



Chapter 10

Towards the demarginalisation of African youth: Agenda 2063 – The Africa We Want – a golden opportunity or a pie in the sky?

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Abstract

The phrase ‘*pie in the sky*’ is commonly employed to denote an appealing concept or idea that is unlikely to come to fruition. This chapter undertakes a critical examination of Aspiration 6 of the African development agenda, Agenda 2063, which is titled ‘The Africa We Want’. Aspiration 6 outlines the vision of a people-centred Africa, which leverages the potential of its citizens, particularly women and youth, while prioritising the well-being of children. The aforementioned schedule incorporates a strategic plan, an implementation plan, and a framework for monitoring and assessing progress, with the initial evaluation milestone set for 2023. This chapter investigates the potential of Agenda 2063 as a means of addressing the marginalisation of youth in Africa, or to determine if it can be considered a missed opportunity.

Introduction

The Pan-African movement is a socio-political movement aimed at achieving self-governance for African nations and fostering solidarity among individuals of African descent globally. During the 20th century, the Pan-African movement initiated the pursuit of African inclusion (Ndizera & Muzee, 2018:142). The movement advocated for the liberation and restoration of the dignity of both Africans and those of

African heritage, standing against injustices such as racial exploitation, colonialism, and slavery (Britannica, 2003).

Agenda 2063 is founded on the principles of Pan-Africanism and the African Renaissance, with the aim being to establish a comprehensive structure for effectively addressing historical injustices. Agenda 2063 reflects the Pan-African imperative that the African continent must consolidate its efforts towards achieving its rebirth. The present Agenda is a product of the evolution of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and posits that Africa is anticipating the forthcoming half-century. Known as 'The Africa We Want', the Agenda 2063 document encapsulates the collective aspirations for the continent.

Furthermore, Agenda 2063 represents an internally derived, collaborative strategic framework aimed at fostering equitable economic expansion and environmentally conscious progress towards African transformation. It builds upon the historical Pan-African movement that advocated for self-governance, liberation, progress, and communal well-being. The objective is to mobilise and unify individuals of African descent, both within the continent and in the diaspora, utilising Africa's inherent resources such as its historical and cultural background, as well as its strategic geographical location, to achieve fair and community-focused progress and advancement. This includes the elimination of poverty; the establishment of social resources, infrastructure, and public services; the solidification of long-lasting peace, harmony and safety; the creation of operative and robust developing states, participating and responsible institutes; and the empowerment of young people and women. These initiatives collectively pave the way for fostering an African renaissance (African Union Commission [AUC], 2015a:17–19). The Agenda not only encompasses the Pan-African vision but also delineates seven pivotal objectives that will facilitate Africa's advancement to the subsequent stage. In consideration of the restricted purview of this chapter, my attention will be exclusively devoted to Aspiration 6, which envisages 'an Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential

of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children’.

Over the last two decades, there has been a noticeable increase in international apprehension over the prospects of the younger generation, with special attention directed toward the African continent. The United Nations has consistently advocated for the involvement and expression of young individuals. Nonetheless, a significant milestone came with the World Programme of Action for Youth, which marked a crucial turning point in creating a framework that highlighted 15 key areas of focus. This framework functions as a comprehensive guide for implementing policies both at national and global levels, all to enhance the overall well-being of young people. The emphasis on the youth demographic has been consistently highlighted across numerous United Nations gatherings and endeavours. These include the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015; Youth-SWAP in 2013, which expands on the World Programme of Action for Youth and is supervised by the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development; the Secretary-General’s declaration of a Five-Year Action Agenda in 2012; and the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development in 2010, which further underscores the significance of youth, positioning them as a pivotal component of the new worldwide development plan.

Aligned with its global perspective, the African Union (AU), functioning as a regional organisation, announced the Year of the African Youth in 2008. Subsequently, the announcement was amended as it was prolonged to become the African Youth Decade (2009–2018) with the objective of expediting the process of empowering young people for the purpose of sustainable development. The aforementioned statements are supported by various policies of the AU. These include the African Youth Charter which became effective in 2009, the African Youth Declaration on the Post-2015 Development Agenda from 2012, the African Union Commission Strategic Plan 2014–2017 from 2013, and Agenda 2063 which was introduced in 2015.

Against this backdrop, the aim of this chapter is to determine whether Agenda 2063 could be proposed as a tool or whether it is already a missed chance – ‘a pie in the sky’ – for the demarginalisation of youth in Africa.

A Concise Summary of Agenda 2063

The concept of Agenda 2063 was introduced at the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Organisation of African Unity/African Union in 2013. It was later officially ratified during the ‘24th Ordinary Session of the African Heads of State and Government’ in 2015, held in Addis Ababa (Tella, 2018). Tella highlights that Agenda 2063 acknowledges both the historical accomplishments and challenges of the African continent while underscoring the importance of Africa’s rightful position in the larger worldwide framework. The framework aims to utilise the knowledge gained from the previous five decades to steer Africa towards a trajectory of development in the subsequent five decades, with the overarching goal of establishing a flourishing and prosperous Africa by the year 2063 (Tella, 2018:716). DeGhetto et al. (2016:94) assert that the strategic plan has the objective of bringing about a change in Africa’s approach, shifting it to being more people-centred. This involves expanding its scope and scale, while also improving its governance, performance outcomes, and its ability to positively influence its citizens.

As described by Tella (2018:716), Agenda 2063 operates as a prescriptive and tactical structure meticulously designed to steer Africa towards progress and advancement, with the ultimate goal of establishing a global presence within the next fifty years. The statement highlights a call to individuals of African origin and descent, urging them to embrace personal responsibility for the continent’s future, serving as the principal catalysts for progress and development (AUC 2015a:13). The statement underscores the importance of dedication from individuals, authoritative figures, governing bodies, and establishments at national, regional, and

continental levels. Their collective action, collaboration, and synchronised efforts are crucial for achieving this goal.

Tella (2018:716) points out that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were formulated without sufficient input from the African population. In contrast, Agenda 2063 provides the people of Africa with the chance to take responsibility for their own developmental agenda. The formulation of this agenda has been shaped through extensive consultations with influential African role-players and previous development agendas, such as the Lagos Plan of Action (1980), the Abuja Treaty (1991), and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (AUC, 2015c) The participation of various beneficiaries and interested parties, such as the youth, women, civil society organisations, research institutions, governmental bodies, private enterprises, religious figures, media outlets, and other relevant parties, cultivates a sense of ownership and endorsement for the initiative.

Utilising previous development agendas mitigates the risk of duplicating prior errors. DeGhetto et al. (2016) delineate the roadmap into three distinct components: 'the strategic plan, the implementation plan, and the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework'. It is designed to achieve goals in the short-term (within 10 years), medium-term (within 10–25 years), and long-term (within 25–50 years).

The primary emphasis during the initial decade comprises:

- sustainable and inclusive economic growth;
- human capital development;
- agriculture and value-added agro-business;
- industrialization/manufacturing and value additions to natural resources;
- employment generation;
- social protection;
- gender/women's development and youth empowerment;
- good governance, including capable institutions;
- infrastructural development;

- science, technology and innovation;
- peace and security; and
- culture, arts and sports (AUC 2015b:n.p.).

Agenda 2063 incorporates an evaluation and monitoring mechanism to incentivise efficient supervision of development outcomes, foster accountability, facilitate complete integration, and promote active engagement and ownership by states (AUC, 2015b). The plan seeks to galvanise the African populace and foster a sense of ownership over the initiatives. It also endeavours to promote self-sufficiency and self-funding of developmental endeavours; guarantee conscientious, receptive, and answerable states and establishments in the region; and underscore the importance of regional economic communities in expediting the process of continental unification.

To summarise, Agenda 2063 outlines the following factors as facilitators of African transformation:

- The people's ownership and mobilisation;
- African resources to finance its development;
- Accountable leadership and responsive institutions;
- Capable and democratic developmental states and institutions;
- Changed attitudes and mindsets;
- A Pan-African perspective;
- Ownership of the African narrative and brand; and
- An African approach to development and transformation (AUC, 2015a:19–20.)

The comprehensiveness of the blueprint is apparent in its consideration of various issues. These include, but are not limited to, youth, gender, education, technology, climate, agriculture, and the environment.

The Agenda recognises the need for a profound shift in Africa's perspective to achieve its envisioned future outcomes. The elements mentioned above encompass crucial aspects, such as the involvement of citizens, the unification of communication, global matters, and responsibility for

outcomes (AUC, 2015a:50; DeGhetto et al., 2016:94). The Agenda further emphasises the need for accelerating regional integration to facilitate the empowerment of individuals of African descent to have control over their own future. The attainment of this objective can be realised through the revival of African endeavours and political leadership, which include solidarity, determination, and sacrifice – qualities that were once prominent. This revival, especially among the youth of Africa, will empower the continent to confront the contemporary challenges it faces (AUC, 2015a:49).

The Agenda is guided by the overarching vision of the AU and encompasses distinct aspirations. The statement advocates for the Pan-African perspective of a unified, thriving, and harmonious Africa. This vision is driven by its own people and positions the continent as a dynamic and prominent entity in the global arena (AUC, 2015a:1). Furthermore, Agenda 2063 comprises seven key aspirations, namely:

1. A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development.
2. An integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa's Renaissance.
3. An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice, and the rule of law.
4. An Africa that is peaceful and secure.
5. An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values, and ethics.
6. An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children.
7. Africa as a unified, powerful, and influential global player and partner.

A snapshot of Aspiration 6

The sixth aspiration of Agenda 2063 envisions a future Africa in which African women are granted complete empowerment across all domains, including equal political, social, and

economic rights. This includes the right to own and pass down assets and belongings, execute agreements, and establish and operate commercial enterprises. Furthermore, the aspiration aims to ensure that productive resources such as land, loans, inputs, and financial services are readily accessible to women in rural areas. The core objective is the complete eradication of discrimination and violence based on gender, spanning economics, social, and political spheres, and directed towards women and girls. This commitment will enable them to exercise their fundamental human rights without any hindrance. The elimination of detrimental social customs, for example, female genital mutilation (FGM), underage marriages, and obstacles to the provision of quality healthcare and education for females, is also a focal point (AUC, 2015a:10–11). The overarching aim is to create a future in which African women are empowered, protected, and free to fully contribute to and benefit from their societies.

The Agenda postulates that by the year 2063, complete gender parity will be achieved, with women holding a minimum of half of the selected and appointed public posts at all levels of society, as well as fifty percent of management roles in both the private and public sectors. Such measures will effectively break down the economic and political obstacles that hinder the advancement of women. Additionally, the Agenda recognises that achieving the complete involvement of women in all facets of human endeavours and the empowerment of both women and youth are fundamental prerequisites for any society to reach its utmost potential. This vision reflects a commitment to creating a society where women and youth are not only equal partners but also active contributors in shaping the future (AUC, 2015a:14).

African youth and the current context

The definition of ‘youth’ in an African context poses a challenge due to the diverse national policies implemented across various African nations. Table 10.1 illustrates the

different definitions of youth, which complicates how to define African youth.

Table 10.1: Illustration of various definitions of ‘youth’

Country or organisation	Defining ‘youth’	As in/per source:
World Health Organisation (organisation)	10–29	World Report on Violence and Health: Youth Violence
World Bank (organisation)	15–24	African Development Indicators 2008/2009: Youth and Employment in Africa
United Nations (organisation)	15–24	UNFPA Framework for Action on Adolescents and Youth
The Commonwealth (organisation)	15–29	Commonwealth Youth Programme
South Africa (country)	14–35	National Youth Policy
Sierra Leone (country)	15–35	National Youth Policy
Nigeria (country)	18–35	National Youth Policy
Mozambique (country)	15–35	National Youth Policy
Morocco (country)	15–29	Ministry of Youth and Sports
Kenya (country)	15–30	National Youth Policy
African Union (organisation)	15–35	African Youth Charter

According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) (2017:1), Africa’s estimated population of individuals aged between 15 and 24 years old was approximately 229.6 million, constituting about 19.4% of the total population. Additionally, children under the age of 15 years accounted for 40.9% of the overall population, with a recorded figure of around 486 million.

What sets Africa apart is its distinctive demographic trend compared to other global regions. While many regions have witnessed stabilisation or decline in the percentage of young individuals within the population, Africa's youth demographic is on the rise. Projections indicate that by 2030, the population of individuals aged 15 to 24 years old will increase to around 331.4 million, making up about 19.7% of the continent's population.

Africa boasts the most youthful population globally, and this demographic is expanding at a significant pace. The size of the youth population in Africa is set to have a substantial impact on the trajectory of the continent's development. It will determine the array of opportunities, possibilities, and constraints available to this demographic cohort.

Another concern that arises with Agenda 2063, as with many other policy discourses, is the inclination to the tendency to see the 'youth' as a uniform entity (homogenous group), disregarding the significant variation and diversity this cohort is characterised by (Anyidoho et al., 2012; Sumberg et al., 2012). Age categories exhibit variations in that the term 'youth' encompasses diverse phases of maturation, such as the latter part of childhood, teenage years, and initial adulthood, which also imply distinct obstacles concerning education, employment, and familial responsibilities. Gender is a significant factor that distinguishes the experiences of young individuals, particularly in relation to their educational and financial circumstances. Hence, the task of referring to the demographic of young individuals and females, while addressing their respective needs, presents an additional level of difficulty.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 emphasise the significance of advancing the rights and fulfilling the requirements of young people, in all their heterogeneity. The effective execution of the transformative agenda in Africa is contingent upon the active involvement of the youth demographic. Attaining these

ambitions necessitates comprehending the requirements, inclinations, obstacles, and capabilities of the youth in Africa.

NEET and youth marginalisation in Africa

The acronym NEET represents the category of young individuals who are ‘**N**ot in **E**mployment, **E**ducation or **T**raining’, which significantly contributes to the marginalisation of youth. The situation of young people who are marginalised is a matter of universal concern and impact. The topic in question was addressed at an international conference organised by the Columbia Global Policy Initiative (Offerdahl et al., 2014:16). Attendees at the conference observed that the youth demographic has a heightened susceptibility to economic upheavals, societal unrest, and hostilities, and despite the widespread progress made in other age cohorts, the youth often find themselves marginalised.

Offerdahl et al. (2014:17) highlight that the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) contends that a percentage of young individuals, specifically one out of ten, face developmental obstacles as they are no longer enrolled in educational institutions. Furthermore, as noted by Offerdahl et al. (2014:9), despite the increasing emphasis on youth rights, their representation in decision-making forums where they should be valued and engaged members of society is limited. This aspect can be understood through the lens that adolescents are in a transitional phase towards adulthood, which can limit their capacity to actively participate in efforts aimed at reducing marginalisation. Additionally, adolescents often face societal labelling as disorderly, defiant, and undependable members of their respective societies.

Likewise, Beukes and Van der Westhuizen (2018:1) point out that present-day society tends to view African youth as a disadvantaged and marginalised group. This perception stems from several underlying factors, with poverty, unemployment, and exclusion standing out as the three main contributors. The perspective mentioned above is substantiated by diverse research discoveries and statistical data pertaining to the

marginalisation of young individuals from educational, occupational, and/or vocational prospects, commonly referred to as NEET (Beukes & Van der Westhuizen, 2018:1; cf. Department of Higher Education and Training [DHET], 2017).

The RSA National Youth Policy reports various societal issues that result in the marginalisation of the country's youth. These issues include elevated incidence of attrition ('dropouts') seen inside educational establishments, insufficient fostering of skill development, inadequate provision of youth employment opportunities and services, substandard health and medical conditions and treatments, a significant rate of HIV infection and or AIDS, elevated levels of addiction to substances, criminal activities and misconduct, gangsterism and violence, restricted availability to cultural and sporting activities, deficient social integration and cohesion, low engagement in volunteer work, and discrimination, exclusion and marginalisation of individuals with disabilities (RSA, 2015).

Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) (2015:7) highlights that the youth in South Africa are facing escalating levels of uncertainty and disillusionment concerning their potential to secure fulfilling employment prospects. This atmosphere of uncertainty and disillusionment may lead to adverse consequences for people, neighbourhoods (or townships), economies, and the community at large, as underscored by Offerdahl et al. (2014:6). Concerning employment, employers frequently display hesitancy in hiring young individuals without experience, and especially those hailing from underprivileged and disadvantage backgrounds face additional discrimination and preconception (Kousiakis, 2015:2). This tendency persists despite the recognition that young people are in a developmental phase where they hold the potential to act as catalysts for transformation, as indicated by RSA (2015:25). Individuals possess the ability to introduce novel concepts with a unique perspective and are poised to assume leadership roles in the communities they inhabit. In the present challenging scenario faced by underprivileged youth who are striving to secure employment, the objective

is not solely to attain a job, but also to foster hope for a brighter future.

It is noteworthy that young individuals who are without employment are comparatively less capable of making significant contributions towards the progress of their country and have limited avenues of exercising their civic rights and privileges. According to StatsSA (2015:3), individuals belonging to this demographic possess reduced consumer spending power, limited savings investment opportunities, and frequently lack the ability to effect change within their personal and communal spheres. This depiction of the negligible impact of youth unemployment is a cause for concern, given that South Africa is ranked alongside Greece and Spain as one of the three nations grappling with the highest youth unemployment rates globally (Kousiakis, 2015:1; World Economic Forum [WEF], 2014:14). Two factors that contribute to the elevated unemployment rates are socio-economic inequality and insufficient education.

Delving further into the current NEET statistics of African youth, it becomes apparent that approximately 20.8% of the African youth population did not participate in education, employment, or training during the year 2021. The prevalence of NEET has shown a modest rise across the African continent. In 2012, about 20.4% of individuals aged 15–24 years were not involved in employment, education, or training. This percentage had increased to 20.8% by 2021.

Furthermore, a noticeable gender disparity of around 10 percentage points in the prevalence of NEET status among young women has emerged since 2018. It is apparent that despite the implementation of Agenda 2063 in 2013 and its evaluation in terms of both women and youth empowerment and development (Aspiration 6), the annual increase in NEET statistics remains conspicuous.

The National Planning Commission (NPC) (2012:26) has identified that social and economic stability and development are at risk due to education challenges, poverty, youth unemployment, and social unrest. The categorisation of

unemployed youths as marginalised youths is a result of the various social issues that are associated with unemployment. These issues include 'poverty, crime, gangsterism, drug and alcohol abuse, poor health, exclusion, loss of self-esteem, and confidence' (Rankin et al., 2012:5). A considerable proportion of the youth population has experienced demotivation in their pursuit of employment opportunities. Unemployment and limited opportunities can result in long-term marginalisation, particularly for young individuals residing in underprivileged environments. Rankin et al. (2012) made a concerning statement regarding the impact of long-term unemployment on individuals. The authors suggest that prolonged unemployment, coupled with poverty and social challenges, can further hinder the ability of young people to escape poverty and integrate into mainstream society. This is particularly evident when individuals remain unemployed for a period exceeding three years.

Acknowledging the marginalising factors previously discussed and underscoring the importance of addressing youth marginalisation, the National Youth Policy (RSA, 2015:3) recognises youth as an essential component of social development, with the potential to act as essential agents for economic expansion, innovation, and social change.

An evaluative analysis of Agenda 2063 and its current progress

Agenda 2063 underwent a thorough consultation process that engaged a diverse array of stakeholders. The stakeholders involved in the development of Africa include the private sector, African academics and think tanks, civil society organisations, planning experts and development specialists, the African diaspora, youth, women, media representatives, faith-based organisations, former heads of state and government, the web-based general public at the continental level, sector ministries, regional economic communities, and other relevant entities. The commendable attribute of the Agenda lies in its incorporation of the perspectives

and contributions of these stakeholders during the formulation process.

It is probable that ownership of the aforementioned entity is shared among individuals of African descent from diverse backgrounds, residing both within the African continent and beyond its borders. Moreover, Agenda 2063 encompasses a wide range of diverse operational areas. From a geographical perspective, the matter pertains to the entire African continent, encompassing all 54 African nations and constituents of the African Union. Despite an extensive consultation process involving diverse stakeholders and widespread support from all countries, the realisation of Aspiration 6, in particular, remains a challenge. This challenge is evident in the escalating figures of gender-based violence, which have surged over the years and were aggravated during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly during the more stringent lockdown phases (levels 5 and 4).

The persistent increase in the number of African NEETs is a cause for concern, and the emphasis on youth integration is a trend that raises apprehension. Goal 18 of Agenda 2063 encompasses various targets that pertain to the establishment of socio-economic prospects for the youth. As per the Mo Ibrahim Foundation's (MIF) African Governance Report (2019), the indicator for Promoting Socio-economic Integration of Youth (2018) within the Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) (MIF, 2018) informs governmental endeavours towards establishing accessible programmes for the youth in the domains of education, housing, and/or employment.

As highlighted in the African Governance Report (MIF, 2019), the continent is currently experiencing a negative trajectory, with an average loss of -1.4% points since 2014. This phenomenon is characterised by a notable decrease in the economic performance of a group of nations, specifically those recorded in 2013, during the period spanning from 2014 to 2017. Out of the total number of countries under consideration, merely 11 have exhibited progress, whereas

the remaining 30 nations have not undergone any discernible transformation. The socio-economic integration of youth is of paramount importance for the future of Africa, given that approximately 60% of its populace was under the age of 25 in 2019. The African Governance Report (MIF, 2019) indicates that the prominent concern emphasised by the foundation in 2017 underscores the need for dedicated leadership and strong governance in Africa. These factors are essential to pave the way for a prosperous and peaceful future for the continent's youth.

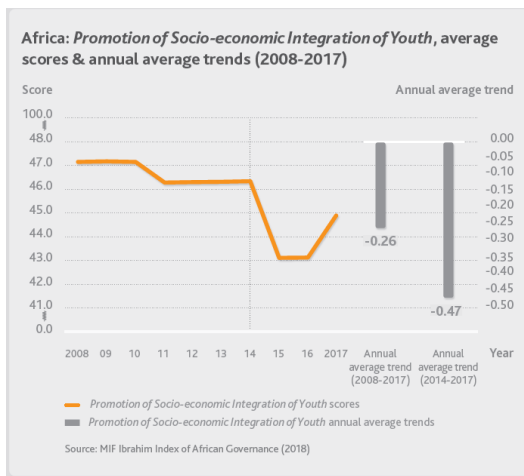


Figure 10.1: Promotion of socio-economic integration of youth. (Source: MIF – Ibrahim Index of African Governance 2018)

As noted by the AUC (2015b:92), the advancement of women's representation in parliament in Africa is inadequate. This deficiency arises from the fact that in several African nations, women typically constitute a minority in crucial parliamentary committees responsible for drafting bills that eventually become law. In relation to the MDGs and the reduction of poverty, the African continent displays a shortfall in one of the most crucial metrics, namely gender parity. The restricted control of authority by the male political establishment, insufficient political determination, socio-

economic challenges, the lack of recognition for unpaid care and household labour, and entrenched patriarchal customs and beliefs continue to impede the meaningful and official participation of women in governance, peace, security, and development processes. The Agenda aims to address this phenomenon as it recognises that the continent’s ambitious objectives cannot be achieved while hindering the progress of a dynamic segment of the populace, namely women, from attaining their full potential (AUC, 2015a:93). Notwithstanding, empirical data and numerical values indicate that the youth and female demographic remain inadequately represented within decision-making frameworks.

Another significant concern lies in the age and length of service of government leaders, which will be explored and discussed in more detail.

Table 10.2 lists the top 20 oldest leaders in Africa in 2017.

Table 10.2: Top 20 oldest leaders in Africa, 2017

Name	Country	Age
Abselaziz Bouteflika	Algeria	80
Akufo Addo	Ghana	73
Alassane Ouattara	Cote d’Ivoire	75
Alpha Conde	Guinea	79
Beji Caid Essebsi	Tunisia	91
Denis Ngueso	Congo	74
Ellen Johnson Sirleaf	Liberia	79
Hage Geingob	Namibia	76
Ibrahim Boubacar Keita	Mali	72
Ismail Omar Guelleh	Djibouti	71
Jacob Zuma (Until 2018)	South Africa	75
Jose Eduardo dos Santos	Angola	75
Mohammadu Buhari	Nigeria	74

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Name	Country	Age
Omar Al-Bashir	Sudan	73
Pakalitha Mosilili	Lesotho	73
Paul Biya	Cameroon	84
Peter Mutharika	Malawi	77
Robert Mugabe (Until 2018)	Zimbabwe	93
Teodoro Obiang Mbasogo	Equatorial Guinea	75
Yoweri Museveni	Uganda	73

(Source: Amupanda, 2018:57–58)

The African continent offers numerous instances that demonstrate how leaders of African liberation movements viewed post-independence Africa as a personal achievement, earned through their heroic efforts. It was emphasised that the populace, particularly the younger generation, should express gratitude towards and commemorate the efforts of the individuals who fought for independence, and refrain from disrupting their governance. As of 2017, it remains a fact that Africa is home to the world's most aged political leaders (cf. Amupanda, 2018:56–59). In order to provide appropriate context and demonstrate the self-perceived suitability of African liberation leaders for governance in Africa, it is imperative to conduct a comparative analysis between the aforementioned information presented in Table 10.2 and the data presented in Table 10.3, which pertains to the leaders with the most extensive tenures (Amupanda, 2018:57–58). According to Table 10.3, it can be observed that a significant number of Africa's most senior leaders are also the ones who have held their positions for the longest periods.

Table 10.3: Africa's longest-serving leaders

Name	Country	Years in office
Denis Sassou Nguesso	Congo	20
Idris Deby	Chad	27
Isaias Afwerki	Eritrea	26
Jose Eduardo dos Santos	Angola	38
Omar Al-Bashir	Sudan	28
Paul Biya	Cameroon	42
Paul Kagame	Rwanda	23
Robert Mugabe	Zimbabwe	37
Teodoro Obiang Mbasogo	Equatoria Guinea	38
Yoweri Museveni	Uganda	31

(Source: Amupanda, 2018:58)

Throughout history, African political leaders have often sidelined discussions and considerations related to youth issues. Consequently, if matters concerning the youth are marginalised, it is plausible that the engagement of young individuals in politics would be further diminished in the eyes of African political leaders. A closer examination of how African governments have established ministries dedicated to youth affairs can offer insights into these leaders' attitudes towards the youth. Therefore, it is imperative to provide a brief illustration (Table 10.4).

Table 10.4: Youth ministries in different African countries

Country	Youth ministry
Angola	Youth and Sports
Burkina Faso	Youth, Professional Education and Employment
Cameroon	Youth Affairs and Civic Education
DRC	Youth and Sports
Ethiopia	Youth and Sports
Gabon	Youth and Sports
Kenya	Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs
Lesotho	Gender and Youth, Sports and Recreation
Liberia	Youth and Sports
Mali	Youth and Citizenship building
Namibia	Youth, Sports and National Service
Nigeria	Youth Development
Rwanda	Youth and ICT
Senegal	Youth, Employment and Promotion of Civic Values
South Africa	Women, the Youth and Persons with Disabilities
Sudan	Youth and Sports
The Gambia	Youth and Sports
Togo	Basic Development, Crafts, Youth and Youth Employment
Tunisia	Youth, Sports, Women and Families
Uganda	Youth and Children Affairs
Zimbabwe	Youth, Indigenization and Economic Empowerment

(Source: Amupanda, 2018:68)

The selected examples of African nations outlined above suggest a prevailing perception among many African leaders

that views youth primarily as entertainers, engaging in activities like football, dance, and musical performances during national events (Amupanda, 2018:69–69). In numerous African nations, youth ministries are commonly integrated with recreational activities, sports, national service, or civic education due to this rationale. With only a few exceptions, this illustrates that young individuals are often seen as a peripheral concern. Therefore, it is clear that the younger generation is excluded from the process of shaping the continental agenda. The marginalisation of young people and its ensuing consequences can be attributed to unresponsive policy environments and the exclusion of youth from mainstream political participation.

Conclusion

Agenda 2063 functions as a comprehensive strategic framework designed to bring about a profound transformation in Africa. Its overarching goal is to facilitate the continent's growth and development, ultimately positioning it to match its global stature by the year 2063. The document outlines the future objectives and targets that the African continent is expected to achieve by the year 2063. Furthermore, Agenda 2063 incorporates a monitoring and evaluation framework to mitigate the potential for repeating past mistakes, even though a comprehensive assessment of the initiative is planned for the year 2063. To ensure effective monitoring and evaluation, a framework comprising short-term (10 years), medium-term (10–25 years), and long-term (25–50 years) objectives has been established. Consequently, the first round of monitoring and evaluation was scheduled to take place in the year 2023.

Moreover, this chapter emphasises the contemporary circumstances in which African youth are situated. It highlighted the absence of female and youth representation in government or decision-making structures, along with the continued marginalisation of young people, despite the emphasis on people-driven development envisioned by

Aspiration 6, which relies on the potential of African people, particularly women and children.

Although Agenda 2063 has been proposed as a potential instrument or strategy to facilitate youth inclusion, given its prioritisation of gender advancement and youth empowerment, this chapter argues that despite well-intentioned policies, young people remain largely on the fringes and consequently, are still regarded as marginalised. While Agenda 2063 could have been positioned as a tool or policy to aid in the endeavour to demarginalise youth, considering its focus on gender and youth empowerment, a pivotal question remains: Is Agenda 2063 an opportunity missed, a mere aspiration without concrete results, or is it premature to draw such conclusions?

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