

African youths - driving force for global agenda 2030

[Parts of the World](#), [Africa](#)



The common cliché “ Youths are the Leaders of Tomorrow” is fading out; youths are already driving change for the better, today. The trend is remarkable in Africa where the youths are not only driving innovations addressing SDGs, but they are also demanding their seat on roundtables discussing the global agenda 2030.

The African continent is undergoing profound demographic change with over 60% of the population under 30 years, 41% below 15 years old while another 19% are youth between 15 and 24 years old; which is the largest population of the young people globally. What’s more, AFDB estimates that the youthful population would double by 2045. There’s no doubt that the youthful population presents a demographic dividend that is a critical resource for delivering economic growth, equitable social and industrial transformation and environment conservation which is the pillars of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030. A significant number of challenges that the SDGS seeks to address are salient for the African youths who account for 60 percent of all unemployed Africans; a significant challenge for sustainable development.

Africa youths are a beacon of rural social entrepreneurship. By moving out of the corners of academic environment, the African youths could deliver practical solutions to problems at the grassroots levels. The World Bank estimates a literacy rate of 75. 31% and internet penetration rate of 35. 20% in Africa, which means that the African youth have high access to knowledge. The youthful populations have an opportunity of driving rural Africa entrepreneurship. By rolling up their sleeves and moving out of the

cities to rural Africa, the Youths could engage in knowledge and skills sharing, a fundamental gap that yields to unproductivity of rural Africa. The youths could be drivers of the agriculture sector, which is simultaneously the largest employer in Africa and directly addresses SDG 1 (Poverty) and SDG 2 (Hunger).

While they may not directly engage in the manual labor associated with agriculture, they could develop practical solutions to agricultural value chain challenges. For example, the smallholder farmers often lack machinery due to the high cost of purchase and maintenance. By developing digital apps that promote sharing of machinery such as tractors or mechanized threshers, tech-savvy youths could connect machinery owners to farmers, which generates income for the youth (App Owner), the machinery owner and increased productivity and yields for the farmers. IFAD estimates annual post-harvest losses at relatively \$4 billion in Africa, which is 40% of the Staple food for Africa. By promoting Small Scale Innovations using knowledge acquired in Schools, the youths could help in minimizing the post-harvest losses. Apps by youths that connect rural farmers to ready buyers have enabled minimize the post-harvest losses.

Data challenge in Africa is estimated to inhibit the realization of SDGs in Africa. The 2017 Africa Sustainable Development Report indicates that although the SDGs contains 232 indicators, that measure performance towards SDGs, only 48% of the indicators are trackable in Africa and attributes the data shortage a consequence of inefficiencies at the local statistics collection. But the African youth has demonstrated increased

interest in App Development which could be instrumental in tracking SDGs performance across the continent. The high penetration of mobile technology and internet in Africa and launch of open data platforms enables tracking of information conveniently an opportunity the youths could explore to ensure the continent is on track. Youth entrepreneurs could organize “SDG data hackathon” through which using available data, the tech-savvy youths could develop knowledge products on SDGs

The African youth could raise awareness on the development challenges and steer an attitude change towards the environment, which is fundamental in realizing SDGS 13 on climate action. By engaging in dialogue and negotiations with community leaders, the youths could hold to accountable leaders who are mandated to address basic needs such as Health (SDG 3) Education (SDG 4), Water (SDG 6), Energy (SDG 7) among others. Social media is emerging as an instrumental tool in creating awareness and the youthful African population is leading the way. Across the globe, youth are using social media platform such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram to monitor public service and mobilize action. Youth-led organizations could join hands in advocacy campaigns for mainstreaming of Global Agenda 2030 in the local and national government agenda. For example, African youths could engage in campaign awareness on gender equality (SDG 5).

Notwithstanding, for the youths to actively engage in delivering agenda 2030, collaborative efforts by governments, the private sector, academia development agencies empowerment is imperative. Given that the African youth is hungry for technology, investing in tech hubs that help the youths to

build essential skills is one intervention that the private sector could collaborate in.

Global Agenda 2030 indeed offer an opportunity for youths to shape the visions and destinies of their communities.