



POLICY BRIEF

Fostering Youth Empowerment - Findings from "COVID 19 and the Youth Question in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda"

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About this policy brief

This policy brief represents the findings of a three-year research project, "COVID19 and the Youth Question in Africa," conducted across Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda. The project, funded by IDRC, aimed to bridge the divide between marginalized youth and their governments. By promoting transparency and accountability, it strived to improve governance mechanisms.

**Authors: - Alemu Tesfaye (MBA)
Truphena E. Mukuna (PhD)**

Introduction

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic brought to the fore the immense potential of youth engagement in societal resilience and recovery. However, the meaningful involvement of youth, a crucial demographic in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda, is often overlooked. Coupled with this, there's a compelling need to enhance social accountability across all levels of society. This policy brief, informed by the research project "COVID19 and the Youth Question in Africa," lays out strategies to promote social accountability through active and meaningful youth involvement in the shaping of a post-pandemic society.

Post-Pandemic Scenario: Youth Inclusion as a Priority

The aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic presents a landscape fraught with both unique challenges and opportunities for Africa's youth. The crisis has had profound effects on their education, employment, health, and general well-being. It's imperative now, more than ever, to ensure that youth perspectives, concerns, and innovative solutions form an integral part of recovery and resilience-building efforts.

The Social Accountability Imperative

Post-pandemic recovery and reconstruction require an enhanced level of social accountability in decision-making processes and resource allocation. Despite the urgency of recovery, current levels of social accountability are insufficient, posing a risk to the efficacy and equity of recovery measures.

The Path Forward

Amplify Youth Participation

Youth participation in decision-making processes is key to effective post-pandemic navigation. This involves more than just representation; it demands active engagement, with youths serving as co-creators of policies

that directly affect their lives. Establishing platforms like youth councils, town hall meetings, and digital forums provides an opportunity for young people to express their ideas and concerns and put forth innovative solutions. Their unique perspectives can bring fresh ideas to the table, fostering inclusivity and ownership of societal recovery.

Ensure Transparency and Access to Information

Transparency in decision-making and resource allocation fosters trust and participation, vital for a united recovery effort. It's crucial to harness digital technologies to share accessible, understandable information related to recovery initiatives. This open flow of information enables the youth to monitor progress, hold decision-makers accountable, and advocate for enhanced accountability. Information access equips the youth with the necessary knowledge to actively engage and influence societal recovery.

Promote Capacity Building

Investing in capacity-building initiatives, including civic education, leadership training, and digital literacy programs, empowers the youth with essential skills to actively participate in social accountability processes. These programs should be tailored to address the evolving societal needs post-pandemic and to equip the youth to effectively contribute to recovery measures. Such initiatives foster self-confidence, critical thinking, and other leadership qualities, creating a generation of proactive and accountable leaders.

Strengthen Social Accountability Mechanisms

To strengthen the culture of accountability, it's essential to enhance mechanisms that hold decision-makers responsible for their actions in post-pandemic recovery. These mechanisms must be youth-friendly, encouraging the active participation of youth in social accountability efforts. It can involve youth-driven monitoring and evaluation processes, community scorecards, and youth representation in oversight committees.

Conclusion

The post-COVID era offers an unprecedented opportunity to reimagine the role of Africa's youth in societal development. By amplifying youth participation, ensuring transparency, promoting capacity building, and strengthening social accountability mechanisms, we can foster a recovery that is effective, equitable, and accountable. By harnessing the power and potential of the youth, we can create a future that truly reflects the aspirations of Africa's young population.

This policy brief is developed as part of the "COVID-19 and Youth Questions in Africa" Project Implemented in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda.



More info available at

