



Youth Exchange for Skills Development

A new tool for the Africa-EU Partnership

Published by

giz Deutsche Gesellschaft
für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

In cooperation with

inbas
Institut für berufliche Bildung,
Arbeitsmarkt- und Sozialpolitik





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Acronym list

AGYI African-German Youth Initiative

AU African Union

BMBF German Federal Ministry of Education and Research

BMFSFJ German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

BMWi German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy

BMZ German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development

BOG Berufsbildung ohne Grenzen

EG Engagement Global

ENSA School Exchange Programme for Development Education

GIZ Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

KfW Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau

SDG Sustainable Development Goals

SIFA Initiative for Africa

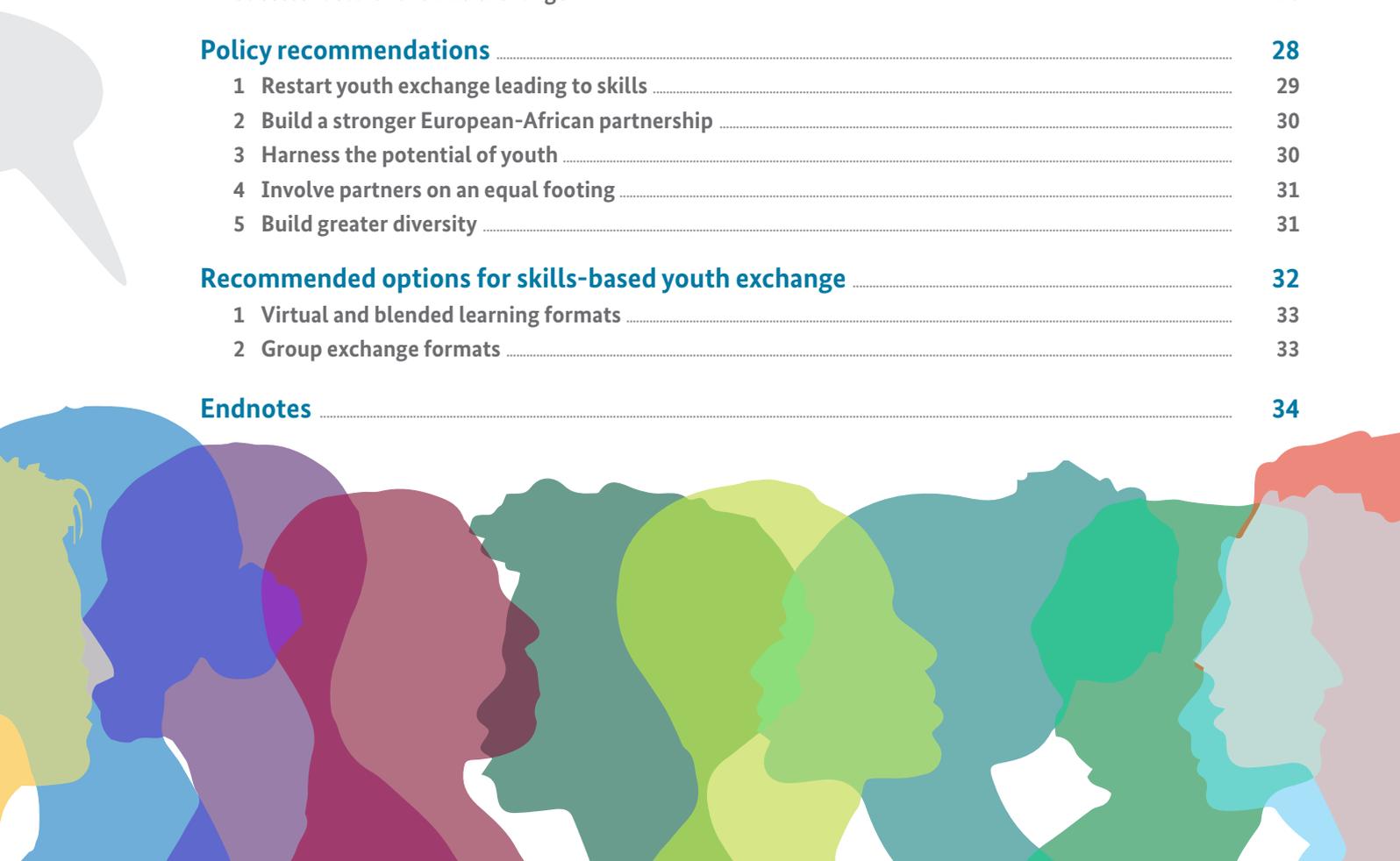
TYC Tanzanian Youth Coalition

WESSA Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa



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Introduction



This policy paper suggests strengthening European-African youth cooperation, giving it a stronger focus on mutual exchange to foster young people's technical and vocational skills.

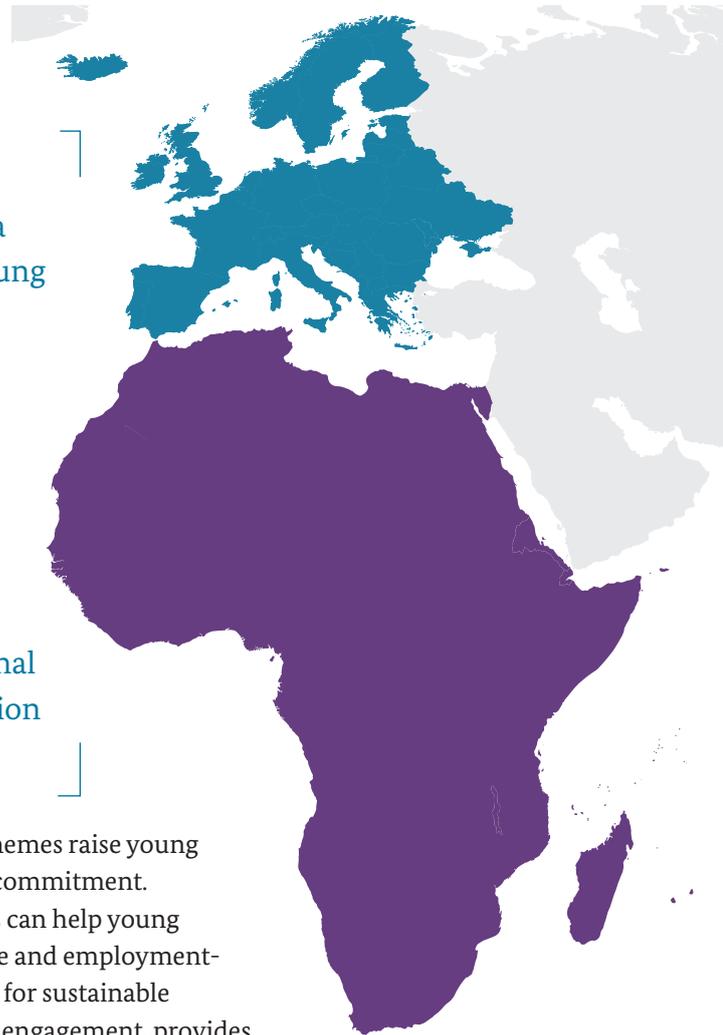
Young people are key actors in shaping the future beyond the COVID-19 crisis. Cross-regional exchange can activate the young generation to take a lead and contribute to sustainable development while strengthening entrepreneurship and employability skills. In response to the COVID-19 situation, transnational youth initiatives can build upon digital interaction and focus on practical innovations.

Evidence from Europe and Africa shows that mobility schemes raise young people's employability, entrepreneurial skills, and social commitment. Education-based youth exchanges and volunteer services can help young people to broaden their personal horizons and acquire life and employment-related skills. Youth exchange in the context of education for sustainable development, coupled with the promotion of youth civic engagement, provides an opportunity for young people to participate in sustainable development processes. Especially those young men and women who have had no access to high-quality skills-based (vocational) training or employment could benefit from international exchange. However, the existing programmes only reach a small elite of youth, while mutual exchange partnerships with African youth coming to Europe face many obstacles.

Policy should harness the synergies between youth mobility, volunteering and skills development with the aim of enhancing employment and social entrepreneurship. Policies and programmes should support strategic partnerships which are initiated, set up and carried out by young people themselves. African youth partners should be on board when reshaping the EU-Africa partnership and restarting youth mobility out of the pandemic situation. Particular attention must be given to promoting gender equality and addressing differences in relation to the access and use by underrepresented groups.

This document provides guidance based on learnings and skills-based pilots during the pilot phase of the African-German Youth Initiative (AGYI). AGYI has been set up as a joint initiative by the Federal Ministry for Economic

African youth partners should be on board when reshaping the EU-Africa partnership





Cooperation and Development and the African Union Commission to strengthen relations between Germany and the African continent and promote the exchange of African and German youth.

Exchange programmes mobilise young women and men for active citizenship, civic engagement and global citizenship. **Young volunteers contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals and the AU Agenda 2063. At the same time, young people can use and gain skills that enhance their employability and entrepreneurship.**



As part of the AGYI pilot phase, partner organisations in the pilot countries set up a skills working group to investigate how to give the young generation the skills they need to solve practical challenges to sustainable development. As the demand for professionally qualified specialists is high in Africa, there is great interest, inspired by the German TVET model, in a stronger focus on skills relevant to the labour market. A needs analysis showed that partner countries are particularly interested in occupational fields that offer long-term employment opportunities in sustainable local development, such as ecologically and socially sustainable agriculture and food production, renewable energies, digitisation and the craft sector.

COVID-19 has had a lasting impact on youth exchange as well as wider development policy. Germany’s EU Presidency has put the following topics on the agenda: the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, strengthening the EU-Africa partnership, making supply chains more sustainable both ecologically and socially, and international climate action. Those should guide the strengthening of African-European youth exchange.

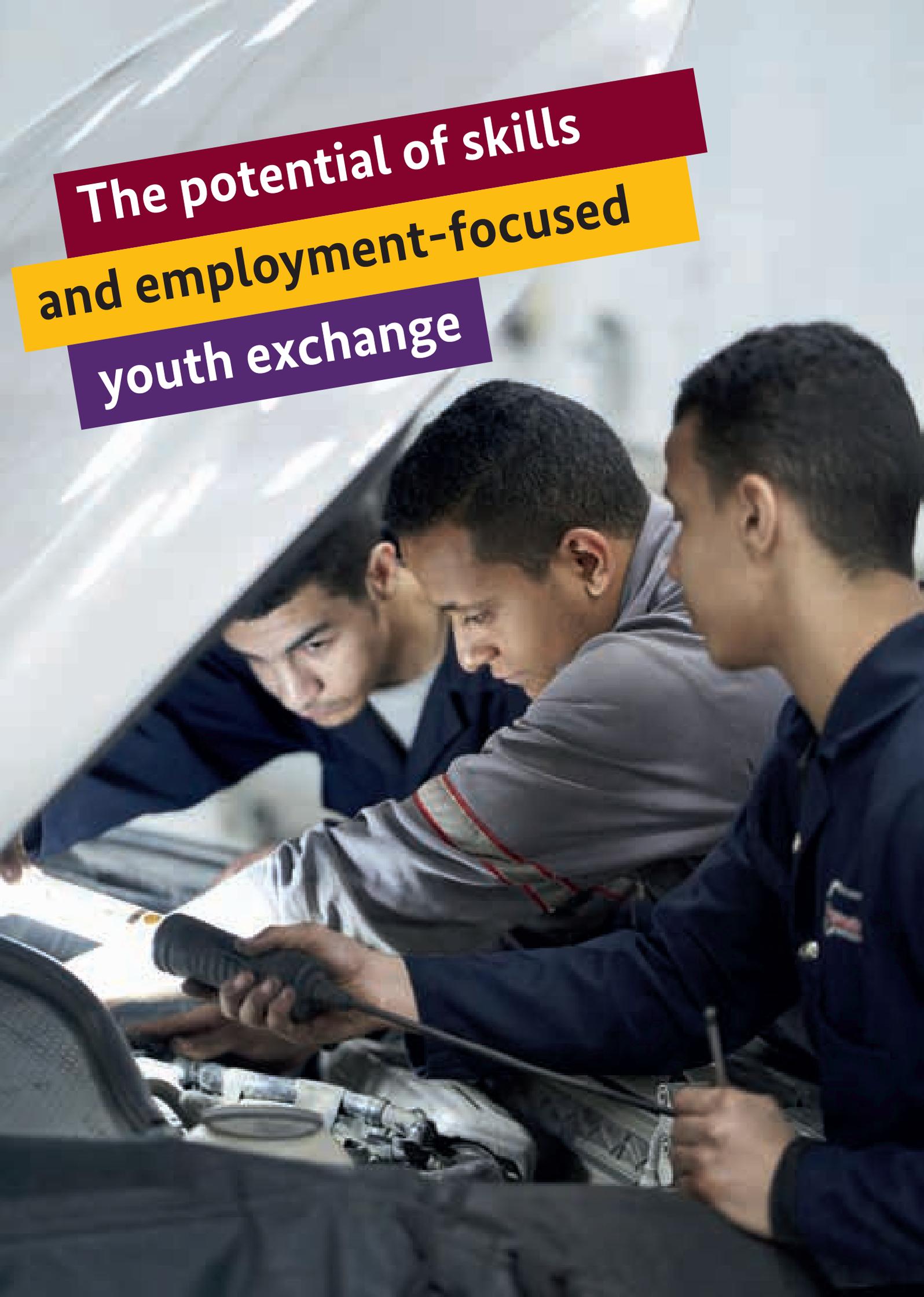


Tackling the crisis with young people as strategic partners

Skills are the foundation for the innovations needed in the COVID-19 recovery. Youth need to build resilience after their reduced opportunities for participation during the crisis. As in Europe, the young generation in Africa faces education disruption, economic crisis, unemployment, skills mismatch, and mental effects of the lockdown. [1] Doors to the future seem to be more locked than ever. It is time for young people to mobilise self-help, act together with their peers, and acquire skills – by building a better future. Policy support and an ability to act across borders can support such initiatives and harness the potential of skills development through exchange.

It is time for young people to mobilise self-help, act together with their peers, and acquire skills – by building a better future.





The potential of skills

and employment-focused

youth exchange

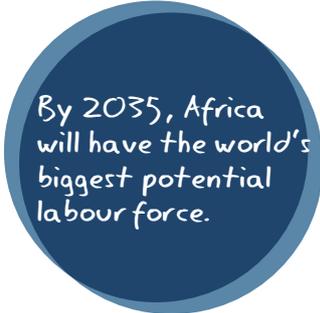
“Africa is the youngest population in the world, with over 60% under 30 years old. If we look into the future, the 2030 and 2063 agendas both lie in Africa as our population will double by 2050. So, the Africa I want is where we value our youth as drivers not subjects of development, where we value the contribution of women and where we own our narratives because our struggle is a struggle for voice.”

– Aya Chebbi, Youth Envoy of the African Union.¹

Africa needs skills for the future. Europe too.

Skills development is amongst Africa’s top priorities. Learning by working together with peers across Africa and Europe on sustainable solutions can unlock a much-needed potential and skills.

African countries share the opportunities and challenges of the strongest young generation ever. By 2035, Africa will have the world’s biggest potential labour force. Africa may become a major producer of the world’s goods and services. The challenge is to harness the continent’s potential and provide work and prospects for Africa’s youth. Every year, more than 20 million new jobs must be created.[2]



By 2035, Africa will have the world's biggest potential labour force.

Involving young Africans, Europeans and diasporas in active, meaningful, and innovative ways is an important priority for both the EU and the AU. The AU and EU Commissions are committed to strengthening their partnership to enhance youth skills development and better match skills with the demands of the labour market. This is particularly so in those sectors with the highest job creation potential, notably in infrastructure development, the digital economy, the climate-friendly/green economy, renewable energy, ICT, agri-business, small-scale manufacturing and the cultural and creative industries.[3] This will accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the AU Agenda 2063.

Young people want skills for inclusive and sustainable development. Digitalisation, migration, demographic changes and the transition to a green economy are significant factors in the changing profile of work and skills needs.[6] As young people seek to acquire new skills to navigate their way towards successful futures, global research shows that transformative entrepreneurial competences such as self-efficacy, creativity and problem-solving have emerged as qualities that are important for the world of work. In the face of these new developments, education and training systems are struggling to keep pace with rapidly changing skills needs. The international exchange of experience can make an important contribution here, by increasing employable skills and enhancing prospects for permanent work and income.

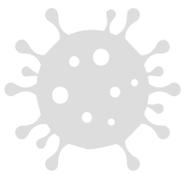
¹ From <https://bridge-it.net/bericht/aya-chebbi-jugendbeauftragte-der-afrikanischen-union-spricht-zum-countdown-projekt>

Youth leadership for youth action

Mobility allows young people to develop competences, discover new cultures, habits and life-styles through peer-learning, and strengthen values like solidarity, democracy and friendship. These skills improve employability, no matter the career path. Among the essential professional skills raised by volunteer mobility are communication, time management, teamwork, flexibility and personal skills. Young people's personal development and employability has been largely recognised by Europe's Erasmus+ programme.

Given the scale and the limitations of still very formal and academic vocational and technical training (TVET), **formal training falls short in terms of employable skills to access work and income.** Triggering young people's self-help capacities is therefore a strategic demand. Unconventional measures are needed to boost their opportunities.

Globalisation also means that contacts with foreign countries and other cultures are proliferating, and not only at managerial level. There is an increasing demand for workers to be competent in foreign languages, have knowledge of foreign markets, and be able to interact constructively with people from other cultural backgrounds than their own. Employers see the skills and competences that mobility imparts as an asset. [7]



With COVID-19, informal and entry job opportunities have mostly disappeared; the doors to the world of work are locked for many young people. The problem is now recognised in Europe, but it is much more severe in Africa, where most young people work informally. [8] Adding to the economic damage, these impacts and uncertainties could take a heavy toll on young people's mental well-being, leading to a "lockdown generation". [9]

As with volunteering more broadly, youth exchange has a wide array of goals, which all hinge on community and personal development. These are the overarching objectives of international and intra-African youth exchange programmes operating in Africa:

- ▶ Empower both the community and individual by strengthening civil society
- ▶ Engage citizens in development efforts to encourage growth at a local level
- ▶ Establish connections across borders and grow personal networks
- ▶ Promote cross-cultural and interpersonal experience
- ▶ Provide knowledge, skills and career development
- ▶ Strengthen inter-cultural understanding and global citizenship

Benefits for trainees

- ▶ Trainees gain new professional and personal perspectives and advance international work experience through a practical phase.
- ▶ They expand their professional and personal skills.
- ▶ They get to know their own job from a different perspective and discover new methods and ways of working.
- ▶ They gain competencies in intercultural communication, sustainable business and global learning.
- ▶ They increase the chances of a successful professional future in a global job market.
- ▶ They gain contacts and friendships for their entire professional life.

Benefits for companies

- ▶ Companies increase their attractiveness as training companies and employers.
- ▶ They gain particularly qualified talents with knowledge of foreign languages, international experience and intercultural competence.
- ▶ They contribute knowledge specifically to sustainable global development, invest in those responsible for tomorrow and position themselves as socially committed companies.
- ▶ They promote the commitment and independence of young professionals through internships abroad.
- ▶ They get to know new work techniques and benefit from contacts abroad.
- ▶ They gain a new perspective and view of their business.
- ▶ They gain access to high-profile platforms for their commitment at events and can network with like-minded people.





Existing mobility schemes

for skills development

and shortcomings

Young people are key actors in shaping the African continent's sustainable political, social, economic and environmental development. Exchange between young Africans and Germans often takes place in contexts of structural and economic inequality. [10] So far young Africans have had few opportunities to gain experience through mobility, exchange or volunteer programmes in Germany or other African countries.

Only very few apprentices and young technical professionals participate in youth mobility. Despite several existing programmes, most are outgoing (sending young people from Europe to Africa but not the reverse) or highly specialised. This means that opportunities for young Africans to participate in those programmes are very few. However, there is a call by partners to give opportunities to more of young women and men.

Exchange between young Africans and Germans often takes place in contexts of structural and economic inequality.



The following table shows how existing initiatives contain elements of a skills exchange partnership.

	Youth Exchange: Germans outgoing	Youth Exchange: Africans incoming
ERASMUS+ [11]	✓	✗
weltwärts	✓	✓
asa programm	✓	Unclear after 2019 reform
 (ENSA School Exchange) [12]	✓	✓
Ausbildung Weltweit	✓	✗
 sequa Business Membership Organisation Partnerships (KVP)	✗	✗
 sequa Vocational Education and Training Partnerships (BBP)	✗	✗
	✗	✓
EZ-Scout Unternehmen. Chancen. Entwicklung.	✗	✗
AHK / BMWi Skills Experts	✗	✗
BMZ Special Initiative on Training and Job Creation	✗	✗
SIFA AU KfW Skills Initiative for Africa (SIFA)		
City partnerships [14]	✗	✗

The above table shows that there is no reciprocal youth exchange programme with a clear focus on skills development. Current German youth exchange programmes either have a clear focus on global learning and do not specifically foster the development of employment-related skills; or they lack an incoming exchange component.

Skills Development for non-academics	Supports lasting partnerships	Private Sector participation
✓	✓	Low
✗	✓	✗
✓	Unclear after 2019 reform	✗
✗	✓	✗
✓	✗	✓
✗	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓
✓	?	✓
✗	✗	✓
✓	?	✓
✓	?	✓
Rare	✓!	Low

Comparing the various programmes, the *AusbildungWeltweit* (EducationWorldwide) programme of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) would seem to come closest to the objective of fostering a skills-based exchange of apprentices or young professionals – if an incoming component were to be added to its current design. The programme has sent apprentices for worldwide and practice-oriented stays abroad during their vocational training since 2017.

Potential entry points within other German private sector cooperation programmes

As part of the Marshall Plan with Africa and the G20 Compact with Africa (CwA), the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) has launched a Special Initiative on Training and Job Creation (*Sonderinitiative Ausbildung und Beschäftigung*) designed to foster growth in enterprises to help create jobs.^[15] To achieve this, it is creating new forms of collaboration with the European and African private sectors, notably by developing innovative joint projects. The aim of the initiative is to create up to 100,000 jobs and 30,000 apprenticeships, to improve working conditions and to promote sustainable economic growth.

German chambers and business associations have built ties to Africa as well. Their Business Membership Organisation Partnerships (KVP) and Vocational Education and Training Partnerships (BBP) are funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) to fight poverty through the promotion of sustainable economic development. The programmes are intended to mobilise the experience and know-how of German business membership organisations (BMO) for development cooperation, enable direct collaboration of non-government agencies and pick up on private sector initiatives. German companies are also starting to search for talented workers in Africa. Since 2019, the German bilateral chambers of industry and commerce have supported the training of workers to secure skills for German companies abroad through the ‘Skills Experts’ programme.^[16]

The BMZ has invited the German chambers and associations to become involved in the Marshall Plan with Africa and the G20 Compact with Africa investment partnership’s Special Initiative on Training and Job Creation. sequa is responsible to the BMZ for the implementation and quality management of this programme, including the PartnerAfrica projects.^[17]

2014 – 2020

Erasmus+ has funded Strategic Partnerships which are now suitable to connect with Africa

2021 – 2027

The European Commission has selected three projects for a pilot Vocational Education and Training mobility scheme for Western Balkan and African countries

EU policies and programmes

The individual Erasmus+ scholarship programmes “Let’s go!” And “Lift” offer trainees from the trade, crafts and commercial-technical areas the opportunity to complete three-week internships in other European countries individually and without connection to a group measure. [18]

In the 2014 – 2020 period Erasmus+ has already funded Strategic Partnerships which are now suitable to connect with Africa. Erasmus+ Transnational Youth Initiatives are Strategic Partnerships to foster the social commitment and entrepreneurial spirit of young people. The distinctive feature of this format is that a Youth Initiative is initiated, set up and carried out by young people themselves. [19] The European Commission has also selected three projects for a pilot Vocational Education and Training mobility scheme for Western Balkan and African countries for the 2021 – 2027 period. However only institutional networking and teacher exchange are financed in the pilot phase, and not student exchanges.

Erasmus+ partnerships can also aim to develop new training content and joint VET qualifications that integrate periods of work-based learning, include opportunities to apply knowledge in practical workplace situations, and embed international mobility experience whenever possible. [20]

Some of the programme’s actions are open to any partner country in the world, but no participation from Sub-Saharan Africa was reported. For some other actions the geographical scope is narrower. South Africa makes up Region 10, while the other African countries fall under Region 11 (the ACP). Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia participate in some actions as Mediterranean Partner Countries which are involved in the Barcelona Process. [21]



AU policies and programmes

With the 1 Million By 2021 Initiative² the African Union Youth Programme aims to catalyse action for youth development in Africa, by providing one million young Africans with opportunities in the areas of education, employment, entrepreneurship and engagement (the 4Es). Twelve pathways have been identified as drivers for the 4Es that will facilitate the expansion of opportunities in youth development, among them skills transfer hubs, internships and apprenticeships, digital skills, job centres, leadership programmes and exchange programmes. [22]

The AU-EU Skills for Youth Employability Programme³ acknowledges the pivotal role of young people for Africa's socio-economic development and seeks to improve their occupational prospects by supporting innovative, job-oriented skills development programmes. [23] The programme is supported by Germany. In 2019, the pilot VET mobility project (Component 3) started to set up mobility arrangements within the consortium of African and European VET providers and to implement mobility in the different EU Member States (in TVET schools and/or industry).

However, the exchange of trainees themselves is not yet envisaged.



² <https://1millionby2021.au.int>

³ <https://africa-eu-partnership.org/en/projects/au-eu-skills-youth-employability-programme>

Success cases

Case

Drip Irrigation Skills Exchange Project in Tanzania

Douglas Mwaisaka from the NGO Tuelimike reports how rural youth used an exchange project to raise their practical and employability skills.

Here in Nsimbo village over 99% of the people are smallholders dependent on seasonal farming. Youth unemployment is a big issue as there are very few opportunities for young people to find a job or employ themselves.

The drip irrigation project enables young people to learn the methods and practices, so that they can find proper work in horticulture or trade.

The target group found it easy to learn employability skills such as communication, teamwork and problem solving, and the project allowed participants to perfect these skills.

Having the drip irrigation equipment on hand and doing the irrigation practically motivated us to learn to use drip irrigation, and introduced us to technology and methods which were new to us and the whole community of Nsimbo and Mpanda.

The business skills needed in horticulture were easy to pick up too. Having drip irrigation equipment changed everything.



Musiegh Madatt from South Africa worked as a weltwärts South-North volunteer at Bonns Fünfte, an inclusive school in Bonn, Germany.

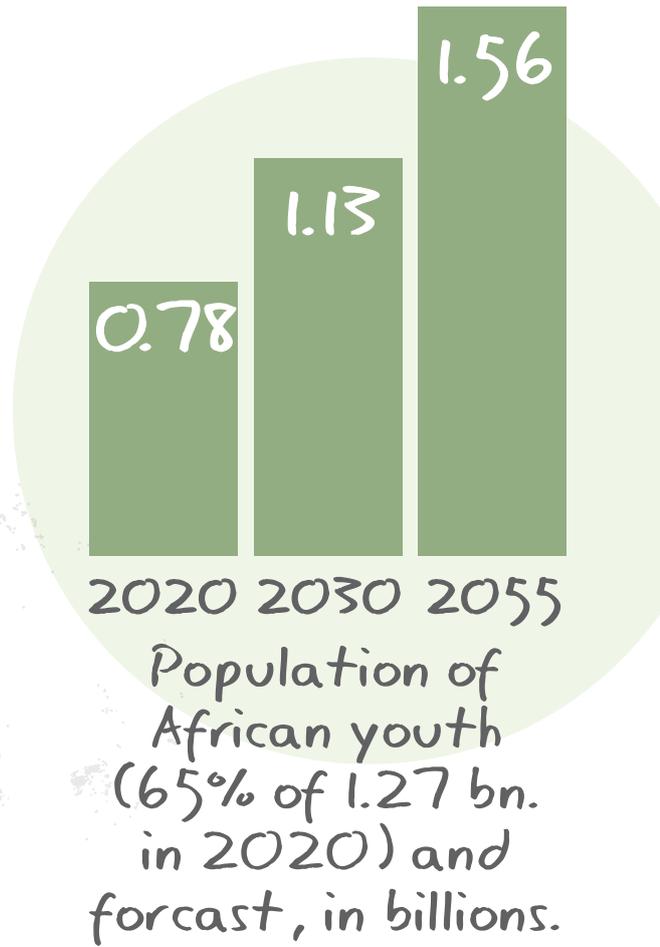
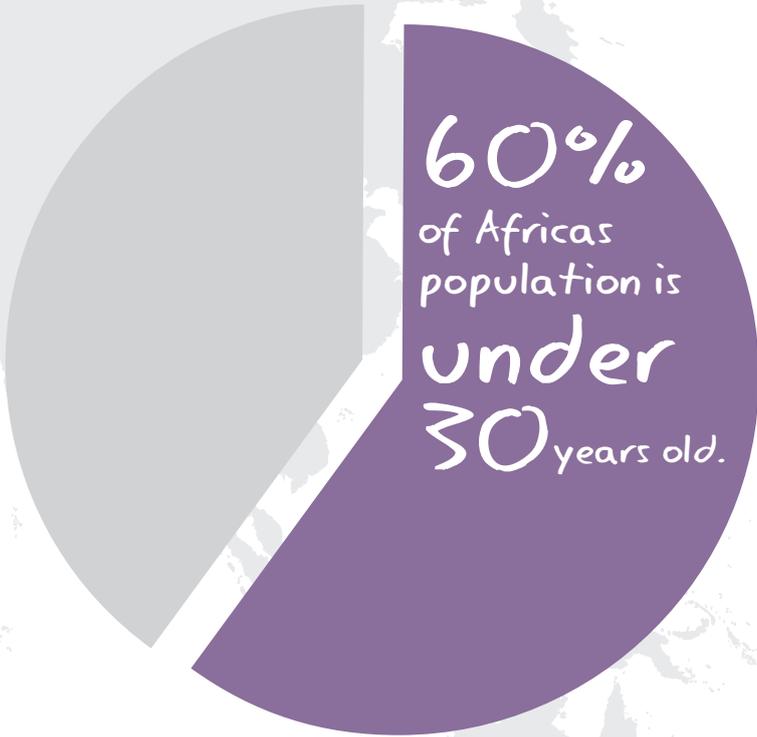
My year of volunteering in Germany has been one of the most profound experiences of my life to this day. I had previously successfully started as a social worker in South Africa and had already completed half a degree in clinical social work. However, I felt that there was more to discover. I decided to take a break from working and studying and jumped head first into this new chapter.

My professional growth during my voluntary service has paid off extremely well. I was able to acquire new skills in a targeted manner as well as promote and develop existing skills. Through my voluntary service I had the opportunity not only to learn a new language (German), but also to improve my ability to communicate with various target groups in my native English.

My experience in Germany will be very useful later when I work in an environment that constantly challenges me on a personal and professional level. I can now face the challenges that arise in my work, and solve problems creatively.

My year of volunteering in Germany has been one of the most profound experiences of my life to this day.







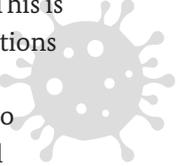
Policy options

support

skills exchange



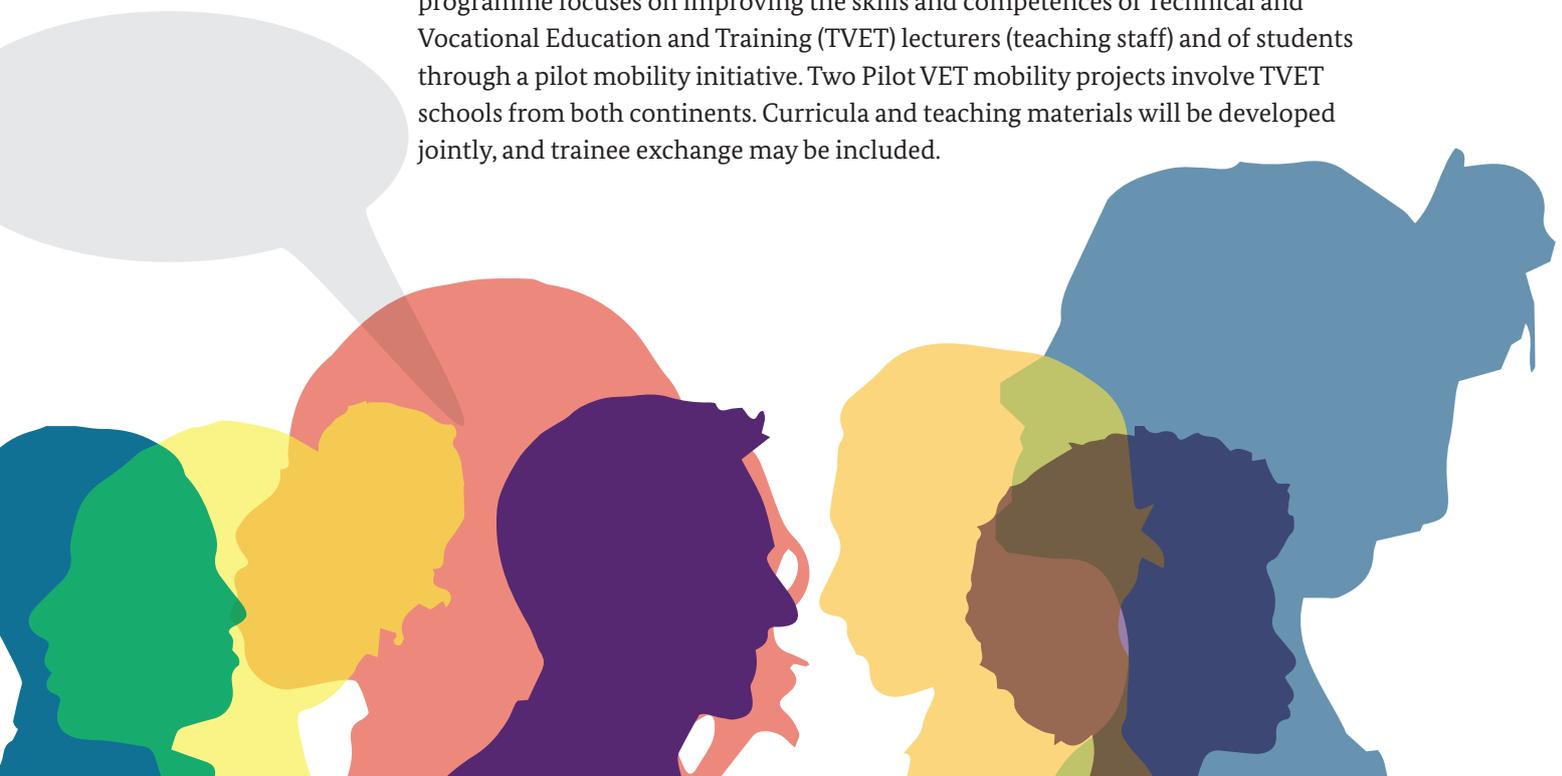
Opportunities arise in times of crisis

- ▶ The 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can form the basis of a post-pandemic plan. In recovery from the crisis a focus on building inclusive and sustainable economies that are more resilient in facing pandemics, climate change, and the many other global challenges is becoming more important. 
- ▶ Both Africa and Europe face a growing number of shared challenges, including the effects of climate change and the digital transformation. The AU and EU Commissions agreed in February 2020 to intensify efforts to enhance youth skills development and better match skills with the demands of the labour market, particularly in sectors with the highest job creation potential, notably infrastructure development, the digital economy, the climate-friendly / green economy, renewable energy, ICT, agri-business, small-scale manufacturing and the cultural and creative industries.
- ▶ Coping with the Corona crisis will significantly shape the cooperation of Germany and the EU with African partners in the coming months and years. Cooperation with Africa has been gaining in importance in the EU in the face of migration policy and increasing economic and geopolitical competition. At best, the Corona crisis can promote an urgently needed renewal of the partnership. 
- ▶ The ILO calls for urgent and large-scale policy responses to prevent long-lasting damage to young people in terms of education/training and labour market prospects. Skills exchange is a solution to the pandemic crisis, as it mobilises active youth participation and contributes to employability and social entrepreneurship. Of course, virtual exchange formats cannot replace all personal encounters. However, digital formats can help to maintain partnerships, ongoing projects and project ideas. Digital skills have grown everywhere during the lockdown.
- ▶ The European Commission has set a high ambition for the EU: to move to a green and digital economy. This translates into its crisis response programme “Europe’s moment: Repair and prepare for the next generation”. Reinforced investment in skills and learning throughout life for all is essential to make this transition successful. As all adults will need to upskill and reskill, vocational education and training (VET) will play a pivotal role in the sustainable growth strategy.
- ▶ Digital technology can open completely new opportunities. Online skills development may become the new normal as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. This is a trend in Europe, and a chance in Africa. Governments and school administrations have adopted e-learning technologies for home-bound students. For instance, the Kenyan, Egyptian and Nigerian educational systems now facilitate access to materials and programmes through cloud services, radio, television, and social media platforms. 

- ▶ The African diaspora in Europe can build bridges and mobilise important stakeholder groups. The AU Youth Division is already cooperating with youth initiatives to develop and implement activities and pilot initiatives with other African and diaspora youth organisations to foster youth employment.
- ▶ One future-oriented skill will be enabling people to interact and work together using digital technology. Smart technology is transforming traditional manufacturing and industrial practices. Teams cooperate globally, while the physical location of production can be decentralised or roaming. Skills exchange is one solution to these demands.

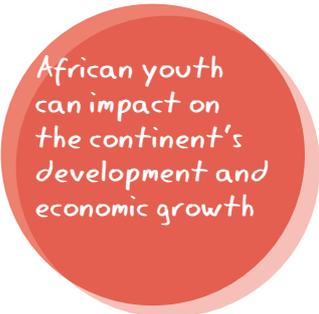
Policy has already evolved

- ▶ Under the joint strategic priority area 'Investing in people – education, science, technology and skills development', Africa and the EU acknowledge the importance of youth, especially girls and young women, and those living in disadvantaged or vulnerable environments. The key objectives of cooperation in this area are to increase access to knowledge and skills, to better link education and skills to employment, and to unlock the potential offered by research, technology, innovation and the digital economy. The partnership between the EU and Africa builds in particular on the implementation of the AU Roadmap on Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investment in Youth.
- ▶ NEPAD is currently implementing a flagship programme called Skills Initiative for Africa (SIFA) in partnership with the AU and Germany. Component 3 of this AU-EU programme focuses on improving the skills and competences of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) lecturers (teaching staff) and of students through a pilot mobility initiative. Two Pilot VET mobility projects involve TVET schools from both continents. Curricula and teaching materials will be developed jointly, and trainee exchange may be included.



Success factors for skills exchange

- ▶ Young people can do amazing things, if they take the lead themselves. A strong partnership with youth organisations, including youth civil society and youth diaspora organisations, will be key for the revitalisation of the EU-Africa partnership.
- ▶ In partnerships, reciprocity leads to mutual benefits. Africans must be able to come to Europe. Incoming participants will benefit from similar learning effects as outgoing participants. Only through exchanges in both directions can all perspectives come together.
- ▶ Skills exchange allows TVET systems to provide attractive learning pathways which lead to future-oriented careers. They also help to develop a lifelong learning mindset, including a willingness to learn about emerging concepts (such as sustainable development, ICT and entrepreneurship) and new pedagogical methods (such as MOOCs, mobile learning and simulation).
- ▶ African youth can impact on the continent's development and economic growth. Infrastructure development, the digital economy, the climate-friendly/green economy, renewable energy, ICT, agri-business, small-scale manufacturing and the cultural and creative industries have the highest job creation potential and mutual interest between European and African countries.
- ▶ Successful exchange programmes need a sustainable implementation infrastructure. The programmes have a didactic approach and guide participants using preparatory and follow-up activities. The guided learning often comprises digital, leadership and entrepreneurial skills.
- ▶ Building on existing structures is always the best option. Large programmes such as Erasmus+ and *weltwärts* can be further shaped to serve the purpose in hand. Many cooperation channels are there to be used, such as company networks, city partnerships, chamber partnerships, faith-based networks, industry delegates and diaspora communities. Dialogue with them should lead the design of actions. Launching artificial new programmes without coordination can damage existing initiatives.
- ▶ Alumni are a key to the sustainability of exchanges. Alumni choose to engage on their return for multiple and complex reasons, but some conditions can nurture and support engagement, such as: recognition (informal, formal and in career contexts); support from sending agencies; access to support services if needed (counselling, debriefing, coaching, etc.); and embedding development education and continuous engagement into wider volunteer programmes that include informed action on return and advocacy as major components.



African youth can impact on the continent's development and economic growth



Policy

recommendations

Decision-makers have a unique opportunity to explore the synergies between youth mobility, volunteering and skills development to increase employability and social entrepreneurship. New initiatives and programmes should build upon the following recommendations >>>

1 Restart youth exchange leading to skills

After the pandemic lockdown, youth mobility needs a substantial relaunch with a focus on employment and skills. The focus on skills development and recognition would be complementary to the existing programmes and would make youth exchange attractive to a broader group of youth. Accessible virtual exchange formats and many creative and innovative ideas are needed.

- ▶ Skills development and inclusion through creativity and the arts should be considered as drivers out of the current crisis. Educational activities and lifelong learning, informal and non-formal learning and youth work (including digital youth work) with a cultural and creative component can help young generations and professionals to acquire skills and competences, including digital competences. These both reinforce creativity in education and boost quality, innovation and recognition of youth work that support the creative potential of youth.
- ▶ Priority should be given to actions that can contribute to job creation, sustainable development and social inclusion, by fostering innovative participatory and intercultural dialogue approaches linking education, training and youth stakeholders with organisations in the private sector.
- ▶ Facilitating the involvement of the private sector as sponsors, partners and ambassadors will be key in furthering the objectives of youth exchange programmes in Africa, particularly relating to increasing employment and funding opportunities. Support from corporates through internship programmes and employment opportunities for youth exchange alumni, for example, would be highly beneficial.

After the pandemic lockdown, youth mobility needs a substantial relaunch



2 Build a stronger European-African partnership

- ▶ Promote youth mobility programmes between the EU and AU countries by enhancing partnerships between stakeholders in similar professions. These can include formal vocations as well as functions in the social, ecological and emergency relief fields (e.g. firefighting, recycling, urban gardening, social assistance). Secure the active participation of alumni and civil society.
- ▶ Build on existing programmes such as Erasmus+ and Ausbildung weltweit through stakeholder dialogue. Build on the contacts that GIZ and Development Partners already have in African countries and add a facility to engage with skills peers in Germany and Europe. Open the Erasmus+ successor from 2021 – 2028 to all African countries.
- ▶ Guarantee equal access to exchange to allow lasting partnerships.
- ▶ Have a multilateral structure and be open to all European and African countries, even if the action starts with a selection of pilot countries.

*...be open to all
European and
African countries ...*

3 Harness the potential of youth

- ▶ Unlock the potential of young people by bringing their talents together to solve the problems of our century. By working together on sustainable development solutions across all borders, young people acquire useful skills for employability and entrepreneurship. This is critical to success in the 21st century, regardless of career choice.
- ▶ Working together in global and diverse teams promotes skills such as problem-solving, learning from failure, critical thinking and collaboration with people of different mindsets and cultures. Ensure that skill promotion efforts are sensitive to gender, ability, location and other relevant factors.
- ▶ Programmes must innovate by developing joint objectives to ensure that young people, including girls and women, play an active role in the decision-making and implementation of the partnership. Youth leaders should voice their needs and expectations towards funding programmes. Especially the African stakeholders should advocate more to design cooperation partnerships to meet the needs of their countries. Aim to reduce racism, sexism and colonial behaviours.

4 Involve partners on an equal footing

- ▶ Governments and public institutions should further invest in and cooperate with organisations directly involved with youth work, and engage with various stakeholders to take advantage of sustainable financial mechanisms. They should pool quality management and know-how, and expand coordination offices in civil society as central points of contact for ministries, to bring together sponsoring organisations.
- ▶ Programmes will greatly benefit from open dialogue between all stakeholders in youth exchange and skills development. The accessibility of information about best practices, experiences, challenges, and successes will enable organisations to make informed decisions regarding the functioning and continuous improvement of their programmes. Such open dialogue will also align expectations between host organisations, sending organisations and participants.
- ▶ Strengthen the operators: host and sending organisations are the central actors in an exchange service. Youth organisations need to be able to maintain an exchange infrastructure, and to cover their costs in the administration of actions.
- ▶ Provide substantial basic funding: for the substantial development of skills exchange services, initial funding is required. Finance incoming costs. Costs before the official start of the exchange (seminars, travel and visas, vaccinations), after return (seminars) and during the exchange (especially accommodation, meals and language courses) should be covered partly in advance. Provide for educational support at home and abroad within the framework of the exchange.

5 Build greater diversity

- ▶ Take action to specifically encourage non-academic young people to take part in exchange programmes, as they gain the greatest possible overall benefit from international youth exchange.
- ▶ Make diversity possible: diverse volunteer profiles that are specific to the agency and job site enable a variety of target groups and milieus to be addressed. Leave no one behind: care for the vulnerable groups. Take care not to crowd out offers that have already emerged spontaneously.
- ▶ Informal skills need to be recognised by educational institutions and the private sector. Create a culture of openness to innovative and transformative skills. Regulate activities only if necessary.



Make
diversity
possible



**Recommended options
for skills-based
youth exchange**

1 Virtual and blended learning formats

Take up digital technologies and innovative and open pedagogies. Digitalisation increasingly offers new forms of communication between young people. This allows cross-border and inter-continental exchanges to take place without travelling. [24]

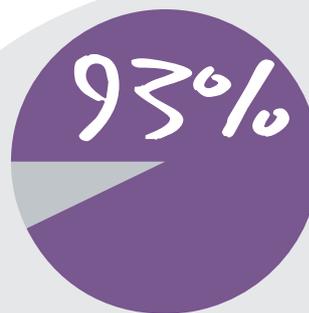
Establish an open contest to award innovative pilot actions. A competition should be used to repeat the action or start a reverse exchange.

How?

Two youth groups (classrooms, universities, youth clubs for 15 – 35 year-olds) exchange virtually on a subject linked to sustainable development (e.g. climate change, peace and security, food security, colonial history). Both groups are pedagogically accompanied to ensure a meaningful exchange.

Through the exchange joint action, the groups identify projects that each group implements in its community during the exchange. Thus concrete cooperation projects on sustainable development trickle down to the community level and strengthen the Euro-African partnership at a grass-roots level.

Interview



are in favour of intensifying cooperation between Africa and Europe.

Source: 'Africa-Europe Civil Society Survey' by IfD-Allensbach among 360 civil society representatives from Europe and Africa, October 2020

2 Group exchange formats

Working in small groups can overcome the hurdles of individual engagement. Guided groups mobilise the potential of all participants. Groups can build the basis of lasting institutional partnerships.

Exchange of trainees and young professionals as part of an innovative group exchange format:

- ▶ A 2 – 3 week exchange of a small group of trainees (3 – 5 people), followed by a return visit
- ▶ Preparation online and at a weekend meeting
- ▶ Follow-up after the stay and continued mentoring

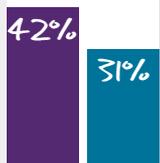
Support through:

- ▶ Initiation of partnerships. Based on the organisation's profile and expectations, we connect the partners or companies with suitable partners in Africa and support them in the first steps of the partnership
- ▶ Support in the preparation of an exchange project
- ▶ Assistance with the funding application
- ▶ Preparation and follow-up of the visits
- ▶ Assistance with visa applications

Interview

5 core topics by EU Commission
in new AU-EU strategy proposal

Sustainable
Growth and
Jobs



Peace,
Security and
Governance



Green
Transition
and
Energy
Access



Migration
and Mobility



Digital
Transforma-
tion



European

important
for me

important
for me

African

Source: 'Africa-Europe Civil Society Survey' by IfD-Allensbach among 360 civil society representatives from Europe and Africa, October 2020

Endnotes

[1] See ILO (11 August 2020) *Global Report: Youth & COVID-19: Impacts on jobs, education, rights and mental well-being*, https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/youth-employment/publications/WCMS_753026/lang--en/index.htm. See also the RAY Network, *The impact of the Corona pandemic on youth work in Europe*, <https://www.researchyouth.net/news/first-findings-corona-research-pro>

[2] See In On Africa (2018) *Youth Exchange Programmes in Africa, Impact Assessment and Recommended Practices Guide*, African-German Youth Initiative (AGYI), <https://www.inonafrica.com/agyi-publication>

[3] From <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20200227/joint-communique-10th-african-union-commission-european-commission-meeting>

[4] See <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1223>. See the EU Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals for compatibility with African countries, <https://ec.europa.eu/migrantskills/#>

[5] https://africa-eu-partnership.org/sites/default/files/userfiles/4th_africa-europe_youth_summit_-_abidjan_declaration_2017.pdf

[6] According to the UNESCO-UNEVOC's 2018 Global Learning Forum on 'Managing Skills in a Time of Disruption'.

[7] See European Commission DG Education and Culture (2013) *Youthpass Impact Study*. By Marti Taru and Paul Kloosterman, <https://www.youthpass.eu/downloads/13-62-225/Youthpass%20Impact%20Study%20-%20Report.pdf> [accessed 01.09.2020]

[8] The youth occupation informality rate ranges from 32.9 per cent in Europe and Central Asia to 93.4 per cent in Africa. (ILO Survey)

[9] On a standardised scale of mental well-being, the ILO survey of May 2020 finds more than half of the young people surveyed have become vulnerable to anxiety or depression since the start of the pandemic.

[10] See Friends of the Earth (2018) *Building an inclusive and cross-regional youth movement for environmental justice. Reflections from African and European youth in Friends of the Earth*, <https://www.foei.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Africa-Europe-Youth-Movement-SofS-EN.pdf>

[11] Erasmus+ is the EU's programme to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe. Its budget of €21.2 billion (2021-2027) provides opportunities for over 4 million Europeans to study, train, and gain experience abroad. Erasmus+ supports traineeships (work placements or study periods abroad) for students currently enrolled in vocational education and training (VET). These opportunities are also open to company-based apprentices and to recent graduates.

[12] ENSA is a school exchange programme designed for youths wishing to broaden their understanding of development policy. It supports school partnerships with regard to content creation along with financial support to allow students from Germany and the countries in the Global South to learn from each other, embrace new perspectives, learn how global relationships work and become committed to being a positive force for sustainable change. See <https://ensa.engagement-global.de>

[13] A number of arts and crafts associations in Europe remember that skills exchange has a long tradition. Since the Middle Ages, young artisans have set out on learning journeys to apply and gather skills during their *Wanderjahre*. In 2014 this 'Waltz' was placed on the UNESCO Nationwide Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

[14] Europe has a tradition of city partnerships since the 1950s, that maintain communication links at government, business, and society level, even in difficult times. ENGAGEMENT GLOBAL SKEW – Service Agency Communities in One World supports Municipalities for Global Sustainability. Some city partnerships have started youth exchange and skills partnerships, most notably among fire fighters and emergency relief workers, and youth exchange partnerships are evolving (e.g. Rheinland-Pfalz/Rwanda and Hamburg/Dar Es Salaam).

[15] See https://www.bmz.de/en/countries_regions/marshall_plan_with_africa/index.html#tab32564603. The first phase of the special initiative only covers measures in the G20 Compact countries Ethiopia, Morocco and Tunisia as well as in Ghana, Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire. The special initiative aims to complement these partnerships with civil society organisations that are innovative, can implement cooperation with business, and have relevant experience in project implementation. Support is provided in implementing the Special Initiative on Training and Job Creation to achieve its goals in Germany and its partner countries.

[16] See <https://www.bmwi.de/Redaktion/EN/Artikel/vocational-training-and-profession/skills-experts.html>

[17] See <https://www.sequa.de/projekte-programme/partnerafrika>

[18] The grant includes a sum for the intercultural and linguistic preparation of the internship as well as country-specific lump sums for travel expenses, accommodation and meals. See https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about_en

[19] See the Erasmus+ Programme Guide, https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/programme-guide/part-b/three-key-actions/key-action-2/strategic-partnerships-field-education-training-youth_en [accessed 03.09.2020]

[20] Erasmus+ Sector Skills Alliances aim tackle skills gaps by identifying sector-specific labour market needs and demands for new skills with regard to one or more occupational profiles (demand side), or by enhancing the responsiveness of initial and continuing VET systems, at any level (supply side), to sector-specific labour market needs.

[21] SALTO-YOUTH working on European priority areas within the youth field links to these countries, combining the Erasmus+ Youth and the European Solidarity Corps programmes. The SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre is located at JUGEND für Europa, the German National Agency for the EU's Erasmus+ YOUTH IN ACTION programme. <https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/training-and-cooperation/about/contactinfo>

[22] See <http://1millionby2021.au.int>

[23] The AU-EU Skills for Youth Employability Programme aims to improve the prospects of young Africans by supporting job-oriented skills development programmes. The multi-annual budget is €91m. See <https://skillsafrica.org>

[24] AGYI has virtual experience of Countdown 2030, and a similar format could emerge. The skills working group discussed a wwB-like small group format.

Imprint

Published by the
Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

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Bonn and Eschborn, Germany

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As at
October 2020

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Name
City

Design
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Eschborn

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