

4th International Conference NOW

“African Youth and Migration”

3rd - 5th September 2017 in Kampala, Uganda

With the world’s largest population under 18, Africa is the world’s youngest continent. While this generation between 15 and 30 years holds a lot of potential, it is also faced with a lot of challenges. Unemployment, poor living conditions, famines, consequences of climate change, terror and armed conflicts, are circumstances that make building a future for oneself or a family unstable, unpredictable, unsafe. Where people suffer from such problems, the situation gives rise to the youth seeking a better future –the central question being, how and where they can find it.

The 5th EU-Africa Summit taking place from 28-29 November 2017 in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, will focus on the topic of ‘Youth’, “which has become a key priority for Europe as well as Africa, in a context of African demographic trends creating major challenges for young people in terms of migration, security and employment”.¹ Concerning the three mentioned terms, Africa’s youth is often perceived rather as a threat than as an opportunity from the European angle. Before this background, we aim to raise awareness for the situation and perspective of the African youth, migrants and refugees, with the intention to listen and learn. As Africa and Europe are connected through a joint past, solutions have to be found together, following a human rights approach.

As a consequence of the economic decay in the course of financial crisis, an insecure perspective of the future is not specific only for Africa any longer, but there - in a wider dimension - they are bound to a context by which the situation is aggravated and often pushes people to leave their home.

Widely ignored by the international public, the world’s third biggest refugee crisis after Syria and Afghanistan emerged in 2017 in South Sudan with about 3.6 Million people fleeing². Most of them are internally displaced (2.1 million), huge numbers are hosted by neighbouring countries and 6 out of 10 are children. Uganda currently hosts Africa’s largest number of refugees, more than 1.2 million people. Not only South-Sudanese, but a large share of African youth grows up in a country other than their country of birth.

Even though travelling to Europe has become more and more dangerous and often fatal, increasing numbers take the risk and try for an insecure future in Europe. The central question being: How can these people develop a safe and viable future perspective – at home or abroad? A country’s youth is its biggest potential, their abilities need to be developed, their needs addressed their wishes heard.

¹ <http://africa-eu-sti-portal.net/en/1040.php>

² www.mercycorps.org/articles/south-sudan/quick-facts-what-you-need-know-about-south-sudan-crisis

Representatives of local initiatives, NGOs, the European Union, the African Union, experts, officials and individuals concerned will gather for 3 days with panels, break-out-sessions and other formats to

- to discuss the situation and future perspectives of African youth
- to identify their positions, their problems, their concerns, their priorities
- to find out how to provide them with a stable perspective on the ground and how to consolidate local pull factors as an alternative for migration.
- to relate to initiatives and good practise models
- to interconnect the stakeholders invited
- to highlight the African perspective and view on the problems and tasks to be tackled, as well as on African and European politics
- to deduct recommendations for the EU-AU-summit to be communicated to stakeholders and politicians representing Austria and the EU at the summit

The conference should bring together about 35 participants from about 6 Sub-Saharan countries and a few European Experts and politicians. Key findings and recommendations shall be published for the EU-Africa Summit.

The conference will be organised by Act.Now in cooperation with the International Institute for Peace and supported by local partner organizations.

We aim to:

- Create a broad public awareness about the subject and the urgent need to address these issues and find solutions
- Expand the knowledge base on major challenges concerning African youth and migration
- Compile a list of material, experiences, models, recommendations and good practice examples from different countries in regard to the major challenges, to be made accessible to the general public as well as to the policy makers and civil servants and those working in the field

Conference Design

- All attendees invited actively take part working sessions, including media representatives, the working sessions are not open to the general public
- Participating stakeholders: Experts and activists working on the issues of the conference, AU and EU representatives, individuals concerned (locals and refugees)
- Everyone attending is equal and his/her voices are equally important
- Working language will be English