Capacity Building and Youth Bulge in Africa

By

Eze Chris Akani PhD
Political Science Department
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education
Rumuolumeni, Rivers State
Nigeria
cherukei.akani@yahoo.com

Abstract

There is no doubt that Africa is trapped in natural resources. Apart from the mineral resources, it has the advantage of accommodating millions of people that can become veritable tools for continental transformation. This is predicated on the maxim that Man creates wealth. Unfortunately, it appears that the teaming population has almost become a paradox. The demographic growth, particularly in what has become a youth bulge has turned to a source of worry to policy makers. If this trend is not economically addressed, it portends danger in the years ahead. This study is to examine how the challenge of youth bulge in Africa can be surmounted with capacity building. This is a qualitative research and data collected was based on secondary sources. These include a review of existing literature, newspapers, official bulletins and visit to some research institutes such as the Claude Ake School of Government, University of Port Harcourt, Choba and the Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law (IHRHL) in Port Harcourt. It was discovered that Africa would face a challenge of monumental proportion if its fast growing youths are not given opportunities to be employed. More important is the fact that the Arab spring was facilitated by youths who saw no future in a system that do not offer them an opportunity for a social reproduction. We therefore recommend that

African leaders should as a matter of urgency initiate a process of systematic capacity building. This would circumvent the occurrence of an African spring, ensure human security and development

Keyword; Arab Spring, Human Security, Development, Transformation, Youth Bulge

Introduction

Africa is the second largest continent in the world and green in nature. This is largely because of its enviable endowment and sprawling demographic population. Orizu (1992:11) described the wide reaches of the continent in this manner.

> More than three times as large as the United States and its possession, the natural resources of this huge land alone qualify it for a position in the forefront of modern states, while its minerals make it both an economic and romantic magnet to less favoured people.

The continent covers an area of 33.313km^2, and lies across the equator and extends as far north as latitude 35^0 and as far south as latitude 35^0 (Ochola, 1975:3). Africa's population in 2016 was 1.216 billion, and in March 2019, the United Nations (UN) estimated that it was 1.310,519,378 making it 16.64% of the world population. It also noted that by 2050, African population would double to 2,527,556,761 representing 26.6% of the global population (www.worldmeters.info/worldpopulation/Africa-population, Retrieved on March 18, 2019). With a 22% of the earth's surface, there is no doubt that the continent has a considerable untapped agricultural potential. Most interesting is the fact that the mineral resources that abound in the continent can position it on a technological trajectory. Unfortunately, this significant advantage has not been utilized for the welfare of Africans. It is therefore, not amazing that almost nineteen years into the 21st century,

Africa is still immersed in an unresolved dilemma, and burdened with a tale of disappointment and glaring despair. Nkrumah (2004:2) pointed out that:

> If Africa's multiple resources were used in her own development, they could make her among the modernized continents of the world. But her resources have been and still are being used for the greater development of overseas interest.

It is a truism that global imperialism imposed the worst form of exploitation and brutality on Africans in the process of primitive accumulation of wealth. This horrendous process engendered the greatest distortions, dislocation and disarticulation of Africa's social formations. They also functioned exclusively in the service of narrow coteries of European interest (Nugent, 2012:8). But by the 1950s to the beginning of 1960s, colonial imperialism witnessed a historic sunset. The African nascent bourgeois class that inherited political power from the colonial State did not waste time to impose, internalize and deepen their preferences, whims, divisive and exclusivist mode of governance.

What was envisioned as a clean break from the despicable past became a mere change of guards dominated by indigenous exploiters and looters in the guise of leaders. It was this coterie of opportunists and blind to productive venture that Fanon (1980:120) described as completely canalized into activities of the ordinary type. Its innermost vocation seems to be to keep in the running and be part of the racket. They initiated a process inimical to development, and erected a political superstructure permeated by sleaze and grand corruption. By the 1980s, it became obvious that the continent has lost focus of development, resorted to arm-twisting tactics and brazen brigandage to cow the people into passivity. The aftermath of all these are rising frustration, growing artificial poverty and penury. Clarke (2010:23) pointed out that:

> The commandeering of the post-colonial state led from 1960s optimism to contemporary pessimism as this political artifact gave way to a re -tribalized culture of authoritarianism within enfeebled states.

It is shocking that by the 21st century, Africa is still saddled with all the pale attributes of backwardness. A continent with a bleak future and unable to provide the basic needs of life to its younger generation. This paper, therefore, seeks to examine how capacity building can be used as an instrument to stem the tide of youth bulge in Africa.

Clarification of concepts

There are two concepts in this paper to be clarified. They are capacity building and youth bulge. Capacity building is an essential condition for human and institutional development. This is predicated on the fact that without strengthening the capacities of institutions, there is the likelihood that they may be moribund, and cast into the dustbin of history. It is within this prism that capacity building can be linked to a process of sustainable development. The United Nation Environment Programme (UNEP) defines it:

> As building abilities, relationships and values, that will enable organizations, groups, and individuals to improve their performance and achieve their development objectives. It also involves initiating and sustaining a process of industrial and organizational change that can equally refer to change within a state, civil society or the private sector, as well as change in process that enhance cooperation between different groups of society (UNEP, 2006:1).

According to Ani (1997:4), capacity building is the ability to formulate plans, identify and select viable options, execute, monitor and evaluate implementation of plans. It is a vital stage in the development process that is responsible for skill renewal, strengthening of capacities and evaluation of goals so that the individual, community or organization may not be caught napping in the face of challenges. It is a holistic process geared towards the sustenance and solidification of abilities and values of today to satisfy tomorrow's needs. If the capacity of a people is allowed to waste or wither away without some form of renewal and building, it automatically results to consigning the future to chaos and Hobbesian state of nature. The United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) averred that capacity building is not in a vacuum, but must be rooted in a broader development objective, such as a national development strategy within a particular theme (Primer, 2009). It is an indispensable process in the sustenance, continuity and revitalization of humanity. This was why Muhtar (1997:20) pointed out that:

> The objective of capacity building is the ability to create the framework for identification and analysis of problems and formulation, and implementation of solutions to enhance sustainable human development.

The systematic process of building skills, creating the framework that would enhance the formulation and implementation of solutions to human or institutional problems, is the core of capacity building. Indeed, it is a long-term continual process of development involving all interested members including the civil society groups, community members and the academia (Premier, 2009). Poelzer (1998:2) stated that:

> Capacity building for people focuses on the process and goals of strengthening human potentials in the participation of public decision making and the achievement of public goals

> within other opportunities and constraints of the social, political, economic and natural environment.

From our discourse thus far, we can sieve out some of the essential ingredients of capacity building. They include:

(1) Development
(2) Human empowerment
(3) A continuous process
(4) Holistic in nature
(5) Sustainability
(6) Multiple in process

These six ingredients explore the core of capacity building even though we are concerned with building the capacity of the youth. It is axiomatic that a society that is constantly involved in capacity building processes from time to time would hardly experience youth brigandage and lingering restiveness. The 1950s did not discern capacity building as important in human development; hence it was relegated to institutional building. But with the increasing complexity of the globe and its attendant problems, crises and conflicts, the UN was compelled to pay attention to its relevance to social development. In 1991, it became capacity building under UNDP, and in 1992 it became an integral part of Agenda 21. This is Agenda for the 21st century, and it arose as a product of the Earth Summit on June 13, 1992, in Rio de Jameiro, Brazil; The Agenda has 350 pages and 40 chapters. It was in chapter 37 that it emphasized the need for capacity building.

> A country's ability to develop more sustainably depends on the capacity of its people and institutions to understand complex environment and development issues so that they can make the right development choice (Agenda 21).

In 2000, the UNDP launched the Capacity Building Initiative (CDI) through its strategic partnership with Global Environmental Facility (GEF). In 2002, it received a significant boost when the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and GEF reaffirmed the priority of building the capacity of developing countries. Today, capacity building has become a catch phrase in development studies and synonymous with social transformation and involves the following:

(1) Human resource development
(2) Organizational development
(3) Institutional and legal framework development.

Youth Bulge

The concept of youth bulge is relatively new within the global lexicon. Nevertheless, from the 1990s, it started gaining scholarly attention. In most international conferences that focus on developing countries, particularly Africa, youth bulge occupies a prominent space in the discourse. It is against this backdrop that we want to examine the concept. Youth is often regarded as a period of transition from childhood to adulthood. It is the important and crucial stage of one's life, and the productive part of humanity. This was why Maria Fernanda Espinosa Gares, President of the 73rd United Nations General Assembly stated that "youth are amongst our best educated, most innovative, and most creative resources". Any community or State that lacks this group of humanity is on its way to extinction. This group ranges from 18 to 40 years. They embody the dialectical forces, energy and philosophical vision of a State. They are impressionistic, innovative; represent struggles of the present and hope of a sustainable future. It can be argued that any community or state that does not initiate a systematic socialization process that would equip the youth is on its way to a dead end. Youth bulge, therefore, means a situation where there is an increase in youth population without a corresponding systematic process to strengthen, build and enhance their skill so that they can surmount the challenges confronting them. This is a situation

confronting Africa. The concept was popularized by Gumar Heinsohen in the 1990s. He was preceded by Gary Fuller and Jack A. Goldstone. They argued that developing countries undergoing a 'demographic transition' are vulnerable to civil conflict and rising frustration. This occurs when available social amenities and welfare policy cannot accommodate the rapid rate of growth of young people. When this innovative, vibrant and energetic young people are deprived and denied of the basic means of existence, the aftermath is exacerbation of unemployment, underemployment, and denial of self-esteem, social discontent and acts of criminality. Regrettably, this is the sad scenario in Africa. According to Chatterjec Siddath, United Nations Development Programme Resident Coordinator in Kenya, by 2050 Africa would have 830 million young people, and between 10 and 12 million people join the African labour force each year, yet the continent creates only 3.7 million jobs annually (UNDP, 2017). The point here is that, Africa is producing more energetic youth, but not meaningfully engaged in such a manner to reproduce their potentials and create value. This is to say Africa is within the verge of a social catastrophe because in most of the fifty-four countries, youths are the largest demographic. On the verge, 41.45% of African youths are below age 15 while 19-28 are between the ages of 15 and 24 (Arab Nowa, 2019). Nnadozie (2017:5) also pointed out that:

> Between 2000 and 2008, Africa's working age population (15-64 years) grew from 443 million to 550 o million or 2.7% a year. The Bulk of Africa's population is becoming more youthful. With youth as a proportion of the total population projected at more than 75% by 2015, due to the high fertility rate underlying the demographic momentum.

The above statements demonstrate the rising youth population in Africa. This has made it to be referred to as the youngest continent. While this can

portend a good omen, but it can only be realized if there is a policy as a driver of change. Ezekiel-Hart (2019:21) pointed out that in 2006, Nigeria's population of about 191,036,000 had a youth population of about 67 million out of which about 42% of these do not have any means of livelihood and only about 20% had more than secondary school certificate. Ovia (2018:91) also pointed out that in Nigeria, more than half of the 182 million citizens are under the age of fourteen creating a phenomenon sometime called a youth bulge. What is worrisome about youth bulge is not the contribution increase of youth people but the inability of states to channel this energy to productive and regenerative uses. They should not be allowed to fallow aimlessly and become susceptible to anti-social activities. In most African countries, unemployment is high as in Nigeria with 18.8%, South Africa 27.7% and Kenya 22.17% (Spectator Index). The unemployed African young population constitute 60% (World Bank, 2011), while 40% of Africa's people will be below the age of 15 years and 60% below 25 years (Horn of Africa Bulletin, 2018). This is a portrayal of a gathering storm unless a policy is put in place to reverse the unwholesome effect.

Effects of Youth Bulge in Africa

Youth bulge in the continent which is a demographic momentum in favour of young people is not a curse. It is a signal of hope under a responsive Government. Sadly, this latent human capital has become a source of worry to the continent. The lackluster leadership and neo-patrimonial governance has placed Africans within the neo-colonial noose. It is stupendous that in spite of its vaunted resources, the continent has failed to provide its young population the necessities of life. This glaring neglect has triggered a groundswell of discontent and frustration manifested in civil conflicts, wars, movement to other places for survival, human trafficking and terrorism. The frustration of the youth was highlighted at the 2018 International Youth Day on August 12 and the theme was "Safe Spaces for the Youth". Antomio Gutterres, Secretary General of the UN declared that:

> The frustration generated in young people that have no hope in the future is a major source of insecurity in today's world. And it is essential that when states plan their economic activities, when the international community develops forms of cooperation, they put youth employment, youth sills at the centre of all priorities (Secretary-General's Address, 2018).

It is this frustum that has induced many African youths to identify with fundamentalist groups like Al Shabaab, Boko Haram and even Isis. With the hope of 'eldorado', they end up living a monster-like and wicked life. This danger prompted Akufo-Addo, Ghana President to declare that "I fear for the future. We must do something about the current unemployment rate in Ghana because if care is not taken, something bad may happen" (Africa Renewal, 2017).

When young people are unemployed and existing in a hopeless environment, they constitute a cannon fodder for lawlessness and manifest traits of social phobia. This suggests why 40% of people who took part in rebel movements mentioned unemployment as a factor in leading them to join rebel groups (World Bank Survey, 2011). Between 1990 to 1999, 8% of civil conflicts occurred in countries where 60% of the population are under 301 and 67 countries with youth bulge, 60% of them are experiencing social unrest and violence (Population Action International). The UNDP also stated that every 24 hours nearly 33,000 youths cross Africa to join the search for employment. 60% joining the army of unemployment (UNDP, 2017). The desire to abandon their home to look for non-existent work in Europe and North America has led to passing through dangerous ordeal, such as crossing the Atlantic Ocean. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that 1,600 people died crossing the Mediterranean Sea (UNHCR, 2018). The International Organization for Migration (IOM) also reported that in 2017, 172,152 were caught crossing to Europe, the number decreased to 51,782 in 2018; with about 1,490 dead or

missing (Telegraph, 2018). The insecurity in Nigeria and the never-ending electoral fraudulence can be attributed to the youth bulge in the country. It is possible that the youth bulge in Africa may reach a crescendo where it will explode as Africa spring. This cannot be wished away because Zakaria (2001:24) pointed out that:

> The Arab world has a problem with its Atlas in more than one sense. Globalization has caught it at a bad demographic moment. Arab societies are going through a massive youth bulge, with more than half of most countries' population under the age of 25.

It was the increasing disillusionment of Arab youth that triggered the Arab spring that swept many presidents off the stage. Uraal (2004:1) stated that in 2001, 33 internal armed conflicts with more than 25 battles, and battle-related casualties took place in 28 different countries. Eleven of these conflicts inflicted more than 1,000 casualties. Africa participated in these wars because they have become a strategy for social transcendence. This volatile situation is compounded by the growing poverty and unemployment in the continent, especially sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) (see table 1).

Table 1: Youth Unemployment in Africa

Year	World	Africa	SSA	North Africa
2007	11.6	13.6	11.5	23.8
2009	12.6	13.5	11.5	23.6
2010	12.7	13.3	11.4	23.1
2011	12.6	12.5	11.5	17.9
2015	12.7	13.9	11.4	26.4
2016			13	30.5

Source: International Labour Organization (2012)

Apart from the excruciating unemployment, it has been forecasted that by 230, the rate of extreme poverty would be amazingly high in some African

countries. This means that by 2030 more than 400 million people will still live in extreme poverty (see table II).

Table II: Forecasted Extreme Poverty Rate (%)

Countries	2018	2030
South Sudan	85	95
Burundi	74	85
Congo	45	54
Nigeria	44	46

Source: World Poverty Check (2018)

A combined reading of tables I and II would come to the inevitable conclusion that the future is shrouded in bleakness and portend a gathering storm. In table I, from 2007 to 2016, Africa overtook the number of youth unemployment in the world with 13.6%, while North Africa doubled the rate with 23.8% out of the global rate of 11.6%. In the second table, the rate of poverty in four countries, including Nigeria – an oil producing country would increase from 46 to 95% eleven years. This unarguably explains the vulnerability of and human insecurity associated with Africa, especially North African countries like Algeria, Sudan, and Libya. These countries have drained the hormone of Arab spring. The fact that SSA has not experienced its own African spring does not exonerate it from the imminent doom. This is extremely important because according to Branngnant (1994:16),

> Unemployment in any society weakness the political system's legitimacy and stability. Such condition produce a climate of radicalism particularly among unattached youths who the least to lose in the gamble and struggle for revolutionary gain.

When young people are faced and forced to dine with poverty, hopelessness and pain of idleness, correspondingly they become

protagonists of protest, reform and agitation for a aching of the status quo. This vividly explains the participation of the youth in most of the fundamentalist groups, anti-social gangs, drug addiction, human trafficking and exodus to Europe and North America through an awe inspiring channel for survival. In this situation of hopelessness and agony, their mindset is fixated on negativity and disenchantment with everything around them. A sense of lost, abandonment and depression begins to manifest. Indeed, when these signals begin to manifest in a state, it is suggestive of a hurly-burly in the offing. In other words, Africa may be approaching the celebration of its own spring. It is within this prism that Agbor, Taiwo, and Smith (2016:9) warned that:

> While such uprisings have not spread to sub-Saharan Africa, the youth in this region are potential destabilizing factor. A large portion of the youth population remains unemployed and their economic status is being made worse by rising fuel and food costs. Even in the absence of large scale revolts, youth unemployment represents an economic cost to society in terms of cost of potential growth and increased crime.
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Youth bulge has become a source of worry and concern to Africa and the international community in the 21st century. This is because of its adverse effect on the society if allowed to tread on its trajectory. But they can also offer a window of opportunity only if the relevant policy in conscientiously enunciated. This is the focus of the next section.

Respond to Youth Bulge

The rising youth population in Africa without a corresponding youth employment has necessitated the urgent need for capacity building. Building the capacity of the youth will ensure youth entrepreneurship, standardized strategies for harnessing the growing energy and potentials.

These would be appropriately channeled to creative and innovative areas for the benefit of humanity. It would also guarantee self-employment, self-esteem, sustainability and stability of the ecosystem. Capacity building becomes a systematic process to dissuade the youth from being mercilessly used as cannon fodders by war mongers, makes them less vulnerable to political deceit and dispensable materials for electoral fraudulence. They become insulated from the antics of ethnic jingoists who ride on the crest of primordialism for socio-economic and political largesse. The 2007electoral violence in Kenya that killed more than 1,500 people and that of 2015 are associated with the promptings of the ruling class. The importance of capacity building was emphasized during the launch of Youth 2030 on September 24, 2018. According to the Secretary General,

> All hopes for a better world rest on young people. Sustainable development, human rights, and peace and security can only be achieved if we empower these young people as leaders and enable them to unleash their full potential (UN Secretary-General's Address, September 4, 2019).

The Secretary-General's address is recognition of the fact that preservation of the future is largely dependent on strengthening the ability and capacity of the youth. It was in furtherance of this ideal that the UN designed myriad structures that would enhance and embolden capacity building programmes. This include:

(1) The International Youth Day, August 12.
(2) World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY)
(3) Declaration of Intent on Youth-Problems and Potentials (DIY).
(4) UN Youth Strategy – Youth 2030: Working with and for Young People.

These laudable programmes represent a bold step in the recognition of the imagination, ideals and vital contributions of the youth in the development of society. WPAY was launched through a UN Resolution 50181 on March 13, 1996. It was to provide policy framework and practical support to improve the situation of young people. The Declaration of intent on youth which is subsumed in SWAY is aimed at:

(1) Attainment of an education commensurate with their (youth) aspirations.
(2) Access to employment opportunities equal to their abilities.
(3) Food and nutrition adequate for full participation in the life of a society.
(4) Participation in decision-making process in other to realize the above objectives, the UN directed that,

> Every state should provide its young people with opportunities for obtaining education, for acquiring skills and from participating fully in all aspects of society. With a view to inter-alia acquire productive capacity and larding sufficient lives (UN Economic and Social Affairs).

The UN Youth strategy – Youth 2010 was launched at the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) on September 24, 2018. The strategy is focused towards ensuring that every young person is in education, learning training or employment by 2030. It also seeks to significantly strengthen the capacity of UN to engage young people from their point of view, knowledge, and to make sure that the UN programmes and policies on youth matters are carried out in a coordinated, coherent and holistic manner. The preamble of WPAY in no uncertain terms that; the world today is home to the largest generation of young people in history. 1.8 billion Close to 90 percent of them live in developing countries, where they constitute a large population of the population. The youth 2030 strategy

should help the UN become a leader in working with young people and should spur new partnerships, but bold new approaches will be required to deliver it (https//news/un-launching-2030-strategy-and-global-partnership-initiative-for-youth, Retrieved on 15/4/2019).It is important to note that there are five principles upon which the strategy is anchored. These are:

(1) To amplify youth voices for the promotion of a practical, just and sustainable world.
(2) To support young people's greater access to quality education and health services.
(3) To support young people's greater access to decent work and productive employment.
(4) To protect and promote the rights of young people and support their cause and political engagement.
(5) To support young people as catalysts for peace and security and humanitarian actions.

To enhance the actualization of this programme, the UN created a high-level steering committee, chaired by the Secretary-General's envoy on youth. The committee is made up of a UN Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development (IANYD), and two biannually rotating representatives of a global youth platform. Recognizing the call from the UN to involve the youth capacity building as stated above, and realizing that something has to be done to prevent the likelihood of an Arab spring version in Africa, its rulers under the aegis of African Union Common (AU) convoked a summit in 2011 in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea. The summit declares that youth unemployment is an impending threat to stability in Africa. It also declared 2009 – 2018 as a Decade for Youth Action Plan. Other programmes include:

(1) The African Union Youth Volunteer Corps (AU-YVC)
(2) The African Youth Charter (AYC)
(3) African Central Framework on Youth Development-Mainstreaming Agenda 2063.

(4) Africa Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF).

The AU-YVC was launched on December 3, 2000 in Abuja, Nigeria. It is primarily focused on ways to empower African Youths in all ramifications, and also deepen the status of young people in Africa s key participants in the delivery of Africa's human development targets and goals. Specifically, AU-YVC among other things is:

(1) To engage Africa's youth on the continent's development through meaningful youth participation by providing service to their continent.
(2) To provide opportunities to young Africans to serve and gain crucial professional experience, soft skills, social experience, international exposure and leadership skills.
(3) To promote shared values and pan-Africanism among upcoming generation.

The African Central Framework was launched by the New Partnership for African Development (NEPA) on August 15, 2015. It recognized that 'young Africans are key to an African Renaissance and would remain players in and advocates of social transformation, and development in all spheres'. The main objective of the framework is to assist African member states to define their national policy scheme with an operational plan, objectives of inclusive growth… taking into account the African youth charter. Specifically, it is:

(1) To provide a platform for the implementation and monitoring of the African youth charter.
(2) To encourage a national response to the global jobs part of the International Labour Organization (ILO).
(3) To help address key challenges facing African youth in the operational engagement in social, economic and political spheres.

AYC can be seen as a landmark in the determination to jettison youth violence in Africa. It was launched by the African Union common (AUC) on July 2, 20066, and came into force on august 8, 2009. Between 2004 – 2007, AUC strategic plan gave priority to youth development and empowerment. The AUC preamble succinctly stated the concern of African rulers to rescue African youths from any acts of criminality. It noted that: convinced that Africa's greatest resource is its youthful population and that through their active and full participation; Africans can surmount the difficulties that lie ahead.

Article 10(1-2) which is on development, stated that:

> Every young person shall have the right to social, economic, political and cultural development with due regard to their freedom and identity and in equal enjoyment of the common heritage of mankind.
>
> States parties shall encourage youth organization to lead youth programmes and to ensure the exercise of the right development.

Article 11(1-2^{a-c}) asserted that:

> Every young person shall have the right to opportunities in all spheres of society: states parties shall take the following measures to promote active youth participation in society.
>
> They shall:
>
> (a) Guarantee the participation of youth in parliaments and other decision-making bodies in accordance with prescribed laws.
>
> (b) Formulate the creation or strengthening of platforms for youth participation in decision-making all local, national, regional and continental levels of governance.

(c) Ensure equal access to young men and young women to participate in decision-making and in fulfilling civic duties.

The framework is a reaffirmation, reinforcement and rededication of the ideals of Agenda 206, particularly the sixth aspirations. It envisioned an Africa where development is people-driven, unleashing the potential of its women and youths. This translates to the fact that young people would constitute an integral part of the drivers to realize the Africa we want which is a strong, united, and influential global player and partner. The ACBF was established in 1991 with thirty-nine African countries as members. The Foundation became imperative to meet the continent's capacity for good governance and economic development. Its presence can be felt in more than forty-five countries through its capacity building programmes. The Foundation also has a five year strategy from 2007 – 2023 to produce skilled people in the continent. African countries who directly feel the painful impulse of youth bulge have not rested on their oars. They have intensified their capacity building programmes by leveraging on the example set by the UN, AUC and ACBF. The philosophy is to convert and direct the bubbling energy of the youths to regenerative ventures. In accordance with WPAY and Article 11(2a) of the AYC, the Nigerian President, Muhammadu Buhari signed the Age Reduction Bill (Not Too Young to Rule) into law on May 31, 2018. This Act made it possible for young people at the age of 25, 30 and 35 to contest for the position of State House of Assembly, Senate/Governor and President respectively. This legislation also led to the repeal of sections 65, 106, 131 and 177 of the 1999 constitution as amended. Apart from this historic effort, Nigeria and other African countries have reacted positively to the call for youth empowerment through capacity building (see table III).

Table III: Capacity Building Programmes in some African Countries

S/N	Country	Programme
1.	Nigeria	Entrepreneurship and the Youth Enterprise. Youth Employment and Development Initiative (YEDI) African Youth Empowerment Nigeria (ATEN) Youth Enterprise of Nigeria (YEN) Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YOUWIN) Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (Sure-P).
2.	Algeria	Youth Employment Support (YES)
3.	Burkina Faso	Youth Employment and Skills Development Project The Women and Youth Saving for Empowerment (WTSE)
4.	Kenya	Youth enterprise Development Fund Youth Empowerment Project Kenya Private Sector Alliance
5.	Uganda	The Youth Venture Capital Fund
6.	Gambia	The Gambia Youth empowerment scheme Youth empowerment Project
7.	Angola	Africa Innovation Foundation (AIF)
8.	Gabon	Youth Volunteer Corps (YVC)
9.	Ivory Coast	Alafia Youth Empowerment Fellowship
10.	Senegal	Pan-African Youth Leadership Programme Youth Career Initiative (PAYLP) PAEST – SP.
11.	South Africa	INWE Youth development Programme Community Development Facilitators. National Youth Development Agency (NYDA)

12.	Sierra Leone	Youth Employment and Empowerment Programme (YEEP) National Youth Service (NYS)
13.	Tanzania	Exceed the Future Tanzania Tanzania Youth Economic Empowerment (YEE) Advancing Youth Activity (AYA)
14.	Ghana	Youth Employment Synergy (YES) Youth Harvest Foundation Youth Leaders (YOLE) Fellowship Programme.

Source: Author's Field Work, 2019

These programmes if conscientiously implemented would turn the tide of youth bulge from negative to momentous dawn. This was why in launching the state of the youth 'Report', President E. B. Koroma of Sierra Leone vowed to nurture and empower youth population that can lead to a change in the destiny of our country (Presidential Address, August 13, 2013).

Recommendations

In other to actualize these programmes, we recommend the following:

(1) African rulers should begin to see the youth as a component of their administration.

(2) All the UN and UEC policies that focuses on the youth particularly the AYC and WAYP should be mainstreamed in the socialization processes of African youth, especially from the secondary to tertiary institutions.

(3) African civil society groups should braze up and leverage on the platforms created by the UN and AU to demand accountable governance form their leaders, and make them create a niche for youth participation in parliament as in Nigeria.

(4) African youth should begin to understand that Governments in the continent cannot cater for all the people. Time has come for self-examination and self-help efforts instead of hoping on the promises of Government which in most times result to 'waiting for the Godot'.

Conclusion

Youth bulge in Africa has come to signpost the weakness of African rulers, the politics of the belly (Bayat, 2009); and the state as a major producer of inequality, unemployment and cronyism. In a situation of inequality and excruciating unemployment. Those who are at the receiving end would hardly respond to rational ideas. The situation in Africa is such that many energetic African youths are facing hard times. This is the concern of those who feel that youth bulge is a time bomb. On the other hand, having many young people is not a sin or an ominous sign of doom. If their vision and innovative acumen are channeled to productive and growth-oriented activities, society would witness human security and sustainable development. They would also develop a high sense of responsibility, self-esteem and self-realization. This is where capacity building is germane in building, and strengthening the capacities and abilities of the youth not only to have confidence in them, but to realize that the hope of sustaining humanity rest on their shoulders. Capacity building becomes a veritable youth entrepreneurship strategy to divert the vision and mind of the youth from unwholesome activities.

Strengthening institutional structures in the State with a systematic and long-term youth plan for capacity building is like building a castle with a firm foundation. Building the capacity of the youth with other state sustaining programmes prompted Goodluck Jonathan, former President of Nigeria, to aver that we cannot talk about rebranding the image of Nigeria if the youth are not rebranded, and there is no future for this country if there is no future for the youth (Jonathan, 2018:123). The fears expressed by President Jonathan had also been raised by the UN, AU, AUC, ACBF and private entrepreneurs in Africa. This led to elaborate programme of action if implemented would make youth bulge in Africa an enviable asset and not a liability. The point here is that Africa would tremendously gain if the energies and innovative skills of its teeming youth are tapped . To do otherwise is to prepare for the whirlwind of African spring. It is gratifying to note that African countries have heeded to the global clarion call to use

capacity building as a tool to give the youth a sense of belonging and place them in a trajectory that would make them part of the decision-making process. The extent this can be sustained is a matter of conjecture considering that African rulers lack the political will to sustain a given programme, especially if it is not in their bourgeois interest. The lack of regime continuity and stability has given fears to many people that youth bulge may compound the continent to many people that youth bulge may compound the continent's lingering crises in the years ahead. In conclusion, therefore, youth bulge in Africa has come to stay with its inherent characteristics. But it cannot be turned to a pillar of strength for Africa if a systematic and long-term progress of capacity building is not in place.

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