



Uplifting Africa's Youth

The Uplifting Africa Program

7/4/2022



Young entrepreneurs, full of inspiration and eager to bring change. *Source: GreenTec Capital Africa Foundation*

Micayla Billouin
The Uplifting Africa Program
www.upliftingafrica.org

The Eurasia Center

Uplifting Africa Through Their Youths and Television

Approximately 77% of Africa's population is under 35 years old.¹ The two major implications of these statistics are that (1) the challenges of African countries and on a wider scale, the world, will fall on the shoulders of these youth; and (2) equipped with the tools and resources needed, there is great potential for societal, economic, political change for all other areas of development on the continent as a whole. With an exponentially growing urban population, some projections are that by 2050, urban populations will have almost tripled.² This staggering prediction necessitates a new refocusing on the institutions and provisions for its youth. African nations must investment in quality education, provide access to health care, and create new job opportunities and other crucial resources.



UN projections estimate the collective populations of Africa to more than double by 2050. *Photo Credit: World Economic Forum*

Given this, it is important that they be given a platform to be heard as well as to share, collaborate, innovate, and create solutions to the sustainable development goals and crises such

¹ Mulikita, Jason J. "Young People's Potential, the Key to Africa's Sustainable Development | Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlock Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States." *United Nations*, United Nations.

² Hajjar, Bandar. "The Children's Continent: Keeping up with Africa's Growth." *World Economic Forum*, 13 Jan. 2020.

climate change and environmental issues. Young voices all over the world must continue to be supported and uplifted. More importantly, those currently in power must be willing to listen to them and turn their ideas into policy and action. We have seen young inspirational activists such as Greta Thunberg, a prominent 19-year-old Swedish environmental and climate change activist. More youth and international voices need to be featured, supported by a mass involvement from people of all ages and races. Led by our youth, after all, for it is their future at stake. We need to feature children in leadership roles and as changemakers, not just victims.

“The returns on investment in young people, particularly young women, and adolescent girls, can be enormous, with the potential to catapult developing economies forward and eliminate extreme poverty.” –
(UNFAP)



Source: United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

Presenting Youth Solutions Through Media

One medium for the youth to express their ideas is on *The 77 Percent*, a TV magazine and reporting show. The Nigerian-based program, airs on DW, the most relevant TV channel to African youth, like Millennials and Generation Z. The premise of the program is that it seeks to uplift and amplify the issues, problems, ideas, and solutions of young people all across the segment of society. The show broadcasts topics ranging from positive stories of development,

success stories, new and hopeful initiatives, to the real and heartbreaking events that take place within the 54 nations that make up Africa. The show has touched on things like Sierra Leone locals conversing about their visions of rebuilding a post-war society, Gambian women teaching and learning self-defense, gender-based violence plaguing South Africa, giving it an infamous reputation as one of the most unsafe places in the world for women, as well as discussions with real life victims and families affected by violence.



An episode of the 77 Percent featuring DW reporter and journalist Elizabeth Shoo. *Source: The DW*

One of the most recent broadcasts featured maternal care, a pressing health issue, and another featured issues of parenthood like the stigma on postpartum depression, disabled couples, and the stereotypes that young mothers often face.³ The television program does not solely document and report on statistics of phenomena, they take the initiative to reach out to

³ Deutsche Welle. "The 77 Percent: DW." *DW.COM*

local communities and families to interview those with firsthand experience, not only to gain insight but to ask them what they believe needs to be done. By allowing these children to speak on these issues and their traumatic, scary, emotional experiences, it can help them to heal from their traumas and come together to flip the script.



77 Percent reporters talking to victims of sexual and domestic violence. *Source: The DW*

This reporting style should also be noted and taken as an example. It not only paints a true picture on the effects of their suffering, but it hopes to inspire members of the audience to do what they can to help. The main audience of this program, young people, are seeing other members of their generation suffer, overcome, improve and rebuild. This has the power to not only motivate them, but to get their communities involved to join the effort. It is impactful and hopefully drives a wider, global audience to action. If there is one message that should stick, it is that these kids, these innovators and agents of change need our eyes, ears, and support, in making change in governments, through policies and social programs. They need to be empowered and

trusted in order to improve the conditions they inherited. It is time to give the youth of Africa a meaningful seat at the table.

