EMERGING PUBLIC LEADERS

Young Public Leaders Voices on the Africa We Want

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The Problem

- By current numbers, 70% of sub-Saharan Africa’s population is under 30—that’s about 743 million of the 1.061 billion people on the Continent.
- By 2030 half of that number, 375 million will reach working age—a population equivalent to the combined populations of Canada and the United States.
- It is estimated that more than half of this number will be unemployed or underemployed.

Figure 3.5 Youth (ages 15-24) share of working age population

Note: Size of bubble indicates the subregion or region’s share of the world working age population at its peak. Youth is the estimated population at ages 15-24 years old. Working age population is estimated population ages 15-64 years old. After 2015, all data represent U.N. projections. Produced by USAID Data Services.

Being unemployed is one thing…but not being a part of leadership is another.

Current leadership doesn’t reflect the population. Most African leaders are 55 or older, with some as old as 75.

There’s a significant gap between those composing and deciding policy and those who have to live daily with the policy blowbacks.

At the parliamentary level across the continent, only 14 percent of members are under 40.

In Ghana only 14.2 percent of the members of parliament or individuals in any kind of meaningful national leadership role are under 40 years of age.

Skills training is the solution to the continent’s youth unemployment challenge and the panacea for the lack of real influence young people seem to have across countries.
A lot of governments across the continent, aided of course by their bilateral partners say the education systems will build the foundational skills for the future labor force.

They argue that skills building and education are crucial to fix the unemployment problem.

However, educational and skill-building institutions aren’t the people who create jobs or create spaces to amplify voices. Firms and people do.
An Abundance of Young African leaders…But where are they?

The past two decades have seen the emergence of a plethora of initiatives in response to the challenge of a leadership deficit.

According to a report by the African Leadership Institute, over 700,000 young Africans across the continent have completed leadership initiatives on governance, policies, digitalization, climate change, the economy, and so much more.

It is evident then that there are an abundance of young leaders prepped and poised to take hold of powerful organizations, institutions, and groups. So where are they?

• The report, “An Abundance of Young African Leaders but No Seat at the Table,” authored by the Africa Leadership Institute hits home when it says, “the challenge now is to link the pools of young leaders with job and employment opportunities and not just skill building”.

• The truth is very few leadership programmes pipeline into direct full-time employment. Many programmes offer professional development support and network, but there is a lack of data that shows how these leaders are employed or engaged in resolving real-life challenges after training.

• If the leaders we are raising are not employed or given a seat at the table to create change, then ongoing leadership development is not a viable solution.

• We need to pull up seats for a new cadre of young people who can play a critical role in building accountability for successful economic transformation, starting from within the public service; that engine room of governance.
The leadership pipeline model is a comprehensive way of ensuring leadership is developed and cherished across people or an organization. The model understands one of the main building blocks of leadership, which is how the development of great leaders begins early.
THE SOLUTION: THESE GUYS AND GIRLS
The Emerging Public Leaders Model

EPL believes the Africa we want needs to move away from leadership development.

Our efforts need to be focused on creating spaces for our young people to lead systems change and to showcase ethical behaviour in real world situations.

We believe that the young leaders we have trained need a seat at the table and an opportunity to contribute and be heard.

Over a period of four years we’ve recruited 80 young Fellows for the Civil Service

13 out of 16 regions of Ghana represented

24 Ministries and Agencies Served

Fixing the issues of Gender representation as well; 50/50 gender parity

46 Alumni in the Government/Civil Service

We see results. We want others to come along side us. Across Africa. Create the Africa we want.
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