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# Education for Self-Reliance as a Philosophical Framework for Realizing Agenda 2063 and the Africa we Want

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**Abstract**

Education remains a fundamental instrument for human and societal development. This paper examines education for self-reliance as a philosophical framework for realizing the Africa envisioned under Agenda 2063. The study adopts the philosophical and analytical methods of inquiry. Drawing on Julius Nyerere's theory of Education for Self-Reliance, the paper explores the philosophical foundations of self-reliance, the role of education in achieving Agenda 2063, the significance of human capacity development, and educational strategies for sustainable development. The findings reveal that many educational systems in Africa still emphasize certificate acquisition at the expense of practical skills, innovation, creativity, and productive engagement. The paper recommends among others, curriculum reforms that emphasize entrepreneurship, critical thinking, vocational competence, and value-oriented learning. The study concludes that education for self-reliance provides a viable philosophical framework for realizing Agenda 2063 and building the Africa we want.

**Background of the Study**

Education has remained one of the most important instruments for human and societal development. It serves as a means through which knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes are transmitted from one generation to another. Beyond literacy and certification, education equips individuals with the competencies required for productive living, responsible citizenship, and meaningful participation in national development. The importance of education has been recognized since antiquity. In Republic, Plato argued that education is indispensable for cultivating virtue, wisdom, and responsible citizenship, thereby contributing to the well-being of society (Plato, 1992). Similarly, Dewey (1916) viewed education as a continuous process of growth through which individuals develop the capacities necessary for effective participation in society. Consequently, philosophers of education have consistently regarded education as a catalyst for personal development, social transformation, and national progress. In Africa, education occupies a strategic position in the quest for sustainable development and continental transformation. Despite its abundant human and natural resources, the continent continues to face numerous challenges, including unemployment, poverty, inequality, insecurity, and inadequate human capacity development. These challenges have raised concerns about the relevance and effectiveness of educational systems that often prioritize certificate acquisition over practical competence and productive engagement. Consequently, scholars and policymakers have increasingly advocated educational approaches that can equip learners with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to address Africa's developmental realities (Emeka, Albert, & Emeka, 2023).

One educational philosophy that has continued to attract scholarly attention is education for self-reliance. The philosophy gained prominence through the works of Julius Nyerere, who argued that education should prepare learners to become productive and self-dependent members of society rather than mere seekers of paid employment (Nyerere, 1967). According to Nyerere, education should be relevant to the needs of society and should combine intellectual development with practical skills and productive work. The philosophy emphasizes creativity, innovation, responsibility, community service, and the dignity of labour. More recently, Maluleka (2021) maintains that education for self-reliance remains relevant to contemporary African societies because it promotes lifelong learning, self-development, and sustainable community advancement. Similarly, Emeka et al. (2023) contend that the philosophy provides a viable framework for addressing unemployment, dependency, and skills deficits across the continent. The contemporary relevance of education for self-reliance becomes even more evident when considered within the context of Agenda 2063. Agenda 2063 is the African Union's strategic blueprint for the socio-economic transformation of Africa. It was launched in 2013 during the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization of African Unity and formally adopted in 2015 by the African Union. The agenda articulates Africa's collective vision of an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful continent driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena (African Union Commission, 2015). Central to this vision is the development of human capital through quality education, science, technology, innovation, and capacity building.

Among the aspirations of Agenda 2063 is the creation of a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development. The achievement of this aspiration depends largely on the quality of education available to African citizens. Addaney (2017) observes that education occupies a central place in the realization of Agenda 2063 because it provides the human resources required for economic growth, social cohesion, technological advancement, and democratic governance. Likewise, Nwozor, Okidu, and Adedire (2021) argue that the success of Agenda 2063 depends significantly on effective capacity building and sustainable development strategies capable of transforming Africa's socio-economic conditions. Furthermore, the growing emphasis on capacity building within contemporary development discourse underscores the importance of education in Africa's transformation agenda. Capacity building involves the development of knowledge, skills, competencies, and institutional abilities required for effective performance and sustainable development. The African Union recognizes human capital development as a critical driver of continental progress and places education at the centre of this process (African Union Commission, 2015). Balogun (2023) further argues that an authentic African philosophy of education should be grounded in the development of persons who can contribute meaningfully to their communities and society. This position resonates strongly with the ideals of self-reliance and responsible citizenship. Against this background, this paper examines education for self-reliance as a philosophical framework for realizing Agenda 2063 and building the Africa we want. The paper argues that an educational system grounded in the principles of self-reliance can promote human capacity development, sustainable development, and responsible citizenship, thereby contributing significantly to the realization of an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa.

**Statement of the Problem**

Education is widely acknowledged as a critical instrument for human development, economic growth, and social transformation. In recognition of its importance, African governments have invested considerably in expanding access to education and improving educational outcomes. Furthermore, Agenda 2063 identifies education and capacity building as essential drivers of an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa. Despite these efforts, many African countries continue to experience high rates of unemployment, poverty, youth dependency, social inequality, and inadequate human capacity development. A major concern is that many educational systems across the continent place greater emphasis on certificate acquisition than on the development of practical skills, creativity, innovation, and self-reliance. Consequently, many graduates leave school without the competencies required to respond effectively to the socio-economic challenges of their societies. This mismatch between educational outcomes and societal needs has contributed to rising unemployment, dependence on government and external support, and limited participation in productive economic activities.

Scholars have therefore questioned the extent to which contemporary educational systems are fulfilling their developmental responsibilities in Africa (Maluleka, 2021; Emeka et al., 2023). The challenge becomes more significant in the context of Agenda

2063, which envisions a continent driven by its citizens and sustained through inclusive growth, innovation, and human capital development (African Union Commission, 2015). The realization of this vision requires citizens who possess the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes necessary for productive living and sustainable development. There is therefore a need to re-examine educational philosophies that can contribute to the achievement of these aspirations. Although the philosophy of education for self-reliance has been widely discussed in African educational discourse, questions remain regarding its contemporary relevance and its potential contribution to the realization of Agenda 2063. This study therefore seeks to examine education for self-reliance as a philosophical framework for promoting human capacity development and sustainable development in Africa.

Flowing from the above, the following research questions were posited to guide the study:

i. What are the philosophical foundations of self-reliance?
ii. How can education contribute to the realization of Agenda 2063?
iii. What role does education play in human capacity development in Africa?
iv. What educational strategies can promote sustainable development and the Africa we want?

Furthermore, the following objectives were stated:

i. To examine the philosophical foundations of self-reliance.
ii. To investigate the role of education in realizing Agenda 2063.
iii. To analyze the contribution of education to human capacity development in Africa.
iv. To identify educational strategies for sustainable development and the Africa we want. This version is approximately 400 words, academically sound, problem-focused, and naturally leads into the research questions and objectives.

**Methodology**

This study adopts the philosophical method of inquiry. Philosophical inquiry is concerned with the critical examination of concepts, assumptions, principles, and arguments that underlie human thought and practice. According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018), educational research extends beyond empirical investigation to include philosophical analysis, which seeks to clarify concepts, interrogate assumptions, and evaluate the logical foundations of educational ideas and practices. Since this study examines education for self-reliance as a philosophical framework for realizing Agenda 2063 and the Africa we want, the philosophical method is considered appropriate. The study relies on documentary sources of data. Relevant materials were obtained from books, peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, policy documents, official publications of the African Union, and other scholarly works related to education, self-reliance, Agenda 2063, capacity building, and sustainable development. These sources provided the theoretical and conceptual basis for the study. The analytical method was employed to examine concepts, arguments, and philosophical positions

relevant to the study. Conceptual analysis is a widely recognized philosophical method that involves the clarification of concepts and the examination of their meanings, implications, and logical relationships (Eder, Lawler, & van Riel, 2020).

Through this method, the study analyzed the concepts of education, self-reliance, Agenda 2063, capacity building, and sustainable development with a view to establishing their interconnectedness and relevance to Africa's developmental aspirations. In addition, the critical method was utilized to evaluate the strengths, relevance, and contemporary applicability of education for self-reliance in addressing the educational and developmental challenges confronting Africa. Sulyman and Eliasu (2020) observe that philosophical research in education employs critical reflection and logical reasoning to assess educational theories and generate insights for policy and practice. Consequently, the study critically examined the extent to which the principles of education for self-reliance can contribute to human capacity development and the realization of Agenda 2063. The choice of the philosophical, analytical, and critical methods is informed by the theoretical nature of the study. These methods enabled the researcher to interrogate existing literature, establish conceptual relationships, and draw reasoned conclusions regarding the role of education in promoting self-reliance, capacity building, and sustainable development in Africa. The findings and conclusions of the study are therefore based on logical analysis and critical reflection on relevant scholarly and policy literature.

**Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored on Julius Kambarage Nyerere's Theory of Education for Self-Reliance (1967). The theory emerged in post-independence Tanzania as a response to the inadequacies of the colonial education system, which Nyerere believed was disconnected from the socio-economic realities and developmental needs of African societies. In his seminal work, Education for Self-Reliance (1967), Nyerere argued that education should not merely prepare learners for white-collar jobs but should equip them with the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes necessary for productive living and national development. The theory emphasizes the relevance of education to societal needs and advocates the integration of intellectual learning with productive work. According to Nyerere (1967), education should promote self-dependence, creativity, responsibility, cooperation, and the dignity of labour. Rather than producing job seekers, educational institutions should nurture individuals who are capable of creating opportunities for themselves and contributing meaningfully to their communities. A major assumption of the theory is that education should serve as an instrument for social transformation and economic development. Consequently, learners should acquire practical competencies alongside academic knowledge.

The theory also stresses community participation, problem-solving, innovation, and the utilization of local resources as essential components of meaningful education. The relevance of Education for Self-Reliance (1967) to this study lies in its alignment with the aspirations of Agenda 2063. The African Union's development blueprint envisions an

integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa driven by its own citizens through human capital development, innovation, and sustainable growth (African Union Commission, 2015). These aspirations resonate with Nyerere's vision of an educational system that empowers individuals to become productive, self-reliant, and socially responsible citizens. The theory therefore provides an appropriate framework for examining the role of education in promoting capacity building and sustainable development in Africa. Furthermore, contemporary scholars have reaffirmed the relevance of Nyerere's philosophy to present-day African realities. Maluleka (2021) argues that education for self-reliance remains a viable approach to lifelong learning and human empowerment, while Emeka, Albert, and Emeka (2023) maintain that the philosophy offers practical solutions to unemployment, poverty, and dependency. Therefore, Education for Self-Reliance (1967) provides the theoretical lens through which this study examines the contribution of education to the realization of Agenda 2063 and the Africa we want.

**Conceptual Clarification**

**Education**

Education is a fundamental process through which individuals acquire the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes necessary for personal and societal development. The term is derived from the Latin words educare, meaning "to bring up" or "to train," and educere, meaning "to lead out" or "to draw forth." These meanings suggest that education is concerned with developing and actualizing human potential. The importance of education has been recognized throughout the history of philosophy. In Republic, Plato argued that education is essential for cultivating virtue, wisdom, and responsible citizenship, which are necessary for the stability and progress of society (Plato, 1992). Similarly, Dewey (1916) viewed education as a continuous process of growth through which individuals acquire experiences that enable them to function effectively in society. These perspectives underscore the role of education in shaping both individuals and communities. Contemporary scholars regard education as a deliberate process of developing the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor capacities of learners. It extends beyond formal schooling to include informal and non-formal learning experiences that contribute to human development. Education performs social, economic, political, and cultural functions by equipping individuals with the competencies required for productive living and responsible citizenship. Within the framework of Agenda 2063, education is recognized as a key driver of human capital development, innovation, and sustainable development (African Union Commission, 2015). In this study, education is understood as a lifelong process of developing the capacities required for self-reliance, societal transformation, and the realization of the Africa we want.

**Self-Reliance**

Self-reliance refers to the ability of individuals, communities, or nations to depend primarily on their own capacities, resources, and initiatives in meeting their needs and addressing their challenges. The concept gained prominence in Africa during the post-independence period when many African leaders sought development strategies that would reduce dependence on foreign aid and external control. It emphasizes self-

confidence, productivity, responsibility, creativity, and the effective utilization of available resources for individual and collective development. Among African scholars and statesmen, Julius Nyerere is widely associated with the philosophy of self-reliance. In his seminal work, Education for Self-Reliance (1967), Nyerere argued that education should prepare individuals to become productive members of society rather than depend solely on paid employment. According to him, self-reliance involves developing the ability to think independently, solve problems, engage in productive work, and contribute meaningfully to community development.

Thus, self-reliance is not synonymous with isolation; rather, it encourages individuals and societies to build on their strengths while engaging constructively with others. In contemporary educational discourse, self-reliance is closely linked to entrepreneurship, innovation, skills acquisition, and human empowerment. It encourages learners to become creators of opportunities rather than passive seekers of opportunities. Maluleka (2021) argues that the philosophy remains relevant in addressing unemployment, dependency, and underdevelopment in many African societies. Within the context of Agenda 2063, self-reliance is a vital requirement for achieving sustainable development and building a prosperous Africa driven by its own citizens. In this study, self-reliance is understood as the capacity of individuals to utilize acquired knowledge, skills, and values for productive living, personal advancement, and societal development.

**Agenda 2063**

Agenda 2063 is the African Union's strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of Africa. It was launched in 2013 during the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization of African Unity and formally adopted in 2015 as a fifty-year development blueprint for the continent (African Union Commission, 2015). The agenda represents Africa's collective vision for an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful continent driven by its own citizens and actively engaged in global development processes. Agenda 2063 is built around seven aspirations that reflect Africa's long-term developmental goals. These include inclusive growth and sustainable development, good governance, peace and security, strong cultural identity, and people-driven development. Central to these aspirations is the development of human capital through quality education, science, technology, innovation, and capacity building. The framework recognizes that no meaningful transformation can occur without an empowered and skilled population capable of driving development processes.

In practical terms, Agenda 2063 emphasizes the need for African countries to strengthen their educational systems to produce innovative, skilled, and self-reliant citizens. It calls for investment in education, vocational training, research, and technological advancement as tools for achieving sustainable development and global competitiveness. Scholars such as Addaney (2017) and Nwozor, Okidu, and Adedire (2021) emphasize that the success of Agenda 2063 depends largely on effective implementation of human capacity development strategies across the continent. Within the context of this study, Agenda 2063 is understood as a continental development vision

that seeks to transform Africa through education-driven human capacity development, economic empowerment, and sustainable growth. It provides the policy and philosophical background against which education for self-reliance is examined as a framework for achieving the Africa we want.

**Capacity Building**

Capacity building refers to the process of developing and strengthening the knowledge, skills, competencies, abilities, and institutional structures required for effective performance and sustainable development. It is a key concept in development studies and education because it focuses on enhancing both human and institutional capabilities to achieve desired developmental outcomes. Capacity building is not limited to formal training alone; it also includes education, mentorship, skills development, leadership training, innovation, and institutional strengthening.

In the context of development discourse, capacity building gained prominence as scholars and policymakers recognized that sustainable progress depends largely on the quality of human resources available in a society. Without adequate human capacity, even the most abundant natural resources cannot be effectively utilized for development. The African Union (2015) emphasizes human capital development as a central pillar of Agenda 2063, noting that Africa's transformation depends on its ability to equip citizens with relevant knowledge and skills. Capacity building is therefore closely linked to education, as educational systems serve as the primary avenue through which knowledge and skills are developed.

Effective capacity building enables individuals to think critically, solve problems, innovate, and contribute meaningfully to economic and social development. It also strengthens institutions by improving governance, efficiency, and service delivery. Scholars have further argued that capacity building is essential for addressing unemployment, poverty, and underdevelopment in Africa. It equips individuals with entrepreneurial and vocational skills that promote self-reliance and economic productivity (Emeka, Albert, & Emeka, 2023). In this sense, capacity building is both an individual and collective process aimed at improving the ability of people and institutions to achieve development goals. Within the framework of this study, capacity building is understood as the systematic development of human abilities and institutional structures that enable individuals to become productive, self-reliant, and capable of contributing to the realization of Agenda 2063 and sustainable development in Africa.

**Review and Philosophical Analysis**

This section critically reviews and analyzes relevant philosophical and scholarly positions on education for self-reliance, Agenda 2063, capacity building, and sustainable development in Africa. The discussion is guided by the research questions and objectives of the study, focusing on how education can serve as a philosophical and practical tool for achieving the Africa we want.

**Philosophical Foundations of Education for Self-Reliance**

The philosophical foundation of education for self-reliance is rooted in the conviction that education must be inseparably connected to the social, cultural, and economic realities of society. Julius Kambarage Nyerere (1967), in his seminal work Education for Self-Reliance, argued that education should not be understood as a purely theoretical or abstract enterprise, but as a practical and socially responsive process aimed at producing individuals who are capable of contributing meaningfully to the development of their communities. He criticized the colonial education system for producing graduates who were largely oriented toward wage employment and external dependency rather than productivity, creativity, and self-sufficiency. At its core, education for self-reliance is a philosophical rejection of dependency-oriented education systems. It proposes that education should cultivate individuals who are self-reliant, productive, and capable of transforming their immediate environment using available resources. This idea reflects a normative view of education as a tool for life, not merely for certification. In this regard, Nyerere's philosophy resonates strongly with pragmatist thought, particularly John Dewey (1916), who emphasized education as a process of continuous growth through experience, reflection, and active engagement with real-life situations.

Dewey's principle of "learning by doing" aligns closely with Nyerere's insistence that education must be linked with productive work and social responsibility. Beyond pragmatism, education for self-reliance is also grounded in humanistic philosophy. Humanism in education emphasizes the development of the whole person, including intellectual, moral, emotional, and practical dimensions. It views education as a means of realizing human potential and dignity. From this perspective, Nyerere's model of education aims at holistic development rather than narrow academic specialization. It assumes that individuals possess inherent potential that can be developed through relevant, meaningful, and experience-based education. The philosophy is also deeply embedded in African communitarian thought. African philosophical traditions emphasize interdependence, solidarity, and collective responsibility. Unlike Western individualistic models of education, education for self-reliance stresses the relationship between the individual and the community. Nyerere (1967) explicitly argues that self-reliance does not mean isolation or individual independence in the absolute sense, but rather collective self-dependence, where individuals and communities work together for mutual development. In this sense, education is not only for personal advancement but also for societal transformation.

Nsamenang (2018) supports this view by noting that African educational thought is historically rooted in communal living, where learning is embedded in social participation and productive activities. Epistemologically, education for self-reliance challenges the dominance of abstract, decontextualized, and externally imposed knowledge systems. It advocates for knowledge that is relevant, applicable, and grounded in local realities. This means that education must be evaluated not only by its theoretical rigor but also by its practical usefulness in solving real societal problems. From this standpoint, knowledge becomes meaningful when it contributes to improving

human welfare and community development. Recent scholarship has further strengthened the relevance of this philosophy. Tikly (2019) argues that African education systems must transition from knowledge reproduction to knowledge production if they are to respond effectively to sustainable development challenges. Similarly, Oketch (2020) maintains that African education must prioritize skills development, innovation, and employability in order to address structural unemployment and economic dependency. UNESCO (2021) also emphasizes that contemporary education systems should focus on lifelong learning, transferable skills, and holistic human development rather than narrow academic achievement alone.

The World Bank (2020) reinforces this perspective by highlighting the need for "future-ready skills," including critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, and entrepreneurship, as essential competencies for the twenty-first century economy. In the same vein, the African Union (2023) stresses that human capital development through education, science, and innovation is central to the successful implementation of Agenda 2063. These contemporary policy and scholarly perspectives demonstrate that the principles underlying education for self-reliance remain highly relevant to Africa's development agenda. However, despite its strong philosophical foundation, the implementation of education for self-reliance has faced significant challenges across African educational systems. Adeyemi and Adeyinka (2019) observe that many African curricula remain heavily examination-oriented, thereby limiting opportunities for practical skill acquisition. Oviawe (2021) further notes that inadequate infrastructure, weak policy implementation, and insufficient teacher preparation continue to hinder the effective integration of vocational and practical learning in schools. These challenges have contributed to a persistent gap between educational theory and practice.

Nevertheless, the enduring relevance of education for self-reliance lies in its capacity to respond to Africa's pressing developmental challenges, including unemployment, poverty, and dependency on external systems. Maluleka (2021) argues that the philosophy promotes lifelong learning, adaptability, and empowerment, while Emeka, Albert, and Emeka (2023) maintain that it fosters entrepreneurship, innovation, and productive citizenship. These qualities are essential for sustainable development and human capacity building in Africa. The philosophical foundations of education for self-reliance represent a synthesis of pragmatism, humanism, and African communitarian thought. These traditions collectively emphasize education as a transformative instrument for personal development, social responsibility, and economic empowerment. Within contemporary African discourse, this philosophy remains highly relevant as it provides a coherent framework for achieving Agenda 2063 and building a self-reliant, prosperous, and peaceful Africa.

**Education and the Realization of Agenda 2063**

Education occupies a central position in the realization of Agenda 2063, which is the African Union's long-term strategic framework for transforming Africa into an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful continent. Agenda 2063, launched in 2013 and

formally adopted in 2015, presents a 50-year vision that emphasizes inclusive growth, sustainable development, peace, and citizen-driven progress (African Union Commission, 2015). At the heart of this vision is the recognition that no meaningful transformation can occur without a strong and functional education system capable of producing skilled, innovative, and responsible citizens. From a philosophical standpoint, education is not merely a social service but a transformative instrument for shaping human capabilities and societal structures. Sen's capability approach, although economic in orientation, reinforces this philosophical understanding by emphasizing education as a means of expanding human freedoms and opportunities. In this sense, education becomes a foundation for empowerment, agency, and participation in development processes. Similarly, within African philosophical thought, education is seen as a tool for social reconstruction and communal advancement rather than individual gain alone. Agenda 2063 explicitly identifies human capital development as a key driver of Africa's transformation.

The African Union (2015) emphasizes the need for quality education, skills development, science, technology, and innovation as essential pillars for achieving its aspirations. This aligns with global development thinking, where education is increasingly viewed as the most important investment for long-term economic growth and social stability. UNESCO (2021) further argues that education systems must evolve to equip learners with twenty-first-century competencies, including critical thinking, creativity, digital literacy, and problem-solving skills. However, despite the strong policy emphasis on education, Africa continues to face significant challenges in translating educational investments into developmental outcomes. Studies have shown that many African education systems still struggle with issues such as poor-quality learning outcomes, inadequate infrastructure, and limited alignment between curriculum content and labour market needs (Oketch, 2020). These challenges have contributed to persistent unemployment among graduates and a mismatch between skills produced by educational institutions and those required by the economy. From a philosophical perspective, this gap raises important questions about the purpose of education in Africa. If education is intended to serve as a tool for societal transformation, then it must be responsive to the developmental needs of society.

Dewey's (1916) pragmatist philosophy supports this view by arguing that education must be directly connected to experience and social life. In the same vein, African educational philosophy emphasizes relevance, practicality, and community engagement as essential features of meaningful education. Recent literature has reinforced the centrality of education in achieving Agenda 2063. The African Union (2023) reiterates that the successful implementation of the Second Ten-Year Implementation Plan depends heavily on strengthening education systems and aligning them with skills development, innovation, and industrialization goals. Similarly, the World Bank (2020) stresses that Africa's future competitiveness depends on building strong human capital through education reforms that prioritize skills acquisition, adaptability, and lifelong learning. Furthermore, scholars such as Tikly (2019) argue that African education

systems must shift from traditional knowledge transmission to knowledge production. This means moving beyond rote learning toward innovation-driven and problem-solving-oriented education. Such a shift is essential for building the kind of human capital required to achieve the aspirations of Agenda 2063. In addition, Oketch (2020) highlights the importance of vocational and technical education in addressing structural unemployment and promoting economic diversification across African economies.

In practical terms, education contributes to Agenda 2063 by fostering inclusive citizenship, promoting peacebuilding, enhancing governance, and supporting economic transformation. Education also plays a critical role in reducing inequality by providing individuals with opportunities for upward social mobility. Moreover, it strengthens democratic participation by equipping citizens with the knowledge and values required for responsible engagement in public life. However, for education to fully realize its potential within Agenda 2063, it must undergo significant transformation. This includes curriculum reform, investment in teacher training, integration of technology, and stronger alignment between education systems and development priorities. It also requires a philosophical reorientation toward education as a tool for empowerment rather than mere certification. Overall education is indispensable to the realization of Agenda 2063. It serves as the foundation for human capital development, innovation, and sustainable development. Without a strong educational system grounded in relevance and practicality, the aspirations of an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa cannot be achieved. Therefore, education must be reimagined as a strategic instrument for transforming Africa's socio-economic landscape in line with the vision of Agenda 2063.

**Education and Human Capacity Development in Africa**

Education is widely recognized as the most critical instrument for human capacity development in any society. In the African context, human capacity development refers to the process of equipping individuals with the knowledge, skills, values, and competencies required to contribute effectively to economic growth, social development, governance, and innovation. Within the framework of Agenda 2063, human capacity development is not optional but central to Africa's long-term transformation agenda (African Union Commission, 2015). Philosophically, education and human capacity development are closely linked to the concept of human flourishing. Aristotle's idea of eudaimonia emphasizes the development of human potential through rational activity and virtuous living. In a similar way, modern educational thought views education as a process of empowering individuals to realize their full potential and contribute meaningfully to society. Sen's capability approach further strengthens this view by arguing that development should be assessed by the expansion of human capabilities rather than income alone. Education, therefore, becomes a key driver of human agency and social participation.

In Africa, however, human capacity development through education has been constrained by structural and systemic challenges. Many education systems continue to

emphasize rote learning, examination success, and theoretical knowledge, often at the expense of practical skills and creativity. This has resulted in a mismatch between graduates' competencies and labour market demands, contributing significantly to unemployment and underemployment (Oketch, 2020). Such challenges highlight the urgent need to reorient education toward capacity-building outcomes that are relevant to societal needs. Recent scholarship underscores the importance of shifting from traditional academic models to competency-based education systems. UNESCO (2021) emphasizes that education systems must prioritize transferable skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and digital literacy. These competencies are essential for preparing individuals to navigate complex and rapidly changing global environments. Similarly, the World Bank (2020) argues that future economic competitiveness depends on strong foundational skills combined with adaptability and innovation. Within African development discourse, capacity building is not limited to individual skills but also includes institutional strengthening. Strong institutions are essential for effective governance, policy implementation, and service delivery.

The African Union (2023) highlights that achieving the aspirations of Agenda 2063 requires both human and institutional capacity development, particularly in areas such as education, science, technology, and innovation. This dual focus ensures that individuals are not only skilled but also supported by functional systems that enable productivity and growth. Education for self-reliance provides a strong philosophical foundation for human capacity development. Nyerere (1967) argued that education should produce individuals who are capable of thinking independently, solving problems, and contributing productively to their communities. This perspective aligns with contemporary views on entrepreneurship and innovation, which emphasize self-sufficiency and creativity as key development outcomes. Maluleka (2021) further supports this view by noting that self-reliance education fosters adaptability, lifelong learning, and empowerment in rapidly changing socio-economic contexts. Furthermore, Emeka, Albert, and Emeka (2023) argue that education for self-reliance directly contributes to human capacity development by equipping learners with entrepreneurial and vocational skills necessary for economic participation.

This is particularly important in Africa, where youth unemployment remains a significant challenge. By shifting focus from certificate-oriented education to skills-based learning, education systems can better prepare individuals for productive engagement in society. Despite these theoretical and policy advancements, significant gaps remain in implementation. Many African countries still struggle with inadequate infrastructure, insufficient funding, and weak alignment between educational curricula and development priorities. These challenges hinder the full realization of education's potential in human capacity development. Addressing these issues requires comprehensive reforms that integrate policy, curriculum development, teacher training, and investment in educational technology. Education is a fundamental driver of human capacity development in Africa. It equips individuals with the competencies required for innovation, productivity, and societal transformation. Within the context of Agenda

2063, education must be restructured to emphasize skills development, critical thinking, and practical application of knowledge. Education for self-reliance provides a coherent philosophical framework for achieving these goals, making it central to Africa's development agenda.

**Educational Strategies for Sustainable Development and the Africa We Want**

Sustainable development is a central pillar of Africa's long-term transformation agenda as articulated in Agenda 2063. It refers to development that meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (WCED, 1987). In the African context, sustainable development extends beyond environmental protection to include economic growth, social inclusion, peace, and institutional stability. Education is widely recognized as the most significant driver of this multidimensional development process. From a philosophical perspective, sustainable development is grounded in intergenerational ethics, which emphasizes responsibility toward both present and future generations. This ethical orientation implies that education systems must go beyond knowledge transmission to include the cultivation of values such as responsibility, environmental stewardship, and social justice. Education therefore becomes not only an intellectual process but also a moral and civic responsibility aimed at shaping responsible citizens. Agenda 2063 positions sustainable development as a core aspiration for Africa's transformation. The African Union (2015) identifies inclusive growth, environmental sustainability, and human development as essential foundations for achieving an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful continent. This requires education systems that equip learners with the competencies needed to address complex developmental challenges such as poverty, unemployment, inequality, and climate change.

Recent scholarship emphasizes the integration of sustainability into education systems. UNESCO (2021) highlights Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as a framework for empowering learners to make informed decisions and take responsible actions that support environmental integrity, economic viability, and social justice. Similarly, the World Bank (2020) stresses the need for education systems to prepare learners for green economies through innovation, critical thinking, and adaptability. In the African context, sustainable development is closely linked to structural transformation. Many African economies continue to rely heavily on primary commodities, with limited industrialization and value addition. Education plays a crucial role in addressing this challenge by equipping individuals with scientific, technical, and entrepreneurial skills necessary for industrial growth and economic diversification (Oketch, 2020). Education for self-reliance provides a strong philosophical foundation for sustainable development. Nyerere (1967) emphasizes the integration of learning with productive activity and community engagement, thereby encouraging learners to apply knowledge in real-life situations. This approach promotes self-sufficiency, innovation, and responsible resource utilization, all of which are essential for sustainability. African communitarian philosophy further strengthens this orientation by emphasizing collective responsibility and shared well-being.

Nsamenang (2018) notes that African educational traditions are rooted in communal life, where learning is directed toward social contribution and environmental harmony. This aligns with sustainability principles that prioritize balance between human development and ecological preservation. Despite these strengths, significant challenges remain. These include weak curriculum integration of sustainability concepts, inadequate teacher preparation, limited funding, and insufficient institutional capacity. In many educational systems, sustainability education remains peripheral rather than central, limiting its transformative impact. Addressing these gaps requires comprehensive policy reforms and stronger alignment between education and national development priorities. The African Union (2023) reiterates that achieving Agenda 2063 depends on strengthening education systems to support innovation, industrialization, and environmental sustainability. This includes prioritizing STEM education, vocational training, and digital skills development as tools for long-term transformation. The analysis demonstrates that sustainable development in Africa is inseparable from education reform and human capacity development. Education for self-reliance remains a relevant philosophical framework for guiding this transformation due to its emphasis on productivity, practical learning, and social responsibility.

**Summary of Philosophical Analysis**

The philosophical analysis of education for self-reliance, Agenda 2063, human capacity development, and sustainable development reveals strong conceptual interconnections among these constructs. Across the reviewed literature, education consistently emerges as the central instrument for achieving Africa's long-term transformation agenda. The analysis shows that Agenda 2063 places human capital development at the core of its aspirations for an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa, thereby positioning education as a strategic tool for development (African Union Commission, 2015). Philosophically, education for self-reliance provides a coherent framework for understanding how education can contribute to Africa's development agenda. Nyerere's (1967) emphasis on practical learning, productivity, and community engagement aligns with pragmatist educational thought and African communitarian philosophy. These traditions collectively argue that education should not be limited to knowledge acquisition but should also focus on the development of competencies that enable individuals to contribute meaningfully to society. The analysis further indicates that human capacity development is a necessary condition for achieving both Agenda 2063 and sustainable development. Contemporary literature highlights persistent gaps in African education systems, particularly in relation to skills acquisition, employability, and innovation (Oketch, 2020; UNESCO, 2021).

These gaps suggest a misalignment between educational outcomes and development needs, reinforcing the relevance of education for self-reliance as a corrective philosophical framework. Similarly, sustainable development requires education systems that promote environmental awareness, economic productivity, and social responsibility. The integration of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into curricula is increasingly recognized as essential for preparing learners to address global

and continental challenges (World Bank, 2020). However, implementation remains uneven across African contexts due to structural, institutional, and policy-related constraints. Overall, the analysis demonstrates that education is not merely a social service but a transformative instrument for societal change. Education for self-reliance, in particular, provides a philosophical foundation that connects individual empowerment with collective development goals. Its emphasis on practical skills, self-dependence, and community-oriented learning makes it highly relevant to the aspirations of Agenda 2063. The synthesis of the reviewed perspectives confirms that achieving a sustainable, integrated, and peaceful Africa depends largely on reorienting education systems toward relevance, productivity, and capacity development. This reorientation is essential for bridging the gap between policy aspirations and developmental realities in Africa.

**Conclusion**

This study examined education for self-reliance as a philosophical framework for achieving Agenda 2063 and the Africa we want. It established that education is central to human capacity development, sustainable development, and the realization of a peaceful and prosperous Africa. The analysis showed that Nyerere's (1967) education for self-reliance provides a strong philosophical foundation for reorienting African education toward productivity, practical skills, and community engagement. It also revealed a strong alignment between this philosophy and the aspirations of Agenda 2063, which emphasizes human capital development, innovation, and inclusive growth. Furthermore, the study demonstrated that persistent challenges such as unemployment, skills mismatch, and weak curriculum relevance require urgent educational reform. Overall, the study concludes that education for self-reliance remains a viable and relevant framework for transforming African education systems and achieving sustainable development and continental integration.

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

i. **Curriculum Reform:** Curricula should be revised to emphasize practical learning, problem-solving, creativity, and self-reliance.
ii. **Strengthening Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET):** Governments should invest more in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), which provides practical skills such as carpentry, tailoring, ICT, farming, and mechanics to improve employability and self-reliance.
iii. **Teacher Development:** Teachers should be trained in practical, learner-centred methods that connect classroom learning to real-life applications.
iv. **Alignment with Agenda 2063:** Education policies should be aligned with Agenda 2063 to ensure learning outcomes support Africa's development goals.
v. **School–Community Collaboration:** Schools should work closely with communities and industries to enhance practical learning and workplace exposure.

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