDG 10

At the time when the 17 SDGs of Agenda 2030 were formulated and accepted, it was the first time ever that the global community has agreed upon a specific goal to reduce inequality (SDG 10) and which urges the global community to “reduce inequality within and among countries”. Kuhn (2020) explains that this decision is surprising and can be regarded as a significant feat in international cooperation. This is because for the first time ever, the common task of reducing inequality within and among countries has been explicitly recognized by almost all heads of states and governments, while also agreeing on a timeframe of achievement by 2030. While the fact that the ten targets of SDG 10 cast a wide net which captures multiple drivers of inequality can be considered as a distinct advantage to ensure that no group or individual is left behind (UNDESA & World Bank, 2019), it leads to a highly difficult and complex goal, embracing both the social and economic dimensions of inequality, while also alluding to links with the environmental dimension of inequality (Kuhn, 2020). This call for reduced inequality by

SDG 10 is opportune since it comes at a time when despite the gains since 2000 to alleviate poverty, inequalities and large disparities in income and wealth remain, and in access to the services, resources and assets are required for a full and dignified life (UNDESA & World Bank, 2019).

A distinct advantage of SDG 10 lies in its universal applicability, while it also creates a context to shift the generally accepted development paradigm towards greater acknowledgement of human rights (Saiz and Donald, 2017). Universality is at stake since all countries are experiencing inequalities, which in many countries have also become bigger over recent decades. Likewise significant challenges are experienced in most countries in terms of policies to deal with inequalities as well as associated political challenges. The inclusion of inequalities between countries takes it a step further, since addressing these requires initiatives at global level, and especially from the wealthier countries which have the biggest influence on the global economy and its governance. The recognition by SDG 10 of the multidimensionality of the phenomenon of inequality through the wide scope covered by its ten targets (Mackie and Allwood, 2022), is aligned with the criticism that development interventions driven by a focus on aggregate economic growth and indicators as absolute poverty and basic needs tend to exacerbate and not to reduce inequality (Saiz and Donald, 2017).

Considered in a more direct way, some of the advantages of working towards the achievement of SDG 10 can be listed as follows:

1. The “leave no one behind” principle of Agenda 2030 (United Nations, 2015), resonates strongly with the targets for SDG 10, and has the advantage that not only poverty needs to be addressed but that governments will need to take proactive, timely steps towards achieving Goal 10 and associated human rights deprivations, such as discrimination, social exclusion, and economic inequality (Saiz and Donald, 2017).
2. By addressing SDG 10 it will be possible to counter many of the detrimental effects of economic inequality on human rights (Kanbur, 2021), which includes, for example, perpetuation of poverty, social exclusion, and creation of disparities in

access to health, education, housing, and other services. Rampant inequality also distorts people's access to justice and the rule of law.

3. A distinct advantage of SDG 10 is presented by its focus on discrimination and to confront it proactively in all its different forms. This is because inequality goes together with discrimination and is often the outcome of policies or practices which are inherently discriminatory (Oestreich, 2018). For example, SDG target 10.2 undertakes to “empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status”.
4. Unlike the MDGs which placed the greatest burden on the poorest countries, the advantage of SDG 10 is that it challenges global inequality by compelling countries to consider the degree to which their actions undermine sustainable development in other countries, which is also appropriate from a human rights perspective (Kuhn, 2020).
5. Finally, increased inequality can have cross-cutting impacts throughout Agenda 2030 and can also work against the attainment of other SDGs, while the advantage of reducing inequalities is that it will have a positive effect on all the SDGs (UNDESA & World Bank, 2019).

#### Supplementary readings

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2. Saiz, I. and Donald, K. 2017. Tackling inequality through the Sustainable Development Goals: human rights in practice. *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 21(8), 1029-1049.

#### 2.4 Challenges with the implementation of SDG 10

While the inclusion of SDG 10 as standalone goal recognizes the importance of inequality as issue of global concern and shows how the SDGs progressed compared to the MDGs (Kuhn, 2020), the formulation of the goals poses significant challenges for implementation and monitoring (Doidge and Kelly, 2013). There is agreement that as

currently formulated, it is unlikely that SDG 10 will succeed in significantly reducing inequality. This is associated with the tendency of using “softer language” in the formulation of the SDG 10 targets. As a result, they come across as vague/weaker than most of the other SDGs (Oestreich, 2018). Although it therefore appears to be unlikely that SDG 10 will result in a significant transformation of issues of inequality, its inclusion in the global agenda provides a foundation for future innovation and engagement. At this stage SDG 10 should therefore rather be seen as the initial steps to do the groundwork on which future actions to address inequality globally can be based.

The vagueness and imprecise language in the formulation of the targets and indicators for SDG 10, create several challenges for its implementation and monitoring. An example is target 10.1, which calls for the wealth of the bottom 40% of income earners to grow at a rate higher than the national average but does not specify how fast. Another example is target 10.2 which calls for the empowerment of the poor and target 10.3 for equal opportunity for all, but also provides nothing specific, while the corresponding indicators are also vague. Targets 10.4 to 10.6 call for improved social safety nets for between-country inequalities, while no specific policies are mentioned. Apart from these challenges related to vagueness, it is also possible to highlight some specific challenges and the actions required to address them, of which a few examples are supplied in Table 3.

Apart from the vagueness and imprecise language of the targets and indicators for SDG 10 which could jeopardize its implementation, Saiz and Donald (2017) point out that SDG 10 is vulnerable to neglect or backlash since of all the goals it will probably require the most impactful changes to the “business-as-usual” economic model. Another challenge is that SDG 10 does not fall under the jurisdiction of any thematic body or institution/s (nationally/internationally) with a mandate to oversee this goal, to monitor its progress and to hold decision-makers accountable for lack of progress. This lack of an institutional “home” for SDG 10 means that it runs the risk of becoming an “orphan” goal – subject to competing international development interests and compromised by diverging national interests. According to Saiz and Donald (2017:1030), the risk



therefore exists that SDG 10 “will be neglected or implemented half-heartedly, ineffectively or in a manner that does not align with human rights priorities.”

Despite these challenges SDG 10 still has the potential to contribute to the reduction of inequalities between and within countries. However, this will only be possible if guided by human rights principles, and with the political will on the part of countries to be held accountable for their commitments. Saiz and Donald (2017) maintain that human rights tools and mechanisms could play a strategic role in this regard, and encourage countries to pro-actively drive implementation, and to take accountability for their actions or omissions in terms of the SDGs.

**Table 3. Examples of specific challenges to achieve SDG 10, and actions required to address these**

Specific challenge	Required actions
Targets and indicators are vague and contain imprecise language that could jeopardise implementation.	Lobby for reformulation of targets and indicators.
Backlash due to the profound and lasting changes which are required.	Incentivising countries to drive the implementation of SDG 10.
No institutions at national/international level with mandate to drive actions to achieve this goal.	Hold governments and other actors accountable for their actions or lack thereof to advance SDG 10.
Lack of basic information, apart from income and wealth, about inequality.	Improve our capability to measure and monitor the other dimensions of socioeconomic disparities, such as gender and environmental inequalities.
Governments are increasingly getting poorer, which has implications for countries' capacity to tackle inequality, while wealth is increasingly becoming concentrated in the private sector	Institute modest but progressive wealth taxes to generate significant revenues for governments to reinvest in education, health, and the ecological transition, thereby addressing inequalities.

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2. Saiz, I. and Donald, K. 2017. Tackling inequality through the Sustainable Development Goals: human rights in practice. *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 21(8), 1029-1049.



## Examples of questions for assessment

### 2. Defining SDG 10 – Introduction

- What are the main groups in which the targets for SDG 10 can be divided?
- Which target(s) of SDG 10 are focussed on vertical inequalities?
- Which target(s) of SDG 10 are focussed on horizontal inequalities?

#### 2.1 Significance of SDG 10

- What is your explanation of the current inequalities between countries and why is it increasing?
- What is your explanation of the current inequalities within countries and why is it increasing?
- What is the status of the progress to achieve SDG 10 by 2030?
- Briefly explain the comprehensive scope and importance of SDG 10 with reference to the main thematic areas covered by this SDG.

#### 2.2 Interdependencies of SDG 10

- Select any three SDGs and briefly explain how they interact with SDG 10. Use examples from your region to illustrate your explanation.
- How is SDG 10 interconnected with the other SDGs? What other SDGs do you think will be most directly affected if SDG 10 is not achieved?

#### 2.3 Advantages of SDG 10

- What will the main advantages be for the world if the goal of reduced inequality between and within countries cannot be achieved?
- Select any two of the targets of SDG 10 and explain the specific advantages which will manifest with the attainment of these targets. Link it to advantages for your specific region.

#### 2.4 Challenges in the implementation of SDG 10

- What are the main weaknesses of SDG 10 and how are these weaknesses creating

challenges for the implementation of this SDG?

- Explain how the interdependencies of SDG 10 with all the other SDGs provide challenges for the achievement of SDG 10. Select two SDGs to use as examples to illustrate your answer.
- What are the difficulties in implementing SDG 10 in your country? Which are the main barriers? And how can they be overcome?

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### 3. OVERVIEW OF VARIOUS CRISES THAT HAVE HAD A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON REDUCING GLOBAL INEQUALITIES AND ACHIEVING SDG 10

Readers (teachers) will be empowered to

1. identify the major crises that have a negative impact on the achievement of SDG 10.
2. explain how the major crises prevent the achievement of SDG 10.
3. describe how the impact of current crises on the achievement of SDG 10 differs regionally.

Historically, crises have formed the basis of the catalyst that initiates significant social, political, and economic change in society. A global or regional crisis also demonstrates exactly how interdependent and interlinked all the components of sustainable development are and this extends to the achievement of the SDGs by 2030. Further, as the impact of most global and regional crises transcends national and international borders, it is important that the international community in collaboration with governments work together to develop common solutions to mitigate the impact of the crisis by facilitating structural transformation that will enable and encourage success in the pursuit of achieving the SDGs targets by 2030.

SDG 10 is about reducing inequality within and among countries. It has ten targets to be achieved by 2030, such as promoting social, economic, and political inclusion, ensuring equal opportunities, and reducing discrimination, facilitating safe migration and mobility, and strengthening the voice of developing countries in global decision-making. Presently, the most dominant global crises that have a direct and indirect negative impact on the achievement of reduced inequalities (SDG 10) globally by the year 2030, include climate change, the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and conflict. For a brief overview of the global state and the impact of the crises on SDG 10 in 2022, view a short video produced as part of the United Nations (2022) report using the following link - <https://youtu.be/Dq0iypmVztk>.

### 3.1 Climate change

One of the leading causes of inequality in the world over the last decade is directly and indirectly linked to the impact of climate change. Human actions since the post-industrial period have led to a rise of 1 °C in the average global temperature. Since 1990, climate change, which acts as a “crisis multiplier” (Cevik & Jalles, 2023) has exacerbated existing problems and affected billions of people worldwide through increased heatwaves, droughts, and floods. Climate modelling predicts that over the next decade extreme hot weather accompanied by heavy precipitation in some areas and drought in other areas will become the norm and in this will threaten global and local food security, water availability, health outcomes, biodiversity, and ecosystem services. The various challenges associated with climate change have thus undermined efforts toward achieving SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 14 (Life Below Water), and SDG 15 (Life on Land). Moreover, climate change also disproportionately affects the poorest and most vulnerable people and countries, who have contributed the least to greenhouse gas emissions but bear the brunt of the impacts thereof; in this way the reduction of inequality across the globe is challenged.

Rising temperatures have slowed the reduction of global inequality and progress towards the achievement of the SDG 10 targets. This is mainly due to the impact that climate change has on poverty in terms of depth and prevalence that makes it more difficult for vulnerable people to escape poverty and increasing the chance that people fall into poverty. The ability to meet the 2030 SDG 10 targets should be considered against the 2023 global poverty estimation of 659 million people. Climate change is a factor that negatively impacts the economic growth of warmer countries and in this way contributes to the world's poorest countries becoming poorer. People living in poverty and other disadvantaged groups, such as small landholders and indigenous peoples, are disproportionately exposed to climate risks. The occurrence of more infectious and respiratory diseases due to climate change and in warmer countries has the potential to increase global inequalities. Climate change results in more environmentally induced

refugees across the globe. Climate action and the transition to green economies offer opportunities for reducing poverty and inequality, for instance, the adoption of sustainable practices, including increased energy efficiency, changes in the energy mix and growth in the use of electric vehicles, could result in a net increase of 18 million jobs worldwide. However, women are less represented in sectors associated with green technology, and the transition to the green economy could negatively affect women's employment.

Despite successful climate mitigation strategies, the global levels of inequality will remain high by 2030. However, despite the challenges presented by climate change, there are also opportunities for addressing these issues and thus the achievement of the various targets stipulated by SDG 10, through global cooperation, recovery efforts that reduce carbon emissions, conserve natural resources, create better jobs, advance gender equality, and tackle growing poverty.

#### **Supplementary readings**

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#### **3.1.1 Impact of climate change in Africa**

Average temperature increases on the African continent are expected to rise by 3 to 6 °C, which is higher than the global increase in average temperatures. The sub-Saharan region is probably one of the most vulnerable regions in the world when it comes to climate change, and this is largely due to the limited capacity of the continent to adapt to or mitigate climate change.



Climate change has, in many ways, a serious impact on the achievement of SDG 10 in Africa. Agriculture accounts for about 23% of Africa's GDP and around 60% of its labour force is involved in this sector. Climate change affects the productivity and profitability of agriculture as it can result in a reduction in crop yields; an increase in pest and disease outbreaks; damage to infrastructure (especially irrigation systems); and disruption in supply chains to markets. This disruption leads to a reduction in income opportunities and an increased risk of food insecurity and poverty and thus collectively widens the equality gap. Climate change limits the potential for industrialisation, innovation, and infrastructure development in Africa, which are essential for achieving inclusive and sustainable growth. Climate change increases the costs and risks of investing in infrastructure projects, such as roads, bridges, dams, power plants, and communication networks. It also affects the availability and quality of energy sources, water resources, and raw materials. These challenges hinder the development of manufacturing, services, trade, and technology sectors that can create jobs, income, and value addition for African economies.

Climate change exacerbates existing inequalities within and among countries, as the poorest and most vulnerable people and countries are disproportionately affected by the adverse effects of climate change, such as droughts, floods, heatwaves, and crop failures. These effects undermine efforts to reduce poverty, hunger, malnutrition, and disease, and increase the risk of conflict and displacement, resulting in an increase of environmental migration and refugees on the African continent. By 2050, the West African countries could see up to 32 million people moving within their own countries due to climate factors. Niger will see the highest numbers of internal climate migrants, followed by Nigeria, but smaller countries like Senegal and Benin will have a larger share of internal climate migrants in the next few decades.

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### 3.1.2 Impact of climate change in Latin America and the Caribbean

The latest reports on the impacts of climate change in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) point to a continued warming trend in the region. While the decades between 1961 and 1990 observed an average temperature increase rate of 0.1 °C per decade, the rate between 1991 and 2021 was of 0.2 °C. The main impacts associated with this increase include the retreat of glaciers , leading to water scarcity; a rise in sea levels which affect the population living in coastal areas; and increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events such as droughts, hurricanes and floods, damaging infrastructure, and economic activities, especially agriculture (World Meteorological Organization, 2022). According to the latest IPCC report, a 1.5 °C temperature increase would increase the population affected by floods by 100%–200% in Colombia, Brazil and Argentina, by 300% in Ecuador and by 400% in Peru.

Similarly to the African context, these impacts of climate change in the LAC region also has a negative influence on SDG 10 and exacerbate inequalities in different ways. Poorer and more disadvantaged groups are affected by inequality in terms of greater exposure or susceptibility to damages caused by climate change, as well as less ability to cope and recover from these damages. Several countries in the region are heavily dependent on agriculture, and impacts in production levels directly affect crop yields, disrupt food production, impacting food prices and jobs in related sectors, and affect the

subsistence of small-scale farmers. Every year, on average, between 150,000 and 2.1 million people are pushed into extreme poverty because of natural disasters in the region; by 2030, this number can increase to 3 million people (World Bank, 2021). As an example, a study in Brazil confirms the negative correlation between temperature and per capita GDP, indicating that poorer areas also tend to experience the most negative impacts of increased temperatures, exacerbating inequality (Cavallo and Hoffmann, 2020).

The increase in temperature levels can also lead to health impacts associated with a dissemination of infectious diseases (with dengue being particularly endemic in Latin America). More disadvantaged communities are more prone to suffer from these diseases, due to having limited access to basic services, including sanitation and health assistance. High vulnerability to vector-borne diseases is observed in the group of over 150 million people without access to a safe water supply and the 350 million without proper sanitation services in the LAC region (World Bank, 2021). By July 2023, the Americas had more than three million cases of dengue, and studies point to changes in temperature and rainfall patterns as key factors to explain the high incidence. Not only is the number of cases increasing, but they are also being seen in regions where the disease was not commonly reported in previous years, such as in high-altitude cities in Mexico and southern states in Brazil (Lenharo, 2023).

Disasters and extreme weather events expose inequalities more clearly, affecting minorities such as women, children, and indigenous people disproportionately, demanding proper measures. Associated with many targets of SDG 10 (such as 10.1, 10.4 and 10.b), is the need for LAC countries to specifically focus on disaster risk plans and climate justice initiatives.

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### 3.1.3 Impact of climate change in Europe

As already seen in the Latin America and Africa sections, the effects of climate change are becoming ever more visible these days in Europe as well. Depending on the region, climate change can result in biodiversity loss, decreasing crop yields and higher temperatures (European Parliament, 2023). Looking at meteorological data, a significant increase in average global temperatures since the Industrial Revolution becomes evident. Europe is warming faster than the global average: “The mean annual temperature over European land areas in the last decade was 2.04 to 2.10 °C warmer than during the pre-industrial period. The year 2020 was the warmest year in Europe since the instrumental records began according to all datasets used, with the range of anomaly between 2.53°C and 2.71°C above the pre-industrial levels” (European Environment Agency, 2023).

During the summer of 2023, forest fires in southern Europe and flooding in Germany showcased the negative effects of climate change in Europe. They were induced by extraordinarily high temperatures and autumn-like storms (Wybrew, 2023). Global warming is anthropogenic, that is, caused by our human interactions. Hence, reducing the use of carbon dioxide to reach climate neutrality is pertinent; especially for the European Union, as it is the fourth largest greenhouse gas emitter worldwide. In terms of inequality, such adverse environmental impacts increase inequality because especially women, children and marginalised groups suffer from the economic downturn that such extreme weather events usually trigger. Furthermore, these events create migration, increasing the risk of economic pressure and making social inclusion for these displaced people difficult.

In this context, SDG 10 addresses inequalities within and among countries – inequalities in terms of income, age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, economic or other status within a country, mobility, and social inclusion. Most of these factors are related to economic status and thus interlinked with a flourishing and peaceful economy. With extraordinary events occurring, this system can change. The European Commission has put into place various policies to tackle inequalities (and discrimination), such as the Anti-Discrimination Plan, the LGBTQ Equality Strategy, and the Cohesion Policy Fund (European Commission, 2023). In addition, to improve economic and social coherence within the European Union, the European Pillar of Social Rights aims to improve social and living conditions (European Commission, 2023d).

Climate change has emerged as one of the most pressing challenges of our time, and its effects are being keenly felt across the globe, including in Europe (Lavalle et al., 2009). As the world collectively works towards sustainable development, it is essential to examine the impacts of climate change within the framework of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 10, which aims to reduce inequalities within and among countries (Pérez-Peña et al., 2021).

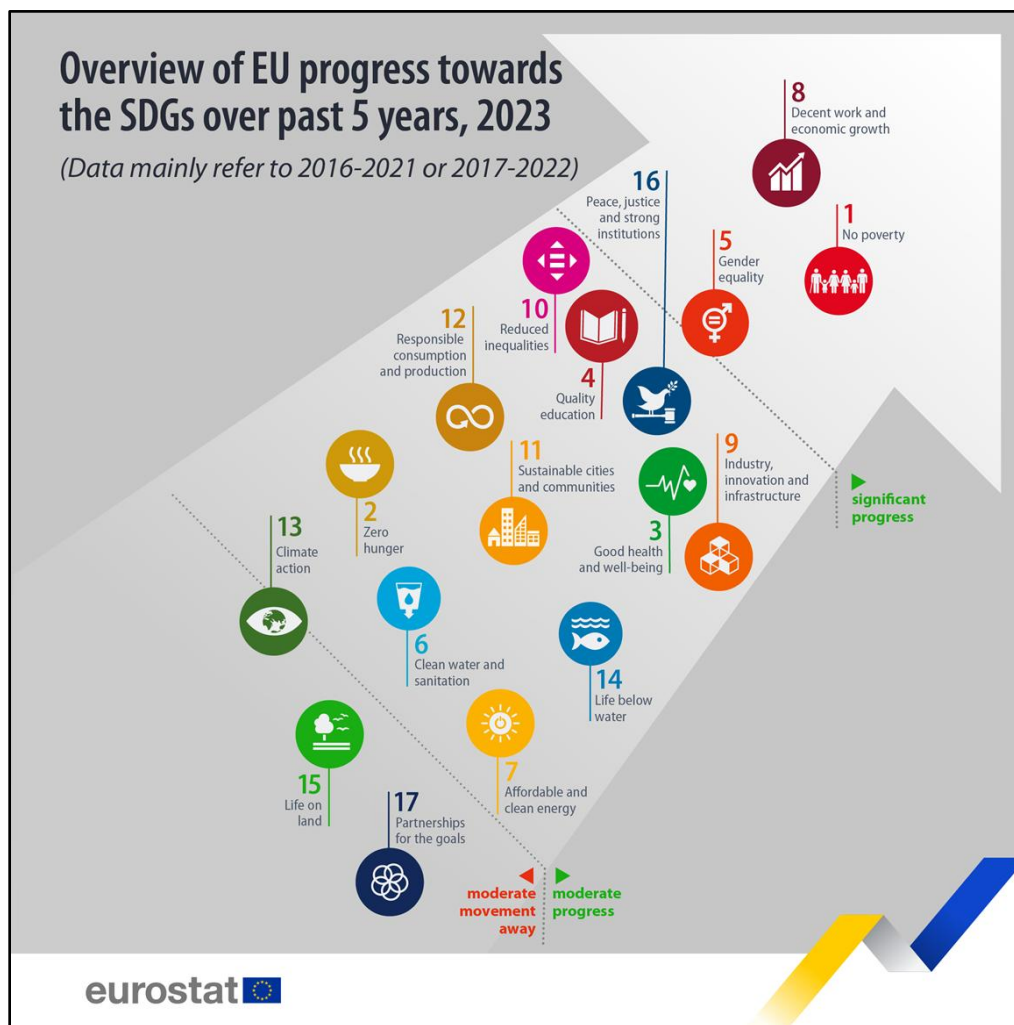
Target 10.2, for example, underscores the importance of inclusivity and empowerment, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, or economic status. In Europe, the effects of climate change are far from uniform, with certain populations disproportionately bearing the brunt of its impacts (Ada-Cristina and Lucian-Liviu, 2020; Beck, 2008). Marginalised groups, including socioeconomically disadvantaged communities and minority populations, often face a higher risk when faced with extreme weather events, heat waves, and flooding (McGregor et al., 2005). It is imperative to ensure that policies promoting inclusivity address these disparities and provide adequate resources for the most vulnerable communities.

Europe's commitment to target 10.3 — eliminating discriminatory laws, policies, and practices — becomes even more pertinent in the context of climate change. Migrants, refugees, and indigenous communities can face heightened vulnerabilities due to language barriers, cultural differences, and limited resource access. A comprehensive approach to climate adaptation and disaster preparedness must ensure equal access to information, resources, and services for all members of society, regardless of their background (Brzoska & Fröhlich, 2016).

The significance of target 10.4, advocating for policies that promote greater equality, is amplified as climate change puts additional stress on social protection systems (Markkanen & Anger-Kraavi, 2019). Extreme weather events are becoming more frequent, highlighting the need for resilient safety nets that encompass the needs of disadvantaged communities. Fiscal policies supporting sustainable development can play a pivotal role in funding climate adaptation and mitigation efforts (Douenne & Fabre, 2020) while addressing the unique challenges marginalised groups face.

In the realm of migration and mobility, target 10.7 gains new dimensions in the face of climate change. Rising sea levels and intensified weather events can influence migration patterns within Europe and from climate-affected regions outside the continent (Bosello & De Cian, 2014). Europe's response should prioritise the orderly, safe, and responsible movement of people, upholding the rights and safety of migrants and refugees in alignment with international standards.

European nations are also urged to consider the broader global Impact of climate change (Ayers et al., 2010) within the ambit of target 10.B. Acknowledging the disparities between developed and developing regions, particularly the least developed countries, African nations, small island developing states, and landlocked developing countries, Europe could play an active role in providing official development assistance, financial flows (Bouwer & Aerts, 2006), and technological expertise to build resilience and reduce inequalities in these vulnerable areas.



**Figure 6. Overview of EU progress towards the SDGs over the past 5 years, 2023**  
 (Source: [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_23\\_2887](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_2887); EC, CC-BY 4.0 license) [Note: Data mainly refer to 2016-2021 or 2017-2022.]

In sum, fighting inequalities between countries is important not only from a social justice perspective for more prosperity and collaboration but also as a prerequisite for solving many interdependent problems such as climate change. Overall, Europe has made moderate progress towards achieving SDG 10 (Figure 6). There is a positive long-term convergence trend between EU countries in relation to the gaps in GDP and income; however, stagnating during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite such positive indicators, an obstacle still to be overcome remains the differences in social and labour market inclusion between home-country nationals and non-EU citizens (Eurostat, 2017).

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### 3.2 COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted global economic activities, and led to the loss of jobs, reduced incomes, and increased poverty, hunger, and instability and in this way



increase the inequality divide in the world. The pandemic disrupted supply chains, leading to food and medical shortages, and caused distress in financial markets, disrupting global trade (Health, 2020). These challenges undermined efforts toward achieving SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities). Moreover, the pandemic also highlighted the need for more resilient and equitable healthcare systems and strengthened efforts toward achieving SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being).

However, the pandemic has also exposed the profound inequalities that exist within and among countries and is exacerbating those inequalities. The COVID-19 pandemic can be called a pandemic of inequalities as never before in human history has the world experienced the simultaneous increase of the inequality divide between the “haves” and the “have nots” in the world as it did during the COVID-19 pandemic. For a global overview that succinctly describes the impact of COVID-19 on global inequality watch the following short video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rx--hD2fHCE&t=167s>

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#### 3.2.1 Impact of COVID-19 in Africa

In addition to the already devastating effects of climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic has and will continue to have a major and devastating impact on the achievement of SDG 10 in Africa. COVID-19 has disrupted economic activities, social services, and public health systems, leading to the loss of lives, livelihoods, and well-being of millions of people across the continent, and in this way has contributed to exacerbating the inequality between the African continent and the rest of the world.

Some of the ways that COVID-19 has impacted SDG 10 in Africa are the following:

1. It increased poverty and inequality within and among countries, as the pandemic has hit the most vulnerable and marginalized groups hardest, such as women, children, youth, the elderly, migrants, refugees, informal workers, and people with disabilities. These groups have faced a higher risk of infection, mortality, income loss, food insecurity, violence, and discrimination due to the pandemic and its containment measures. The pandemic was estimated to have pushed an additional 30 million people into extreme poverty in sub-Saharan Africa in 2020 alone.
2. It affected the productivity and competitiveness of key sectors for economic growth and employment in Africa, such as agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, trade, and services. The pandemic has disrupted supply chains, markets, transport, and logistics, reducing output, income, and demand. The pandemic has also reduced foreign direct investment, remittances, official development assistance, and tax revenues, constraining fiscal space and debt sustainability. These challenges have reduced economic opportunities and social protection for millions of workers and entrepreneurs.
3. It has limited the access and quality of education, health care, and other essential services in Africa, which are crucial for human development and social inclusion. The pandemic has forced the closure of schools and health facilities, affecting the learning outcomes and health status of millions of children and adults. The pandemic has also diverted resources and attention from other health priorities, such as maternal and child health, HIV/AIDS, malaria, TB, and immunization. These challenges have widened the gaps in human capital and social welfare among countries and groups.
4. COVID-19 was also weaponized by leaders to ramp up inequalities and unfortunately this has aggravated conflict on the continent (refer to section 3.3.1).

These are some of the ways in which COVID-19 is still impacting SDG 10 in Africa. However, there are also opportunities for addressing these issues through recovery efforts that can build back better and greener by investing in resilient and inclusive

systems for health care, education, social protection, energy, infrastructure, governance, and peace. Improved data collection is also critical to understanding where investments can have the greatest impact.

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### 3.2.2 Impact of COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean

The COVID19-pandemic exposed and exacerbated inequalities in the LAC region too, with its health and socioeconomic impacts increasing social inequality. In fact, Latin America and the Caribbean is one of the regions that has been hardest hit in terms of the severe impacts of COVID-19 on inequality. Some key points of the relation between the pandemic and inequality in the region include (Clavijo et al., 2021):

1. The most vulnerable households in the region were disproportionately affected: not only did the pandemic widen the income gap in the region, but it also went beyond the financial dimension and caused higher levels of food insecurity and reduced access to basic services such as health and education.
2. The gap in job loss became more pronounced between high and low vulnerability groups: the economic impacts of the pandemic, which led to the shutdown of many businesses and put financial pressure on many others (especially small and

informal business), caused more job losses in groups that were already more vulnerable socially. In both urban and rural areas, households with lower levels of education experienced a higher incidence of job losses.

3. Food insecurity increased, access to health and education decreased: although a recovery in these aspects was observed throughout the pandemic, levels of food insecurity in more vulnerable households were high during the first months of 2020 and it is expected that malnutrition and food deprivation can lead to long-term impacts, especially in terms of child development. Poorer families were also more severely impacted by lower access to medical services, and distance learning represented additional challenges in these contexts (of lack of proper infrastructure and internet connection, for example).

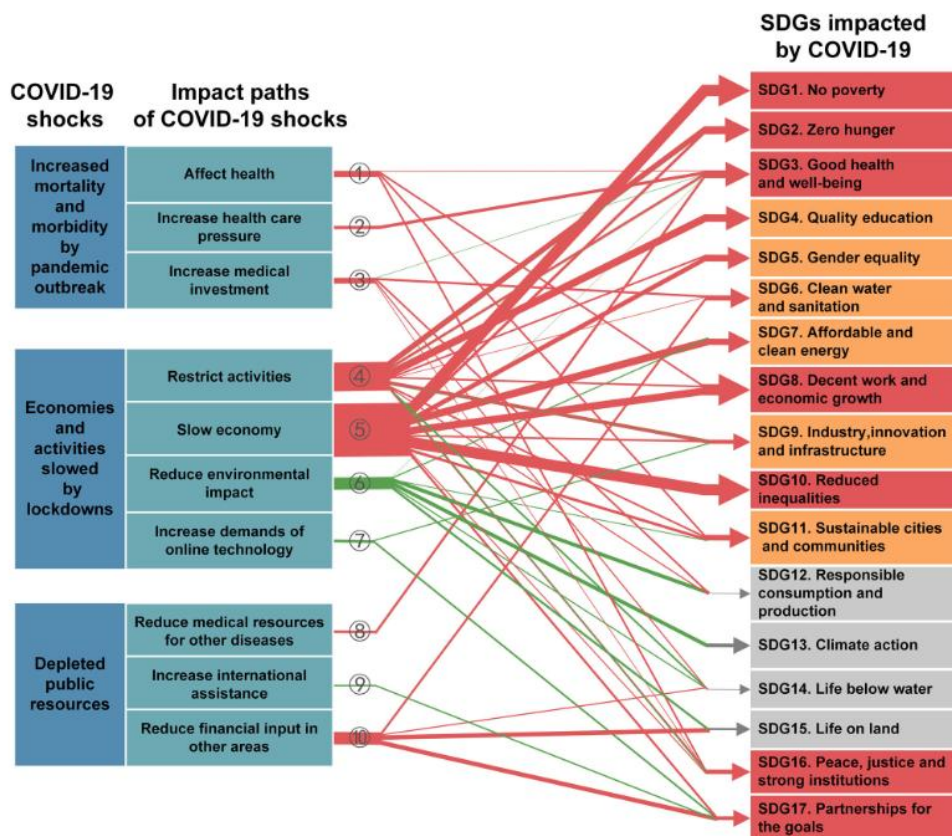
Although the worst health impacts of the pandemic have passed and the region is in the process of economic recovery, several aspects of the crises have long-term consequences, especially in the context of inequality and poverty. Mitigation and recovery policies, as well as financial support programs, are important to ensure a recovery that supports the most disadvantaged groups - especially in terms of placement and employability in the labour market and educational infrastructure.

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### 3.2.3 Impact of COVID-19 in Europe

As with all continents, Europe was also badly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic with severe negative economic and health issues. Research by Yuan et al. (2023) showcases this global picture (Figure 7) by a nominal direct impact of COVID-19 through three initial shocks (left) that relate to ten representations (middle). The orange and red blocks refer to negative impacts, as do the thick red lines, of which one of them points to SDG 10. The authors conclude that 5 of the 17 SDGs were impacted the most; one was SDG 10 (the others were SDG 1, 2, 3, and 8). Seeing Europe as a region with high and upper-middle-income countries, this paper suggests a focus on reducing inequality (SDG 10) would be most beneficial to overcome the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic (Yuan et al., 2023)



**Figure 7. Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the SDGs** (Source: Yuan et al., 2023)

In this context, the COVID-19 pandemic has forged an intricate connection with Sustainable Development Goal 10 – a goal of reducing inequalities within and among countries (Kuhn, 2020). The pandemic's repercussions have rippled across Europe, casting a stark light on preexisting disparities and exacerbating the challenges in achieving the specific targets of SDG 10 (see Flor et al., 2022). In this section, we explore the ways in which the pandemic has hindered the progress towards these objectives, grounded in the European context.

Target 10.1, for example, is a poignant reflection of the economic turbulence brought about by the pandemic (Ahmad et al., 2023). As economies halted and unemployment surged, countries like Spain and Italy, dependent on sectors like tourism, encountered disproportionate impacts (Su et al., 2022). The bottom 40% of the population, already economically vulnerable, faced even graver uncertainties. The pandemic's interruption of income growth has placed achieving this target at risk, as vulnerable populations have been further marginalized (Salerno et al., 2020; Siegel and Mallow, 2021).

In the pursuit of target 10.2, which relates to social, economic, and political inclusion, the pandemic's disproportionate health impacts have raised urgent concerns. For example, minority communities in Europe, often facing healthcare disparities, experienced higher mortality rates during the pandemic (Bambra et al., 2020). The glaring inequality in health outcomes underscores the pivotal need to ensure equitable access to healthcare across all demographics, an aspiration undermined by the pandemic's strain on health systems (Kontis et al., 2020).

Target 10.3 emphasises ensuring equal opportunities and reducing inequalities in educational outcomes. The pandemic's pivot to remote learning exposed the digital divide, particularly evident in countries like Greece and Portugal. As children from disadvantaged backgrounds struggled to access online education, disparities in educational opportunities deepened. The pandemic's disruption of education has underscored the imperative to tackle these inequalities (Blaskó et al., 2022; Cordini & De Angelis, 2021; Papouli et al., 2020; Stantcheva, 2022)

Amid the economic disruptions, target 10.4, related to the call for adopting policies that foster equality, has become increasingly pertinent. Debates arose in various European countries on balancing economic recovery efforts with protecting vulnerable populations. The pandemic's economic impact has emphasised the need for progressive fiscal policies to alleviate disparities and ensure an inclusive recovery (Hill and Narayan, 2020).

Moreover, migration, a central theme of target 10.7, took on new dimensions in the pandemic era (Moroz et al., 2020; Tagliacozzo et al., 2021). Germany's coordinated response in providing healthcare and support to foreign workers highlighted the importance of well-managed migration policies. The pandemic's disruptions underscored the need to ensure the safe and orderly mobility of people, safeguarding the rights and dignity of migrants – an objective further impeded by the crisis.

The global interconnectedness emphasised in target 10.B was starkly evident during the pandemic, as Europe's response resonated worldwide. Countries like Norway's contribution to the COVAX initiative underscored the need for international cooperation and financial flows to support vulnerable regions (de Bengy Puyvallée and Storeng, 2022). However, the pandemic's diversion of resources and attention has created challenges in fulfilling commitments to global solidarity and assistance.

In 2022, after lockdowns and outbreaks had decreased in the EU, the European economies had recovered to nearly pre-pandemic levels with an annual growth of real GDP per capita of 3.3 % in 2022 compared with 2021 (European Commission, 2023d). Yet, the mid-term effects on poverty and inequality within the EU remain uncertain (European Commission, 2023d), as they highlight the already existing inequalities that vulnerable groups such as women and migrants face.

It is worth considering, however, that despite all the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, it also brought new opportunities for European countries, awakening for its inherent potential of guaranteeing equality to other countries; the European Union has financial instruments that will tackle the challenges of equality, cohesion, and economic prosperity for all. Besides the big plans, such as the EU Green Deal and the Cohesion



Policy Fund, other funds aim to reduce the regional imbalances within the EU (for example, the European Regional Development Fund or ERDF) (European Commission, 2023e).

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### 3.3 Conflict

Conflict results in the displacement of people and an increase in humanitarian needs. Conflict also hinders progress towards SDG 10 by disproportionately affecting marginalized groups and in this way exacerbates inequality. Challenges that are a result of conflict undermines efforts towards achieving SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero

Hunger), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions).

The impact of the Ukraine conflict, for example, is not limited to the geographical area of the actual fighting but has had a global reach by disrupting supply chains, global trade, and financial markets, and thus has cumulatively led to increased food, fuel, and fertilizer prices globally, and directly and indirectly will have a lasting impact on the global achievement of SDG 10 by 2030 (Pereira et al., 2022). Although the war in Ukraine will have a lasting negative affect on achieving the respective targets for SDG 10, there are several other ongoing armed conflicts across the globe. In general, the impact of armed conflict (war) on the following three key areas directly adds to growing inequality levels in any war-stricken country:

- War disrupts food systems by undermining food production, causing rapid inflation of food prices, and preventing people from earning money to buy food.
- War destroys key infrastructure that supports daily life, from water systems to energy centres to hospitals.
- War displaces people from their homes, forces children from the classroom, worsens gender inequality, and exposes people to extreme levels of violence.

While the war in the Ukraine is expected to have a lasting impact on the global achievement of SDG 10, there are many regional conflicts that can significantly influence a region or a country's ability to progress towards reducing inequality by 2030. For this reason, it is also important to consider regional conflicts in various regions as a challenge for achieving SDG 10.

Another important dimension to consider in terms of conflict (war) and inequality is that inherent inequality can be the direct cause of conflict and thus by addressing inequality as described in the various targets for SDG 10, much progress will also be made in achieving the peace and justice targets that are set for SDG 16. This argument is presented using a few case studies especially from Latin America, in the short video "Does Inequality Cause War?" It can be viewed by clicking on the following link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mz54p6Aa8Es&t=87s> .

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#### 3.3.1 Conflict in Africa

Africa is often ironically described as a “continent on the move” (Adepoju, 2021). This can be observed through the many specific migratory flows, the most obvious of which is related to labour migration, refugees, and forcefully internally displaced people. Conflict can have a negative impact on achieving SDG 10 in Africa, as it can exacerbate existing inequalities, disrupt social and economic development, displace populations, violate human rights, and undermine peace and security.

Conflict and inequality in Africa are interrelated issues that have affected the peace and development of the continent for many decades. Factors that have contributed to conflict and inequality in Africa are varied and include:

The legacy of colonialism and slavery that created artificial borders, ethnic divisions, and economic dependency.

1. The prevalence of authoritarian and corrupt regimes that violate human rights, repress dissent, and mismanage natural resources.
2. The impact of climate change and environmental degradation that exacerbate food insecurity, water scarcity, and displacement.

3. The interference of external actors that fuel proxy wars, exploit resources, and undermine sovereignty.
4. The marginalization and discrimination of vulnerable groups such as women, youth, refugees, and minorities.

In 2021 it was estimated that the total number of forcibly displaced people in the world was 82.4 million (Brown, 2023), and an estimation of 36 million of these people are concentrated in Africa. According to a report by Amnesty International (2021), conflict in Africa has for many decades had a devastating impact on refugees and inequality, however, these inherent challenges have been compounded by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic that exposed the continent's legacy of divisive and destructive policies that have perpetuated discrimination, oppression, and inequality on the continent (United Nations, 2022). Increased conflict because of the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa was significant as it affected those already negatively affected by decades of inequality, by laying bare the systematic inequality of marginalised communities, unemployed people, health workers, and particularly women and children. Amnesty International (2021) reported that the pandemic was used in many cases by African leaders as a weapon to ramp up the assaults on human rights. In countries such as Ethiopia, Mozambique, Cameroon, and Nigeria the existing armed conflict was compounded by the pandemic as these states weaponised COVID-19 to crack down on human rights, resulting in the killing of civilians and the arrest of opposition politicians and their supporters.

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### 3.3.2 Conflict in Latin America and the Caribbean

On top of impacts caused by the pandemic and by climate change is the crisis associated with conflicts. Latin America and the Caribbean suffer from both regional conflicts, displacement and migration and international events that affect the economy and consequently levels of poverty and inequality.

Given its primary-export character, the Latin America economy is extremely dependent on international prices and the region quickly feels the impacts of international crises. Combined with other crises and the international scenario of uncertainty, the war in Ukraine contributed to Latin American countries facing an economic and trade slowdown, inflation, and a slow and incomplete recovery in the labour market, which consequently can lead to an increase in the inequality gap. Losses in GDP, an increase in food insecurity, and jobs at risk are affecting the most the vulnerable, marginalized, and discriminated populations. This unstable situation also affects education and security. In Ecuador, for example, the increase in poverty levels is expected to cause almost 8% of children to abandon their studies to go work, and gender-violence levels keep increasing, affecting 7 out of 10 women (Care, 2022).

Conflicts in the region are also an alarming situation and represent a humanitarian challenge. These include or lead to armed violence, internal displacement, migration, disappearances, and prison overcrowding. In Colombia, armed conflicts are the main challenge, leading to explosive hazards, restrictions on movements and mass displacement. These events affect the population, especially those in rural areas, who face difficulties in accessing basic services coupled with an increase in food and transportation prices. In Mexico and Central American countries, migration is the main challenge associated with regional conflicts. Some of the factors that contribute to this are the widespread violence, socioeconomic impacts from the pandemic and disasters caused by extreme weather events (ICRC, 2021).

Another pressing challenge in Latin America is the Venezuelan migration crisis. This is reported to be the worst of its kind in the history of this region. Data from 2021 indicated that since 2015, over 5.4 million Venezuelans had left the country because of the

national economic, social and political crises (ILO-UNDP, 2021). Around 85% of these refugees and migrants moved to another LAC country - most of them to Colombia, Peru, Chile, and Ecuador. These groups tend to be seen as a burden in the destination places, affecting the provision of public services and representing a challenge in terms of cohesion. On the other hand, migrants can also be seen as an opportunity to the economy, in terms of investment, consumption and labour force, demanding governments to implement policies and initiatives to support their socioeconomic integration.

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#### **3.3.3 Conflict in Europe**

Over the past decade an unprecedented surge of migration into the European Union has taken place due to several conflicts around the world (Syria, Afghanistan,

Venezuela). Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine started in 2022, many people have been fleeing the war to seek protection in the EU. To integrate migrants and asylum seekers successfully, their social participation needs to be ensured. This mainly means integration into society, education, and the labour market. The latter has the advantage of reducing the trend of population aging and the gap of skilled workers.

In 2022, the EU received 881,220 first-time asylum applications, which is an almost 64% increase since 2021 (EUROSTAT, 2023). Many of these can be attributed to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. As counter measure, the EU set up the “Council Decision of March 2022” that enabled non-EU citizens fleeing Ukraine to receive immediate and temporary protection. By the end of 2022, nearly 3.8 million displaced people received benefits from this temporary protection in the EU (Figure 8). Poland and Germany, followed by Czechia, hosted the highest absolute number of beneficiaries (EUROSTAT, 2023).

The conflict in Ukraine has reverberated across Europe, leaving in its wake a series of intricate implications that extend to the very heart of Sustainable Development Goal 10. This goal, aimed at reducing inequalities within and among countries, has encountered unique challenges as a result of the conflict. In this sense, this section explores ways in which the conflict has hindered Europe's progression towards the specific targets of SDG 10, with a focus on how each target has been affected (Bin-Nashwan et al., 2022).

In this perspective, target 10.1 illustrates the economic repercussions, which in the context of the war, have cascaded across borders and disrupted trade relations. Poland and Hungary, countries sharing a close proximity to Ukraine, have experienced disruptions in economic activities, translating in an impact on income growth, particularly among the most vulnerable populations (Braun et al., 2023).

In the realm of target 10.2, which underscores social, economic, and political inclusion, the conflict in Ukraine has illuminated concerning issues of discrimination and marginalisation. For instance, in Crimea, the rights of the Crimean Tatars have been stifled, underscoring a direct violation of the principles of empowerment and inclusivity

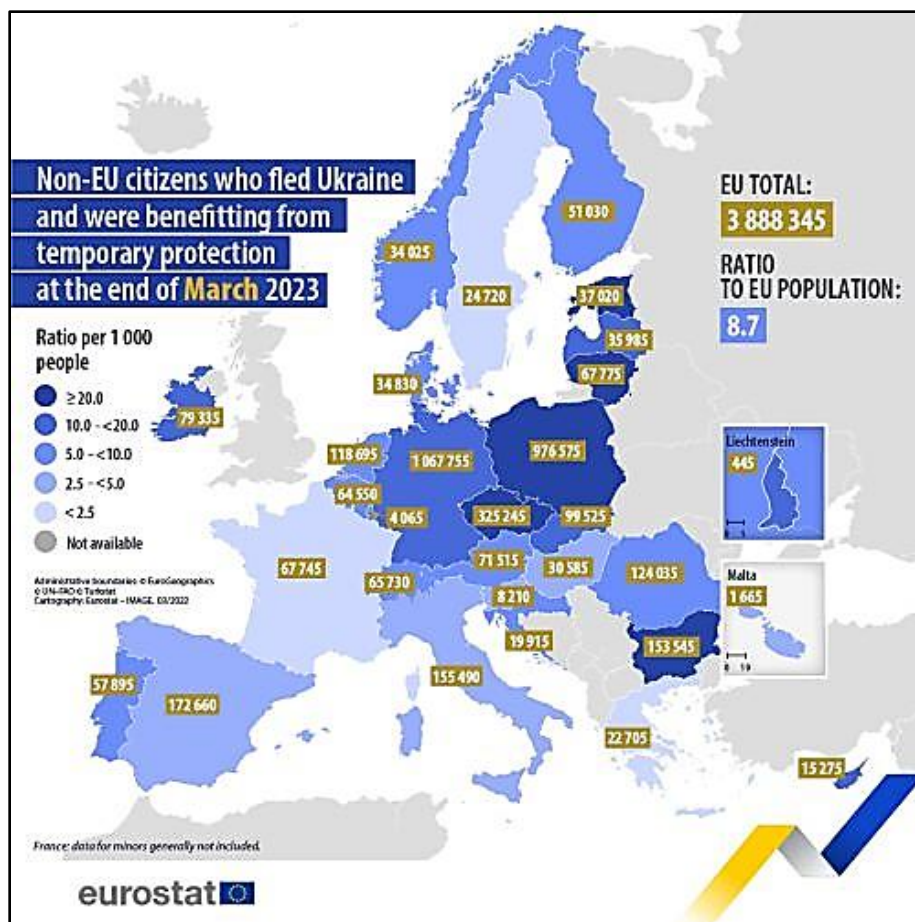


embedded in SDG 10. The conflict's divisive nature has intensified inequalities across various demographic dimensions (see Krysovatty et al., 2022; Levy et al., 2022)

Displacement caused by the conflict has strikingly impacted Target 10.3. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees in countries like Ukraine, Poland, and Germany encounter barriers to accessing quality education, healthcare, and essential services. The conflict's ripple effects have disrupted equal opportunities, impeding educational and healthcare access for these vulnerable populations (Goniewicz, 2022; Guenette et al., 2022).

Migration, an essential aspect of target 10.7, has been reshaped by the conflict. Neighboring countries like Poland and Germany have absorbed refugees and migrants escaping the turmoil. Yet, the unplanned nature of migration stemming from the conflict presents challenges for hosting nations striving for orderly and well-managed migration systems (Boiko et al., 2021; Sadowa et al., 2020). The conflict's influence on migration dynamics underscores the need for safe and dignified migration practices.

In this sense, the conflict in Ukraine has inhibited Europe's journey in pursuing the targets of SDG 10. The challenges brought about by the conflict extend across economic stability, social inclusivity, and political empowerment, collectively impeding the countries of the continent's progress in reducing inequalities. Resolving the conflict's impacts on SDG 10 requires concerted efforts to restore stability, uphold human rights, and create opportunities for inclusivity and empowerment across the affected populations and nations.



**Figure 8. Non-EU citizens who fled Ukraine and were benefitting from temporary protection at the end of March 2023** (Source: Eurostat, 2023)

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### Examples of questions for assessment

#### Global Crisis and SDG 10

1. Name at least three global crises that are affecting the achievement of the targets for SDG 10 in your region.
2. What are the main factors behind the recent global increase in the levels of poverty and inequality?
3. How is climate change contributing to inequality in your region?
4. Did the COVID-19 pandemic have an impact on the progress of achieving the various targets of the SDG 10 in your region? Explain whether this impact was positive or negative.
5. How is the COVID-19 pandemic affecting SDG 10 targets? Are these impacts positive or negative?
6. Explain how conflict has had a negative impact on reducing the levels of inequality in your region.
7. What is the relationship between war/conflict and increased levels of global inequality?

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#### 4. PROGRESS TOWARDS REDUCING GLOBAL INEQUALITIES BY 2030

Readers (teachers) will be empowered to

1. develop an understanding of regional differences in achieving SDG 10.
2. understand the various factors that have a negative impact on the achievement of the various targets for SDG 10.

The uneven distribution of income and access to resources across and between nations results in the current spatial inequalities experienced globally. While the inequality is fuelled by the vast differences in infrastructure especially within the rural and urban divide, the uneven geographical distribution of natural resources also contributes to global inequalities. Within and between countries public policies can also contribute to inequality, while globally ecological and gender inequality is increasingly a reality. The World Social Report in 2020 (United Nations, 2020) described the global spatial inequalities as the major hurdle in the achievement of sustainable development and especially SDG 10 by 2030.

Three important global trends have contributed significantly to increasing inequality in the world. Firstly, the current climate change crisis (refer to section 3.1) increases the vulnerability and thus the inequality index (Gini coefficient) of countries, especially those located in the Global South, as the exposure to natural disasters and environmental degradation without the necessary technological capacity and financial resources to mitigate this exposure increases inequality between and across countries. Secondly, the varied rates of urbanisation and the increased rate of migration triggered by a variety of factors, some related to COVID-19 (refer to section 3.2), and others related to inherent conflict (refer to section 3.3), can result in better living conditions and improved access to basic services; however, the same actions can create more congestion, more pollution, more slums and even increased social exclusion within urban areas. The combined effect of urbanisation and increased migration can thus increase global inequalities. Thirdly, the rapid technological change that accelerated with the onset of



the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly increased new opportunities, but at the same time has widened the digital divide and skills gaps between and within countries.

In a drive to escalate the efforts to address the various targets set for SDG 10, many countries in the world will have to incorporate as many of the following into their respective policies:

1. Improve the provision of education, health, and social protection and in this way directly and indirectly enhance the resilience and capabilities of their populations.
2. Create more effective strategies related to urban planning and governance. Such strategies would include an improvement of the infrastructure and service provision allowing better access to these by marginalised and vulnerable groups.
3. To reduce inequalities spatially between regions; the improvement of trade and investment should form part of related policies.
4. Environmental protection and mitigation measures related to climate change should be fostered between regions.

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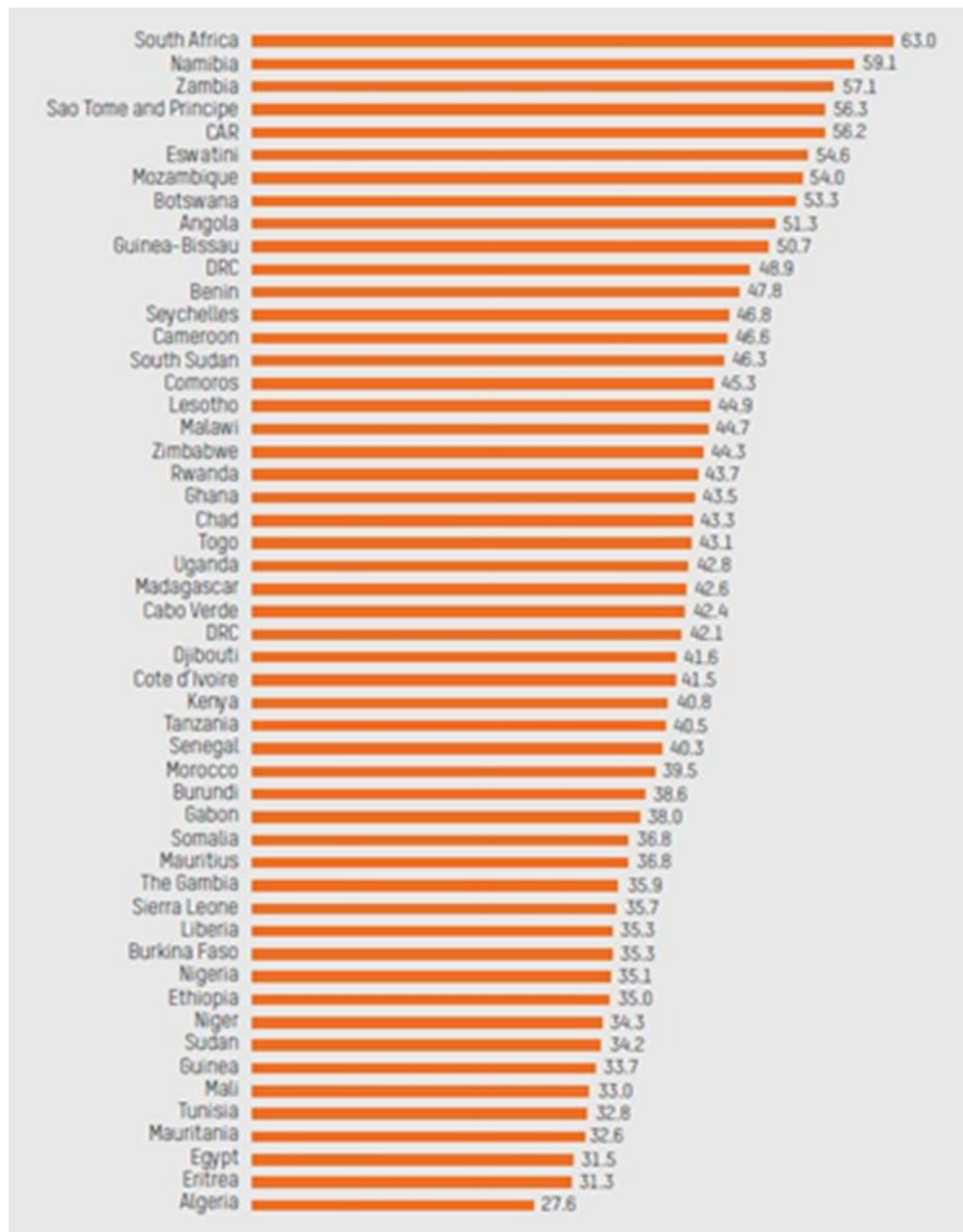
#### 4.1 Regional progress in Africa

Africa currently faces extreme levels of inequality. The World Population Review (2023) indicates that eight of the ten most unequal countries in the world are in Africa, these include South Africa, Namibia, Zambia, São Tomé, and Príncipe Central African Republic, Eswatini, Mozambique, and Botswana (refer to Figure 9 for the Gini

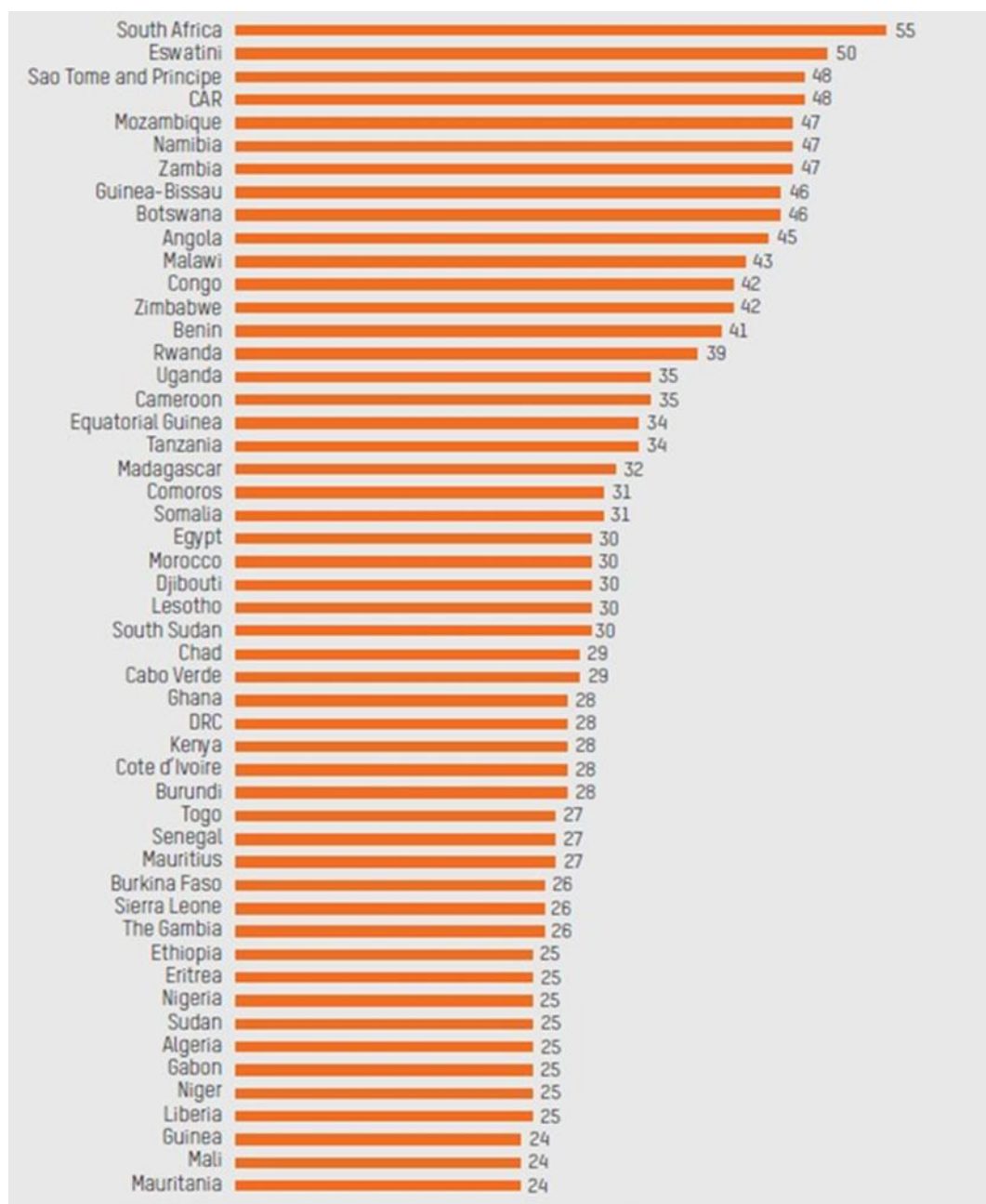
coefficient for each of these countries). Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, every state in Africa's income inequality was of such a nature that it was enough to reduce the per capita GDP by between 1 and 10%, thus making it impossible for the continent to meet the SDG by 2030 (Grigoli and Robles, 2017). Oxfam and DFI (2022) indicated that the countries in the Southern African region were more unequal than the countries in the North African region (see Figure 9). In most African countries an average of 25% of the wealth is held by only 1% of the population (World Inequality Database, 2023) however, in 14 African countries 40% of the wealth is owned by 1% of their respective populations (see Figure 10).

In addition to the high levels of *income inequality* and the small percentage of the respective populations in the various African countries that owns the largest portion of the country's wealth, Africa is also plagued by high levels of *gender inequality*, *urban inequality*, and *racial inequality*, especially in Southern and East Africa (Oxfam and DFI, 2022). The multi-faceted nature of inequality in Africa is contributing to many challenges that are impeding its progress towards achieving the various targets of SDG 10. When analysing the progress in trying to achieve the various targets for SDG 10, it should be noted that none of these targets are fully on track for achievement in 2030; however, significant progress has been made in the achievement of the sub-targets 10.7.3; 10.7.4; 10.b.1 and 10. c.1 (see Figure 11). The reason for the positive progress towards achieving target 10.7 specifically 10.7.3 and 10.7.4) lies largely in the exceptional way that a country like Uganda deals with the refugee crisis in the region. Through the development of a refugee policy, Uganda able to achieve SDG target 10.7 (that aims at facilitating the orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration and mobility of people), through the implementation of a planned and well-managed refugee policy (indicator 10.7.2) and the proper documentation and reporting of the strategies to reduce inequalities amongst the proportion of people who were refugees and asylum seekers in Uganda (indicator 10.7.4). By being an example to the world in terms of the proper documentation of refugees, Uganda has shown how deaths and disappearances (indicator 10.7.3) can be monitored, reported upon, and managed. For more on the way Uganda has played a leading role in achieving target 10.7, refer to section 5.2.1.1.





**Figure 9. Income inequality (Gini coefficient ) in Africa** (Source: Oxfam, 2022:7)



**Figure 10. Percentage or wealth held by top 1% of the population in Africa**  
(Source: Oxfam, 2022:8)



**Figure 11. Progress in Africa towards achieving the SDG 10 targets by 2030**  
(Source: <https://ecastats.uneca.org/unsdgsafrica/SDGs/SDG-progress>)

The achievement of the various targets for sustainable development by 2030 is dependent on *leaving no-one behind*, and within this context foreign direct investment (FDI) is an important aspect of economic development in Africa. FDI can contribute to the economic development of a host country by augmenting domestic capital and the enhancement of efficiency through the transfer of new technology, marketing and managerial skills, innovation, and best practices. FDI has many benefits, and these would be determined by country-specific conditions and the policy environment as the basis for encouraging opportunities for linkages between FDI and domestic investment. Globally FDI into Africa has increased, and many countries on the continent have aligned the FDI into their national development programmes, and in this way the continent is making some progress in the achievement of target 10.b.

The relative success in moving towards achieving target 10.c by 2030 (“reduce to less than 3 per cent the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 per cent”), lies in the fact that inter country migration to a large extent is positively accommodated on the African continent. In fact, in many instances countries embrace the notion that the financial development in Africa could be achieved through the remittances of migrants and they have adapted basic strategies that must be adhered to by different financial institutions. One of the strategies is to ensure or encourage migrants to open accounts in financial institutions and use financial products, and this ensures that remittance recipients (migrants) can positively contribute to the host country (refer to section 5.2.1.1). It also provides financial education and accurate information to recipient families about their financial options.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, and the cumulative impacts of climate change and conflict, there has been some recovery efforts that will help various countries in Africa to move closer to the achievement of SDG 10. However, for Africa to make significant strides towards reducing inequality by 2030, several actions will need to be taken. Firstly, more social protection programmes aimed at supporting the vulnerable and marginalised populations in obtaining access to income, food and basic services and inclusive health services, are urgently required. Secondly, there needs to be an accelerated digital transformation of various sectors that would trigger economic growth in the fields of agriculture, manufacturing, trade, and tertiary services. Not only would such a transformation increase production on the continent, but it would also increase the competitiveness of countries on the continent and in this way would trigger the creation of new markets as the global digital divide would be reduced. Finally, an increase in FDI is needed to assist Africa through a green transition – something which would also help to reduce inequality and ensure more climate resilient development in Africa.

### **Supplementary readings**

1. Asongu, S. A. and Eita, J. H. 2023. The Conditional Influence of Poverty, Inequality, and Severity of Poverty on Economic Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa.

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#### 4.2 Regional progress in Latin America and the Caribbean

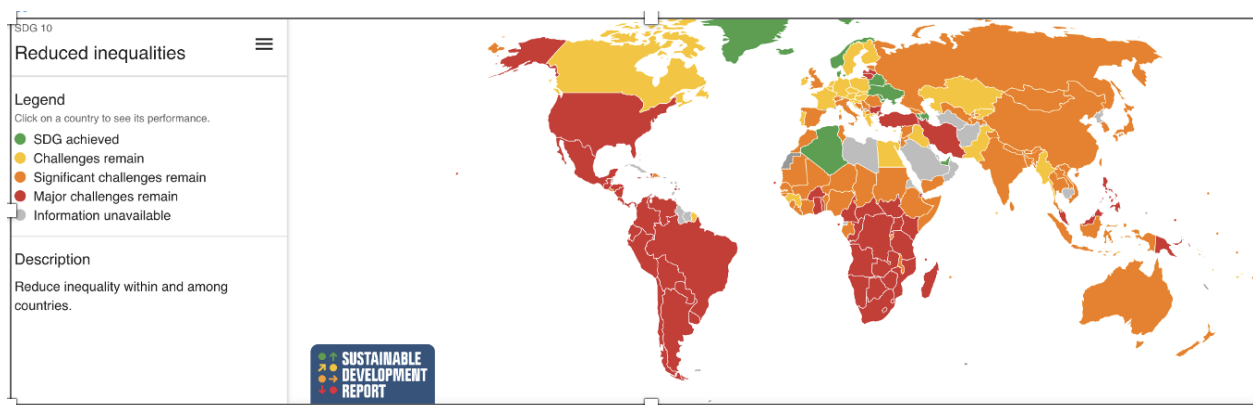
In the first two decades of this century, Latin America and the Caribbean experienced robust economic growth, and poverty and wage inequality went down, thanks to a strong commitment to redistributive policies. Nonetheless, progress began to stall from 2015 onward as economic growth faltered following the conclusion of the commodity boom. The situation worsened due to the COVID-19 pandemic, exacerbating inequality (Chancel et al., 2022).

The high levels of inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean – owing to income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location, and other characteristics relevant in a national context – highlight the significant obstacle that SDG 10 represents for the region.

Understanding the complex social and economic processes that cause inequality is the only way to deal with it. Besides, the idea of equality must go beyond equality of opportunity; it needs to include equality of means, effective equality of rights and

treatment as well as personal autonomy and the mutual recognition of persons (United Nations, 2015).

Figure 12 shows the world progress of SDG10 according to the Sustainable Development Report 2023 (Sachs et al, 2023). Reduce inequality within and among countries in Latin America and the Caribbean remains with major challenges.



**Figure 12. Level of achievement of SDG 10 worldwide** (Source: Sachs et al., 2023)

In terms of the percentage of achievement of SDG 10 and its targets, Latin America and the Caribbean remains around 37% since the launch of the 2030 Agenda, showing very little or no progress (Figure 13).

The Gini coefficient is a statistical measurement of income inequality and economic concentration. A higher number indicates greater inequality, with 1 (or 100) being maximum inequality and 0 being perfect equality. A low Gini coefficient implies that there is less economic disparity among people within a given society, meaning a more equitable distribution of wealth and resources. The Gini index shows that the LAC countries consistently underperform in comparison to the rest of the world: the poorest 50% of the population earns just 10% of the total income, while the wealthiest 10% earns 55%, according to the World Inequality Report (Chancel et al., 2022). Colombia and Brazil are the countries with the highest Gini index, that is, they have the greatest inequality of all the Latin American countries, followed by Chile and Ecuador (see Figure 14).



**Figure 13. Latin America and the Caribbean: Level of achievement of SDG 10** (Source: CODS, 2022)

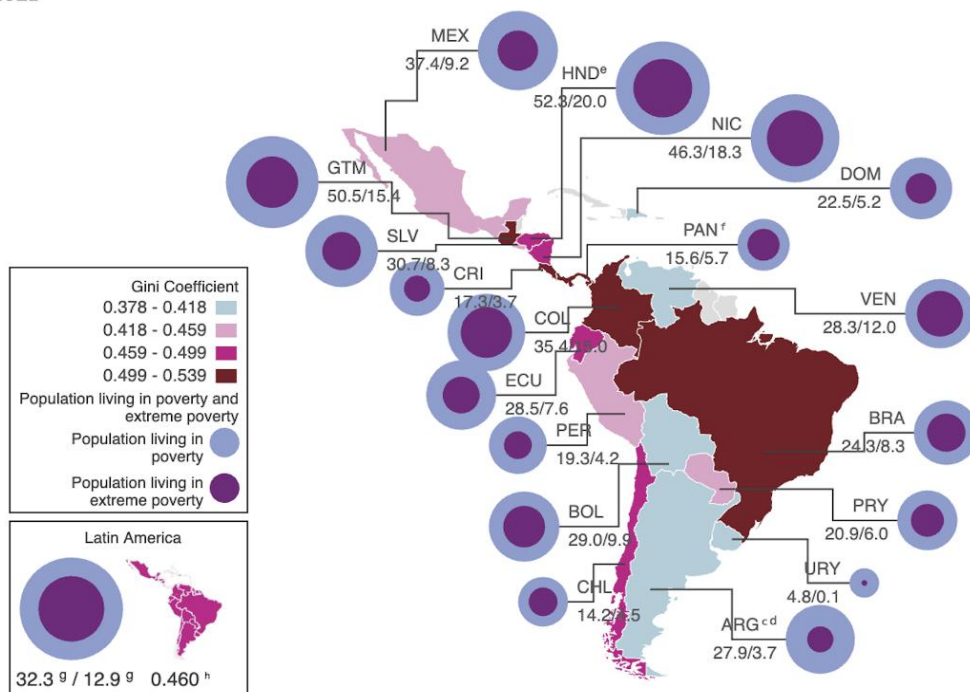


## Poverty and income distribution

Population living in poverty<sup>a</sup> and extreme poverty and Gini coefficient<sup>[A] b</sup>

(Percentages and values between 0 and 1)

2021



[A] ECLAC, Household SURVEYS Databank (BADEHOG).

<sup>a</sup> Includes those living in extreme poverty.

<sup>b</sup> Data correspond to the year 2021, except in Guatemala, Nicaragua and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), where they correspond to 2014, in Honduras corresponds to 2019 and finally Chile and Mexico correspond 2020

<sup>c</sup> Urban areas.

<sup>d</sup> Weighted average based on estimated or projected figures for the specific year in 18 countries.

<sup>e</sup> Simple average based on the latest year available. Includes 18 countries.

Note: The boundaries and names shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

**Figure 14. Poverty and income inequality (Gini index) in Latin America and the Caribbean** (Source: UN ECLAC, 2021)

The last Forum of the Countries of Latin America and Caribbean on Sustainable Development, convened under the auspices of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), pointed out some challenges and opportunities for the implementation, follow-up and review of SDG 10 and its targets (UN ECLAC, 2021).



## Challenges

1. Increasing the availability of timely, reliable and high-quality data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics that are relevant in national contexts.
2. Addressing the discontent of low- and middle-income strata by closing welfare gaps through the pursuit of universal policies.
3. Coordinating various stakeholders (political, technical and social assistance) and institutional levels (local, subnational and national) to reduce inequalities in the local policy sphere.
4. Systematic access gaps affect migrants: reducing inequality means fighting forms such as racism, xenophobia, bias and prejudice, and exploitation. Countries should have effective mechanisms for protecting refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, unaccompanied children, and victims of trafficking and sexual abuse, among others, providing differentiated responses. The approach to migratory governance must be comprehensive and multilateral.

## Opportunities

1. Incorporating civil society better into both implementation and follow-up, not only through reporting mechanisms but also consultative and executive processes.
2. Involving parliaments in the discussion on inequality and the mechanisms for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
3. Ensuring a territorial approach to tackle inequalities based on participatory policies for the implementation and management of programmes and addressing the needs of remote or marginalised localities.

To deal with the landscape of inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean and achieve SDG 10 and its targets, some aspects must be considered according to the last ECLAC forum (UN ECLAC, 2021):

1. *Fiscal Sustainability*: Increase permanent revenue for consistent social expenditure to ensure universal welfare provision.

2. *Active Fiscal Policy*: Combat vulnerabilities and unequal access through measures such as reducing tax evasion, strengthening direct taxes, reevaluating tax benefits, and innovating tax systems.
3. *Private Sector Involvement*: Encourage gender equality initiatives, diverse group training, and productive credits to diminish inequality from within the private sector.
4. *Expanded Social Protection*: Urgently adopt a broader social protection approach aligned with productive policies.
5. *Territorial Approach*: Combat poverty and inequality by considering local contexts for effective policy design.
6. *2030 Agenda Dissemination*: Communicate the essence of the 2030 Agenda to local officials and institutions to amplify localized efforts.
7. *Inclusive Policy Involvement*: Establish mechanisms for affected individuals to participate in policy design, management, and execution.
8. *Strengthening Social Institutions*: Enhance social institutions across different administrative levels and political tiers.
9. *Multiculturalism in Policy*: Integrate multicultural and intercultural principles into public policy development.

#### **Supplementary readings**

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### 4.3 Regional progress in Europe

According to the most recent data, Europe has made moderate progress toward achieving Sustainable Development Goal 10 which focuses on reducing inequalities within and among countries. The European Union and its member states, including examples like Germany, Sweden, Greece, Poland, and France, have taken steps to address these inequalities and promote inclusivity, both within their own societies and in the broader global context (EUROSTAT, 2023).

While there has been positive long-term convergence between the EU countries in terms of gaps in GDP and income, progress has faced challenges during certain periods. The COVID-19 pandemic, for example, led to economic stagnation and disruptions, affecting various aspects of social and labor market inclusion (Su et al., 2022; Tagliacozzo et al., 2021). The pandemic exposed existing vulnerabilities, particularly among marginalised groups, women, and migrants, amplifying the need for a renewed commitment to inclusive policies (Hill & Narayan, 2020; Kontis et al., 2020).

Efforts to reduce inequalities within Europe are reflected in various policy initiatives and instruments. The European Commission has implemented measures such as the Anti-Discrimination Plan, the LGBTQ Equality Strategy, and the Cohesion Policy Fund (European Commission, 2023c, 2023b, 2023a). Additionally, the European Pillar of Social Rights (European Commission, 2023a) aims to improve social and living conditions across the EU, reinforcing the importance of economic and social coherence.

It is worth considering that progress toward SDG 10 can vary across different dimensions and countries within Europe. While some regions may have made substantial strides in addressing certain inequalities, challenges persist, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and other events that can disrupt progress. Achieving SDG 10 requires ongoing collaboration, policy innovation, and social justice and inclusion commitment.

#### Supplementary readings

1. Eurostat. 2023. Analysis of EU short-term progress towards the SDGs in the face of multiple crises. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics->

### Examples of questions for assessment

#### Regional Progress in SDG 10

1. In your opinion, will the countries in Africa be able to achieve the SDG 10 targets by 2030?
2. Which SDG 10 targets have been reversed since 2015? Briefly explain the reasons why the achievement of these targets has regressed since 2015.
3. Which SDG 10 targets will likely be achieved in Africa by 2030 and explain why.
4. Explain the trend of inequality in the African region since the COVID-19 pandemic.
5. Why can some SDG targets not be measured in Africa?
6. In your opinion, will the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean be able to achieve the SDG 10 targets by 2030?
7. Explain the meaning of the Gini index and how it is calculated.
8. Considering the challenges associated with addressing inequality, discuss and identify the causes, consequences, and potential solutions.
9. What measures can be taken in LAC to achieve the SDG10 targets by 2030?
10. In your opinion, who are the main institutions responsible for the measures suggested in question 4.10?
11. What role did the economic stagnation in Europe play during the COVID-19 pandemic in achieving SDG10?
12. Name some of the policy initiatives and instruments introduced by the European Commission to reduce inequalities.
13. What are the main obstacles in achieving SDG 10 in your region/country?

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## 5. GOOD PRACTICES: CASE STUDIES

Readers (teachers) will be empowered to

1. identify good practices in various regional case studies in achieving SDG 10.
2. develop and apply a local project aimed at achieving SDG 10.
3. use the knowledge presented in regional case studies to adapt to a more sustainable way of living.

Over the years examples of good practices have been applied in different countries around the world supporting the achievement of the various indicators as set by SDG 10. These practices reflect different approaches as will be evident in section 5 in the discussion of various case studies from three regions: Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Europe.

Table 4 below also shows how varied these initiatives are: from educational measures to social policies, and from agriculture management to tackling nutrient deficiencies. We will not discuss any of these examples, but you can read up on them if you want to. Other examples can be found on the [United Nations' SDGs Knowledge Platform](https://sdgs.un.org/knowledgeplatform).

**Table 4. Best practices in the achievement of SDG 10 as reflected in various initiatives across the globe**

Geographical coverage	Objective	Related SDGs	Source
Papua New Guinea	Girls' and Women's Right to access Health and Education Services to reduce inequality and inequity in rural communities toward preventing maternal and infant mortality	3, 4, 5, 6,10,17	<a href="https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/girls-and-womens-right-PNG">https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/girls-and-womens-right-PNG</a>
Paranagua, Rio de Janeiro and Recife, Brazil	Entrepreneurs, small businesses, and associations are the initial direct beneficiaries. The programme aims at supporting impact business development and projects with future social, environmental, and cultural results. From an economic viewpoint decent work, reduction of inequalities and responsible consumption and production are main goals. Clean water, regeneration of areas with Atlantic Rain Forest and climate action are the drivers of environment impact. Local culture maintenance and human development for citizenship protagonism are in the cultural side. Intense and vibrant involvement of communities	1, 2, 6, 8, 10, 12, 13, 15, 17	<a href="https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/regenerative-">https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/regenerative-</a>

	throughout the programme is anticipated.		
Global	The Swiss Water Partnership Youth (SWP Youth) is a co-founder of the Global Youth Movement for Water (GYMW). It is a hub of expertise focusing on young people's needs and talents in the field of water for development. It provides a platform for innovative projects for and by young people, with over 400 members from over 50 different countries. On the road to the UN Water Conference in New York, the Swiss Water Partnership Youth aims at supporting all governments worldwide, including Switzerland, to meaningfully include young voices at the highest level, in discussions and actions related to safe access to safe water and sanitation for all.	6, 8,10,17	<a href="https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/offer-training-and-capacity-building-reach-30-30-30-youth-target-30-youth-below-30">https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/offer-training-and-capacity-building-reach-30-30-30-youth-target-30-youth-below-30</a>
India	Through our programmes across India, we are trying to target the following goals: SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages; SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all; SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all; SDG 10: Reduce inequalities.	3, 4, 8,10	<a href="https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/disability-sector">https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/disability-sector</a>
Australia	By 2024, the Northern Territory Government will establish an Aboriginal Water Security Advisory Council for the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water Security to ensure Aboriginal Territorians have a voice on strategic water issues and enhance Aboriginal participation in decisions around water. In addition, the Northern Territory Government will partner with First Nations organisations to progress cultural values mapping for water across the territory.	6, 8, 10,17	<a href="https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/empowering-first-nations-voice">https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/empowering-first-nations-voice</a>
Africa	The programme is conceived to primarily benefit women as a key focus and vulnerable groups across targeted countries in Africa. The basis for identifying vulnerable persons will be their non-viable economic capacity to achieve meaningful socioeconomic progress – meaning that the vulnerable persons are those with little or no capacity to exonerate themselves from vicious cycles of socioeconomic misery. Vulnerable persons may not be having access to means of production i.e., land which may be communal or private; labour which includes necessary knowhow or skills; capital in terms of money and equipment; and entrepreneurship which is the skill to convert land, labour, and capital into money. This is normally realized when one can maximize produce, achieve good quality, use safe storage and packaging, and access markets. Main stakeholder is IDA and arrange different	1, 2, 5, 8, 10, 12	<a href="https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/economic-inclusion-and-empowerment-women">https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/economic-inclusion-and-empowerment-women</a>

	partnerships with local organisations.		
Brazil	Small, large and medium producers of milk, meat, grains (commodities). Growers, producers, farm owners and farm managers. Extension agents: public rural extension service, consultants and advisors' offices. Field agents. Non-governmental organizations. Universities. Research institutes. Agriculture/food supply chain companies. Agribusiness organizations. Financiers. Government (especially the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Food Supply).	2, 10, 13	<a href="https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/low-carbon-agriculture-put-practice-brazilian-savannas">https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/low-carbon-agriculture-put-practice-brazilian-savannas</a>

## 5.1 Africa

In this section on Africa, we discuss three initiatives that contribute to the achievement of SDG 10. Considering that SDG 10 focuses on reducing inequalities and addressing the issue of immigrants and refugees, the three case studies will reflect initiatives in this context. We will look at case studies in Uganda, Tanzania and Cameroon.

### 5.1.1 Uganda: Promoting the rights of refugees through the effective application of SDG 10 and the related indicators 10.7.2 and 10.7.4

Uganda has the largest refugee and asylum-seeker population in Africa, and within the global context, Uganda is the third-largest host of refugees and asylum seekers (European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, 2023). Nanima (2022) reported that in 2020, more than 1.5 million refugees, many of whom arrived after 2017, lived in Uganda. Many of these refugees were from neighbouring countries and the wider geographical region (Ahimbisibwe, 2020) including South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi, Somalia, Rwanda, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Eritrea (refer to Figure 15 for a geographical orientation). The United Nations (2022) reported that in 2022 alone, the numbers of registered refugees in Uganda increased by 146,000, and most of these people (98, 000) were from the DRC. The renewed conflict in South Sudan that broke out in April 2023, will most likely mean that Uganda will start

to receive an increasing number of refugees from the war-torn country, and this will place the Ugandan current progressive refugee policy under severe pressure.



**Figure 15. Location of Uganda and surrounding countries** (Source: European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, 2023)

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda is tagged as “leaving no one behind” (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2022). SDG 10 specifically strives to reduce inequalities amongst and within countries, and dealing with the refugee and asylum population in Uganda provides the perfect case study to reflect on how African countries can honour the SDG Agenda and specifically the achievement of SDG10 (Nanima, 2022). This will be done through an explanation of Uganda’s approach in achieving SDG target 10.7 (that aims at facilitating the orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration and mobility of people), through the implementation of a planned and well-managed refugee policy (indicator 10.7.2) and the proper documentation and reporting of the strategies to reduce inequalities amongst the proportion of people who are refugees and asylum seekers in Uganda (indicator 10.7.4).

#### *The Ugandan Refugee Act and the achievement of SDG indicator 10.7.2*

Despite the high number of refugees in Uganda, the country reflected a Gini coefficient of 42.7 in 2019 (World Bank, 2019), with a value of 0 indicating most equal and a value of 100 as the most unequal of societies. Uganda’s value is comparatively lower than

that of many other African countries. The possible reason for Uganda's comparatively lower Gini coefficient could be the progressive way in which the country has been dealing with refugees. The Ugandan Refugee Act of 2006 is fundamentally based on the principles of two international instruments that provide for refugee protection (Nanima, 2022), namely the 1951 Refugee Convention (or the Geneva Convention) and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees.

The 1951 Geneva Convention defines who a refugee is and goes further to establish the rights of such individuals as well as the responsibilities of the host countries to those individuals; the Convention restricted refugee status to those whose circumstances had come about prior to the signing of the Convention and because of events occurring in Europe. The 1967 Protocol, on the other hand, is significant as it removed both the temporal and geographic restrictions imposed by the 1951 Convention (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2022).

While many countries in the world are signatories to either one or both international acts that provide refugees with protection, the Ugandan Refugee Act of 2006 has been praised worldwide as being a progressive law that best meets international protection standards (Omata, 2022; Ahimbisibwe, 2020).

Through its progressive Refugee Act of 2006, Uganda can claim significant progress in achieving indicator 10.7.2. In summary, the Act allows refugees the right to work, and significant freedom of movement (United Nations, 2020). Unlike many other host countries, the government of Uganda considers refugees to be an asset to their host country and, if given the chance, they can contribute to the economy of the country, and for this reason refugees have the freedom to work in the country (Omata, 2020). The government's approach stands in sharp contrast to many other refugee-hosting countries in the region, which often require that refugees live in camps where they have restricted socio-economic rights and freedoms (Ahimbisibwe, 2022). As part of the Refugee Act, the Refugee Department of the Office of the Prime Minister has made the goal of self-reliance central to the country's refugee approach (Omata, 2020). This is reflected as the "Self-Reliance Strategy" (SRS) that allows the refugees in Uganda the

right to work; freedom of movement within the country; access to basic services, and the right to live in local communities as well as in defined settlements (Ahimbisibwe, 2022). In line with this strategy the Ugandan government allocates small plots of land to each refugee household to facilitate a development-based approach to further refugees' self-reliance (Omata, 2020).

International policymakers frequently search for and highlight good practices in refugee protection, and this they have certainly found in the Ugandan refugee policy. In fact, Uganda has been lauded as an exemplary case that demonstrates generosity, solidarity, and hospitality.

While the Ugandan Refugee Act has been heralded by international policy makers as one of the best in the world, it is important to understand the limitations of such a model of "success". Uganda itself is also vulnerable to natural disasters and epidemics, and the increasing influx of refugees and asylum seekers into the country will place increasing pressure on the sustainability and application of a good migration policy. However, despite several challenges related to receiving large numbers of refugees, the Ugandan Refugee Act can be considered as a very important instrument that has been used effectively in the country's attempt at reducing inequalities amongst refugees and its own population.

#### *Uganda playing a leading role in achieving SDG 10.7.4*

SDG 10.7.4 was introduced in 2019, and by 2020 the Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) from many countries were expected to include this target in their reporting. To address this target, countries are expected to show the steps they have taken to improve the lives of refugees who are identified per 100,000 of the population by country of origin. Furthermore, this target expects host countries to provide the necessary evidence of the steps taken to improve the implementation and management of policies related to refugees (Nanima, 2022).

While a general overview of Uganda's Refugee Act was provided in the previous section, and the country reported its success in addressing SDG 10.7.2, Uganda has

also played a leading role in the achievement of SDG 10.7.4. This is reflected in their 2020 Voluntary National Review (VNR) (United Nations, 2020) where they documented their methodology of tracking the proportion of its population who were refugees. In the 2020 VNR Report for Uganda the following strategies were presented as evidence of the steps that they have taken to reduce inequalities between refugees and the host population and thus progress in achieving 10.7.4 (adapted from United Nations, 2020; Nanima, 2022):

1. Provision of and facilitating access to legal assistance.
2. Calls to the private sector to invest in refugee and host communities.
3. Provision of health services, particularly, to pregnant female refugee and asylum seekers.
4. Provision of free and accelerated learning programmes.
5. The reduction of food insecurity through the granting of land and mobility rights to refugees.
6. Launched the Comprehensive Refugee Response that provides holistic support to host countries to assist in the achievement of the SDGs.
7. Improved the collection of data to identify the location and possible growth of the refugee population.

Throughout the VNR, specific mention is made in each of the 17 SDGs of related strategies that are specific to the refugee population and then it is shown how collectively these strategies will help to achieve SDG 10.

#### *Lessons learned in terms of the achievement of SDG 10*

The most important lesson that many African countries can learn from the Ugandan case study is that the key to achieving reduced levels of inequality between refugees and host communities in the region is to embrace refugees and asylum seekers as active and inclusive members of the host society, and to implement specific strategies to address the various challenges encountered by refugees.

#### *Possibility for replication*



In terms of the achievement of SDG 10.7.2, the "Self-Reliance Strategy" (SRS) followed by the Ugandan government could be infused into the refugee policies of other African countries. The fact that refugees in Uganda have the right to work, have freedom of movement, access to basic services and enjoy the right to live in local communities of the host country, ensure that refugees can contribute meaningfully to the economy of the host country. In terms of SDG 10.7.4, the actions of Uganda to keep a good record of refugees per 100,000 of the population and to strategically work towards providing equal services and opportunities as they do for their own citizens, will allow countries in the region the opportunity to reduce inherent inequality that is a direct result of the movement of people within countries and between borders.

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### 5.1.2. Tanzania: Joint programme to support Tanzania's Productive Social Safety Net (PSSN)

Although economic growth contributes to job creation and employment opportunities, in Tanzania it does very little to reduce poverty and curb income inequality between the rich and the poor (Kinyondo and Pelizo, 2018). In 2018, Tanzania had 27.6 million people who lived below the international extreme poverty rate of US \$1.9 per day, and poverty has remained stagnant at 49% between 2011/12 and 2018 while there has been a fast-growing poor population (World Bank, 2020). The wealthiest quintiles account for nearly half (48%) of the total income in Tanzania, whereas individuals in those poorest quintiles only get 6.2% of the income generated (World Bank, 2020). The country reflected a Gini coefficient of 40.5.6 in 2019 (World Bank, 2018), with a value of 0 indicating most equal and a value of 100 as the most unequal of societies. The Gini coefficient of Tanzania is lower than many of its neighbouring African states.

Although the Sustainable Development Goals emphasize that no one should be left behind, most women and children, especially in Tanzania's rural areas, experience inequalities (Bintabara and Basinda, 2021; Mkupete et al, 2022). The rural-urban inequalities remain huge in the education, health, water, sanitation, nutrition, and youth employment dimensions, for example, the use of electricity for lighting in rural areas is only 8% compared to 49% in urban areas. Woel (2018) estimated that only 33% of the households in rural areas had access to piped potable water. In Tanzania, women are one and a half times more likely to be unemployed at 12.3% than men at 8.2% with implications for household income and welfare in general (UNECA, 2018). Social security coverage in Tanzania is less than 1% for the entire population and about 6.5%

for the formally employed population. All these dimensions are the determinants, indicators, and perpetrators of inequalities among the citizens (Sustainable Development Goals Fund, n.d).

In response to poverty and inequality, with the support of a joint programme, the Government of Tanzania decided in 2018 to scale up one of its existing programmes, the Tanzania Productive Social Safety Net (PSSN), to reach all people living below the food poverty line. This social protection programme focused more on pregnant women and children under five because women had been subjected to inequalities in terms of limited educational and economic opportunities presented to them, which contributed immensely to their daily plight (Sustainable Development Goals Fund, n.d).

The PSSN programme wanted to achieve the following objectives:

1. Raise awareness about the importance of family planning.
2. Promote employment through public works programmes by using conditional cash transfers.
3. Emphasize the importance of primary and secondary education in getting out of extreme poverty.
4. Enable poor households to access food, income, and health services.

This programme promoted an integrated approach to poverty, malnutrition, and inequality by strengthening inter-sectoral coordination, implementation, and delivery systems to support sustainable livelihoods and resilience mechanisms for poverty reduction through training and outreach. The UN agencies worked closely with national partners supporting the National Social Protection Framework to sustain poverty eradication efforts at household level, and each agency brought its experience in gender mainstreaming, nutrition, family planning and youth employment. The aim was to enhance PSSN's community sessions by engaging women beneficiaries, caregivers, and grandmothers in feeding infants and young children.

Cash Plus, a pilot initiative of the Tanzanian Government and UNICEF focusing on extremely poor adolescent youth, was also introduced to help the youth to successfully transition to adulthood by providing, amongst others, cash transfers and life-skills

training. Progressively achieving and sustaining income growth and household expenditure is another strategy for reducing inequalities among citizens as captured by SDG target 10.1 (Sustainable Development Goals Fund, n.d).

#### *Results and impact of the PSSN programme/project*

The programme activities supported Tanzania's Social Action Fund (TASAF) by strengthening delivery systems, including links with nutrition services and programmes. By the conclusion of the programme in 2020 a total, 10,272 PSSN beneficiaries were trained with a special focus on the feeding of infants and young children, while 986 TASAF staff at headquarters, district and ward levels were trained in using the toolkit, and in monitoring the groups. The joint programme also provided technical support to TASAF to review and update its communication and advocacy strategy. This improved understanding of the PSSN programme among different audiences, including programme beneficiaries and high-level policymakers involved in the design of the programme (Sustainable Development Goals Fund, n.d).

The joint programme enhanced PSSN's training materials, which improved implementation and allowed poor and vulnerable households to earn more and become more sustainable and self-reliant, which directly responded to SDG 10.2 by empowering and promoting the socio-economic inclusion of everyone including women and youth. A total of 1,273 beneficiaries were targeted for family planning awareness sessions on the mainland and in Zanzibar and were successfully covered. This programme addressed challenges related to the shortage of extension services, lack of access to the market and information on livelihood enhancement activities, as well as beneficiaries' limited skills and knowledge, contributing to the reduction of inequalities in the country.

The joint programme also developed sustainable livelihood and resilience mechanisms for 1,000 youth (between 15-35 years, with young women making up 52%) through training them in entrepreneurship and providing post-training support. The economic opportunities improved the livelihoods of these individuals and their households (Sustainable Development Goals Fund, n.d).

In addition, 1,040 young people aged 10-24, benefited from sessions on sexual and reproductive health as part of the Cash Plus pilot initiative mentioned above, focusing on extremely poor adolescent boys and girls who lived in households that were part of the PSSN. The programme provided cash transfers, life-skills training, reproductive health education and services, mentoring, and support during the difficult transition to adulthood.

The impacts of this joint programme extended to institutional support, as it provided training to the Zanzibar Ministry of Labour personnel to enhance the coordination, enforcement and implementation capacity of social protection interventions at local government, ministerial and agency levels. As a result, a child protection policy was developed to ensure the coordination of child-related issues, reinforcing synergies whilst avoiding duplication, thus responding to SDG 10.3 which emphasizes policy change. At the national level, the UN agencies supported the government in drafting the Social Protection Framework (Sustainable Development Goals Fund, n.d).

### *Challenges*

The main challenge was the delay in the implementation of joint programme activities because several government institutions, including TASAF, were undergoing a reform process during the implementation phase; however, technical support was provided to TASAF to expedite the process. The delay and ultimately non-approval of the National Social Protection Framework limited the UN's ability to provide timely support under the joint programme. The Government of Tanzania decided to develop a new National Social Protection Policy and merge it with the National Social Protection Framework. The International Labour Organization (ILO) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) supported the Government's review of the current National Social Security Policy (2003) and helped them to develop a more comprehensive national social protection system. Developing a strong national social protection policy was anticipated to create more stable social protection efforts with the budget allocation (Sustainable Development Goals Fund, n.d).

### *Lessons learned in terms of the achievement of specific SDG 10 targets*

The programme directly addresses SDG targets 10.1, 10.2 and 10.3 which seek to achieve and sustain income growth at the household level while promoting the inclusion of everyone irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, or economic status through policy change. To achieve reduced inequalities as stated by SDG 10, this case study was able to establish the following:

5. The pilot Cash Plus model which had positive results on young people, who saved money and started income-generating activities as individuals and groups, therefore, improving their overall quality of life.
6. Awareness training in the feeding of infants and young children, and family planning.
7. The development of a child protection policy to coordinate children-related matters.
8. The development of sustainable livelihood and resilience mechanisms for extremely poor women and vulnerable households.
9. The strengthening of entrepreneurship skills training and post-training support among the beneficiaries.
10. Improvement in the access to market and information to stimulate economic activities (Sustainable Development Goals Fund, n.d).

#### *Possibility for replication*

The joint programme provided a renewed and comprehensive focus on poverty, income distribution, governance and social inclusion which all contribute immensely to reducing inequality in Tanzania, and it can be replicated in other districts within the country or elsewhere on the African continent. The pilot Cash Plus model has a high potential for replication as it yielded positive outcomes to support poor youth in their transition to safe adulthood.

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### 5.1.3 Cameroon: Joint programme in Buea, southwest region, to reduce inequality

The Republic of Cameroon is in Central Africa and has a total population of 28,539,789 (World Population Review, 2023). Located along the Atlantic Ocean, it shares its borders with the Central African Republic, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and Nigeria. Two of its border regions with Nigeria (northwest and southwest) are Anglophone, while the rest of the country is Francophone (World Bank, 2022). Although for 50 years after its independence Cameroon was regarded as “the island of peace”



within the relatively unstable region of Central Africa, it is currently plagued by internal insecurity, mostly in the Anglophone regions, and the secessionist war of independence (Human Rights Watch, 2023), while also grappling with more recent activity by Boko Haram in the far north, and as well as the eastern regions (Human Rights Watch, 2023; Time & Whitaker, 2023). Despite its abundant natural resources like a variety of mineral ores and its ability to produce a wide range of agricultural products, the World Bank (2019) classified Cameroon as a low-income country.

Notwithstanding Cameroon's natural and human assets, the World Bank (2021) indicated that the poverty rate had risen from 24.5% in 2019 to 25.3% in 2021. Poverty is concentrated in the country's northern regions, where 56% of the poor live. The inequality in Cameroon using the Gini Coefficient Index, was estimated to be 47.9 in 2019 (World Economics, 2022), with a value of 0 indicating most equal and a value of 100 as the most unequal of societies. While the Gini Coefficient Index for the country is very comparable with other nations in the region, the index reflects several societal disparities between people at various socio-economic levels (income, sex, age, and people with disabilities). Like the other countries in Central Africa, the inequality in Cameroon has impacted the poor's socio-economic and political inclusion at various levels. In addition to the levels of poverty and inequality, Cameroon has a limited GDP and with socio-economic and human growth that is severely hampered by the impact of climate change, increased institutional weaknesses, and insufficient public services, it is expected that unless measures are taken to specifically counter poverty and inequality levels in the country, the achievement of the SDG 10 targets will become an increasing challenge.

While the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Cameroon was worth US \$45.34 billion in 2021 (World Bank, 2021), an important perspective to consider is that over 90% of wealth in Cameroon is owned by 5% of the population. In addition, half of the country's population has greater liabilities than they have assets (World Bank, 2022). A more refined breakdown indicates that there is significant discrimination (and thus inequality) in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, and people with disabilities in the Cameroon labour market.

In Bonduma Village in Buea, southwest Cameroon, 35% of the households are headed by men who in turn have better access to employment opportunities, while only 21% of female-led households have similar access. Due to their predominance in household duties and childcare, women also have less access to human capital and capacity building. This case study documents the work of several agents to progress towards the achievement of SDG 10. The major role player is Social Development International (SODEIT) which is a social development and relief organization that is not for profit, non-governmental and non-discriminating, based in Buea. This organisation has the vision of working for the practical realization of sustainable social development initiatives by protecting the vulnerable and at-risk population and their communities (SODEIT, n.d.). SODEIT primarily works towards providing children, adolescents, and caregivers a better life. At the same time, in the communities in which they work, the organisation pays specific attention to women and youth who are the most vulnerable population with respect to inequality, discrimination, poverty, and human rights abuses.

#### *The strategy of the programme*

In collaboration with several agencies of the United Nations, international NGOs as well as local stakeholders, SODEIT embarked on leading a joint programme in Buea, that would attempt to address the high levels of inequality by focussing on gender, people living with disability and those who fall within the classification of a low-income group. Due to its location SODEIT is the major agent that monitors the application and success of the programme. The collaborative programme thus aimed at reducing the inequality of people who live below the \$50 of median income, by sex, gender, and persons with disabilities, by creating economic opportunities for local community members, especially women and the youth. The joint programme ran from 2011 to 2020, and used the following strategies to achieve its objectives:

1. Training and income generating workshops were organised for women, youth and people living with disabilities.

2. Local authorities provided people unlimited access to healthcare without any discrimination, including people with mental disabilities who were provided with free healthcare at any government clinic.
3. The joint programme attempted to reduce gender disparities in primary and secondary education.
4. Access to social capital and financial services for women and the youth further formed an important part of developing and creating entrepreneurship opportunities for the youth and women in the community.
5. Local NGOs promoted the engagement of women who had been disadvantaged due to age, gender, ethnicity, disability, and income, by organizing training specifically with the aim of financial empowerment.
6. The programme fostered and created opportunities for women and men to participate equally in income generating and employment opportunities as well as providing equal access to available resources in the rural area.

#### *Link(s) with targets and indicators of SDG 10*

The programme aimed to include and empower all vulnerable people in society, regardless of their age, gender, whether they may be disabled, and their economic background. People and social groups in the Buea rural area faced obstacles that prevented them from fully engaging in socio-economic, and political activities. By creating opportunities for vulnerable groups, the programme was able to achieve targets as specified for SDG 10, specifically 10.2.1, but also contributed to the achievement of several targets specified for other SDGs, in particular SDG 5.

#### *Results and impact of the programme*

The programme aimed at equitable growth that concentrated on generating decent employment with a focus on youth and women's skills development. This action reduced the underemployment rate from 75.8% to less than 56% by 2020 (SODEIT, n.d.). More than 2,000 teenage girls and young women received training regarding health challenges, business ownership, technology skills, and empowerment development through the programme. Equal opportunities for the girl child to attend school formed

an important part of the programme and gave young women opportunities to develop connections within the community, and in many instances they were able to get further training, particularly in the field of health education. SODEIT (n.d) estimated that at least 3,500 young women were trained as peer health educators as a direct result of the programme. In addition, it enabled young girls to acquire the health literacy necessary to use reliable contraceptives and safeguard themselves. It was estimated that this collaborative initiative had about 4,000 indirect and direct beneficiaries by increasing the financial independence of 1,800 women (SODEIT, n.d.). The programme had developed a three-pronged approach that focused on changing policies, public participation, and women's representation. SODEIT (n.d.) connected advocacy, financial independence, and the education of the girl child. It also established partnerships with businesses and associations that promoted gender equality programs.

SODEIT (n.d.) further reports that the program resulted in the creation of 850 internships, most of which were in food processing, local clinics, and healthcare centres, as well as in primary schools as peer educators and in childcare. The number of new jobs and entrepreneurial activities might have been greatly increased thanks to the technical training offered. This knowledge was applied to raising the standard of rural development to facilitate easier access to regional markets. Eight hundred women, young people, and 30 people with disabilities received capacity-building in the areas of business planning and funding to launch commercial operations. An estimated 350 girls who were school dropouts were encouraged to return to school and finish, while some were welcomed in various literacy centres within the framework of the programme. Awareness training to change the norms regarding the boy child over the girl child, and educating communities on land ownership were also part of the programme. Free legal clinics were developed to increase women's and young people's access to legal counsel, contributing to restoring women's rights as a result.

In 2019 SODEIT organized professional workshops over the course of two months, giving young mothers the opportunity to receive theory, tutorials, and hands-on lessons in housekeeping and childcare within the community, in addition to a one-month internship in a hospitality institution. It was essential that multiple stakeholders were

engaged and contributed generously to the various initiatives of this joint programme to give young mothers a fair chance to follow their passion and stop girls from falling into the trap of abandoning school.

### *Lessons learned in terms of the achievement of SDG 10*

To achieve SDG 10's target of reducing inequality (10.2.1), the programme was able to establish the following:

1. It became very clear that it was crucial for the public and private sector to work together to encourage jobs creation and entrepreneurial opportunities for vulnerable groups, which would have a positive influence on their health and well-being.
2. The programme did not only assist communities in addressing issues of unemployment and equality, but also motivated men to participate in the community mobilization of gender-sensitive issues that frequently prevented women and young people from achieving financial autonomy. Furthermore, the programme enabled young girls to acquire the health literacy necessary for their personal hygiene.
3. In addition to the efforts of the participating agencies and national partners, local community members and leaders, teachers, children and women's associations on community level all participated actively in returning-to-school initiatives and promoting literacy training at literacy centres.
4. The programme was able to enhance the economic empowerment of women, youth, and people living with disabilities through a multi-sectoral approach that introduced measures to address the individual, institutional, and community-level barriers that had prevented these vulnerable groups from progressing economically, thus contributing to the country's drive to reduce inequality by 2030.

### *Possibility for replication*

This collaborative programme could be replicated in other parts of Cameroon that face the same inequality challenges and thus support the drive to reduce inequality by 2030. The success of such replication would however depend on funding from international agencies, close collaboration with local NGOs, as well as public/private stakeholders. If a programme such as this is implemented in similar geographical areas it will help to reduce inequality in Cameroon. Positive outcomes of the programme that are related to other SDGs include gender equity (SDG 5), quality education, as it was able to improve good health and well-being (SDG 3), reducing poverty by creating jobs (SDG 1) and promoting peace (SDG 16).

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## 5.2 Latin America and the Caribbean

We will now present three case studies from Latin America and the Caribbean that contribute to the achievement of SDG 10. Because SDG 10 focuses on reducing inequalities and addressing the issue of immigrants and refugees, the three case studies will reflect initiatives in this regard.

### 5.2.1 Ecuador: The “Bono de Desarrollo Humano” programme

Ecuador is one of the smallest countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, located in the northwest of the region, with a population of approximately 17 million. The country's economy is based on activities in various sectors, including agriculture, where exports



of products such as cocoa and coffee are significant; the oil sector, as it is an oil-producing nation, contributing significantly to the country's exports; the tourism sector, benefiting from its rich cultural and geographical diversity, including the Andes and the Galapagos Islands, as well as historic cities like the capital Quito, which has been generating increasing tourism revenue in recent years; and finally, the manufacturing sector, with a focus on textile production. Despite these economic activities, fluctuations that compromise Ecuador's economic stability pose challenges to the country's economic growth.

The percentage of the population living in poverty has increased in recent years, largely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and currently, over 25% of the population is living below the poverty line. As a strategy to improve the living conditions of this section of the population, the “Bono de Desarrollo Humano” (Human Development Grant) programme was created in 2003.

The “Bono de Desarrollo Humano” aims to offer financial aid through pensions and insurance to families living below the poverty threshold. This assistance aims to ensure basic well-being for these families, enabling them to engage in the economy. Most importantly, it seeks to provide them with the means to access educational and healthcare opportunities (Government of Ecuador, 2023). The primary objectives of this programme revolve around aiding marginalized segments of society and those disproportionately impacted by societal disparities. The programme's goal is to reach vulnerable demographics spanning all age groups. For children under five years old, the anticipated outcomes focus on diminishing chronic malnutrition and preventable illnesses. For children and adolescents, it aims to enhance their educational prospects, fostering the continuation of their studies. Lastly, for the elderly and individuals with disabilities, the aim is to ensure comprehensive social protection measures. According to the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB, 2023), 440,000 families have benefited from the programme from 2003 when it was launched until April 2015.

The programme is quite comprehensive in terms of the multitude of benefits it extends to socially vulnerable groups and its dedication to promoting social equality and

fostering inclusivity. Under the umbrella of this initiative, the government has taken significant strides to address the multifaceted challenges faced by people and communities with disadvantaged circumstances.

1. Human Development Grant: Aimed at families in poverty and extreme poverty situations, it is a monthly grant to the value of US \$50.
2. Human Development Grant with Variable Component: Targeted at families in extreme poverty with Ecuadorian children under 18 years old, it is a monthly grant to the value of up to US \$150, depending on the family composition (number and age of children).
3. Pension for the Elderly: Intended for elderly individuals aged 65 or older in poverty or extreme poverty situations, it is a monthly pension to the value of US \$100.
4. Disability Pension: This is a monthly pension to the value of US \$50 for people with disabilities equal to or greater than 40%, who are prequalified based on the Social Registry score.
5. Lifelong Pension: For people with disabilities living in poverty or extreme poverty situations, this is a monthly pension to the value of US \$100.
6. Joaquín Gallegos Lara Voucher: This is a voucher to the value of US \$240 given monthly to the legal guardian of individuals with severe disabilities, catastrophic illnesses, or children under 18 years old with HIV.

Furthermore, the government provides non-permanent cash transfers which are one-off payments to assist in specific cases such as contingency coverage. This assistance consists of monetary benefits for individuals or families in situations of poverty or extreme poverty who have experienced calamitous situations that affect their family's subsistence. This assistance covers nine types of situations, such as natural disasters, fires, humanitarian care for missing persons, children and adolescents who have been totally orphaned, among others. The "Bono de Desarrollo Humano" programme also helps families where a femicide has occurred, specifically aimed at repairing the family and social environment for the children and adolescents left behind due to femicide, delivered on a monthly basis. The inclusion of provision to assist families impacted by

femicide is evidence of a multifaceted approach to addressing the inequalities in the country.

The "Bono de Desarrollo Humano" programme is especially aligned with two targets from Sustainable Development Goal 10, centred around the idea of reducing inequalities within and among countries:

1. Target 10.2: "By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status", by providing conditions for the vulnerable population to prosper.
2. Target 10.4: "Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality", by adopting a social protection policy which is focused on reduce inequalities inside the country.

Equally important is how the project affects SDG 1, which aims to end poverty in all forms by 2030. The "Bono de Desarrollo Humano" programme, by having a social protection plan, contributes to several situations that can aggravate a family's circumstances. The programme recognizes that poverty is a multifaceted phenomenon with diverse triggers, and its proactive approach helps those affected, whether it's as a result of economic problems, unexpected crises, or systemic vulnerabilities.

The "Bono de Desarrollo Humano" initiative presents a commitment to equality and is aligned with Sustainable Development Goals 1 and 10. The programme serves as a multifaceted approach to combating poverty and inequality for a more inclusive Ecuador.

### 5.2.2 Chile: Tuition-free public higher education

Chile is located on the western coast of South America and has a population of around 19 million people. Chile is classified as a high-income country and has one of the most stable economies in the Latin America and Caribbean region. According to the World Bank, the country is showing economic growth in the post-pandemic scenario with a

projection of a gradual recovery and achieving stability by the end of 2023 (World Bank, 2023).

Some of its key economic activities are mineral exploration and extraction, including copper mining, as well as the production of manufactured goods and agricultural products. When it comes to the agricultural sector, the activities that stand out are the fishing and the wine industry. However, despite its economic stability and the relatively high general income of its population, like many countries in the LAC region, Chile also faces challenges related to inequality. When it comes to access to quality services and opportunities for all, there are still significant disparities in the country.

After transitioning through administrations that failed to prioritize public higher education in Chile, the country now considers education as a crucial path for tackling inequality (UNESCO, 2023). This perspective culminated in the approval of the State Universities Law in 2016, a pivotal step towards the objective of delivering tuition-free public higher education in the country (in selected institutions) for students from low-income families. As a significant initiative this law has established an era of tuition-free public higher education in the country aimed at alleviating the financial strain on university students since prior to this initiative, no university in Chile had offered tuition-free education. The main goal of this initiative was to enable a substantial transformation in the accessibility of higher education. By setting a goal for the period leading up to 2018, the objective was to give 70% of the vulnerable young population the opportunity to study at a university. As a result, education emerged as a potent tool for addressing socio-economic disparities and promoting a more equitable society.

While directly aligned with SDG 4, “Quality Education,” this initiative also indirectly contributes to SDG 10, “Reduce Inequalities,” thus helping to pave the way for long-term change within the country. In other words, by providing educational opportunities, the initiative has the potential to create a positive effect that extends beyond the education sector, leading to a more equitable and just society.

By creating the opportunity to make higher education accessible to everyone in Chile, the nation has taken significant steps towards mitigating disparities. The provision of

access to higher education has the potential to transform the lives and socio-economic circumstances of young people. With the acquisition of advanced knowledge and skills, they can secure higher-paying jobs, consequently uplifting the economic condition of their families and breaking the cycle of generational poverty. Moreover, this approach serves as a catalyst for broader societal change. It encourages greater participation from the youth in communities, actively contributing as citizens and amplifying their voices in various sectors of society. As these individuals become more engaged, they not only contribute to the development of a more informed and participatory society but also challenge traditional power dynamics by occupying spaces that have historically lacked their representation. Thus, Chile's commitment to provide access to public higher education for all addresses not only the economic inequalities but also contributes to creating a more inclusive society, where education is the driver for progress and equality.

Moreover, this initiative is also aligning with and making positive contributions towards achieving other SDGs. It significantly contributes to SDG 1, "No Poverty," by implementing strategies that benefit marginalized communities and provide them with educational opportunities. The initiative also shows a commitment to promote gender equality, as outlined in SDG 5, and fosters an inclusive environment where all individuals, regardless of gender, can thrive and actively participate in various aspects of society. Additionally, by aligning with SDG 8, "Decent Work and Economic Growth," the initiative facilitates improved job opportunities for young people. Through its comprehensive approach that addresses multiple Sustainable Development Goals, this initiative exemplifies a holistic and impactful endeavour striving for a more equitable, prosperous, and sustainable world.

### 5.2.3 Brazil: Support Program for the Relocation of Refugees (PARR)

Brazil is the largest country in Latin America and the Caribbean and with 214.3 million inhabitants, also the country with the biggest population in the region. It is an upper-middle-income country and a developing country, considered one of the largest economies in the world. Its most important economic activities are based on its

abundance of natural resources such as its biodiversity, water resources, agricultural production of various commodities, and oil.

Nonetheless, Brazil is a country with great social and income inequality, with significant differences between rich and poor in terms of access to quality services when it comes to education, health, housing, security, infrastructure, etc. Most of the population in Brazil is urban, with 84% of Brazilians living in cities. The COVID-pandemic further aggravated the existing historic social inequalities in Brazil and increased the poverty in the country. According to data from 2021, about 30% of the Brazilian population experienced some form of poverty and 8.4% of the population lived in extreme poverty (IBGE, 2022).

Brazil has been experiencing a significant influx of migrants from other nations, especially from countries in the Latin America and Caribbean region, with Venezuela being one of these countries. Even in the period before the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a significant increase in the number of Venezuelan migrants entering Brazil due to the various ongoing political, economic, and humanitarian crises in Venezuela. These and many other immigrants often seek safety and a better life in Brazil. This situation brings a series of concerns due to the social and humanitarian challenges that can arise from a high volume of migrants. Also, refugees and immigrants often face multiple layers of inequality, including limited access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities.

Considering this context, in 2011, the Support Program for the Relocation of Refugees (PARR), or "Programa de Apoio para a Recolocação dos Refugiados" in Portuguese, was established. The Support Program was created in partnership with a specialised immigration and relocation consultancy, relying on crucial support from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). This initiative was internationally recognised and honoured with the Human Rights and Diversity Seal in 2018 and 2019, and the Spanish Chamber of Sustainability Award in 2016, 2017, and 2019.

Considering that poverty might be at the root of many kinds of inequality, and decent work can be a pathway to escape from poverty, the project's aim goes beyond merely

receiving refugees in the country; it also aims to assist in the integration of these refugees into the local job market. The project recognizes that the ability to find employment not only provides the means of sustenance but also significantly contributes to refugees' self-esteem, social integration, and financial independence. In this way, the project strives to create awareness within society so that people can welcome refugees in the community, and to create partnerships and raise awareness among local businesses for the hiring of these refugees and to facilitate their placement in suitable positions.

The three main objectives of the project are:

1. To raise awareness in companies, public and private institutions, and the general population about the status of refugees.
2. To provides support and partnerships with public and private companies and organisations advocating for refugees.
3. To support refugees in promoting their resumes and work experience by enrolling them on an employability platform and making their professional profiles available to partner companies.

At present, PARR holds one of the most extensive electronic repositories in the nation solely dedicated to this specific group. The compiled data includes crucial information necessary for creating a thorough overview of the individual, educational, and occupational backgrounds of these refugees seeking asylum. The primary objective is to streamline their seamless inclusion into the domestic workforce. The program's archives also contain the specific details of businesses that show a strong alignment with this mission and are open to evaluating candidates from this demographic. Additionally, it provides insights into the positions they have available. According to the project's website, up until the year 2021, there has been no other initiative of this magnitude in Brazil (PARR, 2021). The PARR's efforts achieved remarkable results, helping more than 3,000 refugees.



This project is directly aligned with SDG 10, "Reduce Inequalities," particularly when it comes to the focus on refugees and immigrants. By including these groups into the local job market, the project not only tackles economic disparities but also social inequalities. The project is also aligned with two targets from SDG 10:

1. Target 10.2: "By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status." The inclusion of refugees and immigrants into the local job market has several benefits for their social and economic inclusion.
2. Target 10.7: "Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies." Because the project helps refugees and immigrants to become self-sufficient and socially integrated, it contributes to good migration policies. In addition, the project indirectly impacts other Sustainable Development Goals: Through helping refugees find jobs in the local job market, it addresses SDG 1, "No Poverty", and also SDG 8, "Decent Work and Economic Growth".

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### 5.3 Europe

We will now present three case studies from Europe that contribute to the achievement of SDG 10. Because SDG 10 focuses on reducing inequalities and addressing the issue of immigrants and refugees, the three case studies will reflect initiatives in this context.

#### 5.3.1 Sweden: Democratic accountability, the rule of law and human rights in practice, global aid donor

##### *Economic and political circumstances*

Sweden has a highly developed and diverse economy. It is known for its strong welfare state, high standard of living, and social market economy. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Sweden experienced steady economic growth, a low unemployment rate, and sound fiscal policies. During the pandemic, like many other countries, Sweden faced economic challenges due to the lockdown and restrictions affecting various sectors. However, the Swedish government implemented measures to support businesses and individuals, including fiscal stimulus packages and financial assistance.

Sweden is a constitutional monarchy in which the real executive power is exercised by the government led by the Prime Minister. The King has only representative functions. The legislative body is a unicameral Parliament - Riksdag - consisting of 349 members, elected for a four-year term. The Parliament approves the Prime Minister, who is nominated by the Speaker of Parliament. The Prime Minister appoints the ministers who

form the government. Ministries are not excessively large and have mainly executive functions, being responsible for preparing regulations and draft laws. Day-to-day administration is delegated to well-established central agencies employing apolitical, well-educated civil servants. On January 1, 1995, Sweden joined the European Union along with Finland and Austria. It has been a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) since January 1, 1995, and is a founding member of the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development or OECD (since December 14, 1960). Sweden remains outside the eurozone, even though it fulfils the convergence criteria, as the EU Treaty does not provide derogations for Sweden in this regard. The currency of Sweden is the Swedish Krona (SEK). In 2022, the exchange rate of the krona to the euro slightly exceeded EUR/SEK=10.80.

Sweden is one of the wealthiest countries in the EU, with its per capita gross national income measured in terms of purchasing power parity, accounting for 124% of the EU (27) average in 2021. Sweden is considered one of the stronger economies among OECD countries. In the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Index 4.0 2019, Sweden was ranked 8th. In the World Bank's Doing Business 2020 ranking of countries with the easiest business environment, Sweden also ranked a high 10th place (4th in Europe). It holds the very high 2nd position in the Global Innovation Index 2021. Sweden is perceived as a country free from corruption (4th position in the Corruption Perception Index Transparency International 2021).

In 2021 the structure of Sweden's GDP (according to the World Bank, World Development Indicators) was as follows: 1.35% agriculture, 22.01% industry, 12.63% industrial processing, and 65.33% services. About 53% of Sweden's territory is covered by forests. The country possesses significant resources of high-quality iron ore and other metals (copper, zinc, lead, nickel, chromium, cobalt, as well as gold and silver) and uranium. Thanks to the cooperation of Swedish companies and educated workers, as well as government support, many technological innovations and the world's most famous brands have emerged in the country, including Volvo, Electrolux, Ericsson, IKEA, and H&M.

The most important industries in the Swedish economy are the timber, machinery, automotive, metallurgical, IT and telecommunications, and pharmaceutical industries. Sweden is a leader in environmental protection technologies. Sweden's public finances are healthy, and it has the highest ratings from credit rating agencies: Moody's - Aaa, S&P - AAA, Fitch - AAA. The economy is expected to contract by 0.3% in 2023 and grow by 1.4% in 2024.

The government's policy has a pro-social orientation, and trade unions hold a very strong position. Significant economic issues in Sweden include the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis on its open economy, monopolization in some sectors (e.g., the retail sector), high labour costs, an ageing population, and the high cost of social welfare and healthcare. In European matters, Sweden has a liberal approach and supports simplifying European law and liberalizing trade with other countries.

The current Swedish government aims to make Sweden a global leader in innovative and sustainable industrial production, focusing on the development of innovative industries in transportation, biotechnology, smart urban economy, natural sciences, new materials, as well as education and further development of exports, especially in advanced technologies. Sweden wants to become the first fossil-free country and plans to achieve this goal no later than 2045. The challenge remains the transportation sector, as currently only 15% of the car fleet relies on renewable energy (OECD Economic Outlook, 2023; OECD Economic Survey, 2023, Ernst & Young, 2022; PwC Sweden, 2023).

#### *Key national policy initiatives in 2017–2020 geared towards achieving SDG 10*

In 2018, the government established the Equality Commission, a committee focused on enhancing economic equality and social mobility in the long term. Since 2017 numerous reforms were implemented to improve the financial situation of disadvantaged households and address regional disparities. The Long-Term Inquiry conducted in 2019 analysed income inequality trends and their impact on the economy. The government places a high priority on reducing segregation and initiated an action plan in 2020 to achieve this goal and provide better opportunities for all. In 2017, Parliament set a new

national target and direction for disability policy. The government adopted a national strategy for dementia care and strengthened protection against discrimination through amendments to the Discrimination Act. To further protect children's rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child was enacted as Swedish law in 2020, encouraging a rights-based approach in all public activities. A committee was appointed in 2019 to review Sweden's migration policy and establish a sustainable system for the future. Sweden also joined the Global Migration Framework and contributed financial support to the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund in 2020. Between 2017 and 2020 the country provided significant financial aid totalling SEK 315 million to the UN's International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Swedish policy is built on democratic accountability, the rule of law, and human rights, aiming to promote political and social rights, equity, and gender equality. While more young women aged 20–29 are getting involved in political parties, overall political participation has decreased since 2009. According to Statistics Sweden's 2019 report, young women, individuals with disabilities, and foreign-born people experience higher levels of perceived discrimination, particularly in the workplace. Economic policy in Sweden contributes to high employment rates, and active redistribution through taxes, transfers, and publicly funded welfare services supports poor households. Additionally, the Swedish Consumer Agency's price comparison site, Money from Sweden, has reduced the costs of migrants' international transactions (remittances) by 6–7 percentage points to several countries for those sending SEK 3,000 since its launch in 2014 (Voluntary National Review, 2021; Statistics Sweden, 2020, 2021).

#### *Progress and lessons learned: Impact on the achievement of SDG 10*

In recent years, the disparities between countries and within countries, including Sweden, have widened. The increase in income inequality in Sweden can be largely attributed to the rise of top incomes, driven by increased capital gains and dividends in companies with a limited number of shareholders. There are significant inequalities among different groups in the country. Vulnerability is particularly high for young people, certain labour migrants, asylum seekers, undocumented immigrants, and persons with

disabilities in the labour market, as highlighted in Statistics Sweden's 2020 report, "Leaving no one behind."

Youth not in employment, education, or training (NEETs) face challenges in accessing the labour market and are at risk of long-term exclusion. Single parents are economically more vulnerable than cohabiting partners with children. Foreign-born individuals, especially women, tend to have lower employment and earnings compared to those born in Sweden, even after residing in the country for an extended period. Integration and establishment in the labour market are crucial factors affecting income differences for the future. The COVID-19 pandemic led to a significant economic downturn in 2020, resulting in job losses for many individuals. If higher unemployment persists during the economic recovery, it may further impact economic equality.

To address inequalities and social vulnerability, publicly funded individual welfare services like education, healthcare, and social care, along with universal social protection, play crucial roles in promoting equal opportunities for all. The government has made substantial investments in healthcare and education, especially benefiting households with weaker finances and helping to reduce disparities in life opportunities.

Since 2017 efforts have been made to strengthen basic social protection, lower income taxes for pensioners, increase unemployment insurance benefits, and raise housing benefits, maintenance allowances, and child benefits. Statistics Sweden's 2020 report on the conditions of foreign-born children in Sweden indicates that these children often face worse socio-economic situations compared to those with Swedish backgrounds.

Income growth in Sweden has seen comparable rates for the bottom 40% of the population as well as for the rest. However, those with the highest incomes have experienced slightly stronger growth. The Swedish welfare model is built on joint financing, aiming to foster equity, gender equality, and inclusive social, economic, and political participation for all citizens. Through robust legislation, policies, and practices, Sweden actively combats discrimination and promotes equal opportunities and rights, working to reduce inequalities. Sweden's economic policy focuses on achieving high employment rates and employs active redistribution through taxes, transfers, and

publicly funded welfare services. These efforts are instrumental in promoting a more equitable society, ensuring that the benefits of economic growth reach all segments of the population and fostering social cohesion and inclusivity.

Sweden's role as a global aid donor contributes to reducing inequality in various areas. The country's international work and development cooperation, including involvement in the Pathfinders platform and sub-programmes on reducing inequality and exclusion, have been instrumental in this regard. Sweden supports orderly, safe, regulated, and responsible migration globally through its commitment to the UN Global Migration Framework. The country collaborates with partners to improve global financial markets and institutions, promoting fair competition and convergence concerning remittances and development effects (Voluntary National Review, 2021; Statistics Sweden, 2020, 2021).

In 2021, Sweden ranked as the 8th largest donor among OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) countries. However, preliminary data from OECD for 2022 indicates that Sweden slipped to the 9th position in terms of its DAC donor status during that year.

When considering the size of its economy, Sweden's contributions to official development assistance (ODA) are noteworthy. In 2021, Sweden allocated 0.92% of its Gross National Income (GNI) to ODA. According to preliminary data from OECD for 2022, Sweden moved up to become the second-largest DAC donor in relative terms, dedicating 0.9% of its GNI to ODA. Sweden's commitment to development cooperation has been consistently strong, and it was recognized as the top-ranked country in the Centre for Global Development's 2021 Commitment to Development Index.

Sweden has a long history of providing development aid, surpassing the UN target of dedicating 0.7% of GNI to ODA since 1975. However, in September 2022, Sweden's new right-wing government announced a change in approach. They decided to abandon the commitment to spend at least 1% of GNI on ODA, opting instead for a fixed amount for the next three years to ensure predictability. The government's 2023 budget



allocates SEK 56 billion (equivalent to US \$5.5 billion) annually for ODA in 2023-2025, constituting 0.88% of projected GNI.

Sweden's ODA expenses between 2014 and 2022 were significantly influenced by the costs associated with hosting refugees. These costs peaked at US \$2.7 billion in 2015, constituting 34% of the total ODA, before gradually decreasing to a low of US \$88 million in 2021 (2% of total ODA). While it was expected that these costs would remain relatively low, the unexpected invasion of Ukraine by Russia has the potential to increase Sweden's spending on refugee-related expenses.

To address this, the 2023 budget sets a limit of 8% on the use of Sweden's development budget to cover in-country refugee costs. Traditionally, Sweden has been a staunch supporter of multilateral systems, although its support, particularly for the United Nations (UN) system, has been diminishing. The right-wing government of Sweden has indicated its intention to redirect funding from multilateral organizations to Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). Support for multilateral organizations consists of both earmarked funding directed through multilateral entities for specific sectors or regions and core funding provided to multilaterals. In 2021, nearly 60% of Sweden's total ODA was distributed as a combination of core contributions to multilateral organizations (34%) and earmarked funding channelled through multilateral entities (26%) (Donor Tracker, 2023).

#### *Possibility for replication*

The Swedish socio-economic model, often referred to as the "Swedish Model," is a unique system that has evolved over decades and is characterized by a combination of strong welfare programs, high taxes, active labour market policies, and a strong emphasis on social equality. While it has worked well for Sweden and has contributed to its high standard of living and social cohesion, replicating the Swedish model in its entirety in other countries may face several challenges and may not be suitable for all contexts. However, some elements of the Swedish model could potentially be adapted and applied in other countries: Social Welfare Programmes; Progressive Taxation;

Labour Market Policies; Social Dialogue; Cultural and Historical Context; Economic Viability; Political Will; Globalization and Trade.

Sweden is known for its substantial financial commitment to international development. Replicating its donor activity would require a country with a similar or substantial financial capacity to allocate a significant portion of its Gross National Income (GNI) to official development assistance (ODA). The ability to mobilize and allocate these resources is a crucial factor. A strong commitment from the government and political leadership is essential. Replicating Sweden's donor activity involves making development cooperation a top national priority, regardless of changes in government or political landscape. Consistency in policy and funding is vital.

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### 5.3.2 France: United Against Hatred – combating all forms of discrimination, and improving the reception and integration of foreigners

#### *Economic and political circumstances*

The French Republic is a unitary state with a semi-presidential system of government. The President is elected for a five-year term through direct elections (the presidential term was shortened from seven to five years by a constitutional referendum in 2000). The President appoints and dismisses the Prime Minister, whose selection, however, must be approved by the National Assembly, the lower house of Parliament. Legislative power is exercised by the bicameral parliament - the National Assembly (consisting of 577 deputies elected through direct elections for a five-year term) and the Senate (comprising 348 members elected by electors for a six-year term; according to the new electoral cycle, half of the senators are elected every three years).

France is a member state of the European Union (since its establishment) and other international organizations and institutions, including the WTO and OECD. It is a permanent member of the UN Security Council, granting it veto power. France is also a member of the G7 group, comprising seven countries that are among the world's most economically significant. Additionally, France is part of the eurozone. Due to its numerous overseas territories, it has the largest surface area of all EU member states (a total of 643,801 km<sup>2</sup>).

France is the second-largest economy in the EU (after the UK's exit from the EU). According to estimates from the International Monetary Fund for 2022, France will remain the 7th largest economy in the world in terms of nominal GDP and the 8th

largest in terms of purchasing power parity. France's GDP accounts for 3.3% of the world's economy. Moreover, according to World Bank data for 2022, France remains the 6th largest exporter (export valued at 733 billion euros) in the world, following China, the United States, Germany, Japan, and the UK. In 2021, France's contribution to the EU budget was approximately 28 billion euros (compared to 23.7 billion euros in 2019 and 16.234 billion euros in 2017). Thus, France was the 2nd largest contributor to the EU budget, second only to Germany. The contribution of each sector to France's GDP is as follows: services: 79.8%; industry: 13.5%; and agriculture: 6.7% (OECD Economic Outlook, 2023; OECD Economic Survey, 2023).

In 2020, France experienced the highest recession in its economy since the end of World War II. The impact of this recession was mainly due to the significant impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on sectors such as tourism, automotive, aviation, luxury goods production, and a longer and more rigorous lockdown than in other EU countries.

Thanks to a wide-ranging assistance package introduced by the French government, as well as increased domestic demand in 2021, the national economy grew by approximately 7%, achieving the highest growth in 52 years. This exceeded previous analyst predictions.

Disruptions in supply chains and increased energy prices have worsened economic prospects for all EU member states, including France. According to the forecasts of the European Commission, France's GDP grew by 2.6% in 2022, and it is expected to grow by 0.6% in 2023 and 1.4% in 2024. Similar projections are made by the OECD (0.6% growth in 2023 and 1.2% growth in 2024). According to France's statistical office, INSEE, the French economy should avoid a recession, thanks to a slight rebound in GDP growth of 0.1% in the first quarter of 2023 and 0.3% in the second quarter. Although inflation in France is one of the lowest in the entire EU, it is still noticeable for French citizens, affecting the purchasing power of households and consumption dynamics. Since 2004, France has experienced a trade deficit due to the gradual erosion of export-oriented industries, euro appreciation, and growing dependence on imports, including energy resources. France traditionally records the largest trade

deficits with China, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, and Belgium, while the largest trade surpluses are with the United States, the United Kingdom, Middle Eastern countries, and Switzerland.

France is the most visited country in the world in terms of the number of tourists. In 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, France was visited by 90 million tourists. Tourism is one of the key sectors for the French economy, accounting for about 8% of the country's GDP and generating revenues for the budget of over 60 billion euros. Over 250,000 entities operate in the tourism sector, employing about 1.5 million people (OECD Economic Surveys, 2021; OECD Economic Outlook, 2023; European Union, 2023; Deloitte France, 2021; European Commission, 2023a).

*United Against Hatred and other programmes and initiatives geared towards the achievement of SDG 10*

United Against Hatred is a comprehensive plan devised to tackle racism and anti-Semitism, comprising four key strategies (EQUINET, 2023; European Commission, 2023b). The first strategy involves a nationwide mobilization, coupled with an awareness-raising campaign, to foster unity in the fight against hatred. The second strategy entails the implementation of stricter penalties for racist or anti-Semitic acts, ensuring that those responsible are held accountable for their actions. The third strategy focuses on safeguarding internet users from the spread of hateful content online, with a strong emphasis on creating a safer and more inclusive digital space. Lastly, the fourth strategy centres on education and culture, seeking to educate the population about the importance of tolerance, respect, and understanding.

To address social and economic disparities, the government has introduced significant social and tax reforms. These reforms are carefully designed to enhance the redistribution of resources to support the most disadvantaged segments of society. At the same time, the government has taken measures to restore public finances by directing savings towards better-off individuals, including reforms in family allowances and the taxation of unearned income.

Concerning migrant reception and integration, France passed a comprehensive asylum reform law in July 2015, streamlining procedures and ensuring a fairer distribution of migrants across the country. The law of 8 March 2016 further strengthens integration efforts by granting foreigners a general entitlement to a multiyear residence permit after a year of living in France. This law also establishes a republican integration program, reaffirming foreigners' rights and striving to create a more inclusive environment that welcomes talent and excellence.

Addressing regional inequality is particularly sensitive, especially in French overseas territories. This includes access to employment, training, housing, and healthcare. To tackle this issue, an interministerial delegation has been established to ensure that French overseas citizens enjoy equal access to employment, housing, and banking services. Furthermore, the delegation actively works to promote and enhance the image of French overseas citizens, while challenging stereotypes and prejudices.

In conclusion, France has a comprehensive social welfare system that includes universal healthcare, social assistance, and unemployment benefits, aimed at reducing inequalities and providing support to vulnerable populations. The French government has invested in educational programmes and vocational training to enhance employment opportunities for marginalized communities and reduce the education and skills gap. Efforts have been made to address housing inequalities and provide affordable housing options for low-income families and individuals.

France has implemented anti-discrimination laws and policies to combat racism, xenophobia, and other forms of discrimination, thereby promoting equal opportunities and social inclusion. The government has taken steps to promote gender equality in the workplace, closing the gender pay gap, and encouraging women's participation in decision-making positions. France is also a major contributor to international development aid, supporting projects and programmes in developing countries aimed at reducing inequalities and poverty (OECD, 2022; United Nations, 2016, 2022).

*Results and impact of United Against Hatred and other initiatives and lessons learned in terms of the achievement of SDG 10*

France has a robust legal framework in place to safeguard human rights and implements effective wealth redistribution measures to address inequalities among individuals (Lepinard & Lieber, 2015; Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères, 2013). However, despite inter-regional solidarity mechanisms linking prosperous areas with regions undergoing restructuring, inequality remains a significant challenge in the country. Equal opportunity is still impacted by the strong correlation between educational achievement and socio-economic background, posing hurdles to creating a level playing field.

One of the pressing issues is upholding the dignity of the most vulnerable and ensuring their representation. Legislation has been drafted to combat discrimination against socially insecure individuals, seeking to bolster the effectiveness of their rights and protection. The fight against discrimination remains an ongoing battle, as evidenced by the 26% increase in discriminatory threats in 2015.

France has also taken significant steps towards advancing LGBTQ+ rights, legalizing same-sex marriages in 2013. This landmark decision has expanded gay rights, based on the principles of equality and shared freedoms. Additionally, France actively participates in global efforts to combat discrimination, violence, and human rights violations targeting LGBTQ+ individuals. It condemns the criminalization of homosexual relations which persists in more than 70 countries, viewing such practices unacceptable. France is committed to pursuing the universal decriminalization of homosexuality worldwide.

Regarding migration management, France provides support to host countries, endeavours to stabilize political situations in crisis-ridden nations, and addresses the migration crisis caused by the influx of refugees into Europe. While progress has been made, ensuring effective provision for migrants and their seamless integration remain formidable challenges that require continued attention and action.

According to data from the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE, 2021), immigrants accounted for 10.3% of the entire population of France, making it an important issue for the whole country. The French government implements educational

programmes aimed at increasing awareness of racism and discrimination, as well as promoting tolerance and acceptance of diversity in schools. Additionally, France has introduced measures to prevent discrimination in the workplace and promote diversity in corporations and public institutions. The government and non-governmental organizations conduct periodic social campaigns to raise awareness about racism and encourage society to work towards equality and tolerance.

France takes action against hate speech and discrimination on the internet, including penalizing those who propagate racial hatred. Efforts are made to improve immigrant integration into society by providing support for learning the French language, vocational training, and access to social services.

French law prohibits discrimination based on race, skin colour, religion, nationality, gender, and other factors, and government bodies and non-governmental organizations take measures to enforce these regulations (Lepinard & Lieber, 2015; Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères, 2013). The government collects data on discrimination and racism in various spheres of social life, allowing for the monitoring of situations and appropriate actions to be taken.

It has to be emphasised that to combat inequalities in France, comprehensive measures are needed across various sectors. This includes improving access to quality education and early childhood programs, implementing progressive taxation and social welfare policies, promoting inclusive hiring practices and diversity in the workforce, strengthening healthcare and social safety nets, providing affordable housing and sustainable urban planning, supporting the integration of immigrants, enforcing anti-discrimination laws, investing in youth opportunities, addressing regional disparities through development initiatives, raising public awareness, and regularly collecting data to monitor progress and effectiveness. Collaboration among government, civil society, and private sectors is essential for sustained efforts in reducing inequalities and fostering a more inclusive and equitable society.

France must face a few challenges related to the above-mentioned initiatives:



1. France is a diverse country with a significant immigrant population from various parts of the world. This diversity can present challenges in addressing racism, as it requires understanding and addressing different forms of discrimination and prejudices faced by various communities.
2. The country has a complex history related to colonization, slavery, and immigration. Historical issues and legacies can shape current racial dynamics and complicate efforts to address racism.
3. There is a strong tradition of secularism (*laïcité*), which aims to separate religion from public life. While this principle is intended to ensure equality, it can sometimes be interpreted as a barrier to recognizing and addressing religious-based discrimination, particularly for Muslim communities.
4. France has historically favoured an assimilationist approach to integration, emphasizing French identity over ethnic or cultural backgrounds. This can sometimes lead to a lack of recognition of cultural diversity and issues faced by minority communities.

#### *Possibility for replication*

The French policies aimed at reducing inequality within the country and promoting sustainable development can serve as valuable lessons and examples for other countries seeking to address similar challenges. While each country has its unique context and circumstances, some possibilities for the replication of French policies include the following:

1. Implementing a comprehensive social welfare system that includes universal healthcare, social assistance, and unemployment benefits. This can help reduce poverty and improve the well-being of vulnerable populations in other countries.
2. Investing in education and vocational training to enhance employment opportunities and reduce the education and skills gap. This can empower marginalized communities to participate more effectively in the workforce.

3. Addressing housing inequalities and providing affordable housing options for low-income families and individuals can be replicated to ensure access to adequate housing for all.
4. Adopting and enforcing anti-discrimination laws and policies to combat racism, xenophobia, and other forms of discrimination, promoting equal opportunities and social inclusion.
5. Encouraging gender equality in the workplace, closing the gender pay gap, and promoting women's participation in decision-making positions. This can be replicated to foster more inclusive societies.
6. Assisting the integration of migrants and refugees into society by providing language classes, job training, and social support.
7. Supporting international development aid projects and programmes aimed at reducing inequalities and poverty in other countries. This can contribute to global efforts in achieving SDG 10, reducing inequalities.
8. Adopting progressive tax policies designed to redistribute wealth and reduce income inequalities can be replicated to create more equitable societies.

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5.3.3 Bulgaria: The "We can too – 2" project – improving access to the labour market for unemployed people from disadvantaged groups, and support for refugees and migrants

#### *Socio-economic and political overview*

Bulgaria is a republic with a presidential system of government. The President is elected for a five-year term and appoints the Prime Minister, who leads the government. The legislative authority is vested in the unicameral National Assembly, consisting of 240 members elected for a four-year term.

The country's main agricultural crops include grains (wheat, corn), industrial crops (sunflower, tobacco, cotton), and vegetables (tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers). Bulgaria is renowned for its vineyards and fruit trees, particularly apple, peach, and plum. It is the world's largest exporter of rose oil. Livestock farming, primarily sheep, cattle, and pigs, as well as forestry, are increasingly significant. Fishing is also an important sector, with Bulgarian trawlers operating in the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea, and Atlantic Ocean. The country has deposits of copper and limited iron ore. Its energy resources are relatively small, including brown coal, oil, and natural gas. Coal and nuclear power plants contribute to around 90% of the national electricity production, with the remainder coming from renewable sources, mainly hydroelectric power plants. During the communist era, significant investments were made in the processing industry, with the metallurgical industry playing a crucial role. The food industry also shows significant growth and dynamics. Other important subsectors include the textile and clothing

industry, as well as the production of rubber and plastic products and other non-metallic mineral products.

Bulgaria has a well-developed road network, and maritime and air transport play significant roles, with major ports in Varna and Burgas and passenger airports in Sofia, Plovdiv, Burgas, and Varna. Bulgaria's market-oriented economy has been steadily growing and is known for its macroeconomic stability in the region. Key sectors include automotive, energy, machinery, and food processing. The service sector, particularly tourism, trade, and IT services, also holds significant economic importance.

Bulgaria has been a member of the European Union since 2007 and has some of the lowest tax rates in the EU, including a 10% corporate income tax rate (0% in certain areas with high unemployment) and a 10% flat personal income tax rate. The value-added tax (VAT) rate is 20%, and the country aims to attract foreign direct investment and stimulate economic growth through its lower tax rates compared to other EU countries.

Growth is projected to slow to 1.9% in 2023 due to global headwinds, including the slowdown in Bulgaria's main trading partners, but then rebound to 3.2% in 2024. Private consumption growth will slow in line with lower employment growth. The disbursement of EU funds was delayed in 2022 but is expected to catch up to a large extent in 2023. Inflation is expected to moderate in 2023 and in 2024, but there are risks from high wage increases.

Bulgaria had to extend the timeline for joining the euro area to 2025 due to economic challenges, including high inflation and political uncertainties that led to delays in essential legislative reforms. Although the country has benefited from substantial windfall revenues from major electricity companies, there is a need for more targeted and well-designed fiscal measures, especially in the energy sector. While the unemployment rate remains low, labour shortages persist, requiring a boost in migration and activation policies to entice emigrants to return and encourage those capable of working to enter the job market. To support economic growth and enhance living standards, it is vital to focus on upskilling the population and investing in education and

training opportunities (OECD Economic Surveys, 2023; OECD Economic Outlook, 2023; European Union, 2023; McKinsey & Company, 2020; HSBC, 2022).

*The “We can too – 2” project and other initiatives geared towards the achievement of SDG 10*

The "We can too – 2" project, implemented by the National Employment Agency, is dedicated to enhancing labour market accessibility for unemployed individuals from marginalized communities through skill-building services.

Bulgarian legislation upholds equal opportunities and prohibits discrimination. The Law on Protection Against Discrimination mandates employers, when necessary to achieve the Law's objectives, to encourage applications from underrepresented gender or ethnic groups for specific positions and to promote the vocational development and participation of employees from specific groups when they are underrepresented in particular positions.

During the period between 2016 and 2018, significant efforts were made to boost labour market participation and reduce inactivity by focusing on activation and training initiatives to acquire the knowledge, skills, and competences sought by employers. Disadvantaged groups were given access to the labour market through a range of services, including motivation, information, job placement, vocational guidance, counselling, and targeted training to meet the specific needs of employers, along with subsidized employment opportunities. Additionally, in mid-2019, the Ministry of Education and Science launched the Active Inclusion in the Pre-school System project, aiming to widen access to pre-school education for children from vulnerable and impoverished backgrounds.

As for refugees and migrants, while Bulgaria hasn't joined the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, the country has been actively taking measures to manage migration in an orderly manner. Bulgaria supports the Global Compact on Refugees and remains committed to upholding international humanitarian and human rights principles. Back in 2015, Bulgaria adopted a comprehensive National Strategy on

Migration, Asylum, and Integration according to which people with refugee or humanitarian status were granted the right to work, along with social and health insurance entitlements similar to Bulgarian citizens. Moreover, they were given access to elementary and secondary education, including vocational training. Young refugees and minors were also granted the right to education, both during and after the process of obtaining their status.

Furthermore, it is crucial to understand that measures taken to address poverty eradication, education, employment opportunities, gender equality, and sustainable economic growth can significantly impact income inequality. Many of the actions implemented to achieve other crucial goals are equally relevant and essential in the pursuit of reducing income inequality. The integration of education, poverty alleviation, access to information, and human rights protection plays a significant role in addressing issues related to inequality of opportunity (Voluntary National Review, 2020; United Nations, 2022b).

### *Results and lessons learned in terms of the achievement of SDG 10*

During the past three decades of profound social and economic transformation in Bulgaria, there has been a noticeable surge in inequality within the population. Despite economic growth, inclusivity remains insufficient to effectively combat poverty and address economic and social disparities. The primary objective of policies until 2030 is to foster more inclusive and sustainable growth, simultaneously diminishing social and regional disparities while promoting shared prosperity. Inequality is deeply interlinked with numerous other Sustainable Development Goals, evident in domains such as healthcare, education, access to justice, information, and energy security. A critical correlation exists between inequality and the risk of poverty, particularly for vulnerable groups and individuals facing social exclusion. Addressing inequality requires comprehensive measures encompassing both income redistribution and equalizing opportunities for all.

The funding allocated to municipalities from the state budget to finance social services, which are activities delegated by the state, has experienced a significant increase. In

2019, the amount reached €130 million, representing a rise of €15 million compared to the previous year (2018). During the first nine months of 2018, activities related to the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy supported 32,035 self-identified Roma who were unemployed, ensuring employment for 14,804 individuals. Energy support has also seen a substantial boost, with a €20 million increase in 2019, marking a 50% rise from the previous year's budget. This enhancement in funding has enabled 200,000 Bulgarians to receive energy assistance. Over the period of January to October 2019, Bulgaria received 1,965 asylum seekers, with 168 people granted refugee status, and 257 people receiving humanitarian status. Additionally, 1,080 applications for asylum were declined during the same period.

Some districts in Bulgaria, like Kardzhali and Lovech, exhibit relatively stable income inequality, while cities and regions with robust economic growth, such as Sofia and Stara Zagora, witness a rising inequality primarily driven by the increasing income of a small segment of the population. Overall, statistical regions experiencing economic growth and a rise in incomes for only a fraction of the population tend to have higher levels of inequality (United Nations, 2022a).

#### *Possibility for replication*

The following examples refer to supporting other countries towards reducing inequality.

Several Official Development Assistance (ODA) projects have been implemented in Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of North Macedonia, and Serbia. These initiatives aim to enhance access to social services and education for children, including those with disabilities. One noteworthy project is the "Reforming of the childcare system in Armenia: lessons learned from the Bulgarian experience." (UNICEF, 2017). This pilot program is replicating the successful model of homes established in Bulgaria for young children, offering them a permanent or transitional environment for potential adoption in foster families.

In 2015, the Sensory Therapy Centre project was launched in Skopje, the capital of North Macedonia, focusing on aiding children with autism spectrum disorders and other



disabilities to develop essential skills for independent living. The project secured funds to establish an operational centre equipped with a sensory room and a sensory integration room, providing crucial therapeutic support. Additionally, the centre has forged a partnership with a related organization in Bulgaria to facilitate knowledge exchange and cooperation. The initiative operates in close collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of the Republic of North Macedonia, ensuring effective implementation and broader support for its goals.

In general, replicating Bulgaria's efforts to reduce inequalities in other countries would require careful adaptation and consideration of the specific socio-economic and cultural contexts of each country. However, some general possibilities for replication could include:

1. Investing in education infrastructure, teacher training, and providing scholarships or grants for disadvantaged students which can help ensure equal opportunities.
2. Promoting inclusive hiring practices and providing skills development and training programmes which can enhance job opportunities for marginalized groups, thereby reducing income inequalities.
3. Encouraging the growth of SMEs and providing support to entrepreneurs from disadvantaged backgrounds which can contribute to economic inclusivity.

Replicating Bulgaria's experiences in supporting refugees requires a thorough understanding of its policies, practices, and the challenges it has encountered. It also involves careful adaptation to the unique circumstances and needs of the recipient country, along with a commitment to providing refugees with essential services, protection, and opportunities for a better future.

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## 6. EXAMPLES OF EXERCISES AND ASSESSMENTS

Readers (teachers) will be empowered to

1. reflect on their understanding of the definition of SDG 10.
2. reflect on their understanding of the significance of SDG 10.
3. reflect on their understanding of the interdependencies of SDG 10.
4. reflect on their understanding of the challenges in implementing SDG 10.
5. provide an overview of the crises that have a negative impact on the achievement of SDG 10.
6. explain the regional differences of the impact of climate change, conflict, and COVID-19 on the achievement of SDG 10.
7. give an introductory explanation of the regional progress in achieving SDG 10.
8. select a suitable case study that reflects good practices in achieving SDG 10 in their own region.

Based on the SDG 10 targets and concepts, this section of the manual firstly provides a set of exercises that users (professors, lecturers, and teachers) can use with their students to foster ideas, solutions, and new initiatives for sustainable development. The level of detail and complexity of these exercises can be adjusted according to the educational level of the students. Secondly, a set of shorter assessment questions is also included. These questions cover all the sections in this manual, and require shorter, more to the point answers. For both the exercises and the assessments, users can decide if they want to use them as provided, adapt them according to their own local context and needs or use them as examples and rather develop their own exercises and assessments accordingly.

### 6.1 Exercises

1. *Inequality Gallery Walk*: Create a gallery walk in your classroom or school where students can display posters, infographics, or artwork related to various forms of inequality. Assign different groups of students to research and create displays on topics such as gender inequality, income inequality, racial inequality, or educational

inequality. Allow students to walk around, observe, and discuss the exhibits, fostering conversations about the causes, consequences, and potential solutions for each form of inequality.

2. *Inequality Case Studies:* Provide students with some case studies or real-life scenarios that highlight different aspects of inequality. For example, you can present cases of individuals facing discrimination, unequal access to resources, or barriers to social mobility. Divide students into groups and ask them to analyze the case studies, identify the underlying factors contributing to the inequality, and propose strategies or policies to address them. Encourage them to think critically and consider both short-term and long-term solutions.
3. *Inequality Awareness Campaign:* Assign students the task of creating an awareness campaign to address a specific aspect of inequality. They can develop posters, videos, social media campaigns, or presentations to educate their peers and the wider community about the issue. Encourage creativity and effective communication strategies to convey the importance of reducing inequalities and promote action. Students can also organize events such as panel discussions or guest speaker sessions to raise awareness further.
4. *Data Analysis and Visualization:* Provide students with data sets related to inequality indicators such as income distribution, education levels, or healthcare access. Ask them to analyse the data, identify trends, and create visualizations (charts, graphs, or infographics) to present their findings. Students can then interpret the data, discuss the implications of the findings, and propose policy recommendations to reduce inequalities based on the evidence they gathered.

5. *Community Engagement Project:* Engage students in a hands-on project that addresses a specific inequality issue within their local community. It could involve organizing a fundraising event, volunteering at a local organization focused on reducing inequalities, or conducting surveys and interviews to understand the experiences and needs of marginalized groups. Through this project, students will have the opportunity to make a positive impact and develop empathy and understanding towards the challenges faced by others.

## 6.2 Assessments

### 1. Introduction to the SDGs

1. Name the five areas of critical importance to which the 17 SDGs are linked and explain why this is referred to as the five Ps.
2. Explain the link between the MDGs and the SDGs.
3. Explain how the SDGs differ from the MDGs.
4. Where does SDG 10 fit into the five Ps?
5. Which area/s of concern is/are primarily addressed by SDG 10?

### 2. Defining SDG 2

1. What are the main groups in which the targets for SDG 10 can be divided?
2. Which target(s) of SDG 10 are focussed on vertical inequalities?
3. Which target(s) of SDG 10 are focussed on horizontal inequalities?

### 2.1 Significance of SDG 10

1. What is your explanation of the current high levels of inequality between countries and why is it increasing?
2. What is your explanation of the current high levels of inequality within countries and why is it increasing?
3. What is the status of the progress to achieve SDG 10 by 2030?
4. Briefly explain the comprehensive scope and importance of SDG 10 with reference to three main thematic areas covered by this SDG.

## **2.2 Interdependencies of SDG 10**

1. Select any three SDGs and briefly explain how they interact with SDG 10. Use examples from your region to illustrate your explanation.
2. How is SDG 10 interconnected with the other SDGs? What other SDGs do you think will be most directly affected if SDG 10 is not achieved?

## **2.3 Advantages of SDG 10**

1. What would the main advantages be for the world if the goal of reduced inequality within and between countries can be achieved?
2. Select any two of the targets of SDG 10 and explain the specific advantages which will manifest with the attainment of these targets. Link it to advantages for your specific region.

## **2.4 Challenges in the achievement of SDG 10**

1. What are the main weaknesses of SDG 10 and how are these weaknesses creating challenges for the implementation of this SDG?
2. Explain how the interdependencies of SDG 10 with all the other SDGs provide challenges for the achievement of SDG 10. Select two SDGs to use as examples to illustrate your answer.
3. What are the difficulties in implementing SDG 10 in your country? Which are the main barriers? And how can they be overcome?

## **3. Overview of global crises that have a negative impact on the achievement of global equality**

1. Name at least three global crises that affect the achievement of the targets for SDG 10 in your region.

### **3.1 Climate change**

1. What negative impact does climate change have on equality in your region?

### **3.2 COVID-19**

1. Did the COVID-19 pandemic have an impact on the progress of achieving the various targets of SDG 10 in your region? Explain whether this impact was positive or negative.
2. How is the COVID-19 pandemic affecting SDG 10 targets? Are these impacts positive or negative?
3. How can SDG 10 actions help post-COVID-19 recovery?

### **3.3 Conflict**

1. Explain the negative impact of conflict on equality/inequality in your region.
2. Which is the relation between conflicts and equality/inequality worldwide?

### **4. Progress towards the achievement of global equality by 2030**

1. How does your current lifestyle affect the achievement of the SDG 10 targets?
2. In your opinion, will the countries in Africa be able to achieve the SDG 10 targets by 2030?
3. Which SDG 10 targets have been reversed since 2015? Briefly explain the reasons why the achievement of these targets has regressed since 2015.
4. Explain the trend of inequality in the African region since 2015.
5. Why can some SDG targets not be measured in Africa?
6. In your opinion, will the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean be able to achieve the SDG 10 targets by 2030?
7. Explain the meaning of the Gini index and how it is calculated.
8. Considering the challenges associated with addressing inequality, discuss and identify the causes, consequences and potential solutions.
9. What measures can be taken in Latin America and the Caribbean to achieve the SDG10 target by 2030?

10. In your opinion, who are the main role players responsible for the measures suggested in the last question of 4 above?
11. What role did the economic stagnation in Europe play during the COVID-19 pandemic in achieving SDG10?
12. Name some of the policy initiatives and instruments introduced by the European Commission to reduce inequalities.
13. What are the main obstacles to achieving SDG 10 in your region/country?

## **5. Case studies and best practices**

1. Select a case study in your country that reflects a best practice in terms of achieving the SDG 10 targets in your region. Briefly explain this case study in relation to SDG 10 and explain the best practice that is reported in this case study that will contribute to the achievement of the SDG targets.
2. List some good practices that can contribute to the achievement of SDG 10.
3. What could be your own contribution to SDG 10?



## 7. CLOSING STATEMENT

This manual provided you with an introduction to some crucial aspects regarding SDG 10, while also turning the focus to global crises having a negative impact on its achievement as well as its progress in three regional contexts. The case studies that we discussed highlighted some best practices in three regions of the world, namely Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Europe. As part of this introduction to SDG 10, we also provided you with supplementary readings and examples of exercises and assessments. In this way you were exposed to a variety of resources and perspectives on this SDG which will enable you to develop your own insights. We trust that this has kindled your interest in SDG 10 and why it is so important. Similarly, we trust that this has empowered you to be able to present a class or a series of classes on SDG 10, and/or to be innovative and develop your own classes based on some of the information and resources provided in this manual.