

YOUTH: TAKING THE REINS OF THE FUTURE



Youth are the backbone of society, a primary human resource for development, and agents of social change economic growth, and technological innovation, as recognized by the United Nations.

By forming the bulk of the population globally, they are poised to renew and refresh society's current status through leadership, innovation, and skills.

THE PROBLEM

At 1.8 billion, today's global youth generation is the largest in history, playing a critical role as partners and leaders of development.

- 1.2 billion are aged between 15 to 24 years and count for 16% of the global population.
- African youth represent almost 60% of Africa's population making Africa the world's youngest continent.
- The African Development Bank reports that while 10 million to 12 million youth enter the workforce in Africa each year, only 3 million formal jobs are created annually.
- It is estimated that more than 400 million young people between 15 and 29 live in fragile and conflict-affected areas of the globe.
- 33 million internally displaced people are under 25 and around 25.2 million under 18 due to conflict, disasters, and violence in 104 countries and territories as of 31 December 2021
- Approximately 214 million people - or 3.1% of the world's population - are international migrants, while 740 million migrate within borders.

IMPLICATIONS

- The above unmet needs can lead to violence, instability, unrest, and mass migration.
- Unemployment crisis due to the demographic boom globally.
- Economic strife, insecurity, corruption, poor education systems, and unemployment often push youth to seek better opportunities abroad.
- Due to fleeing conflict, more immigrants into neighbouring countries and beyond are searching for better and safer environments to rebuild their lives.



WHAT ACTIONS ARE NEEDED NEXT?

- Ensure that the youth are educated, healthy, employed, and civically engaged to drive economic growth, democracy and prosperity.
 - Increase and encourage youth representation and participation in local and global political processes to voice their needs. For example, the IPU's 2021 report on Youth Participation in National Parliaments noted that youth under thirty counts for only 2.6% of the world's MPs, and 73% of the world's upper houses of parliament do not have MPs under the age of 30.
 - Rallying peace dialogue with leaders from affected countries to mitigate the effects of political instability.
 - Addressing the future of work and ensuring economic inclusion
- The first step toward the economic inclusion of the next generations is to manage better and facilitate mobility, both intra-continental and between an ageing continent and one going through a youth population boom.
 - Embed youth employability and decent work opportunities as a priority criterion, addressing the mismatch between youth aspirations, training, jobs and market demand and prioritising youth access to housing, education, and cultural institutions.
 - To generate decent jobs and sustainable growth, education must be a high priority.

