

Exploring Lost and Available Opportunities for Youth Empowerment in Selected African Countries

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ABSTRACT This paper aims to discuss pertinent lost opportunities towards youth empowerment as well as available opportunities to advance their empowerments. The paper uses dialogue, debates and perspectives from selected African countries such as South Africa, Botswana, Rwanda, Southern Sudan, DRC and Kenya. These are the countries that form evidence of the factors that have been discussed in the paper. Findings indicate the following environment militating against youth empowerment: Youth's exploitation of their labour by the their parents/guardians/ adults; being used as agents of violence and war by the adults/ governments; being used for voting purposes at the political expediency of the adults/politicians; adults' condescending attitudes towards the youth; being used by their parents/societies to advance cultures for the gains of their parents/societies, but detrimental to their rights; and their increased indulgence in drug abuse. The following represents avenues of empowerment: Their physical strength to tap resources; their capacity and access to higher education; capacity to embrace diversity and being explorative; and embracing the spirit of indigenisation. The paper concludes by advocating for increased recognition of youth as agents of development by adults, governments, NGOs and private sector; increased funding of youth activities; and increased goodwill from the government and the adults to offer them a platform to realize their potential.