

A young man with dark skin and glasses, wearing a light blue collared shirt, is shown in profile from the chest up, looking upwards and to the right. The background is a soft-focus bokeh of green and yellow light spots, suggesting sunlight filtering through trees.

YOUTH STRATEGY FOR  
EAST AND HORN  
OF AFRICA

IOM, 2021-2024



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## FOREWORD



In December 2020, IOM launched its [East and Horn of Africa Regional Strategy 2020-2024](#) which aims to leverage migration for sustainable development and ensure that “no one is left behind”. It is centered around the human rights of migrants, the Sustainable Development Goals, the African Union’s Agenda 2063 and the strategic priorities of its Member States, and the Regional Economic Communities, amongst which the empowerment of youth and women features prominently.

Indeed, managing youth migration to leverage it for the social and economic development of the region has become increasingly important, especially as the young population continues to grow at an accelerated pace, they often want to and already contribute to the resilience of their communities, proposing innovative solutions, driving social progress, and inspiring political change, in urban as well as rural contexts, and grow ever more connected to each other. While most governments have youth welfare and participatory approaches high on their developmental agenda, it is important to ensure that such strategies also include migrant youth (women, men, girls, and boys). This is especially crucial in this

region given the increasing rate of intra and inter-regional mobility and the free movement regimes that is already under implementation across several states.

The current Youth Strategy for the 2021–2024 is thus an important vehicle for giving life to IOM’s Regional Strategy for the East and Horn of Africa (EHOA), and its strategic priorities<sup>1</sup> under the three pillars also outlined in IOM’s [global strategic vision](#): resilience, mobility, and governance. Through this Youth Strategy, IOM seeks to share good practices on mainstreaming migration into the youth developmental agendas of a variety of stakeholders across the countries of the region, namely, Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan, Uganda, Rwanda, Somalia, and the United Republic of Tanzania. This includes, inter alia, national, and local governments, international and civil society organizations, diaspora, academia, NGOs, and others. At the cornerstone of promoting the welfare of young people is the importance of ensuring that a whole of government and a whole of society approach is followed.

<sup>1</sup> These include Priority 1: Mitigate adverse drivers of displacement and irregular migration; Priority 2: Promote and provide timely and effective assistance and protection to people at risk and/or affected by crisis; Priority 3: Promote durable solutions and reintegration for displaced persons and returning migrants; Priority 4: Facilitate mobility and support regional integration; Priority 5: Promote inclusion and conditions that empower migrants and the diaspora to contribute to sustainable development; Priority 6: Promote robust and whole-of-government structures, coherent policies and normative frameworks underpinning migration at the subnational, national, regional, and global levels and supportive of sustainable development objectives; and Priority 7: Reduce the incidence of irregular migration, including smuggling of migrants and trafficking of persons. These strategic priorities will be tackled through coordinated cross-thematic approaches to contribute to broader regional goals.

True to this belief, this strategy has been developed in close coordination and partnership with all IOM Offices in the region and in accordance with the priority of government and non-government stakeholders. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the focal points in each of the IOM missions for their valuable insights and input on which this strategy is built.

This strategy is also an expression of an intention to support a bridge between supra-national initiatives on youth and migrant welfare on the one hand and national and regional initiatives on the other. To achieve this, proposed concrete initiatives have been framed within the larger theoretical frameworks provided by the United Nations, the African Union Commission, the relevant Regional Economic Communities, namely, the East African Community (EAC) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). In parallel, important resources on the approaches followed by different stakeholders and entities for youth welfare and participation have been included in the annexes of this strategy, which are a vital part of this document. It is hoped that users will benefit from the richness of information included as part of these annexes as

lessons learnt from other countries that can then be customized to the needs of the countries for an overall synergized approach in the long term.

Finally, the year 2020 has been watershed in many ways, stemming from the global COVID-19 pandemic that has not left a single country untouched, and which has disproportionately affected youth. While the suffering has been unparalleled, there have also been a few learnings that will be important to carry further in the future. Among them has been the critical importance of involvement and participation of youth for the success of any policy or programme or initiative, also including the importance of youth diasporas. This strategy is an attempt to ensure that such lessons are applied inclusively across a broad spectrum so that no-one-is left behind.

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## ACRONYMS

<b>AU</b>	African Union	<b>FGM/C</b>	Female Genital Mutilation/Circumcision
<b>MRCs</b>	IOM's Migration Response Centres	<b>SOPs</b>	Standard Operating Procedures
<b>AfCFTA</b>	African Continental Free Trade Area	<b>GBV</b>	Gender Based Violence
<b>CNJB</b>	National Youth Council of Burundi	<b>SDF</b>	Skills Development Fund
<b>AUC</b>	African Union Commission	<b>GCM</b>	Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
<b>NCM</b>	National Coordination Committee	<b>TVET</b>	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
<b>AU FMP</b>	African Union Free Movement Protocols	<b>HIV</b>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
<b>NEP</b>	The National Employment Program	<b>UNCTAD</b>	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
<b>AYC</b>	The African Youth Charter	<b>ICRS</b>	Information, Counselling and Referral Services
<b>NDP</b>	National Development Plan	<b>UNDES</b>	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
<b>DPoA</b>	African Youth Decade, 2009-2018 Plan of Action	<b>IDPs</b>	Internally Displaced Persons
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-Governmental Organizations	<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>CERF</b>	The Central Emergency Response Fund	<b>ICCG</b>	Inter Cluster Coordination Group
<b>NUEYS</b>	National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students	<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
<b>CFTs</b>	Core Facilitation Teams	<b>IGAD</b>	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
<b>NYC</b>	National Youth Council	<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>CHVs</b>	Community Health Volunteers	<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>NYP</b>	National Youth Policy	<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>CJSOI</b>	Indian Ocean Youth and Sports Commission	<b>IPC</b>	Infection Prevention and Control
<b>OIBC</b>	Opportunity Issue based Coalition	<b>UNCT</b>	United Nations Country Team
<b>CMP</b>	Common Market Protocol	<b>KAP</b>	Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice
<b>PoEs</b>	Points of Entry	<b>UNSC</b>	United Nations Security Council
<b>CONFES</b>	The Conference of Francophone Ministers of Youth and Sports	<b>MMC</b>	The Mixed Migration Centre
<b>PPE</b>	Personal Preventive Equipment	<b>WASH</b>	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
<b>EAC</b>	East African Community	<b>MoCYS</b>	South Sudan's Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports
<b>PVE</b>	Prevent Violent Extremism	<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme
<b>EACYP</b>	The East African Community Youth Policy 2013	<b>MoLSA</b>	Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
<b>RCCE</b>	Risk Communication and Community Engagement	<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>EHOA</b>	East and Horn of Africa		
<b>R-ARCSS</b>	The Revitalized Agreement for the Resolution of South Sudan		
<b>EU</b>	European Union		
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals		



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Decades of very high fertility in Africa, coupled with rapidly declining child mortality have created a population age-structure dominated by young people under the age of 25 <sup>2</sup>. It is estimated that 226 million young people live in Africa, representing nearly 20 per cent of the overall population, making Africa the world's youngest continent <sup>3</sup>. Around 20 per cent of the 127 million people of Kenya, Rwanda, United Republic of Tanzania, and Uganda are between the ages of 15 and 24 and can be labelled as “youth” according to the United Nations definition. The demographics of these countries, mirror the continental average. Statistics indicate that the EHOA region has more male youth than females <sup>4</sup>. Such youthful population, if healthy, skilled, and gainfully employed, can be a catalyst for accelerated social and economic development, thereby allowing Africa to reap the benefits of demographic dividend.

The challenge for youth today lies in the transition between childhood and adulthood, especially in finding and securing good jobs, which depends on among other things, labour markets as well as the strength of the health and education systems accessible. In 2009, the International Labour Organization (ILO) reported that the youth unemployment rate in the region was approximately 20 percent and

unemployment rates for female youth exceed that of males in all countries. The substantially higher youth unemployment rate is indicative of structural issues within the economy. The reasons for these differences include inter alia: unequal access to education and training opportunities, which restricts women to sectors with low productivity and low wages; unequal gender relations in the households; and women's reproductive and caregiver roles that are perceived to affect their productivity and as a result, favouring men at the workplace.

In the quest for greener pastures, a large section of youth migrates from rural to urban areas or within urban areas in the same country, creating more competition for the limited number of jobs in the urban areas without necessarily improving the job prospects of those left in rural areas. Forced migration represents another dimension of youth movement originating in the region. Conflict, persecution, human rights abuses, natural disasters, and failure of governance have a profound impact on large-scale movement of youth in the region. Throughout the EHOA, as of 2020, there are more than 6.5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), and over 3.6 million refugees and asylum seekers; a large majority of the displacements are associated with inter-ethnic

conflict and violence <sup>5</sup>. Between 20 and 30 percent of the affected people are young people who lack access to quality education, employment, adult mentorship, and health information and services <sup>6</sup>.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also exposed youth migrants' extremely vulnerable position, both directly and through its larger economic impact. On the other hand, the virus brought out the fact that young people can take on leadership roles in assisting their communities in a situation where the virus threatens the most vulnerable, including the elderly and people with co-morbidities and have an

influence over the risk-reduction behaviors of their peer groups.

For centuries, youth around the world have left their homes in search of better livelihood opportunities. In Africa, population growth is an integral aspect of migration patterns regionally and nationally. Migration is recognized as an effective poverty- reduction and development tool and can also contribute to lowering the unemployment rate, including development as recognized by the **Sustainable Development Goals** and the **Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM)** <sup>7</sup>.

### 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



It is now recognized that human mobility may be a solution to many challenges of our day, including development as recognized under Target 10.7 (facilitate orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies) of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). At the international community level, the nexus between migration and development is inextricably tied to youth welfare as identified under the **Global Compact for Migration**.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations (2013) *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision*

<sup>3</sup> *Id*

<sup>4</sup> Reliefweb Report for UN Population Fund 2018

<sup>5</sup> IOM, *A Region on the Move*, 2020

<sup>6</sup> Reliefweb Report for UN Population Fund 2018

<sup>7</sup> GCM Objective #2: Minimize the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin; #6 Facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work; #7 Address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration; #15 Provide access to basic services for migrants and #16 Empower migrants and societies to realize full inclusion and social cohesion.

“ According to the World Economic Forum, by 2035, Africa will contribute more people to the workforce each year than the rest of the world combined. In order to absorb these new entrants, Africa needs to create more than 18 million new jobs each year.

**The objective of this strategy** is to support governments in the EHOA to address the challenges to youth welfare and employment in the region and to ensure that migration can bring about positive results in both countries of origin and countries of destination. It also strives to ensure that IOM's youth interventions in the EHOA are participatory and pursued in a coordinated, coherent, and holistic manner.

**Priorities for IOM's Engagement with Youth:** IOM is committed to strengthening its capacity to meet new demands and deliver more effectively with and for young people, in line with the trends and to the development priorities of its Member States, the African Union and Regional Economic Communities (RECs), along with the ongoing UN Reforms, and the international and regional frameworks. To do so, IOM has identified four regional priority areas clustered under, and in response to, the three pillars of the IOM's EHOA Regional Strategy 2020–2024 – resilience, mobility, and governance, briefly described below – as set out in chapter 2. Each of the priority area pertains to a specific intervention that includes:

1. peacebuilding and resilience;
2. economic empowerment through decent work;
3. informed and healthy foundations; and
4. youth engagement, participation, advocacy, and human rights.

### Resilience

The objective of this pillar is to support young people as catalysts for peace and security as well as humanitarian action. To leverage youth for peacebuilding and strengthening resilience of

conflict and natural disaster-affected communities, **IOM proposes support toward livelihoods stabilization of young men and women in crisis-affected migrant sending settings; engagement of youth with alternative/ diversified livelihood opportunities and in recovery and social cohesion efforts; mobilization of youth in disaster preparedness, education, and post-disaster efforts; engagement of young women as managers of natural resources in rural economies; participation of youth in climate change policy decision-making processes and in peacebuilding; and creation of host country welcome orientation briefings in cooperation with local/national authorities and migrant community.**

### Mobility

The objective of this pillar is in two-fold:

First, to support young people's greater access to quality education and health services by following a participatory approach. Safeguarding the rights of young people and investing in their quality education, decent work and employment opportunities, effective livelihood skills, and access to health and services and participation are essential for development. **IOM will strive to meet these principles enshrined under the SDGs and the GCM through various initiatives such as spreading awareness against FGM/C; awareness raising and anti-xenophobia campaigns surrounding epidemics and pandemics; HIV responses that advance human rights of youth affected by HIV; tackling gender-based violence; increasing access to healthcare, psychosocial support, and education; and developing mentors and coaching network.**

IOM will also strive to increase access to more jobs for young persons, especially migrants, and enhance the quality of available jobs by increasing their productivity, facilitating movement of young people to more productive sectors, and increasing access to social protection. The most crucial step in this direction involves focusing on stronger technical and vocational education and training (TVET) that acts as a bridge in preparing recent graduates for the job market.

To support young people's, especially migrants' and potential migrants', greater access to decent work and productive employment as a gateway toward a better future, **IOM proposes: to develop unified messages/information for young migrants about opportunities and challenges of migration in the region; provide pre-departure and in country (destination) information on safe migration; create targeted messages in points of departure/arrival; establish national/regional young migrant leaders' network; strengthen technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and promote public-private partnerships and support to job fairs and other similar initiatives.**

### Governance

The objective of this pillar is to amplify youth voices for the promotion of a peaceful, just, and sustainable world, to protect and promote the

rights of young people and support their civic and political engagement. Under this priority area, **IOM will strive to ensure that youth are engaged in all important debates on local/national/regional levels by encouraging government and non-government stakeholders to embrace a youth inclusive approach through initiatives such as regional roadshow campaigns; cross cultural activities; support to Model United Nations activities; development of “youth-friendly” national diaspora strategies; support to International Youth Day Sporting Meets; and model United Nations activities to encourage debate and advocate on migration related themes at country and regional level.**

1. Recognizing that engagement of youth, especially migrants, in initiatives built to promote them is an important end in itself and one that is crucial for achieving the objectives of this strategy and placing reliance on the 'Youth 2030' Strategy developed by the UN, IOM recommends a series of measures to operationalize this strategy under the three pillars of resilience, mobility and governance in Chapter 3. This includes **mainstreaming structures for youth-focused coordination; establishing youth engagement platforms and expert rosters; enhancing opportunities for dialogue; building staff capacity youth issues; focusing on talent management including strengthening internship programmes and introducing youth markers to track progress in programming.**

# INTRODUCTION

According to the United Nations, the world's population will reach 10 billion by 2055 and more than 95 per cent of this growth will happen in low and middle-income countries.<sup>8</sup> Of the 2.4 billion people expected to be added to the global population between 2017 and 2055, more than 1.4 billion (57%) will be added in Africa.<sup>9</sup> Decades of very high fertility in Africa, coupled with rapidly declining child mortality have created a population age-structure dominated by young people under the age of 25. The demographics of the East African Community (EAC), particularly those of Kenya, Rwanda, United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda, mirror those of Africa.<sup>10</sup> Around 20 per cent of the 127 million people in these four countries are between the ages of 15 and 24 and can be labelled as “youth” according to the United Nations definition. In the last population and housing censuses in the four countries conducted between 2009 and 2014, about 40 per cent of the Rwandese population were children below the age of 15, and the corresponding percentages were 43 per cent in Kenya, 45 per cent in the United Republic of Tanzania, and 52 per cent in Uganda.<sup>11</sup> Such a youthful population, if healthy, skilled, and gainfully employed, can be a catalyst for accelerated social and economic development thereby allowing Africa to reap the benefits of demographic dividend, as endorsed by the United Nations-led Opportunity Issue based Coalition (OIBC-3) on “Harnessing Demographic Dividends.”<sup>12</sup> This has the potential to propel the continent on a sustainable path of wealth creation and overall development. See **Annex I** for further details on application of the concept of demographic dividend in the EHOA.<sup>13</sup>

For centuries, youth around the world have left their homes in search of better livelihood opportunities. Migration is recognized as an effective poverty-reduction and development tool and can also contribute to lowering the unemployment rate. The interrelationship between migration, development and welfare of youth has lately attracted increasing attention from governments and the international community through initiatives such as [youth4migration](#) which was created to act as a bridge between young people and the UN system in order to ensure that their right to meaningful participation is realized.

In Africa, population growth is an integral aspect of migration patterns regionally and nationally. The challenge for youth today lies in the transition between childhood and adulthood, especially in finding and securing the best job which depends on the strength of the health and education systems accessible. To address the high unemployment rate, social inequality, and many other challenges faced by the youth, African governments have been making efforts to assist the youth to participate in regional and global value chains and international trade.

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is among the efforts which have the potential to redress some of the key challenges the continent is facing, provided that adequate investment is allocated to maximize Africa's biggest resource – its youth human capital. Under article 27, the AfCFTA is dedicated to technical assistance, capacity building and cooperation improving the export capacity of both formal and informal service suppliers, with particular attention to micro, small and medium size, women, and youth service suppliers. Once fully implemented, the AfCFTA is envisaged to play a pivotal role in making trade opportunities accessible to African youth and to provide a conducive environment for professional mobility and skills portability. It could

also help countries to reduce the social inequality gap. Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) countries have also endorsed the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons which is seen as one step closer to regional integration leading to continental integration”. Whilst the Protocol is yet to be ratified by IGAD Member States, the high-level Ministerial endorsement by IGAD Ministers of interior and those in charge of labour is itself a recognition of the immediate effect of free movement agreements have on creating decent working conditions for youth, as they provide access to legal channels for migration as well as a normative framework for addressing the rights of migrants. Meanwhile, the EAC Common Market Protocol (CMP) has articles that guarantee free movement of persons and labour within the territories of its Partner States. It includes key provisions addressing the removal of visas, opening hours of borders, entry requirements and stay including limitations. The EAC CMP goes further in promoting standard identification system and acceptable travel documents which can help East Africans through regional cultural activities, sports, and youth exchange programmes.

## Drafters' Reflections

As the United Nations Migration Agency, IOM has the capacity to contribute significantly to convert the youth bulge in Africa into a demographic dividend by constructively engaging with the youth population. While the focus of the strategy lies on the overlap between youth and migration, the strategy aims to provide guidance on engagement with all young people viewing them not only as target population but also as important partners. A substantial portion of work into this strategy was carried out when the

world at large and the continent in particular started battling with the COVID-19 global pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed youth migrants extremely vulnerable position, both directly and through its larger economic impact. First, many cases of COVID-19 have been reported amongst migrant communities and many of them still are in conditions that put them at greater risk of contracting COVID-19. Secondly, with border closures, migrants are often not able to return to countries of origin and instead get trapped in countries of transit or the destination countries without housing and income. Some were arbitrarily detained for months in unsanitary and abusive facilities without the ability to legally challenge their detention or eventual deportation. The broader economic implications of the pandemic are likely to be enormous for youth migrants.

At the same time, the virus further underlined the fact that young people can take on leadership roles in assisting their communities in a situation where the virus threatens the most vulnerable, including the elderly and people with co-morbidities and have an influence over the behaviors of their peer groups. As mothers, sisters and daughters, women also play a key role in shaping the values and behaviors of their households and communities, including those related to peace and conflict. This strategy is built around the cornerstone that marginalized groups, including youth and women are uniquely positioned in the fight against COVID-19. While the text contained herein, does not focus directly on response measures to the pandemic, the information and recommendations included can be used to in develop youth-centric approaches for long-term recovery measures in crises situations.

8 United Nations 2020 projections

9 *Id*

10 East African Regional Analysis of Youth Demographics p. XII

11 *Id*

12 Issue Paper from the UN, Opportunities/Issues based Coalition on: Harnessing Demographic Dividends through investments in Children, Adolescents, Youth and Women's Empowerment (Health, Education, and Employment) for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

13 UNCTAD





## CHAPTER 1

### YOUTH DEMOGRAPHICS IN EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA

“ East and Horn of Africa youthful population presents a powerful opportunity for accelerated economic growth and innovation while other world regions face an aging population with subsequent issues such as high health costs for elderly care and high demand for skilled and qualified labour. Yet this demographic also presents economic and social challenges, as well as implications for peace and security.

The United Nations defines ‘youth’ as all people between 15 and 24 years of age. The African Youth Charter defines youth to include the age range between 15 and 35 years.<sup>14</sup> Different organizations and states have defined youth to range between diverse age brackets based on their mandates: UN General Assembly 15-24 years, World Health Organization (WHO) 10-19 years, Commonwealth 15-29 years, African Union 15-35 years, Burundi 15-26 years, Ethiopia 15-29 years<sup>15</sup>, Kenya 18-34 years<sup>16</sup>, Rwanda 14-35 years<sup>17</sup>, United Republic of Tanzania 15-35 years<sup>18</sup> Uganda 15-30 years<sup>19</sup>. Depending on the country, young people can be as young as 12 years of age and as old as 35. This variance leads to varying demographic data collected from different sources, making it difficult to compare data from various sources and using it for evidence-based

policymaking. It is therefore clear that the definition of youth is often fluid, in countries around the world it differs based on demographic, economic, social, or cultural settings.<sup>20</sup> For the purpose of this strategy however, the UN definition of youth is used, which includes all people between 15 and 24 years of age.<sup>21</sup>

It is estimated that 226 million young people live in Africa, representing nearly 20 per cent of the overall population, making Africa the world’s youngest continent.<sup>22</sup> Further, in 2010, 70 per cent of the continent’s population was under the age of 30.<sup>23</sup> This trend of a large proportion of the demographic falling within the category of ‘youth’ is also mirrored in the EHOA region where the youth aged between 15-24 years constitute slightly more than 20 per cent of the entire population.<sup>24</sup>

14 African Youth Charter

15 Ethiopian Youth Policy 2014

16 Kenyan Constitution

17 Rwandan National Youth Policy

18 National Youth Development Policy 2012

19 Uganda National Youth Policy September 2016

20 This refers to official and not the “social” definition of youth and as in South Sudan and other parts of EHOA, definitions of youth also tend to connote a so-called “historical life-stage category” while at the same time signifying a category that is predominantly male (Leonardi 2007)

21 <https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2018/12/WorldYouthReport-2030Agenda.pdf>

22 United Nations (2013) World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision

23 United Nations (2013) World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision

24 UNDESA 2017



Statistics indicate that the EHOA region has more male youth than females.<sup>25</sup> This can be attributed to the fact that women are exposed to some sex-selective prenatal practices such as abortion and excess female mortality (either through infanticide, child neglect or maltreatment later in life). However, UNDESA data indicates that the number of male youth migrants equaled that of female migrants in 2019 in Africa.<sup>26</sup>

Although there has been a considerable increase in primary school enrolment, with the majority of EHOA countries on course to achieving the targets of universal primary education and gender parity in education, access to post-primary schooling is still a challenge for most young people in the region and especially those on the move.<sup>27</sup> Overall participation in tertiary education is low, and very few young people from vulnerable groups such as girls, persons with disabilities, young persons living in rural, remote, and marginalized areas, young people caught up in conflict situations and orphans cannot access higher education because of limited resources to meet education costs, amongst other challenges. Cultural beliefs and practices in many instances still have an impact on female participation in education, and many national policies, plans and programmes do not address the multidimensional nature of gender inequalities in education and their implications for girls' right to education<sup>28</sup>.

A critical analysis of the current education situation in the region has led stakeholders to believe that there seems to be an overemphasis on enrolment numbers rather than on attendance and the relevance of education. Many countries in the region continue to overemphasize the provision of basic education to achieve the goal of universal primary education, forgetting that nurturing young people who will participate in the constantly evolving

labour environment requires skills life-long learning and skills that can be acquired only at higher levels of learning. In this regard it is important to recall that the 2030 Agenda identifies youth and migrants among those that should have access to life-long learning opportunities to help them to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to exploit opportunities and to participate fully in society.

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics research on gross enrolment ratios in tertiary education, Kenya was among the countries with the highest enrolment rate in tertiary institutions, with 31 per cent in 2009.<sup>29</sup> Kenya also had more young females (36%) enrolled in tertiary institutions than young males (25%). On the other hand, Uganda, had comparatively lower tertiary enrolments, at 4 per cent. It was also observed that disparities between female and male enrolment are narrowing at tertiary levels, despite the lower enrolments.<sup>30</sup> With rapid globalization, it is important to ensure that secondary education becomes the new minimum level of attainment, with an emphasis on tertiary education and life-long learning.

In 2009, the International Labour Organization (ILO)

**Table 5**  
Regional unemployment rate, total and among youth (Percentage)

	TOTAL (15+)									
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Eastern Africa	8.3	8.6	9.0	8.5	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.2	8.2
Middle Africa	9.9	9.9	9.7	9.3	9.2	9.2	9.3	9.3	9.4	9.4
Northern Africa	10.5	10.4	10.7	11.1	11.1	11.3	11.3	11.3	11.4	11.4
Southern Africa	24.3	23.6	23.8	24.4	24.6	24.6	24.5	24.5	24.4	24.4
Western Africa	8.3	7.7	7.7	7.7	7.7	7.6	7.6	7.7	7.8	7.8
	YOUTH (15-24)									
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Eastern Africa	13.7	14.5	14.4	13.6	13.4	13.8	13.9	13.8	13.8	13.7
Middle Africa	17.7	16.5	16.4	15.3	15.3	16.1	16.5	16.8	17.0	17.1
Northern Africa	26.9	26.4	29.2	31.3	30.8	31.7	31.1	31.1	31.3	31.4
Southern Africa	43.7	43.5	44.2	45.2	46.5	46.0	45.0	45.1	45.1	45.2
Western Africa	12.8	11.9	11.8	11.8	11.8	11.7	11.8	12.0	12.1	12.1

Source: UNCTAD calculations, based on International Labour Organization (ILO) ILOstat database modelled estimates, November 2016.

Notes: The unemployment rate is the number of unemployed persons as a share of the labour force. Data for 2009–2016 are estimates and data for 2017–2018 are projections.

reported that the youth unemployment rate in the region was approximately 20 percent.<sup>31</sup>

A comparison between overall unemployment rates (15+ years) and youth unemployment (15 – 24 years) rates in Eastern Africa further indicates that the latter figure has remained consistently higher by about 5 percentage points in the preceding ten years. Substantially higher youth unemployment rate is indicative of structural issues within the economy. If not addressed in time, these can adversely impact the overall productivity of an economy exposing it to deflationary trends. Focusing on unemployment rates at national level, youth unemployment ranges from 6.5 per cent in Uganda to 23 per cent in Kenya. Additionally, while unemployment is relatively high in the region, the degree of underemployment among the working poor is even greater.

youth unemployment and underemployment vary. Unemployment rates for female youth exceed that of males in all countries. The reasons for these differences include: unequal access to education and training opportunities, which restricts women to sectors with low productivity and low wages; unequal gender relations in the households; and women's reproductive and caregiver roles that are perceived to affect their productivity and as a result, favouring men at the workplace. In many countries, young women have a different transition to working life from that of young men – in particular, it is more protracted. Employers in many countries, irrespective of gender, display a striking preference towards hiring young men over young women, for

**Table 6: Youth (aged 15-24)\* unemployment rates in the EAC (%)**

	Kenya	Rwanda	Tanzania	Uganda
Total Population	7.4	17.8	10.3	9.4
Male	5.3	15.2	8.2	8.0
Female	9.6	21.0	12.3	11.0
Youth (Age 15 -24)	22.7	23.0	13.7	6.5
Male	17.1	20.4	8.9	5.5
Female	20.9	26.0	14.5	7.4

Source: KNBS Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey, 2015/16; NISR Rwanda Labour Force Survey 2017; NBS Tanzania Integrated Labour Force Survey, 2014; UBOS Uganda National Household Survey, 2012/13 & UBOS 2016 Labour Market Transition of Young People in Uganda

To illustrate the seriousness of youth unemployment in the region, out of over 750,000 youths who attempt to enter the job market annually in Kenya, only 15 per cent manage to get jobs in the formal sector. The inability of the formal labour market to absorb most of the youth seeking jobs has inadvertently led to the mushrooming of the informal sector where youth try to eke out a living. Part of the problem faced by the young job seekers is that many are not equipped with the requisite skills and competencies as a result of dropping out of school and the poor quality of education received. Hence there are limited job opportunities for them in the formal sector.

Considering that young people are not homogeneous, it is clear that the dimensions of

a variety of reasons. Many young women are not able to enter the labour market easily or to leave earlier because of such prejudices and limitations, reducing the labour force participation rates for young women. This gap is largest in Somalia, where the participation rate for young men is higher than that for young women by 28 percent.<sup>32</sup>

Besides international migration, the region is also characterized by large scale rural-urban migration. In the quest for greener pastures, a large section of youth migrate from rural to urban areas or within urban areas in the same country, creating more competition for the limited number of jobs in the urban areas without necessarily improving the job prospects of those left in rural areas. Besides the

25 Id  
26 [https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2019/03/MigrantYouth\\_FactsFigures.pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2019/03/MigrantYouth_FactsFigures.pdf)  
27 Id  
28 UNECA (2011): *Africa Youth Report: Addressing the Youth Education and Employment Nexus in the New Global Economy*.  
29 Id.  
30 African Youth Report 2011  
31 ILO 2009

32 (ILO, 2010)

provision of public services, education, utilities, housing, and infrastructure is affected by the demographic and skills composition in both urban and rural areas. Aggregate economic conditions are among the major causes of youth unemployment. The average rate of urbanization in the region is estimated at 4.1 percent. The capital cities of Addis Ababa and Nairobi have populations of well over three million each. Socio-economic and environmental problems in the ever-growing urban centers are an on-going challenge that need to be addressed.

Forced migration represents another dimension of youth movement originating in the region. Conflict, persecution, human rights abuses, natural disasters, and failure of governance have a profound impact on large-scale movement of youth in the region. Throughout the EHOA, as of 2020, more than 6.5

million people are internally displaced and 3.6 million can be categorized as refugees and asylum seekers<sup>33</sup>.

Most of these displacements are associated with inter-ethnic conflict and violence. Between 20 and 30 percent of the affected people are young people who lack access to good education, employment, adult mentorship, and health information and services.<sup>34</sup> In addition to young women, young persons with disabilities, young people in camps for the internally displaced, young refugees and young migrant workers are also often excluded from accessing healthcare, obtaining an education and from being employed. Efforts to invest in early childhood education, special education, and educational infrastructure for purposes of inclusivity and life-long learning are very much required in the region.



33 IOM, *A Region on the Move, 2020*  
34 Reliefweb Report for UN Population Fund 2018



# CHAPTER 2

## PRIORITIES FOR IOM'S ENGAGEMENT WITH YOUTH

Several global, continental, regional, and national-level documents have analyzed the youth dynamic in EHOA and made recommendations with the overall objective of transforming the evident youth bulge to a demographic dividend (See *detailed mapping in Annexed II and III*). In line with the key opportunities and challenges for youth recognized by the African Youth Charter, African Youth Decade 2009-2018 Plan of Action, the EAC Youth Policy and the IGAD Regional Strategy (2016 – 2020), this strategy seeks to guide IOM's work in leveraging youth and migration to achieve the overall objective of sustainable development in the region. The strategy also takes into account the global and regional megatrends identified in the IOM's East and Horn of Africa Regional Strategy 2020-2024 that will influence migration patterns in the coming five years including domestic and international inequalities; urbanization; digitalization, automation and innovations in information and communications and "distance-shrinking" technologies; demographic transition (with an increasing young population and more women entering the workforce), including the feminization of migration; and climate change alongside natural hazard-induced disasters and environmental degradation. An understanding of the dynamics of these megatrends and their implications, as well as pertinent data, will be critical for future migration management and governance in the region. Beyond these, specific drivers of migration and determinants of the Organization's work are likely to include: (a) the promise of peace and regional integration; (b) the increasingly protracted nature of crises, fragility and potential ruptures; (c) the increasingly entrenched nature of transnational organized crime; (d) the persistent vulnerability of migrants in irregular situations; and (e) the continuous re-emergence of epidemics, pandemics, zoonotic diseases and other public health threats. These specific drivers are centered around the human rights of migrants including young migrants, the strategic priorities of IOM's Member States and the mobility dimensions of the regional

integration agenda of the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities, in particular the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the East African Community (EAC) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA).

In response, this strategy identifies key interventions classified into four priority areas - peacebuilding and resilience; economic empowerment through decent work; informed and healthy foundations; and youth engagement, participation, advocacy and human rights – clustered under, and respond to, the three pillars of IOM's global strategic vision – resilience, mobility, and governance as set out below:

### 1. PILLAR 1: RESILIENCE

Under this pillar, IOM will redouble its efforts to invest in young people while recognizing them as leaders and agents of change to achieve the required transformations towards sustainable and resilient societies through:

#### 1.1. Priority Area I: Peacebuilding and Resilience

**Youth can be positive agents of change in their communities in time of conflict and disaster.** Early action to stabilize their livelihoods builds resilience and supports social cohesion; it also provides alternatives as conflict prevention for at-risk youth. In the EHOA region, where conditions of conflict and instability prevail simultaneously with peace and development, strategic entry points focusing on mobilizing and empowering youth as positive agents of change in their communities, including emergency employment and entrepreneurship and recovery of critical livelihoods assets such as skills development and access to finance. Youth also can be mobilized in disaster preparedness, education, and post-disaster efforts—e.g., managing natural resources, mobilizing communities via new technologies, acquiring peacebuilding skills, or supporting efforts to reduce gender-based violence.

The objective of this priority area is to support young people as catalysts for peace and security as well as humanitarian action, whilst maintaining a protection and do-no-harm approach. IOM's Midnimo Approach<sup>35</sup>, jointly developed in collaboration with UNDP and UN-HABITAT, seeks to promote participation of youth in community planning and political processes. Central to Midnimo's approach is its participatory community planning process led by Core Facilitation Teams (CFTs). In Somalia, Midnimo bridges humanitarian, development, and peace- and state-building efforts and operationalizes the paradigm shift from an aid agency driven modality to one where the government and community co-design and lead their nationally aligned and owned programmes through core components. Additionally, in Kenya, IOM utilizes its Information, Counselling and Referral Services (ICRS) approach to provide capacity-building support for individuals and communities at-risk of radicalization and violent extremist recruitment. In South Sudan, IOM's youth- focused peacebuilding project aims to strengthen economic and social interdependencies for the youth IDPs, returnees and host community youth through livelihoods and rehabilitation of critical community infrastructure.

To leverage youth for peacebuilding and strengthening resilience of conflict and natural disaster-affected communities, IOM proposes the following initiatives:

- **Support** toward livelihoods stabilization of young men and women in crisis-affected migrant sending settings as an important building block for resilience and to support social cohesion. Entry points include emergency employment and entrepreneurship and recovery of critical livelihoods assets, including skills development and access to finance.
- **Engage** youth at-risk of (re)joining armed or criminal groups with alternative/diversified livelihoods opportunities as a strategy for conflict prevention, including through leveraging interdependencies such as cross-border trade.
- **Engage** youth, especially migrants, in recovery and social cohesion efforts (e.g., rehabilitation of social

<sup>35</sup> Jointly implemented by IOM, UN-HABITAT, and UNDP, Midnimo, meaning "unity" in Somali:  
• Promotes durable solutions for returnees and IDPs,  
• Increases their social cohesion with host community, and  
• Improves governance at the Federal Member State and district levels in urban and peri-urban settings in Somalia.  
• Will begin supporting economic activities in concerned areas.

and socioeconomic community infrastructure) to empower them as agents of change and promote a more positive image of youth at risk in reintegration efforts.

- **Mobilize** of youth in disaster preparedness, education, and post-disaster efforts, in particular those focusing on emergency employment creation, community infrastructure rehabilitation and local governance.
- **Engage** young women as managers of natural resources in rural economies, whilst ensuring a protection and do-no-harm approach.
- **Support** toward adaptation and mitigation actions and enhancement of effective participation of youth in climate change policy decision-making processes, bringing innovative perspectives and solutions.
- **Mobilize** of migrant youth in peacebuilding, lead non-violent transitions, and use new technologies to mobilize communities and society to bring about change.
- **Create** host country welcome orientation briefings in cooperation with local/national authorities and migrant community and spiritual leaders to share peace and security challenges from migrants already in host communities.

### 2. PILLAR 2: MOBILITY

Under this pillar, IOM identifies youth engagement, as agents of integration and social cohesion, to support for regional integration and to facilitate mobility more broadly as the most immediate ways that an organization like IOM, with migration at the core of its mandate, can contribute to national and regional objectives of transformative inclusive economic growth and youth and women empowerment. A foundation for this is ensuring youth have access to quality health and education through:

## 2.1. Priority Area II: Informed and Healthy Foundations

Youth, the transition from childhood to adulthood, is a critical time-period in an individual's life. Adequate health facilities and enriching education systems have the capacity to transform an individual into a constructive member of the society and hence set in place a virtuous cycle of individual and societal development. On the other hand, inadequacy of these critical support systems can cause permanent shortcomings in an individual's capacity to contribute to their own and larger societal well-being.

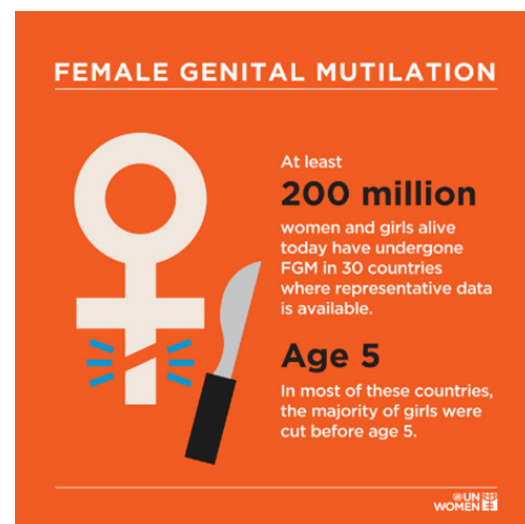
Conflict, natural disasters, public health crises, epidemics and pandemics increase the risks associated lack of adequate education and healthcare systems manifold. For example, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has exposed youth to health risks, while at the same time strained often already weak education systems further and brought to the forefront some major access issues, especially for vulnerable groups such as those on the move. Meanwhile, Youth, the transition from childhood to adulthood, is a critical time-period in an individual's life. Adequate health facilities and enriching education systems have the capacity to transform an individual into a constructive member of the society and hence set in place a virtuous cycle of individual and societal development. On the other hand, inadequacy of these critical support systems can cause permanent shortcomings in an individual's capacity to contribute to their own and larger societal well-being.

Conflict, natural disasters, public health crises, epidemics and pandemics increase the risks associated lack of adequate education and healthcare systems manifold. Meanwhile, the capacity and proactivity of young people and youth-led organizations in acting quickly to respond to the needs of others in times of crises brings out the criticality of their inclusion for the success of any response.

<sup>36</sup> In the age group 15 to 49, the prevalence in Somalia is currently at 98%, Djibouti at 93%, Sudan at 88%, Eritrea at 89% and Ethiopia at 74% (UNICEF report). The most severe form of FGM/C (infibulation), often referred to as pharaonic, is most commonly practiced in Somalia, Djibouti, and Sudan where the prevalence is the highest in the world.

<sup>37</sup> FGM/C is regarded as violence against women, a form of torture, and a traditional practice harmful to the girl child. Regionally, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Banjul Charter) and its Protocol on the Rights of Women (Maputo Protocol), in addition to the Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, have emphasized the promotion and protection of women's rights. The clearest and most explicit language is found in Article 5 of the Maputo Protocol, which prohibits "all forms of FGM" through legislative measures and sanctions. FGM/C has been criminalised in most countries in the horn of Africa: in Djibouti (1995, amended 2009), Ethiopia (2004), Eritrea (2007), and Somalia (2012). There are ongoing efforts to criminalise it at the national level in Sudan, but conservative religious and political actors have blocked these attempts deeming them against Islamic law.

The ongoing COVID-19 global health crisis currently being faced by humanity has brought to the forefront important lessons about this dual role played by youth both as important beneficiaries of and key partners in improving health and education systems.



In the EHOA, Female Genital Mutilation/Circumcision (FGM/C) has emerged as one of the most significant health-related challenges affecting women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health.<sup>36</sup> Despite being condemned by a number of international and regional treaties and conventions, as well as by several national legislations, the prevalence of FGM/C its prevalence in the region remains particularly high in comparison to world average. FGM/C violates the right to health and bodily integrity as stipulated in article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights<sup>37</sup> and poses grave and immediate challenge to women and girls achieving their highest potential.

Besides physical health, anxiety, depression, stress, and suicide present disturbing aspects of youth health, especially prevalent in countries ravaged by political instability and economic crises. Trauma and lack of social support and services may seriously affect young people and cause lasting harm to their

physical and mental health. When social structures break down in the face of war and instability, young adults frequently engage in high-risk drug use or high-risk sexual behavior.

Along with health, education is the second pillar for health and informed foundations among individuals. In EHOA, while there has been some progress in access to primary education, and in some countries, much remains to be done. Gender, economic and other inequalities in access to education need to be tackled to a large extent. The quality of education also needs to be enhanced so that young people leave school prepared for work and full engagement as citizens instead of contributing to a country's unemployment and underemployment figures.

Given this context, the objective of this pillar is to guide IOM's interventions to support young people's greater access to quality education and health services by following a participatory approach. These services should be available without any discrimination on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity or legal status in any country. Safeguarding the rights of young people and



investing in their quality education, decent work and employment opportunities, effective livelihood skills, and access to health and services and participation are essential to achieving development and resonates also with the principles enshrined under the SDGs and the GCM.

Of particular interest, in this regard is IOM's work in Burundi focuses on improving the mental health of youth in in order to build the resilience of communities emerging from violent conflict. IOM is also working in the United Republic of Tanzania to protect the rights of women and children against domestic violence. Some proposed initiatives that have the potential to contribute to building health

and informed foundations for youth and migrants in the region are

- Engagement with UNICEF, UNESCO, WHO to **spread awareness against FGM/C** among migrant communities.
- Development of **awareness raising and anti-xenophobia campaigns surrounding epidemics and pandemics** including COVID19.
- Promotion of enabling legal and policy environments for **HIV responses that advance human rights of youth affected by HIV**.
- Empowerment of young women and most at-risk populations to tackle **gender-based violence**.
- Development of a **mentors and coaching network** between IOM counterparts and youth in selected locations.
- Engagement with local and national partners to increase **access to healthcare and psychosocial support** for youth and migrants through strengthening referral mechanisms.
- Increased **awareness raising** among migrant and host communities on the importance of education for children.
- Engagement with local and national partners to increase **access to education** for youth and migrants through strengthening referral mechanisms and offering scholarships for young women and especially abled persons.
- Development of a **community-based projects on promotion of mental health** through provision of psychosocial support targeted toward returning migrants and host communities.
- Training and engagement of young returning migrants in hygiene promotion schemes to ensure adequate awareness raising among returning migrants' communities.
- Promote and implement activities to resolve skills shortages through addressing skills mismatches while increasing recognition of harmonized qualifications across Africa.



## 2.2. Priority Area III: Economic Empowerment through Decent Work

“ There are more young people on the continent today than ever before and numbers are steadily rising. Predictions reveal that the youth population in Africa (aged 15-24) will double from its current 231 million to 461 million by 2050. - UNCTAD, Economic Development in Africa Report (2018).

Sustainable human development cannot be achieved without decent work and living wages. Income losses and joblessness diminish human and social capital, are associated with poorer health and educational outcomes, and contribute to long-term and intergenerational poverty and inequality, weaker resistance to shocks, and weaker social cohesion. IOM's policy and practice concerning youth recognizes decent work and livelihood creation including through local economic development, as chief determinants in the socio-economic empowerment of youth. Economically empowered youth will more actively contribute to local economic development and sustainable human development. Laws and standards also need to be implemented so that underage children are not exploited in the labour market as a cheap source of labour and those who are of age to work are treated appropriately by providing them with access to decent work opportunities in line with Objective 6 of the GCM.

In addition, the **economic empowerment of youth has important societal benefits including promotion of social justice and gender equality, and offers the potential for social transformation, through increased, constructive interaction between generations.** Jobs provide young people with a sense of identity and dignity but also respect for societal values and norms. Thus, they increase social cohesion, re-establish trust in political systems and institutions and provide an important vehicle for the exchange of ideas and opinions between generations in the workplace. To address the high unemployment rate, social inequality, and many other challenges the

youth are facing, efforts have to be made to assist the youth to participate in Small and medium sized enterprises and regional and continental trade.

Young people should be given low-interest access to finance which does not require property-based collateral and guarantees. There is a need to create an enabling legal, regulatory, and administrative environment for youth to actively participate in regional and continental trade and governance processes. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) has the potential to address some of these issues such as non-tariff barriers continent-wide. The AfCFTA is also expected to play a major role in making trade opportunities accessible to young people by improving trade governance, its trade facilitation provisions, enhancing customs and border management. Similarly, the Protocol on Free Movement of the Persons in the IGAD Region allows to enhance orderly cross-border mobility and migration, regional economic integration, and development. It is expected IGAD region integration through free movement will lead to socio-economic development, facilitate trade and investment, and ignite creativity to create jobs for the youth. In the EAC, cross-border labour mobility is also an important priority for Partner States. For instance, the January 2020 Regional Ministerial Forum on Migration (RMFM) Communique Calls for action for the inclusion of gender migration, children on the move and **youth** and women issues.

**Education** is an essential ingredient for empowering youth. At the national level, countries have to be prepared to adapt their public education to provide the young people with more relevant learning

opportunities they need to create jobs for the future and for them to be employable. Education systems have to be crafted to produce a capable, healthy and skilled workers who can meet the demand of special skills and knowledge of digital economy – which is presenting opportunities for young people.

This priority area therefore works towards increasing the quantity of jobs for young persons, especially migrants, and towards enhancing the quality of jobs by increasing their productivity, facilitating movements of young people to more productive sectors, and increasing access to social protection. The most crucial step in this direction involves focusing on stronger technical and vocational education and training (TVET) that acts as a bridge in preparing recent graduates for the job market. With many economies in the region unable to generate enough jobs, and poverty forcing adolescents to leave school prematurely, young people must have the option of access to vocational and jobs training, as well as to assets, such as credit, if they are to generate livelihoods. IOM can play a crucial role not only in supporting relevant national counterparts in strengthening TVET systems but also in improving migrants' access to such training programmes.

Although the study of second generation of diasporas and their transnational ties to their families' homeland is relatively new, there are a few emerging themes and trends which shows the African second-generation diaspora, whether born or raised abroad, are doing well economically; and they are graduating from college and attaining gainful employment. There are reports that the second-generation Africans participate in transnational activities such as traveling to their respective ancestral land, initiating, and maintaining contact with friends or relatives, and even sending remittances. IOM will maximize on this and the skillsets, connections, and commitment they have to develop their homelands to facilitate knowledge transfer and fill knowledge gaps via permanent, temporary, and “virtual” return. Their skills can be tapped by establishing knowledge exchange network. Some initiatives can include mentorship program in certain sectors, peer to peer programs, short visits, and assignments. To increase

the benefits of these programs, IOM will seek to survey the human resource available in the second-generation diaspora, create or revive active second-generation diaspora networks and develop specific activities and programmes. IOM will also assist countries to reorient their embassies to engage the second-generation diaspora.

Another important avenue for job creation is entrepreneurship. While entrepreneurship rates in the EHOA are high among both migrant and host community youth, the majority of entrepreneurs are driven by necessity rather than an opportunity, and thus have low productivity with low growth potential.<sup>38</sup> Evidence shows that if equipped with the right skills, mentorship, social networks, technology and finance, young entrepreneurs could drive the region's economic growth and social progress.<sup>39</sup> IOM's partnership with local civil society organizations to conduct trainings on livelihood generating activities and in entrepreneurship for youth belonging to migrant and host communities is crucial in this regard.

Simultaneously, it is also important to ensure that when educated and skilled young people migrate, they do not lose access to the job market as a result of non-recognition of their educational and technical qualifications in the country of destination. Mutual recognition of qualifications to facilitate skills transferability is therefore recognized as an important objective under Article 18 of the African Union Free Movement Protocols (AU FMP) and also finds mention in the EAC and IGAD regional protocols applicable in the region.<sup>40</sup>

IOM's ongoing work in Somalia seeks to enhance service delivery and increase livelihood opportunities for youth belonging to migrant, internally displaced and host communities. In Somaliland, IOM works with local partners to enhance skills and knowledge development among marginalized youth by engaging skilled members of the Somali diaspora. In Kenya, IOM is supporting that development of a labour migration policy and the Labour Migration Management Bill to facilitate effective, responsive, and dynamic labour migration governance system. IOM's projects in Kenya focus on promoting safe,

38 East African Regional Analysis of Youth Demographics P. XIV  
39 Id.  
40 Article 18, AU FMP

orderly, and regular labour migration through facilitating bilateral labour agreements and spreading awareness on ethical recruitment.

In Djibouti, through a youth-led fabrication lab or “fab lab”, IOM has provided training and access to computer-assisted equipment like 3D printers and laser cutters for returnee migrants, refugees, and the local community. The lab called ‘Creative Spaces’ aims to increase job and learning opportunities in technology and build stronger start-up and entrepreneurial communities in migration contexts.

To support young people’s, especially migrants, greater access to decent work and productive employment as a gateway toward a better future, IOM proposes the following further initiatives:

- Support to a regional network of national stakeholders (Ministries, Agencies, Services etc.) to develop unified messages/information for young migrants about **opportunities and challenges of migration** in the region.
- **Provision of pre-departure and in country (destination) information** on safe migration, migrant workers’ rights and challenges/risks of irregular migration, trafficking and smuggling through migrant information info-points/centers and other facilities that IOM operates in as well as in support with government agencies, including by offering assistance with travel documentation applications.
- Creation of **targeted messages in points of departure/arrival** (bus and train stations, airports, ports, cross border areas) in cooperation with government and non-government stakeholders (border guards, NGOs, other UN agencies etc.)
- Organization of **“Youth for Youth”** project proposal contests for sponsoring projects under donor initiatives advocating for youth participation in relevance with SDGs and GCM priorities such as the Youth Employment Fund.
- Establishment of a **national/regional young migrant leaders’ network** and organization of contests offering winners paid 3-6 months internships with IOM offices in the region to train and mentor them as future IOM staff/youth ambassadors in various contexts/events/activities.
- Creation a platform bringing together diaspora,

state partners and the private sector, in the aim of **promoting exchanges on market trends**, integration, and tips for overcoming challenges.

- Promote **IOM-private sector partnerships** to explore entrepreneurship programmes, innovative skills development mechanisms and job placement opportunities, also prioritizing sustainable economic sectors.
- Collaboration with ministries of education and labour to **strengthen technical and vocational education and training (TVET)** including overhauling curriculums for key economic sectors.
- Support to job fairs and other similar initiatives in close collaboration with relevant stakeholders including national and municipal authorities, UN agencies and other international organizations, business companies, civil society, academia, and local recruitment agencies to provide returnees and local youth with a platform to gain knowledge about the employment landscape, relevant marketable skills, and upcoming job opportunities in their communities.
- Advocate for the implementation of AfCFTA, the EAC CMP, and the Protocol on Free Movement of the Persons in the IGAD Region to address the high unemployment rate, social inequality, and many other challenges in the region.
- Creating opportunities for the second-generation diaspora through establishing knowledge exchange network in order for them to contribute for the development of their homeland.

### 3. PILLAR 3: GOVERNANCE

Youth active participation in policy dialogue and good governance have proven to be key for the identification of long-standing and sustainable solutions. IOM will therefore prioritize a more inclusive, integrated, and innovative approach in involving youth in policymaking to amplify its support to Member States capacities in governance matters. Recalling the recognition in the 2030 Agenda that well-planned and managed migration policies are key to ensuring safe, orderly, and regular migration particular, particular attention will be given to inclusion of youth in the governance of migration.

### 3.1. Priority Area IV: Engagement, Participation and Advocacy for Human Rights

When young men and women understand their rights, they become empowered to engage in civil society, public service, and political processes, at all levels. It becomes crucial to know the channels through which young people may exercise their civil and political rights and contribute to decision-making processes that impact their lives. Channels for engagement include formal political processes such as youth advisory boards at local level, youth parliaments or shadow councils at national level, and engagement with United Nations processes at the global level, for example. Other entry points include volunteerism, access to civil service positions and decision-making processes in the public administration, initiatives for transparency and accountability, promotion of human rights, legal reform, support for youth organizations, policy review and use of media, including social media, to increase access to information and collect and report on relevant data. Awareness of their rights is especially crucial for young migrants who often find themselves in vulnerable situations because of their unfamiliarity with laws and justice systems in new locations.

The objective of this priority area is to amplify youth voices for the promotion of a peaceful, just, and sustainable world and to protect and promote the rights of young people and support their civic and political engagement. IOM advocates for and supports an enabling environment where human rights are respected, protected, and promoted – where vulnerable and marginalized groups of young men and women are empowered to develop their full potential to lead dignified lives in societies where their voices are heard and valued. IOM continues to apply human-rights and gender-based approaches across policy and programme development, and to advocate for the elimination of all forms of discriminatory practices, including gender-based violence. On this basis, it has strengthened its engagement with and for youth. In the spirit of a truly participator approach, IOM emphasizes consultation and engagement with young people on the design, implementation and monitoring of its policies and programmes. To meet our accountability

to young people, it is important to monitor and evaluate IOM’s own and others’ policies, programs, communications, and advocacy to ensure that it is youth-sensitive and youth-facing. It is also important to convene key stakeholders including young people to assist at every stage of programming and ensure our engagement is with diverse and gender-balanced representatives.

Further, youth have an important role in holding governments and policy makers accountable – this is essential for good governance. The African Union has created a platform for youth participation at the continental level. Similar platforms are required at EAC and IGAD levels to facilitate active and meaningful participation of the youth in trade governance. It is imperative to give the youth opportunities to participate in trade policy making and to remove barriers that inhibit the integration of youth-led businesses into regional and global trades.

IOM must strive to ensure that youth are engaged in all important debates on local/national/regional levels by encouraging government and non-government stakeholders to embrace a youth inclusive approach. Currently, IOM is involved in several projects and initiatives that directly target engagement, participation and youth advocacy while also promoting the rights of youth, especially migrants. For instance, IOM works to increase community participation among at-risk youth in slums in Uganda with support from the United Nations Peace Building Fund (PBF); in Ethiopia IOM implements a project focusing on youth engagement initiatives to influence attitude and behavioural changes by conducting awareness raising programs on irregular migration, and human trafficking; in Kenya IOM’s youth-related work focuses on spreading awareness to promote safe and fair labour migration and prevent violent extremism (PVE) through the utilization of information, counselling and referral services (ICRS) approach. Additionally, IOM continues to build the capacity and skills of youth belonging to vulnerable populations that have a higher risk of recruitment into violent extremist group to build their resilience.



Alongside mainstreaming youth related engagement, participation, and advocacy in all aspects of programming, IOM proposes the following initiatives at country and regional level to further empower youth:

- Conceptualization of **“Migration Means”** regional roadshow campaigns of lectures and photo exhibitions in cooperation with schools, universities, cultural and educational centers, local/national actors, cross border communities with the organization of photo contests offering winners paid 3-6 months internships with IOM offices in the region.
- Organization of **“Hakuna Matata - Arts Unite Us”** cross cultural activities including theater, instruments, arts, music, and opera on migration themes bringing together young migrant artists/street artists and performers in cross border areas.
- Encouragement to **“Meet Us - Open Doors”** bi-monthly visits of school/university students, migrant community leaders to IOM regional and country offices to discuss migration issues and IOM’s operations in EHOA.
- Support to **International Youth Day Sporting Meets** as sports contribute to the health and happiness of young people, breaking down barriers and building trust and community spirit. To build social cohesion among migrants, IDPs and host communities International Youth Day celebrations **(10 August)** can include sports competitions and events around the competitions that focus on the

importance of sports in improving mental health.

- Support to **Model United Nations activities**, along with other UN agencies, in schools and universities to encourage debate and advocate on migration related themes according to the SDGs and GCM targets.
- Use of IOM expertise and multiple platforms to **counter xenophobia**, through actively counter misleading policy assumptions, and promote dialogue.
- Development of **“youth-friendly” national diaspora** strategies through IOM’s IDIASPORA.
- Support toward awareness and promotion of **human rights of youth**, implementation of existing human rights instruments and promotion of access to information.
- Establishment of Returnee Committees in Somalia (particularly Mogadishu, and Hargeisa) to strengthen ties among returning migrants and provides them with a platform where returnees are able to share experiences, enhance peer-to-peer support and channel feedback and complaints over community reintegration activities while advocating for sustainable reintegration together with youth and community members in areas of high return under the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in the Horn of Africa.

## CHAPTER 3

### OPERATIONALIZING THE YOUTH STRATEGY

IOM recognizes that engagement of youth, especially migrants, in initiatives built to promote them is not end in itself. **To empower youth, it is important to ensure that they are a part of the decision-making processes that impacts on their development.** A youth strategy can only be successful in the truest sense if it actively engages the youth and is adaptable to their needs and demands. Recognizing this and placing reliance on the cross-cutting system-wide actions and interventions developed by the UN in its **‘Youth 2030’ Strategy**<sup>41</sup>, IOM recommends the following measures to support its overall capacity in the region to advance and deliver on the priority areas outlined in the preceding sections:

**Mainstreaming structures:** Ensure a Youth Focal Point function in each IOM Country Mission, to support the system-wide country level coordination on youth.

**Youth engagement platforms and Expert Rosters:** Put in place mechanisms, such as e.g., youth advisory boards, at the Regional Office for EHOA, to provide a channel for input and feedback from diverse groups of young people on IOM’s work and consolidate a roster of experts on issues of youth and migration.

**Dialogue opportunities:** Establish regular online and offline engagements between young migrants and IOM’s Senior managers, including the Regional Director.

**Capacity building:** Provide orientation briefing on youth and migration issues to Resident Coordinators, IOM representatives, and other senior management positions.

**Staff Capacity Building on Youth Issues:** Build the capacity of staff to understand and address youth needs including by exploring the integration of training and capacity building components into existing training and capacity building programmes across the UN system.

**Strengthening internship programmes:** Engage with relevant decision-making bodies and identify innovative solutions with a view of establishing minimum quality standards across the IOM for internship programmes and advance efforts to ensure adequate compensation of interns and widening of the intern pool.

**Talent management:** Expand and replicate in IOM successful human resource modalities for attracting young talent, such as the Young Professional Programme, Management Reassignment Programme, fellowship programmes and UN youth volunteers. Promote across the IOM system and the larger UN system mobility and support career development of young staff.

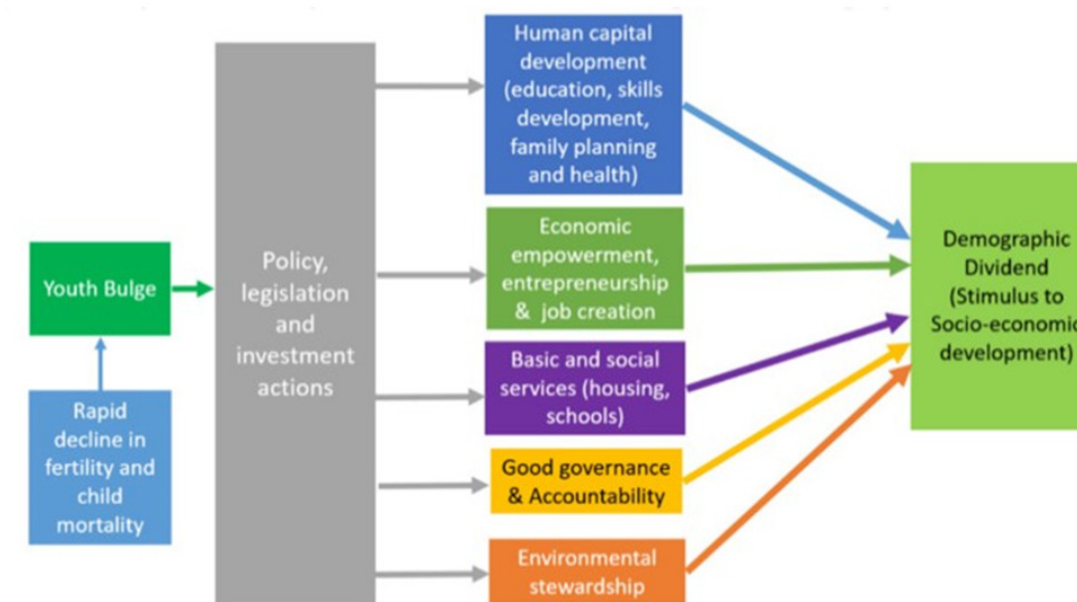
**Markers:** Employ a youth marker system to track progress and ensure IOM programming contributes to youth empowerment and intergenerational equity. Annex I: Demographic Dividend and its Application.

41 Youth 2030 Working with and For Young People





## ANNEX I: DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND AND ITS APPLICATION IN EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA



African Heads of States and governments have shown their conviction that harnessing the demographic dividend will contribute to transforming the continent and attainment of sustainable development goals, the Agenda 2063 and other aspirations of the African Union <sup>42</sup>. Applying the concept of Demographic Dividend, as endorsed by the United Nations-led Opportunity Issue based Coalition (OIBC-3) on “Harnessing Demographic Dividends<sup>43</sup> .” to the Member States in EHOA makes it clear that in order to reap the demographic dividend, two efforts need to be launched in parallel:

- Controlling birth rates to create a youth bulge such that the demographics of the Member States reach a point where the birth rates of subsequent generations is lower than the birth rates in preceding generations leading to a demographic condition where the working age population is larger than the dependent population. This has the potential to spur productivity and sustained economic growth.

- In order to convert this potential growth as a result of the youth bulge into actual growth, economies need to educate its youth and keep the unemployment and underemployment rates low. These measures will also ensure that a smaller proportion of the youth is disenfranchised and hence reduce the possibility of civil unrest. This virtuous cycle of demographic dividend can be mapped in the figure below.

When the ratio of the working-age population to dependents increases, referred to as a **youth bulge**, a window of opportunity opens for accelerated economic growth, a phenomenon called the **demographic dividend**.

The conversion of a **youth bulge** to a demographic dividend is not automatic since countries can squander this opportunity if the youth are uneducated and do not have equitable access to decent jobs. The creation of jobs to meet the demands of large youth populations requires both

<sup>42</sup> Such as the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (2016-2025), the AU 2017 roadmap on Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth which demands a paradigm shift in the organization and provision of education and training in Africa especially for the young people

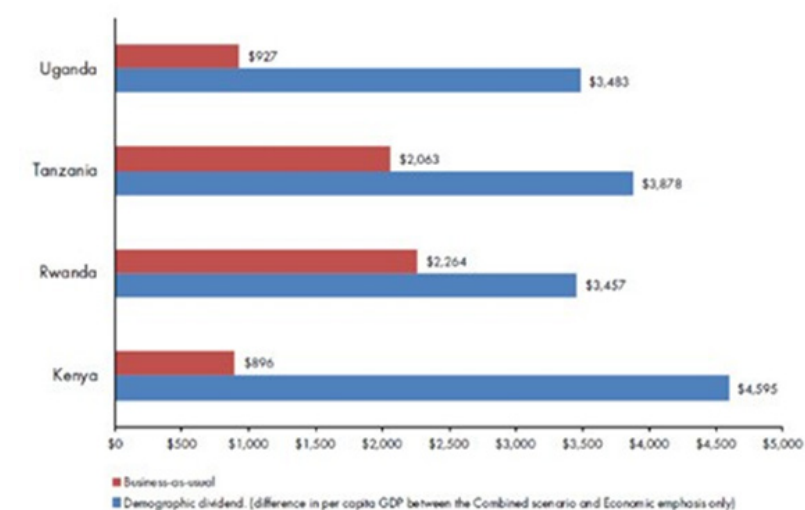
<sup>43</sup> Issue Paper from the UN, Opportunities/Issues based Coalition on: Harnessing Demographic Dividends through investments in Children, Adolescents, Youth and Women’s Empowerment (Health, Education, and Employment) for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



local and foreign domestic investment, enabling environments for entrepreneurship, and good governance and accountability

Governance and accountability are particularly important in ensuring that youth have equitable access to available jobs, particularly in the formal sector.

The Demographic Dividend Modelling Tool when applied to the Member States in EHOA makes it clear that two simultaneous and parallel efforts need to be made in order to reap the demographic dividend. First, there needs to be a youth bulge. A 'youth bulge' is a temporary demographic phenomenon which occurs when child mortality declines, and fertility falls rapidly so that the previous cohort of births is larger than subsequent cohorts. As the large cohorts of births move into the working ages (15-64 years), we get a bulge in the population pyramid. A bulge in the youth pyramid means that the young people in a specific country outnumber the children and the dependents. This creates a potential for faster economic growth as the working age population is able to produce and consume more leading to a virtuous economic cycle which is known as the 'demographic dividend'. However, demographic dividend is not automatic. A country can "squander away" this opportunity if i) Youth are under-educated or unskilled leading to low productivity, ii) There is high youth unemployment or under-employment and iii) Youth who are not economically productive become disenchanted and cause civil unrest.



A May 2018 study titled 'East African Regional Analysis of Youth Demographics'<sup>44</sup> applied the Demographic Dividend modelling tool in four EAC Partner States, – Kenya, Rwanda, United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda, to estimate the impact on development indicators of adopting different investment scenarios as follows:

- i. Business as Usual: Characterized by maintaining the status quo across all sectors.
- ii. Economic Emphasis: Economic reforms to enhance productive efficiency and accelerate economic growth, job creation, and poverty reduction.
- iii. Social Emphasis: Combining economic reforms as in (ii) above and investing in education to achieve universal secondary education and at least two years post-secondary education.
- iv. Combined Emphasis: Concurrently emphasizing economic reforms and education and prioritizing family planning to achieve contraceptive prevalence rate of at least 64 per cent by 2050-55.

The results of the study, as shown in the adjacent graph, clearly indicate the significant difference in projected per capita income under the 'Business as Usual' scenario and the 'Combined Emphasis' Scenario. Under the former scenario, rapid population growth will continue to put serious pressure on development and a youth bulge will not be achieved over the next few decades. Under this scenario, human development will remain low, and the countries will remain stuck at low-income levels<sup>45</sup>. On the other hand, under the 'Combined Emphasis' Scenario where family planning is prioritized and birth rates are brought down significantly to create a youth bulge while simultaneously emphasizing on the skills development of the youth, the per capita income and subsequent human development increases manifold. IOM's Youth Strategy for East and Horn of Africa, through its three pillars, aims to leverage the region's inevitable youth bulge into demographic dividend.

44 [https://media.africaportal.org/documents/East\\_African\\_Regional\\_Analysis\\_of\\_Youth\\_Demographics.pdf](https://media.africaportal.org/documents/East_African_Regional_Analysis_of_Youth_Demographics.pdf)  
 45 East African Regional Analysis of Youth Demographics p. XII

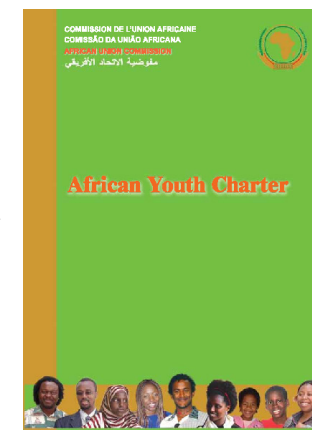
## ANNEX II

### MAPPING EXISTING REGIONAL YOUTH STRATEGIES

Several global, continental, regional, and national youth strategies have analyzed the youth dynamic in EHOA and made recommendations with the overall objective of transforming the evident youth bulge to a demographic dividend. This annex maps each of these strategies and highlights their key features:

#### African Youth Charter

Endorsed in July 2006, the [African Youth Charter \(AYC\)](#) is a political and legal document which serves as the strategic framework that gives direction for youth empowerment and development at continental, regional and national levels. The AYC aims to strengthen, reinforce, and consolidate efforts to empower young people through meaningful youth participation and equal partnership in driving Africa's development agenda. Ratifications as of 15 March 2016 stood at: 42 Member States have signed the Charter; 38 Member States have ratified the Charter and 3 Member States are yet to sign and ratify.



#### African Youth Decade 2009-2018 Plan of Action



The [African Youth Decade, 2009-2018 Plan of Action \(DPoA\)](#) is a framework for multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional engagement of all stakeholders towards the achievement of the goals and objectives of the African Youth Charter. The DpoA was also aimed at facilitating more coordinated and concerted actions towards accelerating youth empowerment and development. The DpoA explains the background and reasons behind the declaration of a Decade for Youth by the African Union Assembly in January 2009. The DpoA intended to support the development of national and regional plans of action, while simultaneously providing a framework to allow coordinated activities at the continental level. The DpoA was intended for use by a broad spectrum of stakeholders including African Union Member States, development partners, the AUC and constituents of the AU organs.

#### EAC Youth Policy

The [East African Community Youth Policy 2013 \(EACYP\)](#) is a plan of action adopted by East African Community (EAC) Council of Ministers on Youth matters. One of the considerations by the EAC Forum of Ministers that led to the development of the policy was the need for regional strategies on challenges in the areas of Gender, Youth, Children, Social Protection and Community Development. This includes challenges relating to Gender Based Violence (GBV), lack of harmonization of Gender, Youth and Child-related policies, limited women, and youth empowerment as a result of inadequate skills development and life skills programmes and lack limited of community empowerment to facilitate effective participation in social development programs.

The Forum of Ministers identified several strategies, inter alia, development of appropriate structures, policies, and laws to improve youth participation; increased opportunities for vocational education and training, establishment of vulnerability indices and capacity building for communities which were approved under the EACYP. The policy prescribes strategic priority areas and actions to guide the implementation of initiatives related to youth empowerment and address youth-related challenges. It also articulates the need for key definitions including how the term "youth" is defined, related legislation and programmes carried out across the region.

## IGAD Regional Strategy (2016 – 2020)

IGAD's strategy on youth empowerment is embedded in its Regional Strategy (2016 – 2020) as part of the Health and Social Development component. The key areas of focus are towards the development of Youth Plan of Action for IGAD Member States and the operationalization of a Regional Youth Strategy to review and harmonize individual Member States' Action Plans at a regional level. IGAD's priority areas for youth empowerment include enhancing contribution of youth in the labour market, reducing unemployment rates and addressing violent conflict to spur economic growth.



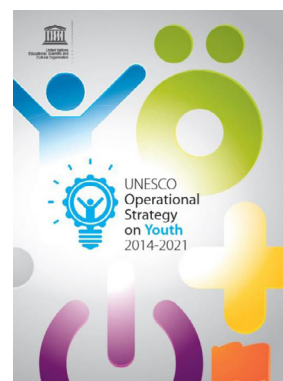
## UNDP Youth Strategy 2014-2017



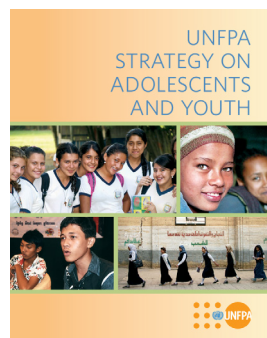
Launched in 2014 in response to the worldwide phenomenon of young men and women calling for meaningful civic, economic, social and political participation, including in recent consultations on the post-2015 development agenda, UNDP's Youth Strategy identifies development challenges and issues facing youth today, and more importantly offers forward-looking recommendations for strategic entry points and engagement of a broad range of partners, including young people themselves, in addressing youth empowerment issues around the world. The UNDP [Youth Strategy](#) offers key entry points for systematic and coordinated action to support youth within an increasingly complex development context for their social, economic, and political development. UNESCO's Operational Strategy on Youth (2014 – 2021).

## UNESCO Operational Strategy on Youth (2014 – 2021)

The UNESCO Operational Strategy on Youth stands on three distinct but complementary pillars – (i) Policy formulation and review to ensure that supported member states provide a comprehensive policy environment for inclusive youth development and participation; (ii) Capacity development for the transition to adulthood which could provide an improved educational and learning environment for youth to acquire skillsets for the transition to adulthood; (iii) Civic engagement, democratic participation and social innovation in partnership with youth organizations and development actors to allow for young women and men to engage as active citizens towards democratic consolidation, sustainable communities and peace.



## UNFPA's Adolescents and Youth Strategy



UNFPA's Adolescent and Youth Strategy is a multi-sectoral framework that focuses on paving a successful pathway to adulthood for youth around the world. The agency's commitment to the advancement of adolescents and youth is comprised in 5 strategic prongs: (i) To enable evidence-based advocacy for comprehensive policy and program development, investment and implementation; (ii) To promote comprehensive sexuality education; to build capacity for sexual and reproductive health service delivery (including HIV prevention, treatment and care); (iii) To take bold initiatives to reach marginalized and disadvantaged adolescents and youth, especially girls; and (iv) To promote youth leadership and participation.

## Youth, Employment and Migration Strategy in West and Central Africa

This is a three-pronged strategic approach developed by IOM in line with the UN Youth Strategy (2018) to address the youth-(un)employment-migration nexus. The strategy aims to support governments in West and Central Africa to address the challenges of youth unemployment and to ensure that migration can bring about positive results in both origin and destination communities. It also strives to ensure that young people have a role to play in implementing the objectives set forward in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



## UN Youth Strategy

Launched in September, 2018, UN's [Youth 2030](#) seeks to act as an umbrella framework to guide the UN and all its related and allied bodies across three pillars of youth engagement (i) peace and security; (ii) human rights; and (iii) sustainable development) in all contexts. It seeks to "significantly strengthen" the UN's capacity to engage young people and benefit from their views, insights, and ideas, and to ensure that UN's work on youth issues is pursued in a "coordinated, coherent and holistic manner." It comprises five priorities:

- i) amplify youth voices for the promotion of a peaceful, just and sustainable world (engagement, participation and advocacy);
- ii) support young people's greater access to quality education and health services;
- iii) support young people's greater access to decent work and productive employment;
- iv) protect and promote the rights of young people and support their civic and political engagement; and
- v) support young people as catalysts for peace and security and humanitarian action.



The Strategy aims to facilitate increased impact and expanded global, regional, and country-level action to address the needs, build the agency and advance the rights of young people in all their diversity around the world, and to ensure their engagement and participation in the implementation, review, and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as other relevant global agendas and frameworks. Through the Youth Strategy, the UN seeks to become a Leadership Example, a Pioneer in Innovation, an Investment and Solution Catalyst and an Accountability Leader.

## African Youth Front on Coronavirus

This is a high-level policy and advocacy framework for young people to co-lead Africa's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. More specifically, the African Youth Front on Coronavirus will operate as a multi-stakeholder advocacy group of youth and intergenerational networks who will support the implementation of the African Continental Strategic Plan for COVID-19. The main objectives of the initiative are to organize, mobilize and unite youth and grassroots civil society actors as well as convene and facilitate the Virtual AU Youth Consultations Series on COVID-19.



## ANNEX II

### EXISTING NATIONAL YOUTH POLICIES AND STRATEGIES IN EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA\*

#### The National Youth Policy of Burundi

During the 1993 crisis in Burundi, there was large-scale forced conscription of youth into armed groups and hence many young people abandoned schooling. Education infrastructure was also destroyed. As a result, in the subsequent years, the education system produced thousands of young men and women without qualifications, with very possibilities of employment<sup>46</sup>. The 2008 census in Burundi reflected an unemployment rate of 13 per cent among youth who had completed university leaving them vulnerable to the influences of criminal groups and radicalization.

In response, Burundi developed a National Youth Policy<sup>47</sup> in 2008 in partnership with UNDP. The revision of the same was initiated in 2011. The strategy defines youth to fall between the ages of 15-26 years. After a civil war that lasted more than 10 years and ended in 2005, Burundi channelized its efforts toward focusing on its youth to contribute to peace and security, reconciliation, and national reconstruction of the country. The youth policy seeks to extend services and vocational education to young people to improve their physical and mental status. It notes the importance of completing education and entering productive employment. Some initiatives in the field of vocational training and employability are organized in cooperation with other Francophone states in the [Conference of Francophone Ministers of Youth and Sports](#) (CONFEJES).

The Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture of Burundi prioritizes full education of youth and its integration into society. It encourages young people to be mobilized in education programs for peace, human rights, reconciliation, and reconstruction

46 [http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Burundi\\_2008\\_National\\_Youth\\_Policy.pdf](http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Burundi_2008_National_Youth_Policy.pdf)

47 [http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Burundi\\_2008\\_National\\_Youth\\_Policy.pdf](http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Burundi_2008_National_Youth_Policy.pdf)

48 According to the UN Report on the Rights of the Child in Burundi (2010) the CNBJ should allow more effective participation of young people in politics and serve as an intermediary between the government and young people. [http://www.youthpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/library/2010\\_UN\\_Report\\_Rightsofthechild\\_Burundi\\_FRE.pdf](http://www.youthpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/library/2010_UN_Report_Rightsofthechild_Burundi_FRE.pdf)

49 UNESCO. *Regional Report on Youth Policies and Violence Prevention in the Great Lakes Region* (2012)

\*A substantial portion of the work on this strategy was undertaken in 2020 when the world and the African continent were engulfed in the COVID-19 pandemic. This annex therefore also contains a specific section per country on special vulnerabilities of youth and youth centric responses to the virus in the EHOA region.

of destroyed infrastructure and promotes the creation and development of associations and youth movements. It works in cooperation with the Conference of Francophone Ministers of Youth and Sports (CONFEJES) especially in vocational training, and training for trainers. Burundi also established a democratically elected National Youth Council of Burundi (CNJB) in 2008 to represent the opinions of young people<sup>48</sup>.

The National Youth Policy of Burundi also identifies key challenges to youth empowerment in the country. These include: the mismatch between the training received by young people and the realities of the labour market; the high rate of youth unemployment; the un-coordination of management structures of the young; the poor leadership capacities for youth associations; and the increasing HIV prevalence among young people<sup>49</sup>.

#### Ongoing youth-sensitive initiatives by IOM to tackle COVID-19 vulnerabilities:

- IOM is working with the Ministry of Health on a protocol to manage confirmed cases of COVID-19, and with the Ministry of Interior, other UN agencies and NGO partners on contingency planning. Special efforts have been made to include youth representatives in this initiative.

- IOM has trained 31 members of the Protection Sector on Psychological First Aid (PFA) which includes a component to aid youth affected by COVID-19.

- IOM has partnered with the Ministry of Health and other agencies including WHO, UNDP, WFP, IMC, and civil protection representatives to develop youth-sensitive SOPs on COVID-19 detection, notification, and referral.

- The Ministry of Health in Burundi has approved IOM's proposed methodology to install community based COVID-19 surveillance in at risk cross-border areas which includes youth representatives.

- IOM and Commissariat General des Migration (CGM) has organized dialogue between the community and security personnel to improve community engagement in the fight against COVID-19 and cross-border crimes that especially target youth, including smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons.

#### The National Youth Policy of Djibouti

Unemployment in Djibouti is endemic in the country and particularly affects the young. Despite a recent reduction, the most recent estimates show an unemployment rate of 54 per cent of the active population in 2010, compared with 59 per cent in 2002. While it is true that the economy generates few new jobs, there is also an imbalance between the needs of the labour market and the skills of young people. The unemployment experienced by young people is explained by the problems that exist in demand as well as supply.

The country does not currently have a formal strategy to deal with youth unemployment but has put in place several initiatives. The most recent 2001-2005 National Youth Policy of Djibouti focuses on development, empowerment, and integration of the youth by adapting institutional and strategic policies to the concerns of Djiboutian youth<sup>50</sup>. The [Secretariat of State for Youth and Sports](#) in Djibouti implements government policy in the fields of youth and sports. Djibouti is member of two international bodies in the field of the youth [CONFEJES](#) and [Commission de la Jeunesse et des Sports de l'Océan Indien \(CJSOI\)](#). A [National Youth Council](#) (CNJB) was formed in Djibouti in 2007 with the objective of placing "the difficulties of young people at the centre of all public decision-making<sup>51</sup>." The objective of the creation of the council was to increase the involvement of young people in decision-making processes. The council acts as a platform for dialogue, expression of interests, and action and facilitates

50 the UNCRC – Djibouti report (2007)

51 the UNCRC – Djibouti report (2007)

52 2008 Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy Paper

dialogue between young people, governments, and international organizations. The two main initiatives set up to promote youth employment in Djibouti are the young graduate loan and the young promoters' loan. The young graduate loan scheme was set up in 2011 by the Djibouti social development agency ADDS (Agence djiboutienne de développement social) with funding of USD 40 million to support the business start-up projects of young graduates. The young promoters' loan scheme was launched in 2011 and is aimed at those with projects linked to the primary sector (fisheries, agriculture, and livestock), to support business start-ups and to improve poor development in the sector.

The [Djibouti: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper](#) (2008) notes that efforts are deemed insufficient "to meet the legitimate expectations of young people and to solve the problems facing them." Key problems are lack access to quality education, and youth unemployment. Further, institutions are short of fiscal resources, many projects rely on external funding. Key challenges to youth empowerment in Djibouti include (i) access to an education that responds to the needs of the market; (ii) unemployment – over 90 per cent of young people between 15 and 24 years of age have no activity; and (iii) confidence in the future of the country – more than half of the young people are thinking of emigrating<sup>52</sup>.

The formulation and implementation of a national youth promotion strategy is thus a priority for the future.

#### Ongoing youth-sensitive initiatives by IOM to tackle COVID-19 vulnerabilities:

- Upon request from the Embassy of Ethiopia in Djibouti, IOM is registering the most vulnerable migrants stranded in Djibouti, a large proportion of which belong to the youth demographic.

- In co-ordination with UNICEF, WFP, and the National Office of Assistance to Refugees and Disaster Victims (ONARS Djibouti), IOM continues to provide support to vulnerable migrants in the Migration Response Centre (MRC) in Obock, where hundreds of young migrants are stranded.

- In collaboration with the National Police Service, IOM has carried out a rapid youth-sensitive needs assessment at border posts, including land borders, ports, and airports to check the preparedness and response as well as needs and gaps to promote effective measures to prevent the disease.

### The National Youth Policy of Eritrea

Low levels of youth employment and scarcity of livelihood opportunities in Eritrea is one of the major concerns for the Government of Eritrea where approximately 31 percent of the population falls within the age group of 15-39 years<sup>53</sup>. A substantial number of Eritrean youth migrate in search of employment and better livelihood opportunities as a result of the prolonged prevalence of strained relations with neighboring countries that impeded the country's development combined with the UN Security Council (UNSC) sanctions that adversely impacted the foreign direct investment and inward remittance flows. Nevertheless, the conclusion of the July 2018 Friendship and Peace Agreement between Eritrea and Ethiopia, and the upliftment UN SC sanctions have provided a sense of optimism for Eritrea's development and progress.

Eritrea's consolidation of youth-related policies is currently ongoing and hence while there is no specific document to refer to, youth and students have been well organized in the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students (NUEYS) that defines youth as persons within the ages of 14 and 40 years<sup>54</sup>. NUEYS was established in 1950 during the liberation struggle as one of the mass organizations of the Eritrean Peoples' Liberation Front and continues to contribute toward the country's development. The union is mandated to encourage youth to participate in Eritrean economic, social, political, and cultural spheres of the country.

Following the Peace Agreement concluded with Ethiopia in July 2018, the Government of Eritrea has started focusing on human resource development as an exercise in nation building to modernize the

53 EPHS 2010 (National Statistics Office, 2013)

54 The National Union of Eritrea Youth and Students' Constitution

55 2018 -2023 Education Sector Plan

56 <https://www.theigc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Broussar-Tekleselassie-2012-Working-Paper.pdf>

57 Dire Dawa, Togochole and Semera

58 Metema

country's economy. The government's focus is currently on providing equitable access to quality education and Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) to meet the domestic and international labour market demand and to create employment opportunities for Eritrean youth<sup>55</sup>.

### Ongoing youth-sensitive initiatives by IOM to tackle COVID-19 vulnerabilities:

- IOM is participating in the RCCE Working Group to provide information to the mobile populations on prevention and control of COVID-19. The public information campaign has been designed to be youth sensitive and special efforts are being made to reach young migrants through social media.

### The National Youth Policy of Ethiopia

In recent years, unemployment in Ethiopia has increased significantly, with official estimates indicating that over 11 million Ethiopians are currently unemployed. In Ethiopia, the annual labour market entrants are estimated to be around 3 million. Close to 70 per cent of the workforce remains in the rural parts of the country<sup>56</sup>. However, during the last two decades, growing landlessness among youth has contributed to an increase in rural-urban migration and migration abroad.

In poor families, the migration of young members of a household often serves as a risk mitigation and livelihood strategy. Migration is considered an investment for the rural poor with limited opportunity for employment.

A knowledge, attitude, and practice (KAP) survey conducted by IOM in 2018 showed that there was a limited understanding among surveyed communities on the causes, risks, consequences, and possible benefits of migration. Understanding and clear identification of irregular migration versus regular migration, trafficking and smuggling was also found to be very limited. Data collected at IOM's Migration Response Centres (MRCs) on the Eastern<sup>57</sup> and Northern<sup>58</sup> routes indicated that

almost all migrants assisted at the centres reported migrating for economic reasons (97%) while 25 percent also mentioned educational reasons and 5 percent reported migrating due to natural disasters or environmental conditions.

A recent study conducted by IOM's Regional Data Hub indicated that around 77 percent of Ethiopian migrants did not have any source of income in Ethiopia prior to migration, and half earned less than 1,800 Birr (61 USD) per month<sup>59</sup>.

In 2017, the Youth and Sport Ministry introduced a strategy on Youth Development and Transformation<sup>60</sup> that recognizes the need for structural change in the economy through creating new employment opportunities in the agricultural sector and industrial zones.

The Youth Development and Transformation Strategy in relation to youth economic participation and benefits prioritized the following four interventions:

1. Transformation of the economy from Agri-led to industrialization to maximize/increase the benefits accrued to the youth.
2. Response to youth unemployment in cities and towns through facilitating opportunities in mega projects and employment opportunities in government and non-government organizations, in the private sector, food security, manufacturing, construction, urban farming & business.
3. In rural Ethiopia, tackling unemployment through responding to the growing landlessness among the youth by identifying farmland to which the youth would have facilitated access for various gainful activities.
4. Strengthening the response to unemployment among pastoralist and semi-pastoralist youth by creating new opportunities for young people to engage in agriculture, facilitate employment opportunities in railway and telecom expansion projects, mining, and food security projects.

### Other existing and emerging frameworks include:

- World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) The WPAY provides a policy framework and practical guidelines for national action and

59 IOM, *the Desire to Thrive Regardless of the Risk*, April 2020

60 *The Ethiopian Youth Development and Transformation Strategy*, Youth and Sport Ministry, June 2017, page 16-17.

international support to improve the situation of young people around the world. The WPAY covers fifteen youth priority areas and contains proposals for action in each of these areas. Of the 15 fields of action identified, the most critical for Ethiopia in the context of COVID-19 are education, employment, hunger and poverty, health and girls and boys.

### Special vulnerabilities faced by migrant youth as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in Ethiopia:

- The large majority of Ethiopian migrants are young, their median age being 22, compared to an average of 25 for African migrants overall. The Government of Ethiopia recognizes that any effort to ensure peaceful coexistence must be youth centred. Ethiopia's population of nearly 105 million is projected to exceed 127 million by 2037, majority of which will be below the age of 30. As such, the impact of COVID-19 on migrants significantly affects the youth in Ethiopia.

Special vulnerabilities/impact of COVID-19 on Ethiopian migrants abroad include:

1. Rising levels of discrimination and xenophobia against migrants during the COVID-19 pandemic, where migrants may be stigmatized as carrier of the virus.
2. Layoffs of migrant workers due to COVID-19 economic downturn, leading to loss of income. This, in turn, negatively impacts individuals and families who rely on remittances
3. Issues with visas or work permits expiring even if migrants cannot leave the country due to travel restrictions or inability to afford a return ticket, putting migrants into undocumented or irregular status.
4. Travel restrictions have also meant that many migrant workers have been prevented from taking up employment abroad for which they had secured contracts, and for which they may have already paid high recruitment fees. This can lead to further irregular movements, increased potential for debt bondage and human trafficking.
5. Exclusion of youth in irregular situations from essential services, especially health care, social protection, and information on COVID-19 infection prevention and control (IPC) measures.



6. In addition to often being the first to be laid-off, migrants often are the last to have access to COVID-19 testing or treatments abroad.

7. Where access to COVID-19 testing or medical treatment is available, young migrants may not come forward due to fear of detention or deportation, especially those in an irregular status

8. Women migrant workers employed as front-line health care workers face increased risk of becoming infected with COVID-19.

9. Loss of ability to support household consumption and savings due to remittances lost as a result of job losses.

Special vulnerabilities/impact of COVID-19 on Ethiopian migrants in Ethiopia include:

1. Stigmatization of returnees as carriers of the virus in return communities, especially after the returnees have been in quarantine facilities.

2. Rural economies, which include a high number of young people, are supported by remittances from urban areas. In a majority of cases, these remittances are provided by migrant youth. The economic contraction caused by COVID-19 and domestic travel restrictions will affect rural economies and expose the youth in rural areas to more vulnerabilities, such as increased unemployment which, in turn, may lead to more irregular migration.

3. Vegetable and flower farms have already been severely affected by COVID-19, with tens of thousands of workers being sent home with no pay as demand from the European markets have dropped.

4. Ethiopia hosts a growing number of refugees, among them many young people, who live in refugee camps and in cities as urban refugees. Refugees often have limited access to information on COVID-19, and often live-in crowded camps or small dwellings in urban settings owing to lack of income, putting them at a particular risk of contracting COVID-19.

5. Lack of access to universal health coverage and health systems especially set up to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

6. Limited access to public health information to facilitate informed migration decisions.

7. Lack of access and/or disruptions to continued education, and skills development, entrepreneurship.

8. Limited national capacities to collect, analyze and disseminate data disaggregated by age, gender, and other population characteristics, especially for addressing the most marginalized and vulnerable youth groups during and after this pandemic.

*Ongoing and planned youth-sensitive initiatives by IOM to tackle COVID-19 vulnerabilities:*

1. Partnership in the framework of the UN-led COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response & Recovery Plan currently under development.

2. Inclusion of vulnerable returnee youth in the Youth Empowerment Fund and the Productive Safety Net Programme.

3. The Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia launched national voluntary youth service program has launched a youth engagement programme in order, inter alia, to promote national unity and integration, foster peaceful coexistence and social cohesion, including the COVID-19 response.

4. Collaboration with ILO job retention and job creation efforts focused on propping up/ repurposing large and medium-scale enterprises.

5. The Ethiopian Red Cross engagement of volunteers for the COVID-19 response, many of whom are young people.

6. Ongoing UNDP/GIZ led decentralization/localization programmes aimed at ensuring government programmes meet the needs of youth.

7. Collaboration with health sectors on initiatives focused on universal health coverage.

8. Collaboration with education sectors on education delivery to ensure continued skills acquisition and learning, with particular attention to the needs of young women and girls.

### **The National Youth Policy of Kenya**

In Kenya, the most acute challenge faced by youth is the inability to access employment and hence the lack of opportunities to earn a decent and honest living. The issue of creating employment opportunities for the youth (formal, informal and self-employment) needs therefore to be addressed urgently and with

resources, focus and commitment<sup>61</sup>. There are several obstacles to the empowerment of youth in the country. These include high population growth rate which exerts pressure on available resources and low economic growth rate that is unable to create enough employment opportunities for the youth.

The education system in the country has been criticized for producing graduates who are neither properly equipped for entry to the job market nor possess the necessary life skills<sup>62</sup>. Government Ministries, youth organizations and international agencies that have their own individual youth programmes and policies which are not harmonized leading to duplication of efforts and limited impact. For instance, in 2007, based on the Strategic Plan, the Department of Youth Development was mandated to develop youth policies and programmes. Then, the Ministry of Youth Affairs assumed responsibility but, as reported in [Africa Review](#) in April 2013, was disbanded after the 2013 elections. In the [2014 budget policy statement](#), “Youth Development and Empowerment Services” were listed under the Ministry of Devolution and Planning, which sits under the Office of the President, however it is unclear if this ministry has taken over the duties of the now-defunct Ministry of Youth Affairs.

This is further complicated by lack of adequate resources to run youth programmes. Existing structures within public and private sectors and the prevailing attitudes that do not provide an enabling environment for the youth to participate in decision-making, planning and implementation processes. Even though considerable effort has been made to provide education, training and entrepreneurial skills for the youth, most Kenyan youth lack the skills and experience to be successfully absorbed into the labour market or start their own businesses<sup>63</sup>.

The National Youth Policy of Kenya was adopted in 2006, followed by a [strategic plan](#)<sup>64</sup>. The Policy “visualizes a society where youth have an equal

opportunity as other citizens to realize their fullest potential, productively participating in economic, social, political, cultural and religious life without fear or favour.” The strategic plan (2007-2012) provides a detailed action plan for the implementation of the eight strategic areas: Employment; Empowerment and Participation; Education and Training; Information Communication Technology; Health; Crime and Drugs; Environment; Leisure, Recreation and Community Service<sup>65</sup>. Youth and Representation. The [National Youth Council of Kenya](#) (NYC-Kenya) was established in the [National Youth Council Act](#) (2009) in response to the [election violence](#) of 2008.

The [Act](#) mandates the [NYC-Kenya](#) to coordinate youth activities and organizations along with supporting the national youth policy<sup>66</sup>. The formulation of the National Youth Policy and the establishment of the National Youth Council are important advances towards enhancing youth development in Kenya. Nevertheless, the youth policy falls short of offering specific affirmative guidelines on the representation of the youth in governance bodies at local, regional, and national levels. In fact, an investment in building the capacity of Kenyan youth by targeted interventions and in addressing their specific needs in terms of education, skills training and gainful employment is seen as imperative for national development and the realization of the Millennium Development Goals in Kenya by 2015. This Strategic Plan offers a coherent, ambitious but realizable road map to address this and other challenges facing young people.

*Special vulnerabilities faced by migrant youth as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in Kenya*

Kenya reported its first COVID-19 case on March 12th, 2020. As a response to the growing threat, the Government of the Republic of Kenya implemented strict travel restrictions and announced its borders would close on March 15, 2020. In a research conducted by the Mixed Migration Center (MMC) on migrants and refugees, it recommends increase

61 UNDP Kenya National Youth Report (2009)

62 UNDP Kenya National Youth Report (2009)

63 UNDP Kenya National Youth Report (2009)

64 [http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Kenya\\_2006\\_National\\_Youth\\_Policy.pdf](http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Kenya_2006_National_Youth_Policy.pdf)

65 [http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Kenya\\_2006\\_National\\_Youth\\_Policy.pdf](http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Kenya_2006_National_Youth_Policy.pdf)

66 According to the [official Facebook Page](#), legal challenges initially prevented the establishment of the council, but the first elections took place in 2012. However, it notes that there is no operational budget. The National Youth Council is a member of the [Commonwealth Youth Council](#).

cash support to vulnerable refugees and migrants to cushion them from the negative impacts of loss of income, and support governments to safeguard the right to seek asylum and preserve the principle of non-refoulement in line with international refugee law and human rights law. Challenges faced by migrant youth in Kenya as a result of COVID 19 include increased difficulty in moving around inside the country and crossing borders; increased risk of detention, deportation racism and xenophobia; loss of income as a result of restrictions on movement; loss of housing and inability to afford basic goods and services and inability to continue the migration journey and send remittances back home. The additional challenge of being excluded from other channels of support adds to their vulnerability. Collective economic activities have also been disturbed by the COVID -19 lockdown. Due to business closures and restricted movements, many of communal finance mechanisms like the Somali refugees' businesspeople "ayuto"- credit groups, are not working. Although Kenyan government has started to assist some vulnerable Kenyan families with food and a small cash stipend via M-pesa, the mobile money network in Kenya- refugees are excluded from government support by their legal status.

Young people in Kenya's informal settlements, cities and towns are the driving force behind preventative measures in the community.

*Ongoing and planned youth-sensitive initiatives by IOM to tackle COVID-19 vulnerabilities:*

- IOM continues to build capacity and skills of youth and offers business support to populations vulnerable to recruitment to violent extremism to ensure that they do not slip further into poverty due to COVID-19.

- IOM Kenya Country Office is currently working on a policy analysis document under review that focuses on the Socio-Economic impact of COVID 19 in Kenya on vulnerable communities (IDPs, refugees, and irregular migrants); migrant workers; remittances and social inclusion (Xenophobia). Special focus has been placed on youth in providing

<sup>67</sup> Youth lead the way in preventing COVID-19 spread in Kenya's informal settlements. The youth group said they were also inspired by the graffiti art seen on the vans used as public transport known as 'matatus.' The murals, painted on the walls of buildings, feature messages stating, 'End Corona' and 'Corona is Real' mainly written in Kiswahili and Sheng, the informal language widely used in urban areas. In the informal settlements there is widespread misinformation about COVID-19 and a lack of trust in information coming from the authorities. While many pre-

recommendations for response measures.

- As the Government of Kenya continues to adapt and update prevention and response interventions to the COVID-19 pandemic, IOM continues to provide assistance and psychosocial support to young, stranded migrants by linking them with essential services and providing tele- counselling.

- Young artists in Nairobi's informal settlement Mathare are using their talent to educate residents about how to prevent COVID-19 through brightly coloured murals. A youth group, known as Mathare Roots Youth Initiative, came up with the idea after hearing about similar work in Sierra Leone during the Ebola outbreak. The youth were inspired during the UN-Habitat training for youth groups managing hand washing facilities in the informal settlement funded by the agency's Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme in Mathare <sup>67</sup>. IOM hopes to identify and explore partnerships with such youth-centred initiatives.

- A youth-led digital enterprise in Kenya is gathering and disseminating up-to-date, accurate information about COVID-19 in English, Kiswahili, and Amharic to ensure information on the disease and how to prevent it from spreading. IOM is looking into avenues for supporting such initiatives.

- IOM and ILO are providing technical support to the Government of Kenya in drafting Guidelines on COVID-19 Pandemic at Workplace in Kenya. These guidelines are proposed for management of labour relations between employers and employees during the period of the COVID-19, which also includes youth who have been employed in the agricultural/ horticultural sectors which have been affected due to closure of borders.

**The National Youth Policy of Rwanda**

Statistics from the 4th Rwanda Population and Household Census of 2012 revealed that young Rwandans aged between 0-35 years account for 78.7 per cent of the Country's population which is currently over 10.5 million of which 4.16 million are aged between 14 -35 years. Almost 60 per cent of them are employed while 4.1 per cent are unemployed and 37 per cent inactive, of which 75

per cent of the economically inactive are students and 16 per cent look after families. Unemployment rate is higher among young women (4.9 %) as compared to young men (3.2%) with the highest unemployment rate is observed among young active women living in urban areas (13%) and university graduates (13.2%).

The Republic of Rwanda under the Ministry of Youth and ICT revised the 2006 National Youth Policy in 2015 so as to update and renew the direction of the Youth Sector in relation to a number of guidelines and orientation that have since emerged in the Sector.

Amongst the updates was the revision of the definition of Youth in terms of age, in consideration of the current priorities and trends of Rwanda's Development – it was brought from 14–35 years to 16–30 years. The revision also took into consideration the post-2015 global agenda context as enshrined into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The youth policy is aligned to the [Rwanda Vision 2020](#), the National Employment Programme (NEP), as well as the [National Information and Communications Infrastructure \(NICI\) Plan](#) amongst other national development plans and macro- economic policies.

The Policy is also aligned to the [Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy \(EDPRS2\)](#), especially on its two pillars, which are economic transformation and productivity and youth employment.

The main vision of this 2015 policy is to achieve a Health, Aptitude/Attitude, Patriotism, Productivity, and Innovation- HAPPi Generation. Through the policy, the Government of the Republic of Rwanda puts much focus on youth economic empowerment by addressing issues related to unemployment and underemployment, limited skills, low rate of access to finance and markets, mismatch of current education curriculum vis a vis skill required on both local and global labour market, high population growth in relation to economic growth, poor monitoring of the vast sector, among others. The Policy proposes a holistic set of strategies for actions to achieve the above-mentioned issues.

vention methods such as regular handwashing and physical distancing are challenging, it is hoped that the murals will raise awareness and encourage communities and residents to do what they can to protect themselves and their families.

Rwanda is at a key moment in its growth, as the country transitions from Vision 2020 to Vision 2050, aiming to secure high standards of living for all Rwandans. To this end, Rwanda has developed [National Skills Development and Employment Promotion Strategy](#) (2019 – 2024) which aims at upskilling Rwanda's workforce for long-term economic transformation by putting private sector at the helm by adopting the principles embedded in the National Strategy for Transformation, the Private Sector Development and Youth Employment strategy, and other relevant national documents. This strategy builds upon the National Employment Program (NEP) and seeks to amplify NEP's successes, such as attending the upskilling needs of investing companies through the Skills Development Fund (SDF), while addressing its shortcomings, such as insufficient private sector engagement and weak accountability.

Special vulnerabilities faced by migrant youth because of the COVID-19 pandemic in Rwanda include higher transmissibility due to large household sizes, intense social mixing between the young and elderly, inadequate water, and sanitation, might propagate transmission disproportionately and faster.

The Government of Rwanda has taken several measures to strengthen the country's ability to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmissions, including closing places of worship, schools, and commercial air traffic, limiting large gatherings, encouraging work from home etc. Borders have partially been closed, except for goods, cargo, returning Rwandans and for asylum seekers (who upon arrival are subject to one week of quarantine), citizens or legal residents. In addition, unnecessary movements in the country (except for essential travels) has been prohibited.

*Ongoing and planned youth-sensitive initiatives by IOM to tackle COVID-19 vulnerabilities:*

- IOM, in coordination with the Government, WHO, UNICEF and UNHCR, is working on adapting COVID-19 risk communication materials for border communities, truck drivers, and for persons in refugee camps with special focus on the youth demographic.

- A group of young people in Rwanda have been writing and producing a series of radio dramas to



teach listeners about the vital role handwashing and sanitation play in preventing the spread of diseases such as COVID-19. IOM aims to identify and support such youth-led initiatives.

- Under the Japanese funded project IOM will conduct awareness raising for communities in the Districts of Karongi, Musanze and Rubavu. The awareness raising will target amongst other target urban communities, border communities, refugees as well as youth. Amongst other, IOM has worked in coordination with UNICEF to developed posters with clear and easy to understand messages on symptoms and prevention of COVID-19.

- IOM recently also developed an initiative with the objective of improving the living conditions of vulnerable households affected by floods and landslides in Nyabihu, Gakenke, Ngororero through provision of emergency shelter and avoid further deterioration of living conditions of IDPs and host populations. This would amongst other include households with children and youth. This will lessen the over crowdedness of temporary shelters, ameliorating their living conditions, including better hygiene, health dignity and protection, for amongst other, youth.

- This intervention will also allow displaced families living in schools (currently occupying 93 classrooms, usually used by 4,185 school pupils) to return home and schools to reopen in September 2020, as per Government's recommendations; hence children attending school will indirectly benefit from the project activities.

### The National Youth Policy of Somalia

Somalia is one of the youngest countries in the world with 70 per cent of the population under 30 years of age. There are widespread challenges faced by Somali youth, which include: unemployment, insecurity, risk of radicalization and extremism, irregular migration, lack of quality education and vocational training, health services. With these major obstacles, the Somali youth face challenges in realizing their rights and access the basic services they need. A Somali Youth Charter was developed by involved youth groups in 2012. It sought to provide a guiding set of

principles for the design of youth programmes. The Somalia National Development Plan (2020-2024) has identified youth as one of the vulnerable groups that need to be prioritized particularly for employment opportunities. The National Youth Policy (2017 – 2021) also emphasizes the important role of the youth as change makers for development and stability in the country. The policy is an affirmation of commitment from the Federal Government of Somalia that it aims to meet the development needs of its youth, both men and women. Youth participation in all spheres of development is the overall goal of the policy to ensure the youth attain their full potential. The main areas of the National Youth Policy include seven thematic areas<sup>68</sup>, namely:

- i. strengthening education and skills development;
- ii. raising employment creation and economic development;
- iii. security and peace;
- iv. promoting healthy lifestyle;
- v. protection of youth;
- vi. improving youth participation and citizenship;
- vii. justice and reintegration of youth in conflict with law.

#### *Ongoing and planned youth-sensitive initiatives by IOM to tackle COVID-19 vulnerabilities:*

- IOM, in partnership with the Ministry of Health and an Ethiopian community group, has conducted youth-sensitive COVID-19 prevention activities through mobile health clinics, and is providing basic health services and referrals to stranded migrants at Migrant Response Centres.

- IOM continues to aid young stranded Ethiopian migrants through Migration Response Centres (MRCs) and Ethiopian Community Centres (ECCs) in Bossaso.

### The National Youth Policy of South Sudan

Youth in South Sudan are defined as those between the ages of 14 – 35 years. Further, flow monitoring registry (FMR) data from 1 January – 30 June 2020, 284, indicates that children and youth between 5 and 17 years of age make up 15 per cent of all tracked

travelers (8% female and 7% male), adult males (18 and over) make up nearly half of all travelers (45%), and adult women just under a third (32%). Children and youth are underrepresented in economically motivated movements (3%) and overrepresented in movements related to education (56%). Movements undertaken due to displacement were also constituted of a high proportion of children and youth, with 39 percent<sup>69</sup>.

Recent data indicates that youth unemployment is high in South Sudan as a result of lack of a skilled labour supply, absence of a coherent government policy, and the lack of a sound legal and regulatory framework limit the absorption of youth by the labour market<sup>70</sup>. South Sudan's Youth Policy is currently under review<sup>71</sup>. A series of consultations have been completed to, "provide input to the revision of the existing policy document that was developed prior to the independence of South Sudan, 9 July 2011<sup>72</sup>."

The Revitalized Agreement for the Resolution of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) also makes reference to the importance of including marginalized groups, including youth and women, to realize enduring peace and stability. A national consultation, entitled "Youth LEAD" will become a baseline study for the new national youth policy<sup>73</sup>.

#### *Youth Engagement*

The Ministry of Culture, Youth & Sports (MoCYS) is responsible for youth affairs and the national youth policy, promotion of youth activities and projects, youth services, youth organisations, youth centres and hostels, youth sport activities, and developing policies on youth development. According to the [Youth Unemployment briefing](#) (2012), the Ministry of General Education and Instruction has a unit responsible for youth education, and a dedicated Youth Directorate exists within the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare. The [South Sudan](#)

[Youth Forum](#), established in 1983, acted as a national platform for youth councils and youth NGOs but is currently inactive. Youth in South Sudan are currently "not organized into youth governing body to raise their issues to the government" and there exists "lack of platform for exchange of best practice<sup>74</sup>."

The strategic interventions of the National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan 2019-2021 include HIV/AIDS prevention addressing key populations (Female Sex Workers-FSW, Men Who Have Sex with Men-MSM and prisoners) and vulnerable populations (uniformed services, adolescents, and young people); and populations of humanitarian concern (migrants, refugees, and IDPs)<sup>75</sup>. The intended outcomes are knowledge about HIV and HIV risk reduction, improved coverage and uptake of tailored or 'friendly services' for HIV prevention, treatment, care and support, and increased community mobilization to demand for HIV and other linked sexual and reproductive health interventions.

Youth in South Sudan continue to face risks associated with various forms of trafficking in persons, including forced recruitment by armed forces or armed groups, forced marriage, domestic servitude and sexual exploitation, and labour exploitation. The lack of livelihood opportunities greatly affects youth participation in their communities. The biggest constraints to livelihood opportunities for youth are a lack of access to financial capital, education, relevant skills, and scarce work opportunities. In addition, youth are often left out of decision-making processes at the community level. Gender Based Violence (GBV) remains one of the most critical threats for women and girls in South Sudan. Research conducted in 2017 indicates that more than 65 per cent of women and girls have experienced some form of sexual or physical violence in conflict-affected areas<sup>76</sup>, with a further study finding that 75 per cent of women had experienced intimate partner

68 <https://somalia.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/UNFPA%20Somalia%20National%20Youth%20Policy%20Eng%20fa.pdf>

69 <https://displacement.iom.int/system/tdf/reports/20200724%20IOM%20DTM%20SSD%20FMR%20Dashboard%20June%202020.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=9265>

70 The Youth Unemployment briefing (2012) outlines to challenges of youth employment

71 A 2012 youth report (longer) and a 2012 employment briefing exist.

72 According to a UNICEF press release on 10 July 2012,

73 Resulted in a full report (2012) and summary version (2012).

74 According to an article on 4 December 2013

75 Revised National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan 2021-2023; Towards a HIV/AIDS Free in South Sudan-Ministry of Health (MOH), South Sudan AIDS Commission (SSAC), South Sudan

76 IRC, No Safe Place: A lifetime of violence for conflict-affected women and girls in South Sudan (2017)

violence within the last year<sup>77</sup>. In the context of protracted conflict, displacement, coupled with a precarious economic situation and widespread food insecurity, individuals and families resort to risky coping mechanisms, such as increased forced and early marriages and survival sex. Patriarchal social norms further cause and support the subordination of women and girls, thereby contributing to multiple forms of GBV, including conflict-related sexual violence.

In South Sudan, under the UN Peacebuilding Fund project, Youth Action for Reduced Violence and Enhanced Social Cohesion in Wau, IOM's Transition and Recovery Unit (TRU), Mental Health and Psycho-Social Support (MHPSS), and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Units are implementing a project that seeks to directly engage criminalized and 'at-risk' youth in urban areas, including members of youth gangs as a way of generating positive change and reducing violence and insecurity. It tries to address the urban violence that jeopardizes sustainable returns in order to ensure that the benefits of peace can be fully realized for all members of society, including marginalized groups of youth, as well as women and girls. This is complemented by other ongoing projects, including Mitigating Livestock-Related Violence in the Border Areas of Western Bahr el Ghazal and Warrap, which tries to grapple with the realities of localized conflict and organized conflict in rural areas by working with armed youth and other community leaders on conflict and gender transformation, equipping people with inclusive mechanisms for the resolution of conflicts and promoting peaceful interaction and dialogue.

#### *Impact of COVID-19 on Youth in South Sudan*

The first case of COVID-19 in South Sudan was confirmed on 5 April 2020. The risk of a rapid spread of COVID-19 in South Sudan continues to remain high, due to the country's weak health system, low water supply coverage, poor hygiene, and sanitation services, as well as the challenge of maintaining key humanitarian supply chains through neighboring countries. This has left the South Sudanese population and residents, particularly women, children, persons with disabilities, the elderly, Internally Displaced

Persons (IDPs), migrants and returnees, highly vulnerable to epidemic diseases<sup>78</sup>. South Sudan's Border closures and lockdowns highlight the impact of movement restrictions on livelihood and access to basic services in highly complex humanitarian environments where coping mechanisms are already strained. In areas of high population density, such as displacement sites, vulnerable populations are forced to exit the sites to areas with very limited services where host communities are already facing challenges of their own. This – coupled with increased pressure or inability to generate an income for many South Sudanese who operate in the informal sector – could result in escalating tensions at the community level.

The pandemic affects mobile people in need of assistance in several ways. Notably, IDPs in congested camps or camp-like settings face higher risk of transmission of communicable diseases such as COVID-19. Crowded environments not only increase the likelihood of IDPs becoming infected; they do not allow for social distancing and isolation. Undocumented migrants who may currently be in detention or share small apartments face similar concerns. Border closures often lead to use of unofficial border crossings, raising protection concerns for vulnerable groups on the move, emergence of trafficking and smuggling, supply chain disruptions, and increased corruption in exchange for access. All these can easily lead to spikes in the number of infections.

Vulnerabilities faced by migrant youth as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic include access to available information on COVID-19, access to health services, livelihood opportunities, and access to preventive measures, such as face masks, hand sanitizer, or water and soap for hand washing. In the context of COVID-19, the unequal and gendered nature of participation in public life is likely to be exacerbated and deepened by the pandemic, given that South Sudanese girls and women bear the overwhelming burden of caring for the sick, including aging dependents, and are less likely to receive adequate health information given reduced access to the public sphere.

<sup>77</sup> Gender-Based Violence Knowledge, Attitude and Practices Survey, South Sudan (Draft December 2017), commissioned by IOM.

<sup>78</sup> Recent IOM DTM and WHO study showed that more than a third of IDPs and returnees reside in settlements located more than 5km from a functional health facility. IOM DTM – WHO – Health Care Access for IDPs and Returnees (May 2020)

#### *Ongoing and planned youth-sensitive initiatives by IOM to tackle COVID-19 vulnerabilities:*

- IOM is engaging in youth-sensitive risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) exercises, infection prevention and control (IPC), mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services, community-based transition, recovery, and stabilization initiatives, including livelihood and peacebuilding initiatives, and migration management.

- Through a project focused on youth action for reduced violence and enhanced social cohesion in Wau, South Sudan, IOM has prioritized radio messaging and awareness raising on the role of youth in combating COVID-19, as well as in encouraging solidarity, anti-hate speech, and anti-discrimination to contribute to existing COVID-19 response efforts, while at the same time leveraging the opportunities presented by the virus to promote tolerance.

- As an active member of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and the Inter-Agency COVID-19 Operations Group, IOM continues to participate and co-lead relevant technical working groups and advocating for youth and migrant-sensitive approaches.

#### **The National Youth Policy of the United Republic of Tanzania**

There are few initiatives in the United Republic of Tanzania to monitor progress toward measuring achievement of policy aims affecting young people, and hence there is limited data available<sup>79</sup>. The United Republic of Tanzania overhauled its [1996 national youth policy](#) in 2007. The National Policy on Youth Development (2007) intends to create an enabling environment that builds the capacity of young people and promotes employment opportunities and access to social security. The policy focuses on a number of areas including employment, healthcare, and education, the role of local agencies, HIV/AIDS, disability, equality, financial services, juvenile justice, the informal sector, and ICTs<sup>80</sup>.

<sup>79</sup> A 2011 State of Youth in the United Republic of Tanzania report by Restless Development

<sup>80</sup> A 2009 critique focuses on the hurried development of the policy, with the result that it is "not thoroughly informed by what the youth on the ground really demands".

<sup>81</sup> According to the National Policy on Youth Development, the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Youth Development is responsible for youth policy.

<sup>82</sup> In 2012 the government pledged to table a bill to create a NYC Regional Report on Youth Policies and Violence Prevention in the Great Lakes Region (2012)

<sup>83</sup> <https://www.unfpa.org/data/world-population/UG>

As a member of the [Commonwealth of Nations](#), [the United Republic of Tanzania is a signatory of The Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment \(PAYE\) 2006-2015](#), and has signed and ratified the [African Youth Charter](#) (2006).

There are currently two ministries responsible for youth policy and affairs: the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Youth Development which is the guardian of the United Republic of Tanzania's youth policy,<sup>81</sup> and the Ministry of Information, Culture, Youth and Sports. Within the latter sits the Youth Development Division.

The National Youth Policy also commits the government to support the creation of the National Council of Youth<sup>82</sup>.

#### *Ongoing and planned youth-sensitive initiatives by IOM to tackle COVID-19 vulnerabilities:*

- With support from DFID, IOM has been supporting the government on youth and gender sensitive COVID-19 risk communication reaching 92 villages and over 13,000 people.

- IOM continues to respond to Sexual and Gender Based Violence protection needs, through referral for case management, counselling, shelter, and psychosocial support (PSS) services particularly for young migrants, who have been negatively impacted by COVID-19.

- IOM, in partnership with UN Women and OHCHR, is developing a plan to engage in online dialogue on the impact of COVID-19 with migrants and youth.

#### **The National Youth Policy of Uganda**

Uganda's population grew from 16.7 million in 1991 to the current 45.7 million people in mid- 2020, according to United Nations data<sup>83</sup>. The youth population (18-30 years) currently constitutes a significant proportion of the total population (22.5%) and according to estimates grew from



approximately 3.7 million in 1991 to 7.7 million in 2014, out of which 53.4 per cent are female and 46.6 per cent are male.

The poverty situation in Uganda improved from 56.4 per cent in 1992-3 to 19.7 per cent in 2014-15<sup>84</sup>. According to the Youth Employment Report produced by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) in 2012, the number of youth in the labour force bracket were found to be 4.4 million of which about 3.5 million (or 80%) were rural based. Of these, 51 per cent are female while 49 per cent are male<sup>85</sup>.

To address emerging youth issues and outline priority areas of concern, the Government of Uganda has reviewed the National Youth Policy of 2001. The revised policy: Uganda National Youth Policy 2016 (NYP) highlights appropriate objectives, strategies, principles, priority strategic areas, implementation framework, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. The revised policy reflects government's preparedness to meet needs, interests, and aspirations of the youth in line with the National Development Plan 2016-2020 (NDPII), the Constitution of Uganda, regional and international obligations that the country ascribes to. The policy recognizes that youth are a heterogeneous group and targets all persons aged 15 to 30 years priority areas identified in collaboration with a wide variety of stakeholders. These are sustainable livelihoods, employment promotion and enterprise development; skills training and entrepreneurship development; youth participation and governance; access to resources and services; and management coordination and partnerships.

To combat the spread of COVID-19, the government ordered the closure of arcades, shopping malls, restaurants, and other types of businesses. As a result, many migrants, especially youth lost their jobs and livelihood opportunities in Uganda. To address these vulnerabilities, the government, with support from the African Development Bank, is providing loans to small and medium-sized enterprises that mainly are operated by youth and mainly employ youth.

IOM's efforts to improve resilience of Ugandan and migrant youth include partnering with grassroots

organizations to leverage the use of online platforms to train the youth in tailoring, fashion design and making of face masks, distribution of necessities in partnership with other agencies and provision of financial services through cooperatives.

*Ongoing and planned youth-sensitive initiatives by IOM to tackle COVID-19 vulnerabilities:*

- IOM is coordinating with the various government ministries to lead youth-centric community engagement initiatives to tackle the spread of COVID-19.
- IOM recently launched COVID-19 risk communication radio broadcasts in eastern Uganda that targets youth and mobile populations.
- IOM has partnered with UN Women and local human rights groups to convene E-dialogue on COVID-19, Gender, Human Rights and Social Cohesion. The dialogue leverages the power of social media to specially reach out to the youth demographic.
- IOM has trained 60 Village Health Teams (VHTs) on risk communication and has conducted two radio talk shows related on infection prevention that include theme of youth involvement and leadership.

84 Uganda's Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, 2014

85 [https://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Uganda\\_2001\\_National\\_Youth\\_Policy.pdf](https://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Uganda_2001_National_Youth_Policy.pdf)

