Sustainable development: Promoting languages, Levering cultures, Working with populations

2nd Congress of the POCLANDE International Network
(People, Cultures, Languages and Development)

27-29 October 2021
Kenyatta University, Nairobi (Kenya)
Convenor: Vincent OTABA WERE

Rationale

POCLANDE (Populations, Cultures, Languages and Development) network was founded in 2018 with the aim of bringing the correlation between language, culture and development into focus. It seeks to provide a framework for reflection and action for researchers, experts and practitioners, specialists in language studies or other disciplines, who are closely interested in the role of languages/cultures and the involvement of populations in the implementation and achievement of sustainable development goals. The focus is on a range of themes looking at languages and cultures as drivers of societal development in its broad sense.

In recent times, the notion of sustainable development has gained ground in different areas of life. This is due to the fact that people are at the heart of sustainable development goals, which, in turn, are a core component of policy decisions by countries, NGOs, international organizations, etc. Sustainable development has since become an integral part of the discourse by most stakeholders in the area of development. It therefore ranks high on policy agendas in spite of the disconnect between proclamations and the reality on the ground.

Moreover, there is a multitude of definitions of this concept, in fact more than 200[1]. According to the Association Adéquations, an organization working in the area of sustainable development, human rights, international solidarity and cultural diversity, "the aim of sustainable development is to promote, through collective action and over time, economic, social and environmental development centred on the interests, potential and needs of current populations, starting with the most disadvantaged. Sustainable development means not only steadfast (lasting) development, but also development that safeguards life and stability in the long term. There is evidence that collective work is an important aspect of development, especially for the benefit of the most vulnerable populations. According to the Brundtland Report (1989: 51), sustainable development is "a mode of development that meets the needs of the present time without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs[3]. The goal is to satisfy the needs and aspirations of populations. These needs are politically, culturally, socially, and economically defined. However, as many

researchers have demonstrated[4], the achievement of these goals in many parts of the world is often hampered by linguistic, cultural and even conceptual barriers. Stakeholders and environments in these different parts of the world are diverse. Moreover, motivations, actions, history, expectations and capacities for action do not always match the proposed models..

Since languages and cultures are inseparable from societies, it would seem legitimate to consider them as a pool of resources for sustainable development. The question then arises as to how academicians, researchers and field practitioners can mobilize linguistic and cultural resources to improve people's living conditions. How then can linguistic and cultural barriers be removed in order to contribute to sustainable development, knowing that cultural and linguistic diversity makes it possible to be as close as possible to the people at the community level since local languages and cultures are carriers of relevant knowledge? This debate on languages, cultures and the role of populations as drivers of development is a crucial factor in improving the living conditions of the people themselves. The issues brought about by sustainable development should, so to speak, be analysed not only in political, economic and social terms but also in sociolinguistic and cultural terms.

It is against this background that the 2nd Congress of the POCLANDE network invites researchers, experts and practitioners to innovatively reflect on ways and means of promoting languages[5], levering cultures and involving populations in order to achieve sustainable development goals.

Participants are therefore invited to submit abstracts for papers addressing thematic issues in the area of sustainable development with a focus on one of the components of the congress' central theme.

How to promote languages?

Why and how to leverage cultures?

Modalities and actions through which populations should be involved

Thematic areas

In order to build on the discussion points above, participants are to chose key areas of sustainable development[6] based on the following thematic areas:

- Linguistics and Communication: communication for development, technical communication, specialized discourse, language development and planning, mobilization of language and cognitive resources.

- Sociolinguistic and policy aspects: language perceptions, actions on language status

- Translation-Adaptation-Interpretation: challenges and innovations

- Local languages, minority languages: strengthening these languages, conceptual enrichment, teaching and transmission of knowledge

- Sharing of experiences and/or innovative approaches for the benefit of populations

- Anthropological and cultural dimensions of sustainable development

- Linguistic diversity: *barrier* (obstacle) to sustainable development or *lever* (protection) of sustainable development?

- Economic costs and benefits of language use in business sectors: audiovisual, language industry, the power of languages on the Internet, etc.

Submission of abstracts

Abstracts for papers should be half a page long, in either English or French. They should include: the title of the paper, the surname(s), first name(s), host institution(s) and e-mail address of the author(s), followed by five keywords and a few essential bibliographic references.

Abstracts should be sent to the following addresses:

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Projected timelines

1st September, 2020: First reminder

1st November, 2020: Second reminder

31st January 2021: Deadline for submission of paper proposals

31st March 2021: Notification to authors

30th April, 2021: Registration begins

1st September 2021: End of registration