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ENTWICKLUNG UND ZUSAMMENARBEIT
E+Z

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GLOBAL AFFAIRS
Development agencies face uncertain future amid polycrisis

PUBLIC FINANCE
Why restructuring Sri Lanka's sovereign debt is so cumbersome

CULTURE SPECIAL
D+C authors recommend books and a short film series

Young people

CONTENTS

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D+C Development and Cooperation
In German: E+Z Entwicklung und Zusammenarbeit

FOCUS

Young people

Lacking access to good jobs and other opportunities, masses of young people around the world are condemned to "waithood". They are expected to become adults, but do not have the means they need to take their fate into their own hands. Human resources are being wasted in many places. As frustration grows among members of the generation, political systems become unstable. Good education is part of the solution, but only if it really does lead to opportunities.

Front page: Shakira Wafula, face of the youth protests in Kenya.
Photo: Larry Madowo

Photo: picture-alliance/Sipa USA/Hindustan Times

Our focus section on young people starts on page 20. It pertains to the UN's 4th, 5th, 8th and 16th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG): Quality education, Gender equality, Decent work and economic growth and Peace, justice and strong institutions.

Waithood – endless adolescence

According to the UN, persons aged 15 to 24 belong to the age group defined as youth. For socio-economic reasons, however, even persons over 30 are often considered to be "girls" or "boys" in many places. Even where social norms expect young persons to become independent fast, serious obstacles stand in their way. The obstacles include lack of access to

- good education and vocational training,
- influential networks,
- policy-making forums and
- decent employment.

The implication is that young people fail to acquire "attributes of adulthood". According to Alcinda Honwana, the Mozambican social anthropologist, these attributes include living in one's own home, having a job, starting a family and being able to financially support relatives.

> "Young people, moreover, deserve more say in politics. This planet is the only one they will ever have."

Anthropologists call this kind of waiting for adulthood "waithood". It is especially prevalent in Africa, the demographically youngest continent with an average age of about 19. However, masses of young people face tough labour-market competition in other world regions too. Whether in Lucknow or Lagos, it is not unusual for someone with a college degree in business administration to still live with their parents in a tiny home and earn money in the informal service sector, for example as a street vendor.

Many young people refuse to patiently accept waithood. Throughout history, the young generation drove protests. Examples in recent decades included the Occupy movement responding to the global financial crisis of 2008, the Arab Spring, Fridays for Future and Black Lives Matter. With international repercussions, young people made themselves heard again and again.

Kenya is currently experiencing the impacts of such protests. The entire cabinet was dismissed because of the youth movement that rose up triggered by President William Ruto's tax plans. Inspired by those events, young people have started mobilising in Ghana, Malawi and Nigeria too. Earlier this year, young activists contributed to Senegal holding presidential elections even though the incumbent head of state, Macky Sall, wanted to postpone them. He was term-limited and no longer in office.

Some trends are worrisome, however. In the recent European elections, right-wing populists won increased support from the age group 16 to 24. These parties excel in using social-media platforms to reach out to youngsters. So do radical Islamist groups.

Extremists do what they can to exploit the personal insecurities and the longing to belong which mark adolescence. Democratic governments and parties must serve young people better. Education must be accessible, and it must be good. It must include competent citizenship, media literacy as well as the basic facts regarding sex and reproductive health. Formal degrees must then lead to decent jobs and other opportunities.

Young people, moreover, deserve more say in politics. This planet is the only one they will ever have. Not only in Germany, we see a pattern of climate policy being slowed down whenever budgets are tight and decision-making becomes difficult. Everywhere on earth, this is casting a very dark shadow over young people's future.

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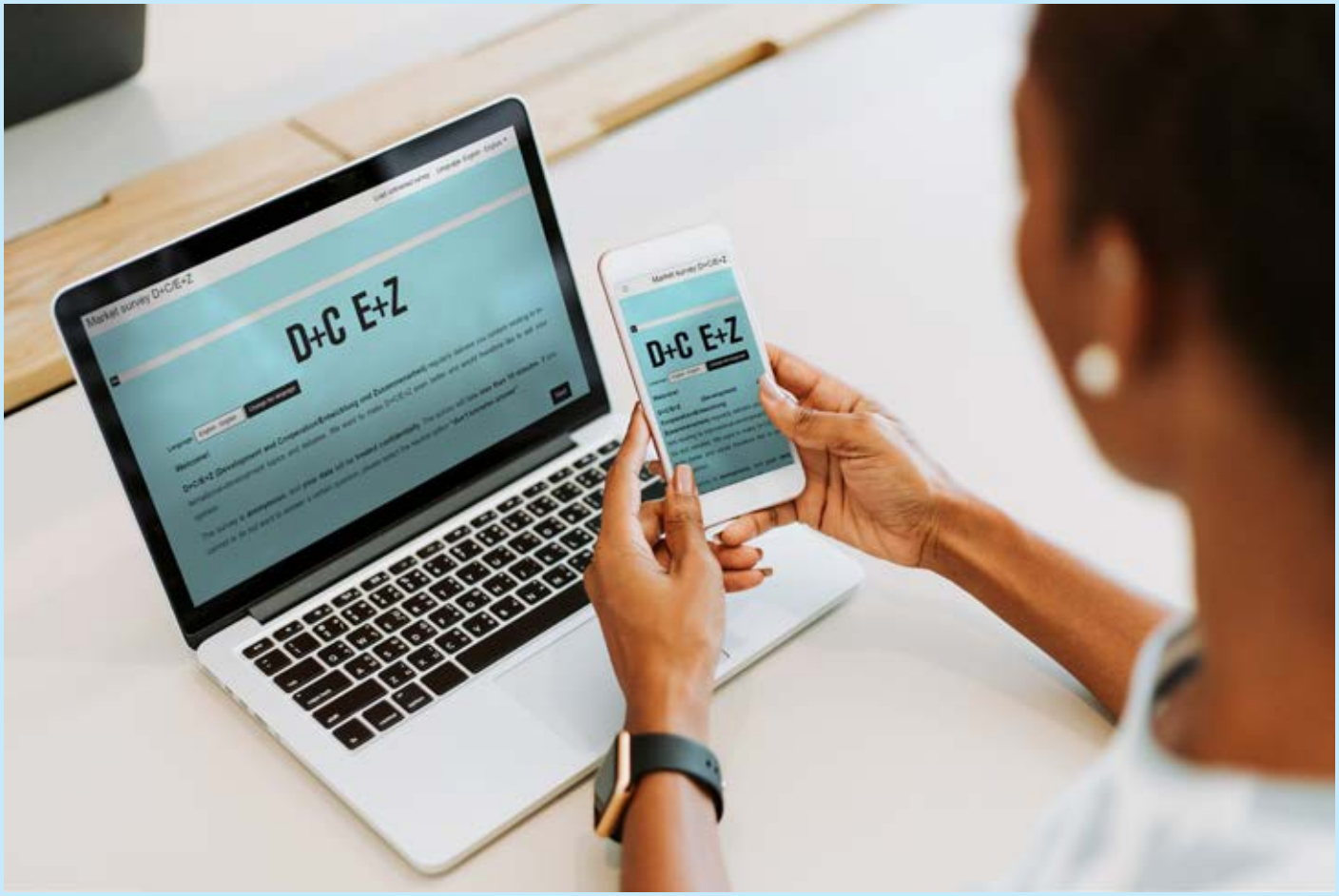
We will be discontinuing our printed magazines at the end of this year and expanding our digital outreach instead. Our mandate will stay the same. Our job is to foster debate on how to achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goals internationally. We hope you will keep reading our content, and we will do our best to make it easy for you.

If you like, please help us to modernise our digital outreach in ways that suit your needs. We are currently running an anonymous online survey regarding our users' preferences. Please do take part – just go to: **https://faz-bm.limesurvey.net/284583?lang=en**



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DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION D+C

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Ugandan demonstrator in front of the World Bank headquarters during a meeting with the IMF last year.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Uncharted waters ahead

Global policymakers are facing unprecedented challenges due to multiple crises, geopolitical power shifts and increasingly anti-democratic tendencies. Solutions require smart prioritisation, new trust, transparency and successful communication.

By Katharina Wilhelm Otieno

The rifts between the so-called west and south are deepening. Reasons include grievances such as the unequal distribution of Covid-19 vaccines and the horrendous debt burdens that some countries are struggling with. Increasingly, developing countries' government spending is flowing into debt servicing rather than urgently needed development. "A new reality is in the making," says Len Ishmael, a former ambassador of the Eastern Caribbean states to the EU and Belgium.

With the war in Gaza, the point of no return may have been reached in terms of broken trust between the west and the south, says Ishmael, who now works for the Diplomatic Academy in Brussels. In view of the humanitarian catastrophe unfolding in Gaza, many expected western governments to intervene more decisively instead of merely endorsing Israel's "right to self-defence". When other countries are suspected of war crimes, they normally fast put pressure on those governments and insist on a rules-based world order, Ishmael says. According to her, many observers in developing countries and emerging markets would appreciate a rules-based world order – but it would have to be "one in which the rules are not changed whenever the referee doesn't like them anymore."

Ishmael is aware of the inadequacies of the terms "global south" or "west". Nevertheless, she finds them useful. "South", according to her, implies shared experiences of colonialism, underdevelopment and solidarity, while "west" indicates notions of shared values and common interests.

However, Ishmael proposes the term "new south", which stands for a newfound capacity for agency, strategic alliances with multiple partners and leadership emanating from very different places. She is not only thinking of Brazil and India, but even of small island states like Barbados. In her eyes, new south also suggests that there is no simple division into good and evil.

The reality in most countries of the south is that masses of people live in poverty. Accordingly, governments there prioritise pragmatic approaches that help their people. Diplomats from Africa, Ishmael reports, are prone to saying things like: "The Vice President of the USA came and lectured us; the Chinese are coming to build roads."

That we are at a watershed became undeniably clear at a conference celebrating the 60th anniversary of the German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS) in Bonn in early July. Two years ago, the institute changed its name from Deutsches In-

Photo: picture-alliance/ZUMAPRESS.com/Eric Kayne

> "In view of the numerous crises occurring around the world, the next set of goals could be called the Survival Development Goals, says Archna Negi of India's Jawaharlal Nehru University."

stitut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE) to IDOS. It was a birthday celebration in bleak times: With the rise of the far right across Europe, the existence of the entire aid community is at risk (see box).

A troubling fact is that around 80 % of donor government's official development assistance (ODA) flows to autocratic contexts, according to research. Hawa Ba of the Open Society Foundations reports that civil-society space has shrunk considerably all over the world. However, civil society has not been eradicated, she pointed out. In many countries, activists are working to circumvent restrictions. Ba cites Senegal and Kenya as recent examples. In both countries, young people in particular have taken to the digital space to fight for democracy.

Promoting democratic structures in places with autocratic tendencies is not easy, says Ba. One challenge is that youth movements in Africa tend to reject western donors, as they do not want to stay dependent on the rich countries and strive for authenticity. Nevertheless, engagement is possible, says Ba, but donors must respect the agency of these movements and meet them where their needs are. This includes paying close attention to channels like X, TikTok and WhatsApp.

SURVIVAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS

In view of the numerous global challenges, the shared vision beyond 2030 remains blurred at best. André de Mello e Souza of the Brazilian think tank IPEA (Institute for Applied Economic Research) notes that multilateral institutions are becoming weaker in times of global polarisation.

In his eyes, the reforms of the IMF and the World Bank were too little, too late. According to him, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) must become binding. It obliges all states to combat the climate crisis but denies equal responsibility.

He would furthermore like to see a global tax on the ultra-rich – not only to raise government revenues, but also to curb their global influence.

The UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with their list of internationally acknowledged development targets are under growing scrutiny too. Many observers agree that they cover too much ground and are too complex. Some say the focus should be on health, inequality and the climate crisis, which require global cooperation, rather than issues like education which nation states can deal with on their own. Jörg Faust of the German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval), expresses the general sentiment: "They are the best we have, but not good enough."

In view of the numerous crises occurring around the world, the next set of goals could be called the Survival Development Goals, says Archna Negi of India's Jawaharlal Nehru University. In her view, responsible consumption, not growth as such, is the key to sustainability. She argues that debates about growth and de-growth do not make sense unless the entire capitalist system can be put in question, which is unlikely to happen, says Negi.

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ODA under attack

One question that worries Imme Scholz of the Heinrich Böll Foundation is: How are we supposed to cooperate internationally to promote the common good when discussions regarding official development assistance (ODA) at the national level are becoming increasingly difficult? She is dismayed by anti-democratic parties demanding that high-income countries should focus more on their own needs.

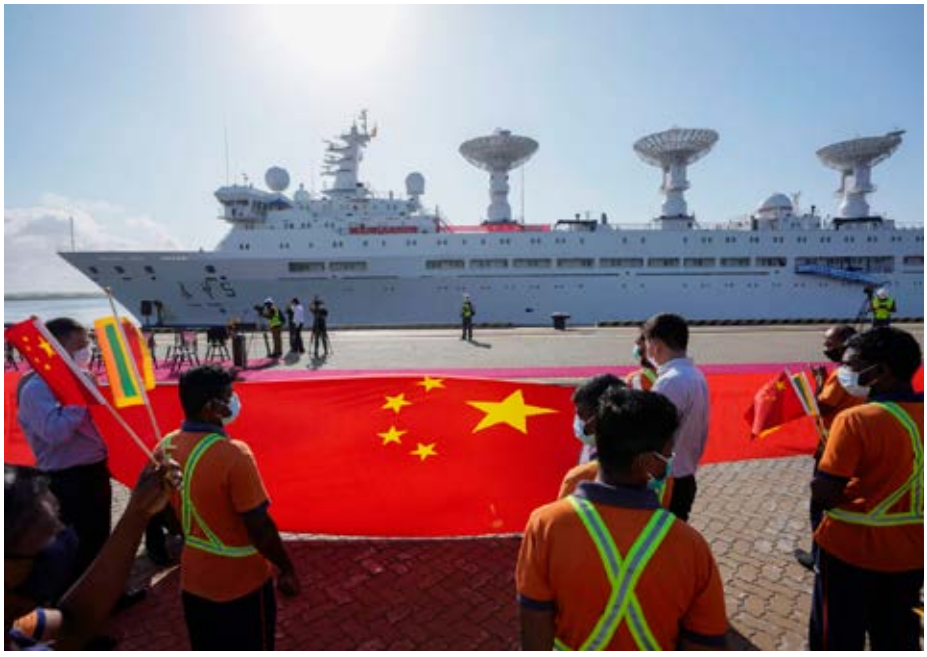
The concern that ODA is increasingly at risk due to the global rise of anti-democratic forces permeated all discussions at the conference to mark the 60th anniversary of the German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS) in Bonn in July (see main text).

Current events reinforce these fears: The new Dutch government not only wants to drastically cut ODA – the new Minister for Foreign Trade and Development, Reinette Klever, even called for the complete abolition of development aid a few years ago.

In Germany too, a dispute is raging over ODA cuts with regard to the 2025 federal budget. Organisations from all sectors protested vehemently against this, but Finance Minister Christian Lindner cut funds significantly. Communicative debacles such as the bogus debate promoted by populist forces about the alleged fact that German ODA is spending € 315 million on cycle paths in Peru are of little help in view of the current situation.

Jochen Steinhilber of Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) agrees that ODA is under pressure. In his experience, populist forces are discrediting development funding in general. Due to a dangerously low level of public awareness of how international institutions work, they often manage to defame projects. He hopes that a set of measures can restore public trust. They include:

- fighting fake news, addressing scepticism, promoting knowledge about institutions and transparency – with the help of IDOS and other partners,
- strengthening the accountability of institutions,
- leaving no one behind, promoting solidarity,
- making attractive offers in geopolitical contexts and
- emphasising and communicating the effectiveness of development projects in the public debate. KO



Chinese research ship arriving at Hambantota Port in 2022.

SOVEREIGN DEBT

Piecemeal progress

Sri Lanka's government has been making several important steps towards restructuring its heavy sovereign debt. The process is cumbersome, however, and some observers worry that President Ranil Wickremesinghe may be less interested in long-term debt relief than in impressing voters by signing deals ahead of elections that are due in October.

By Arjuna Ranawana

Sri Lanka's government went into default in April 2022. Several reasons contributed to making it unable to service its debts. On the one hand, there was the Covid-19 slump with the collapse of the important tourism sector and inflation because of higher prices for energy and imported commodities in general. On the other hand, it became obvious that successive governments run by members of the Rajapaksa family had used foreign loans for financially unviable vanity projects.

Sovereign default fast exacerbated the deep economic recession and triggered a political uprising. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa fled the country, but later returned. The Parliament chose Ranil Wickremesinghe as his successor. Poverty kept worsening, however. Vitally important goods became unaffordable for many people. Even those with sufficient purchasing power spent hours waiting in line, but sometimes unsuccessfully when supplies ran out.

The new head of state's most important task was thus to restore economic stability. The challenge was particularly great because rather different groups of creditors had given Sri Lanka loans. Things had been easier around the turn of the millennium, when many developing countries struggled with over-indebtedness. At the time, the main creditors were multilateral and bilateral agencies, so when western governments finally understood that debt relief was inevitable, they made it happen. Today many more parties are involved in resolving debt crises of the kind that is affecting Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka's outstanding foreign debt currently amounts to more than $37 billion. Of that sum, some $12 billion are owed to private bondholders, $11 billion to multilateral banks, about $9 billion to Chinese institutions and over $5 billion to bilateral agencies from other countries. Sri Lanka's government thus needed to strike agreements with all of them, but lacked a single forum for achieving results. This setting means very cumbersome negotiations because all creditors want to ensure that other creditors do not benefit from any concession they make. It also makes it harder for the indebted government to pit parties against one another.

In late 2022, Wickremesinghe's government concluded a bailout agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). It went along with rather tough austerity and thus thwarted socio-economic hopes that were expressed in the political uprising. On the upside, it allowed the government to function properly once more, and it also restored investors' confidence to some extent.

The IMF also obliged Sri Lanka to conclude debt-restructuring agreements. Consecutive tranches of bailout disbursements depend on progress being achieved. As all creditors know that full debt services cannot possibly resume, they have incentives to compromise. Nonetheless, private-sector investors, western governments and creditors from large emerging markets try to make others assume most of the costs, minimising their own losses.

CHINA IS A PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT PARTNER

In this context, the People's Republic of China proved to be particularly difficult. India too is an important bilateral creditor, but it joined Japan, France and other governments in the group called the Official Creditor Consortium (OCC). In late June, the OCC struck a restructuring deal with the Sri Lankan government.

China's most important bilateral lending agencies are the China Exim Bank and the China Development Bank, but they do not even negotiate with Sri Lanka's government together. Both banks are state institutions, but the regime in Beijing insists that they are separate entities. While the Exim Bank followed the example set by the OCC with a deal of its own, the China Development Bank is still engaged in talks.

Photo: picture-alliance/ASSOCIATED PRESS/Eranga Jayawardena

Hambantota Port in South Sri Lanka has become an internationally known example for how sovereign debt can go terribly wrong even before the sovereign default. The harbour and its surrounding infrastructure were built with loans from the Exim Bank. Inaugurated in 2010, however, it generated less container traffic than expected and thus proved to be commercially nonviable. The owner, the Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA), eventually became unable to service the loans. Next, the China Merchants Port Holding Company Limited (CMPort), which belongs to the Chinese government too, purchased the majority ownership of the port, including the right to operate and develop it for 99 years.

Several other projects failed as well, including an airport and a cricket stadium. It mattered quite a bit that Chinese agencies, when lending to foreign governments, do not pay attention to issues of governance. They are generally willing to finance whatever a national government plans. Some vanity projects designed to celebrate the Rajapaksas, however, were useless in business terms and clearly do not serve the common good. Such lending increased Sri Lanka's sovereign debt which is now weighing down on the people.

The recent agreements Sri Lanka concluded with the OCC and the Exim Bank, however, mean that $10 billion worth of loans will now be paid back later than originally planned and at lower interest rates. After the bilateral creditors made concessions, moreover, private bondholders became willing to move as well. In early July, they struck a deal with the Sri Lankan government to extend timeframes, reduce interest rates and even cancel up to 28% of the debt. Should Sri Lanka's economy start to grow fast again, however, the government will have to service 85% of the currently outstanding debt rather than merely the 72% now agreed.

All these agreements mean that Sri Lanka's government gets some additional fiscal space, but not the clean slate that debt relief could provide. The agreement with bondholders, moreover, does less to revive the economy than it would if it allowed the government an unencumbered restart.

While much work remains to be done, President Wickremesinghe has certainly achieved considerable progress regarding debt restructuring. The IMF is willing to disburse more bailout money. Ahead of presidential elections due in October, Wickremesinghe can tell voters that things are getting better. According to him, Sri Lanka paid more than nine percent of GDP on foreign debt payments in 2022, and, thanks to the recent bilateral restructuring deals alone, that share will sink to below 4.5% from 2027 to 2032.

Whether things are actually getting good rather than merely better is a different question. In 2024, debt servicing will still consume more than half of Sri Lanka's government revenues. Some observers argue that the debt burden remains quite heavy, with payments mostly being postponed and set to become much more onerous again in the not-so-distant future. It also matters that every rupee used for debt services cannot be invested in Sri Lankan policies for achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

Sri Lanka's current experience shows that some kind of international sovereign default mechanism would indeed make sense. It would ensure that all creditors are involved in coherent negotiations to restore solvency to a sovereign government after default. Establishing a global mechanism, however, requires global consensus – and that looks unlikely at a time when China and western countries are increasingly seeing one another not as partners, but as systemic rivals (see interview with Vannessa Wannicke on the next page)

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The Magufuli Bridge is being built by the China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC) and will link two regions in Tanzania.

INDUSTRY

"China is our systemic rival"

A recently published position paper of the Federation of German Industries (BDI – Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie) urges the Federal Government to adopt a development policy that takes more account of China's growing global influence. The BDI's Vanessa Wannicke elaborated things in an interview.

Vanessa Wannicke interviewed by Hans Dembowski and Katharina Wilhelm Otieno

What do you mean when you call for a "strategic" development policy?

The term stands for a policy that suits the needs of our partner countries but also serves our own geostrategic interests. Spelling out our interests transparently will boost our credibility. Relevant interests could involve the access to critical raw materials or strategic diversification to spread risks better.

Western countries' credibility is doubted in several ways. Partner countries were frustrated when western governments insisted on the intellectual property rights for Covid-19 vaccines. They see contradictions when we demand respect for human rights, but then leave taking in refugees to countries with poor human-rights track records, like Tunisia, Egypt or Turkey. At the same time, we are poaching skilled professionals from developing countries, for example from the health sector, even though those people are urgently needed at home.

Yes, we live in a complex world, and we must deal with contradictions openly. We are not the only ones facing such difficulties. Our partners do so as well. As BDI we are keen on discussing how private investments can generate attractive jobs at the local level and how we can make our development projects more effective. Too often, we see the success of a project ending once the funding stops. What is needed are more long-term programmes and investments. Other countries, in particular China, are taking a different approach, building large-scale infrastructures. In doing so, they lay the foundation for the economic development of the countries concerned.

Should Germany take the same approach?

Yes, and not only in regard to transport infrastructure, but to communication systems too. Satellite constellations, for example, could provide fast internet access in remote areas, improving access to education and information. Unfortunately, German development cooperation hardly grasps such technological opportunities. Germany should act with more confidence in these fields and involve the private sector more actively. German companies could also contribute much to improving water and electricity utilities or the building and equipping of hospitals. However, too often, they do not get assignments due to unfavourable financing and tender conditions.

Please elaborate.

When developing countries and emerging markets hold tenders, the focus is normally

Photo: picture-alliance/Xinhua News Agency/Hua Hongli

on the price – to the detriment of qualitative criteria. In those settings, our companies cannot compete with subsidised Chinese rivals. If labour and environmental standards mattered more, things would be different. What about resource intensity? Is it environmentally friendly? What about total costs over the project's life cycle? Will local workers be employed, or will staff be shipped in, for example from China?

That is how China tackles unemployment at home, without generating incomes for Africans.

Yes, exactly. German companies traditionally take a different approach, investing in skills training and professional qualifications at the local level. Machinery and equipment manufacturers, for example, train African staff who can then ensure proper maintenance and machine usage in the long run. We believe that this kind of quality criteria must apply when authorities in developing countries and emerging markets hold tenders for internationally funded projects. In negotiations with partner governments, our Federal Government should insist on it and use its influence in multilateral development banks accordingly.

A long-standing complaint is that German companies are too risk adverse to invest in Africa. Do you want the Federal Government to mitigate risks, for example with export credit guarantees?

Yes, export credit guarantees are a well-established foreign trade promotion instrument. It covers political and economic risks and is very much appreciated by industries. The BDI would like to see this instrument dovetail more with German development policy. To make that happen, the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK) and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) must cooperate more closely. It would be great if budgets for developmental projects factored in this kind of risk management.

But development efforts are not supposed to be tied to assignments for companies from the respective donor government.

We do not think that free competition for tenders suits the era we are living in anymore. Even countries like Japan, the USA or France grasp opportunities, tying aid when it makes sense. Hence, there is no level playing field anymore. It really does not serve German or European interests to leave it to China to expand African infrastructures – especially not if it is done with western funding but does not meet the highest standards of sustainability.

Let's be clear: unless German companies have a real chance of winning tenders, they cannot promote eco-friendly approaches or due diligence regarding human rights.

China has become an important provider of development funding and is playing a crucial role in ongoing debt crises. It vehemently opposes debt relief. How should western governments respond?

Debates regarding over-indebtedness are always multi-faceted. All parties involved have different, specific interests, and that is reflected in the proposed solutions. Debt relief, moreover, is often granted for geopolitical reasons. As BDI we have been trying to raise awareness for an aspect that often gets too little attention: the impact of excessive sovereign debt on the business climate for German exporters. When state agencies in heavily indebted countries want to buy German products, they often cannot do so because of the OECD's Sustainable Lending rules, which restrict state borrowing. In such settings, companies should get support from the BMZ budget. That would facilitate unbureaucratic action and permit indebted countries to invest in urgently needed infrastructure, technology, education, clean energy and other things.

Is China the big problem, or do you feel competition from other emerging markets as well?

Interest in Africa has grown in general, but China is certainly the most important player. That said, Russia, India, the Gulf States and Turkey are systematically expanding their influence in Africa too. Today, countries of the so-called global south can choose with whom they want to cooperate.

How do you want to safeguard partner countries' ownership? Unless they assume responsibility, projects normally do not last.

This important issue deserves much attention in negotiations of governments. From the perspective of private business, however, the answer is easy. Our companies respond to supply and demand. Anyone who orders from them, becomes the owner and takes responsibility accordingly. Therefore, we prefer free market transactions without any state intervention. Nonetheless, targeted governmental risk management is often necessary in African markets.

Major infrastructure projects are almost always assigned by governments, and that is especially true where infrastructures are poor.

Exactly, and our companies could make valuable contributions in this field. However, of Germany's bilateral commitments regarding official development assistance (ODA), a mere seven percent is invested in classical infrastructures. Japan, by contrast, uses two thirds of its bilateral ODA for energy, water and transport infrastructure.

Your position paper demands that no more ODA money should flow to China. Wouldn't it make sense to support some Chinese efforts in a targeted manner for the sake of global public goods such as climate mitigation, for example?

Let me state it very clearly: China is our systemic rival. The country has long graduated from the status of a developing nation and is challenging us even in the field of innovation. Therefore, we find it problematic to channel ODA funds to that country – especially at a time when Germany faces cuts in public spending. We would like to see Chinese competitors excluded from tenders for western-funded projects. Let's keep in mind that China is tying most of its own development spending to assignments for Chinese companies too.

LINK

BDI, 2024: Zeit für eine entwicklungspolitische Zeitenwende ("Time for a new era in development policy").
https://bdi.eu/publikation/news/zeit-fuer-eine-entwicklungspolitische-zeitenwende
An English translation is expected to become available soon.

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Healing a post-genocide society

Thirty years ago, the Hutu ethnic group committed genocide against the Tutsi minority in Rwanda. The killings lasted almost 100 days. Over 1 million Tutsis were exterminated. The carnage left the country in a state of hopelessness and grief. But Rwanda set out on a pathway of reconciliation. The country successfully bridged the gap between perpetrators and victims, being now admired globally.

Led by President Paul Kagame, the Rwandan state has invested immensely in healing the society from the trauma of genocide. The government introduced so-called Gacaca courts, a traditional form of community justice that involved resolving disputes through open-air hearings overseen by community elders. These community-based courts sought to handle the otherwise overwhelming caseload of genocide-related crimes.

More recently, the government introduced socio-therapy, a psychosocial healing and peace-building programme which uses small groups as an open environment for discussion and healing. It is practised in groups of an average of ten to fifteen people, including both survivors and genocide perpetrators. Meeting weekly for about three hours over fifteen weeks, a group may choose any location in their direct living environment such as a church, a private room, a place under a tree, or on grass in the open.

One of the groups, named Mvura Nkuvure ("let's heal each other") is where genocide survivor Mukaneza belongs. She describes her challenging first time. "It was so hard being in the same space with those who committed the genocide. I just cried and left. However, the facilitators urged me to return for other sessions. In the third session, one of the perpetrators confessed to having killed my sister, and I fainted at the news. But despite the shock, the news brought me closure and the internal peace that I needed."

Rwanda has many people suffering from psychological and social issues, but not enough trained professionals to help them. The community programme aims to address this shortage. It identifies locals who, after some training, can lead the programme. It involves different phases that cultivate safety, trust, care, respect and memory restoration.

Many participants, despite outward appearances of competence or adjustment, understandably experience internal feelings of indignity, dehumanisation and lingering fear due to past traumatic experiences. By sharing life stories, the group fosters trust among participants and creates an caring environment that helps to overcome social isolation.

Nsabimana, a former convict, says that the confession about the killings he participated in and the places where bodies were dumped and later asking for forgiveness, has set him free. "Even though I had been set free and was out of prison physically, I still felt psychologically bound. After participating in the programme, I feel wholly forgiven and accepted in my community," he says.

The group sessions allow the reflection on the bad events of the genocide and help evaluate where participants are on the path to healing. "Mvura Nkuvure allowed me to share my personal story. I had never had the chance to talk about my tough encounters during the genocide. In the past, I suffered chronic headaches and insomnia, but since joining the programme, the headaches are gone, and I feel much lighter. My household is also happier, and we can now concentrate on developing ourselves," says Mukaneza.

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Culture Special

As every summer, the D+C/E+Z editorial team presents books, music and films that we appreciate and would like to recommend. The oeuvres are tackling issues of developmental relevance, and we would be pleased if our recommendations inspired you to read, watch or listen to them. This year we are presenting our culture special in two Digital Monthlies – in August and September.

Photo: picture-alliance/Godong/Philippe Lissac/Godong

FICTION

Confronted with our own preconceptions

"Recitatif" is a story about two girls, Roberta and Twyla. One of them is black, the other white. To the very end, the author leaves the reader in the dark as to which of the two is which. This is a story about identity, racism and prejudice.

By Dagmar Wolf

Twyla and Roberta are eight-year-olds when they meet at St Bonny's children's home in the US. They are not orphans like the other children; their performance at school leaves a lot to be desired, and their mothers, both single parents, are unable to cope with them – one because she is ill, the other because she "just likes to dance all night". So, both girls end up spending four months in a home, where they have to share a room. One of the girls is black, the other white.

"We looked like salt and pepper standing there," says Twyla. Initially, the two girls view one another with scepticism and suspicion, influenced by their respective parental homes. "My mother [...] was right. Every now and then she would stop dancing long enough to tell me something important and one of the things she said was that they never washed their hair and they smelled funny. Roberta sure did." But then they become confidantes, because they are the only children who have been "dumped" in the home, with no "beautiful dead parents in the sky". They are therefore very low down in the orphanage hierarchy. In fact, there is no one below them except Maggie, the mute kitchen woman who is tormented and ridiculed by everyone and whose story runs like a red thread through the entire narrative.

After 28 days, the two girls receive a visit from their mothers – Roberta's mother with a huge cross around her neck and a Bible under her arm, Twyla's mother in tight green slacks and a shabby fur jacket. Twyla's mother holds out her hand in greeting but Roberta's mother grabs her daughter and hurries away. Did a white woman refuse to greet a black woman or did a black woman refuse to shake hands with a white cheerful soul?

Eight years later, the two girls meet again. They still live in the same town. Twyla is now working behind the counter in a diner, wearing a uniform and thick opaque stockings. Roberta is dressed to the nines and accompanied by two young men with big hair and beards. They are on their way to see Jimi Hendrix. Time passes. The two girls, now young women, meet again in a shopping mall. Roberta has a very wealthy husband, Twyla is married to a fireman and has a son. More time passes. Roberta and Twyla meet at a demonstration. It has been decided that white and black children should go to school together. Twyla is in favour, Roberta is not.

Toni Morrison won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1993, becoming the first black woman ever to receive the award. In her short story, she repeatedly plays with racist prejudice, with codes that could point to the protagonists' racial identity. The reader is puzzled and tries to judge the colour of the characters' skin from outward signs, tell-tale language or social status. But there are no reliable clues. What seems plausible could be completely wrong. A person who is poor and oppressed does not necessarily have to be black. A person of wealth and high social standing is not automatically white. Right up to the end, the reader is left guessing which of the two is black and which is white.

Morrison wrote this, her only short story, in 1983. Racial segregation in the US had been legally abolished 20 years earlier but discrimination against the black population was still deeply rooted in society. Denigration, stigmatisation and racism remained in evidence in language.

Morrison's short story was rediscovered a few years ago and was published for the first time as a book in 2022. It features an introduction by Zadie Smith, a British writer known, amongst other things, for exploring issues of race, religion and cultural identity. The story has lost none of its relevance. Skin colour continues to be one of the factors that determine how people are perceived even today.

Black and white schoolchildren in a school bus in Charlotte, North Carolina, in 1973.

Photo: picture-alliance/Glasshouse Images/Circa Images

BOOK

Morrison, T., 2022: Recitatif. New York, Alfred Knopf.

https://www.cusd80.com/cms/lib/AZ01001175/Centricity/Domain/1073/Morrison_recitatifessay.doc.pdf

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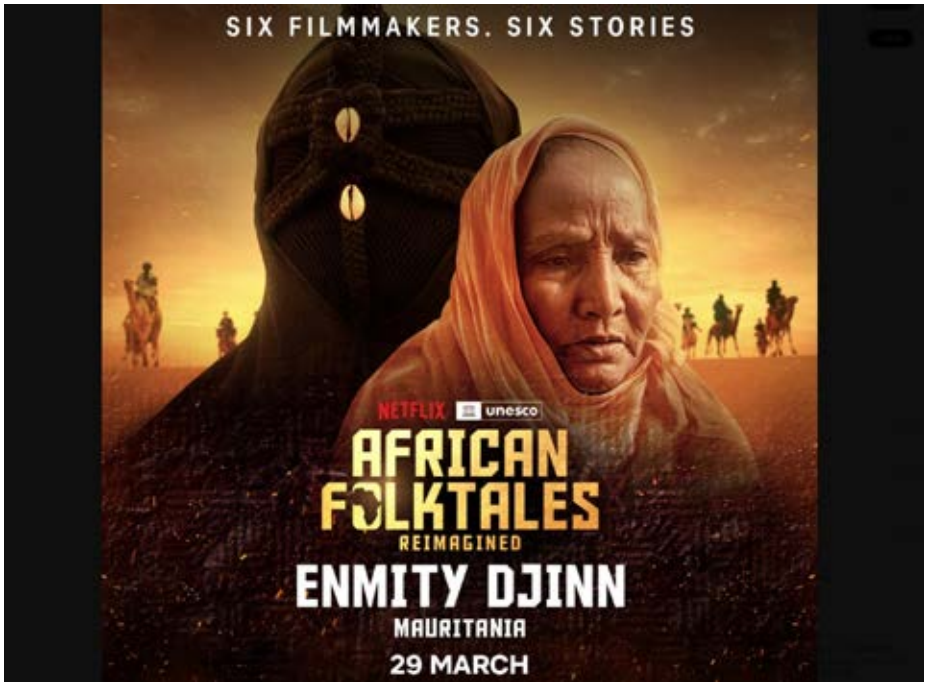

"Enmity Djinn" is one of the six winners of a short film competition by UNESCO and Netflix.

SHORT FILMS

African filmmakers in the spotlight

In a series of short films, six young directors reinterpret traditional stories and link them to current socio-political issues such as domestic violence, forced marriage and the role of women.

By Jörg Döbereiner

Mamlambo is a reptilian river creature in the folklore of the South African Zulu, a malevolent being that drags people into deep water and kills them. In her short film of the same name, South African director Gcobisa Yako reimagines the character in a modern context: as a benevolent female entity that stands by women who have experienced violence. When young Amandla, in a moment of despair, throws herself down a waterfall, she is saved by Mamlambo and learns that gender-based violence is a considerable problem.

Together with five other short films, "Mamlambo" forms the six-part drama series "African Folktales Reimagined", available on the Netflix streaming platform since 2023. Young directors from Kenya, Mauritania, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda present their own interpretations of traditional narratives and mythological motifs.

Kenyan director Voline Ogutu, for example, paints a picture of a misogynistic society in her dystopia "Anyango and the Ogre". This society is divided into two parts: a fenced-off area of wealth and abundance accessible only to young women, who are confined to the role of mothers in conventional families. In contrast, older, marginalised women live in impoverished conditions in the outside world. However, the world of the wealthy is only seemingly idyllic: three children distract themselves from the violence their father inflicts on them and their mother by telling the fairy tale of a husband who turns out to be a monster.

TALENTS FROM SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

The six directors won a short film competition organised by UNESCO and Netflix for young talents aged 18 to 35 from sub-Saharan Africa. Their ideas stood out from more than 2000 submissions, earning them $25,000 each and a production budget of $75,000 to create the films with local production companies. With this initiative, UNESCO aims to support young filmmakers and promote the continent's cultural diversity.

The genres within the series are also diverse: In the science fiction drama "Halima's Choice", a young woman who is to be forcibly married is immersed in a virtual world; in the historical thriller "Katera of the Punishment Island", a woman seeks revenge on a cruel man; and "Katope" tells the story of a girl's encounter with a mysterious rainbird during the dry season.

The films vary in quality. In addition to the aforementioned "Mamlambo", a particularly captivating contribution is "The Enmity Djinn" by Mauritanian director Mohamed Echkouna. He tells the story of an older woman who knows how to protect her family from an evil spirit.

"African Folktales Reimagined" shines a light on the cultural treasure of African oral traditions. It also provides a spotlight for six emerging talents of the African film industry. In their perspectives on mythology and contemporary issues, elements of fantasy and science fiction intersect with often starkly depicted social criticism. The oppression of women in patriarchal society is addressed on several occasions.

A new generation of African filmmakers impressively demonstrate that they are not afraid to tackle pressing socio-political issues.

SHORT FILMS

Netflix and UNESCO, 2023: African Folktales Reimagined. (Suitable for viewers aged 16 and over.) Films and directors:
Katera of the Punishment Island (Loukman Ali, Uganda, 28 min); Halima's Choice (Korede Azeez, Nigeria, 24 min); Anyango and the Ogre (Voline Ogutu, Kenya, 18 min); Enmity Djinn (Mohamed Echkouna, Mauritania, 19 min); Katope (Walt Mzengi, Tanzania, 14 min); Mamlambo (Gcobisa Yako, South Africa, 21 min).

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Photo: Screenshot UNESCO campaign

Historical portrait of Jind Kaur.

NOVEL

The last queen

Maharani Jind Kaur was a powerful opponent of the British Empire in South Asia in the first half of the 19th century. She was the last monarch to yield sovereign power in Punjab, which was then a Sikh kingdom. A recent novel by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni tells the story of her life.

By Hans Dembowski

Jind Kaur's fate was one of extreme changes. She was from a humble background but became the youngest wife of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. After his death, she rose to power herself, representing her son, who had become maharaja at the tender age of five. She was popular among Sikhs and enjoyed the support of this community, which has a reputation for military prowess and dominated Punjab at the time.

Jind Kaur was queen regnant from 1843 to 1847, when the British Empire took control after winning a war against the Sikh army. The colonial power separated her from her son Duleep and imprisoned her in a far-away town, fearing her role in a potential Sikh uprising. She managed to escape, however, and fled to Nepal, where she was granted asylum.

Duleep Singh formally stayed maharaja of Punjab after 1947, but power was now exerted on his behalf by the British Resident in Lahore. Later, the young monarch was exiled to England and officially befriended by Queen Victoria. His mother, no longer considered a threat by the colonialists, was allowed to join him in England where she died in 1863 at the age of 45.

In 2021, bestselling novelist Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni published her fictional account of Jind Kaur's life. The novel's programmatic title is "The last queen". The maharani, however, was not the last South Asian woman to inherit a position of power from her husband or father. Though the subcontinents' societies are generally male dominated, family ties matter very much. Jind Kaur was thus a precursor of Indira Gandhi, Benazir Bhutto or Sheik Hasina, the daughters of prime ministers who themselves became top leaders of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh respectively.

Divakaruni is from Calcutta and a professor of creative writing at the University of Houston. She is a prolific writer herself and has tackled a broad range of topics – from renarrating Indian mythology in a feminist perspective to assessments of the South-Asian diaspora experience in the USA or fantasy novels for children. In her fictional biography of Jind Kaur, she stuck to the basic historical facts, but used her imagination to describe her protagonists' emotions and personal interactions. She admittedly invented some of the characters.

The book is easy to read. The plot makes sense, emotions run high, and the historical context is fascinating. One wonders, however, to what extent Divakaruni's storytelling relies on contemporary ideas of gender roles and female empowerment rather than accurately describing how Punjabi women thought and felt almost 200 years ago. For example, the author writes about Jind Kaur's relationship with the other co-wives. She makes friends with one who later euphorically opts to be burned on the Maharaja's pyre after his death. Divakaruni's Jind Kaur tries to convince her friend of not sacrificing herself, but the other maharani is absolutely determined, and opium ultimately ensures that her death in the flames is not too painful.

One has reason to doubt that the author accurately assesses how members of a South Asian harem understood their roles in the 19th century. Such questions are of only minor relevance, however. Fiction writers have the liberty to convey ideas in the way they think is appropriate. Their job is not to reveal some kind of absolute historical truth.

Divakaruni offers her contemporary readers a vivid fictional biography of the last sovereign monarch of Punjab and helps keep the memory of Jind Kaur alive. She thus has rendered gender justice a service. After all, women's often important roles in history are all too often neglected.

BOOK

Divakaruni, C. B., 2021: The last queen. Gurugram, Haryana, HarperCollins India.

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LITERATURE

The literary power of Black women writers

In 1992, Ghanaian-born editor, author and critic Margaret Busby published "Daughters of Africa", an anthology celebrating the work of 200 Black women writers around the world. "New Daughters of Africa" followed in 2019. Now, a selection from the follow-up has been published in German.

By Dagmar Wolf

In Margaret Busby's anthology "New Daughters of Africa", female authors of African descent write about tradition, friendship, gender and identity politics, racism and discrimination. They also write about sisterhood and mutual solidarity.

For the German edition "Neue Töchter Afrikas", which was published last year, Margaret Busby and a team of Black women from Germany selected 30 pieces of writing, including poems, essays and short stories, written in the last hundred years. The German edition is co-edited and published by Christa Morgenrath and Eva Wernecke as part of the literary and educational series "stimmen afrikas" (voices of Africa).

Andaiye, a Guyana-born writer who died in 2019 at the age of 76, addressed issues of left-wing women's politics in the Caribbean and the wider world. Her essay "Audre, there's rosemary, that's for remembrance" is dedicated to the Black American writer and activist Audre Lorde, who died of cancer in 1992.

In this piece, Andaiye describes how she coped with her own cancer and talks about the support she received from other women, especially Lorde. They encouraged and helped each other when the disease drained their strength. Unlike Lorde, Andaiye managed to beat cancer twice.

London-born Malorie Blackman, whose parents are from Barbados, primarily writes for children and young adults. In "Letters", she writes to her daughter about the worst day of her life, which in hindsight turns out to be the best. After being diagnosed with a serious illness and learning that she will not live past the age of 30, she feels she has nothing to lose and decides to devote herself to what gives her strength and fulfilment: writing.

The diagnosis turns out to be wrong. "So, what I thought for too many wasted years was the very worst day of my life – overhearing that I was going to die – well, it turns out it was the very best day of my life. It made me unafraid to take a chance." Her daughter is still too young to understand all this; hence the letters in which she encourages her daughter to go her own way.

In "Security", Yvette Edwards – whose works have been nominated for literary prizes in the UK and US – tells the story of a humiliating confrontation with a security guard in a supermarket. Merle just wants to buy a few small items for the journey before her deportation flight to Jamaica the next day. The guard keeps a sharp eye on her, following her around the aisles.

Merle is 78 years old, has lived in England for over 54 years – 40 of them spent working as a geriatric nurse – and has always behaved properly, yet she is regularly followed by security guards like a thief. And she is now about to be deported (we do not learn the reason for her deportation). Her anger boils over. She plays games with the guard, whose accent suggests that he comes from somewhere in Eastern Europe. She provokes him and chases him. At the exit, she cannot resist the temptation to whisper in his ear: "It's me today, but tomorrow, they'll be back for you."

In her story "Home", Burundian activist and writer Ketty Nivyabandi, a passionate advocate for social justice and defender of human rights, describes the painful longing that refugees feel for their homeland. In 2015, she was forced to flee her home country Burundi after leading women's protests in Gitega. "You learn to unlearn yourself," Nivyabandi writes. "You learn because the alternative is too painful. Because to remember – to truly remember – is to hurt, and your stretch-marked heart can only stretch so far. (...) Sometimes, on a merciful night, the moon will rise just as it used to, under my porch. On such nights, I close my eyes, and I am home."

Margaret Busby at the 2023 Booker Prize ceremony in London.

BOOKS

Busby, M., ed., 2019: New Daughters of Africa: An International Anthology of Writing by Women of African Descent. New York, Amistad/Harper Collins.

Morgenrath, C., Wernecke, E., Hg., 2023: Neue Töchter Afrikas. 30 Stimmen. Münster, Unrast Verlag.

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Photo: picture-alliance/Anadolu/Wiktor Szymanowicz

US ambassador speaks at the University of Ghana on peace and food security.

EDUCATION

A pedagogy for Africa's future

Africa, with its diversity, is struggling with numerous complex problems that require innovative solutions. Education, especially tertiary education, is key to unlocking the continent's potential in a sustainable way.

By Cecilia Y. Ojemaye and Lesley Green

Education is an important cornerstone in the quest for development around the world. Nowhere is this more evident than in Africa. As the continent faces multiple challenges and opportunities simultaneously, it is becoming increasingly important to reassess and reshape pedagogy and education to meet the needs of society. In this paper, we propose some key strategies for a pedagogy of sustainability in Africa's tertiary education system to increase the chances of empowering Africa's future.

At the centre of any meaningful development is sustainability, which encompasses environmental, social and economic dimensions for development plans such as the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Africa 2063 Agenda.

In current discourses, however, the environment is seen as an issue rather than a central actor. We need a new pedagogy that integrates environmental awareness into educational practice and provides students and future leaders with the knowledge, skills and values they need to contribute to more sustainable development.

One of the main goals of a pedagogy of sustainability is to promote a better understanding of sustainability. As the social, political and economic spheres are interconnected, this means overcoming traditional disciplinary boundaries and promoting interdisciplinary approaches to learning so that students can develop a comprehensive understanding of complex challenges.

LOCAL ENGAGEMENT

A pedagogy of sustainability should also emphasise active and experiential learning methods. This will better enable learners to bring about change in their own communities. Reality should not have to fit our models. Our solutions must meet the needs and demands of the contexts in which people are striving for improvement. By engaging with local communities – and their realities – students can gain valuable insights into the practical dimensions of their knowledge and develop solutions that are relevant.

Focusing on local issues needs a different approach to creating and sharing knowledge. It should start with a sense of responsibility and ethics, where community input helps to shape new ideas, influence and civic engagement.

Educational institutions across the continent should commit to integrating a pedagogy of sustainability into their curricula and operations. This could include revising existing courses to include sustainability content, developing new interdisciplinary programmes that focus on sustainability and incorporating sustainability principles into campus management practices. Universities cannot preach sustainability as a marketing tool while polluting the environment or pretending that their societal role as sites of knowledge production is an excuse or a way out of their social responsibility.

In sub-Saharan Africa, only 9.4% (around nine million students) of the corresponding age group were enrolled in tertiary education in 2021, according to the World Bank. This is far below the global average of 38%. Sub-Saharan Africa spends 21% of its public education expenditure on tertiary education. Implementing a pedagogy of sustainability in Africa's tertiary education system will require concerted action from various stakeholders, including governments, educational institutions, civil-society organisations and the private sector.

A pedagogy of sustainability is a promising approach to shaping Africa's sustainable development across the continent. However, it is not a panacea on its own. A new vision of how we learn and live requires collective action and commitment. The development of future generations in Africa literally depends on it.

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Photo: picture-alliance/ASSOCIATED PRESS/Misper Apawu

PROTESTS

Kenya erupts

For weeks, Kenya has been experiencing a wave of protests led by young people, triggered by an unpopular finance bill. No one can really say they didn't see this coming. What is unfolding in Kenya is a lesson in what happens when the debt crisis escalates not just metaphorically, but literally.

By Isaac Sagala

Under the pressure of this situation, President William Ruto was forced to take drastic measures. He has withdrawn the controversial bill and sacked almost his entire cabinet. The youth-led demonstrations (see Alba Nakuwa on page 23 and Shakira Wafula on page 24 in this issue) continue. There have already been more than 50 deaths. Hundreds have been injured. Human-rights organisations are also reporting abductions.

The fact that it has come to this should be no surprise to anyone. Ruto won the elections in August 2022 and found a country in debt crisis. The foreign debt amounted to $ 62 billion or 67 % of Kenya's gross domestic product (GDP).

Former President Uhuru Kenyatta took on extensive loans domestically, from commercial lenders, China, the USA, Saudi Arabia, the World Bank and the IMF. This was used to finance huge infrastructure projects such as the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR), which connects Nairobi with the port city of Mombasa, and an additional 11,000 kilometres of paved roads.

The commercial loans came with high interest rates and the infrastructure did not generate the expected revenue to finance these loans. In 2021, Kenyatta entered into a 38-month debt-relief agreement with the IMF to help Kenya manage its debt. This was on the condition that taxes would be increased, subsidies reduced and government spending cut. Currently, more than half of government revenue is being used to repay the debt.

This is at the expense of development projects, the education system or healthcare. As recently as March, a good half of all Kenyan doctors went on strike, paralysing the healthcare system, schools opened late after the vacations due to a lack of budget, and the country's infrastructure could no longer cope with the heavy flooding of the last rainy season. Hundreds of people died in the floods (D+C reported in Digital Monthly 06/24).

AXE THE TAX

The financial bill that broke the camel's back is a guideline that sets out the government's budget plans and is usually presented to parliament before the start of a financial year. In the 2024/25 version, the Kenyan government wanted to raise $ 2.7 billion in additional taxes to reduce the budget deficit and borrowing. Kenya's national debt now stands at 68 % of GDP.

New levies were introduced on financial transactions and basic foodstuffs such as bread, vegetable oil and sugar. A new vehicle-registration tax of 2.5 % of the value of a car and an "eco-levy" imposed on previously exempt goods such as sanitary towels and diapers caused public outrage. It goes without saying that this did not go down well in a country where masses of people have been living in poverty for decades.

Citizens were further angered by the millions lost through rampant corruption and waste of public funds that could significantly reduce the national debt if properly managed. Many leading politicians were accused of flaunting an opulent lifestyle on the internet based on questionable wealth suddenly acquired within two years in office.

Much anger is directed against the IMF, since protesters know that the government is basically implementing the conditions attached to its emergency loan. But the situation is more complicated than in earlier African debt crises. Kenya owes huge sums to Chinese institutions as well as private-sector bond holders.

Ruto is now at a crossroads: he says his government will have to borrow more money, $7.6 billion, to run the government after the rejection of the controversial finance bill, and that this will set the country back by two years.

In light of calls for his resignation, Ruto is putting on a brave face after making major concessions to the demands of the youth. He faces the difficult task of appointing an entirely new cabinet. However, public confidence in him has been severely damaged.

It is unlikely that Ruto will resign. The protesters have promised to continue demonstrating.

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Protesters in Nairobi.

Photo: picture-alliance/ZUMAPRESS.com/Kanyiri Wahito

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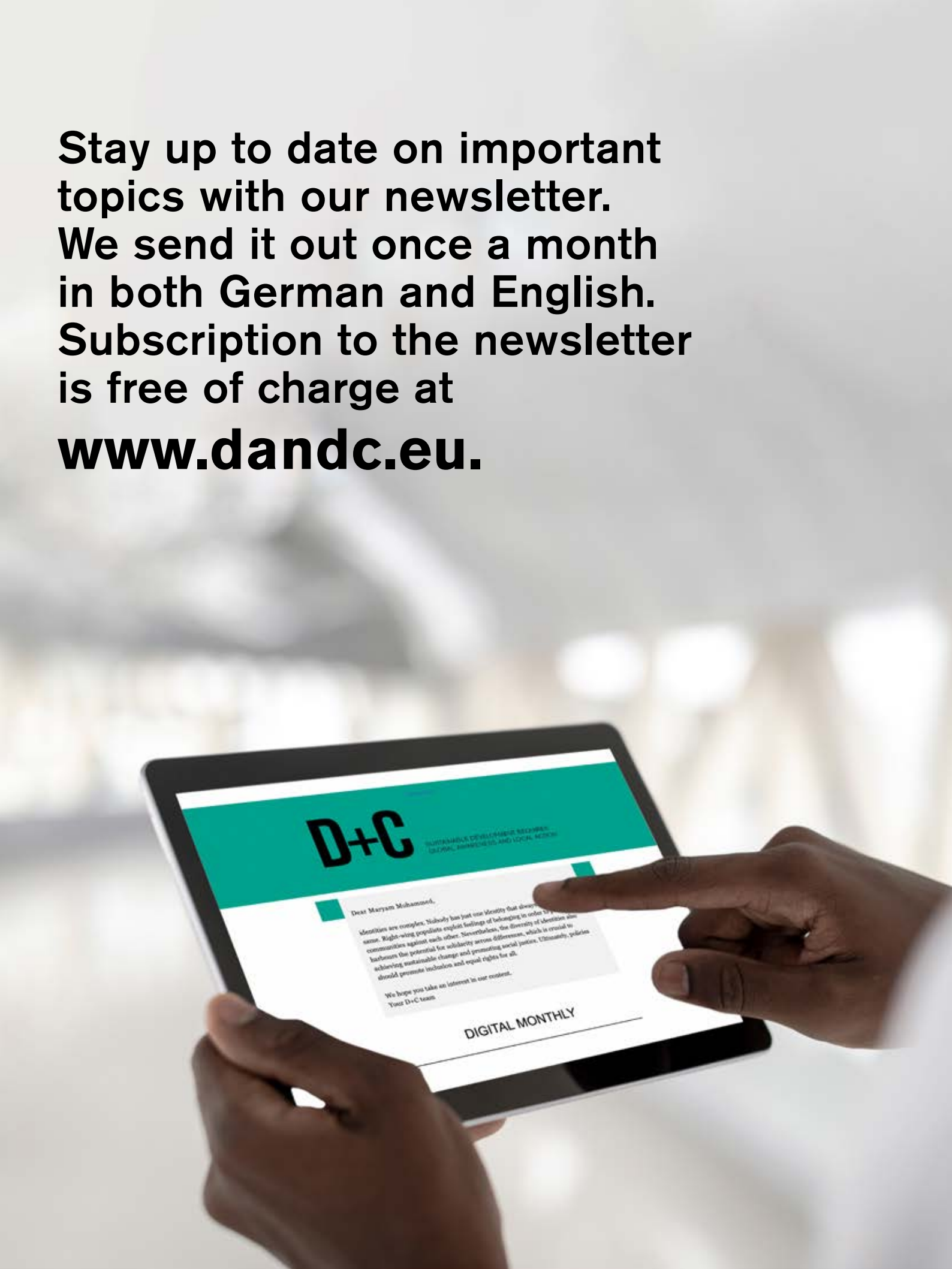

Young women show their inked fingers after casting their votes during parliamentary elections in India in June.

FOCUS

Young people

Photo: picture-alliance/Sipa USA/Hindustan Times

TEENAGERS

Don't leave sex education to pornographic websites

Masses of young people around the world only get information about sexuality online. That information is distorted and potentially harmful.

By Mahwish Gul

Around the world, people are becoming increasingly dependent on the internet. According to the International Telecommunication Union, about two thirds of the world population now have access to this digital infrastructure which was only created three decades ago. Commerce, entertainment, political interaction, education and socialisation increasingly depend on online information and interaction.

Pornography is an underestimated web phenomenon. Some 12% of the world's active websites are estimated to belong to this genre. In 2013, a Huffington Post article stated that porn sites received more monthly visitors than Netflix, Amazon and Twitter combined. Back then, of course, Netflix and Twitter were still new. But while statistical assessments vary, that old article is still being discussed more than 10 years after publication. The point is that sexual content is an undeniable feature of online life. It is readily available without serious restrictions to anyone who has internet access.

We truly live in a digital age now. What we consume online shapes our understanding, perceptions, opinions, attitudes and behaviours. That is especially true in our formative years.

A plethora of research indicates that porn can influence a person's sexual practices and attitudes. That is not only, but especially true of young people. Some kinds of porn potentially encourage unsafe behaviour, including sexualised violence. Sexually explicit content, moreover, is not only viewed for arousal but also as a source of information. Unfortunately, many young people around the world do not have any other source.

Researchers warn that early exposure to pornography can cause various forms of long-term harm. Adolescent pornography use is associated with early sexual activity, more partners, but lower relationship satisfaction. Porn often distorts people's expectations, while it correlates with the acceptance of misogynism and outdated gender stereotypes.

Pornography depicts phantasies – typically men's – with little regard for what really matters in couple's lives.

All of this may result in dissatisfaction and may easily cause anxiety in relationships. Unsurprisingly, sexual dysfunction is sometimes linked to excessive porn consumption too.

Unintended exposure to pornography is problematic too. According to a recent essay in the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health, almost half of young men (46.2%) and more than half of young women (55.7%) first saw sexually explicit content without intending to do so. The experience was often shocking.

ADDICTIVENESS

Such trends have sparked serious debate on what impacts porn sites have on a person's sexual maturation, sexual behaviour and overall personality development. Like the internet, porn can prove addictive moreover, with one dependency reinforcing the other.

The solution seems obvious, right? Ban internet pornography! Well, no.

It sounds simple, but it is not feasible. Concerns about fundamental freedoms and censorship matter, but they are only of minor relevance. What is more important is that the global nature of the internet makes it impossible for any single country or even groups of countries to impose bans. And even where that is possible, it would hardly prove effective. Advancements in technology, from

Photo: picture-alliance/AP Photo/Stephen Wandera

encrypted content to peer-to-peer or virtual private networks, thwart many such efforts to restrict access to any kind of specific content. Moreover, prohibition normally leads to the growth of unregulated black markets which are very hard to monitor.

The solution lies in a more nuanced approach: comprehensive sex education (see box) combined with efforts to improve media literacy. Parents and schools must rise to these daunting challenges. Unfortunately, neither side can assume that the other will do a good job. Sex is a taboo in many societies, and the internet is a historically young and under-researched phenomenon.

Sex education is important because teenagers are genuinely interested in sex. They need to be told about reproductive health, but also the psychological dimensions of intimate relationships. They deserve to know that pornography basically depicts sexual phantasies, with exaggerated images and an extremely narrow focus on what, in reality, is only a small part of any real couple's complex interactions. Only honest discussions about sexuality and relationships can foster the understanding of consent, boundaries and potential risks that young people need to take responsibility for their own wellbeing.

Media literacy, on the other hand, is essential for making informed choices online – and not only in regard to sex. Knowledge and critical thinking skills are necessary to navigate the digital landscape. Various parental controls and age-verification tools are not the solution since they can only reduce harm to a limited extent.

As a matter of fact, digital options can serve the purpose of sex education, providing a full and diverse range of information. The Global Partnership on Comprehensive Sexuality Education argues that privacy and ease of use can help overcome discomfort and shame that both learners and educators may experience. Given that porn websites generate a lot of traffic, some researchers even argue they might be good places to deliver serious sex education. So far, however, they are not.

Ultimately, a multifaceted approach that combines education, empowerment and responsible adulthood is key to addressing the complexities surrounding both sex and the internet. People with sufficient media literacy will be more likely to find the information they need, and people with sufficient sex education will be better able to make sense of porn when they see it.

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Fundamental human right under attack

Comprehensive sex education is both a human right and a human need, as María Lohan and Alejandra López argued in a review of international evidence. They co-authored their report for UNESCO and UNFPA in 2023. Their conclusion was that good sex education "contributes to the reduction of adverse health outcomes such as intimate partner violence, HIV and unintended pregnancy."

Girls in particular need comprehensive sex education. They are the ones who can get pregnant after all. Successful family planning obviously depends on an understanding of contraceptives, and since many women marry as teenagers, that means they should get it in school. In many cultures, moreover, conventional norms demand that they obey men, which puts them at risk of abuse. Experience shows that girls are in a better position to protect themselves if they have learned about gender stereotypes in competent sex education.

Internationally, however, formal comprehensive sex education is often non-existent, contested or on the decline. According to a UNESCO report of 2021, only 85 of 155 surveyed countries had policies or laws on the matter. Implementation was generally said to be weak due to inadequate curricula and lacking teacher capacities. This paper too insisted that sex education reduces the risk of unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. It recommended involving parents, school officials, religious leaders, media and young people in promoting the cause of sex education.

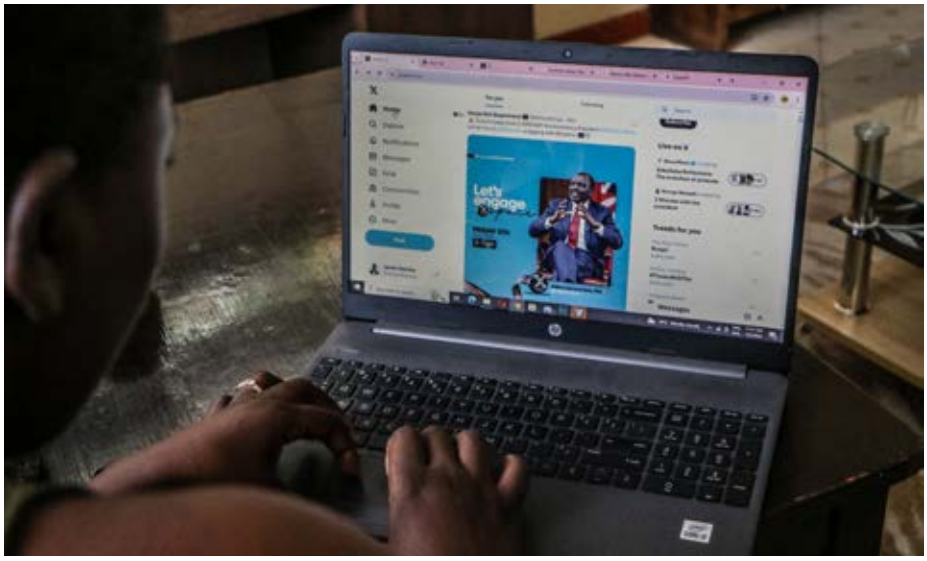
In many developing countries, sex education is not on the public agenda at all. In Europe, it is under attack from right-wing populists, as the Council of Europe has warned. False propaganda claims that underage persons are being taught immoral behaviour. In truth, of course, sex education does not teach teenagers to have sex, but prepares for a responsible, safe and fulfilling adulthood.

In the USA, the percentage of schools requiring instruction on the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) decreased by about 10 percentage points between 2000 and 2014. Instruction on HIV prevention even decreased from 64.0 % of schools to only 41.1 %.

In western countries, sex education gained public support in the 1960s and 1970s. Concerns over teenage pregnancies played a role. The idea was to inform young people about how their bodies function and tell them what consequences their actions may have. It had become clear that traditional morality was increasingly outdated – and that people had never fully lived according to its rules anyway. The USA was one of the forerunners of instituting sex education programmes in formal school education, but "abstinence only until marriage" approaches started to gain momentum in the 1990s. However, a recent meta-survey of opinion polls showed that the general public in the USA is still in favour of sex education. MG

LINK

Lohan M., López, A., 2023: Comprehensive sexuality education. An overview of the international systematic review evidence. UNESCO Digital Library.
https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000385849_eng



President Ruto agreed to speak to the youth online.

YOUTH MOVEMENTS

The revolution is being televised

In recent weeks, massive protests have erupted in Kenya's major cities triggered by discontent over the finance bill 2024. The people on the streets are almost exclusively young people, forming a kind of political movement the country has never seen before. President William Ruto has since withdrawn the bill, but the youth have no intention of stopping and are demanding more far-reaching reforms – preferably a new government.

By Alba Nakuwa

The proposed bill foresaw a significant increase in taxes on everyday goods and services such as sanitary towels, digital transactions, mobile data, bread and cooking oil. Millions of people in Kenya live in poverty. It was therefore clear that they would be especially affected by the tax increases (see the contribution by Isaac Sagala on page 18).

Initially, the uproar took place online, where young people voiced their discontent on platforms such as WhatsApp, X, TikTok and Instagram. At the end of June, they began to take to the streets. The demonstrations quickly gained momentum. After tear gas and water cannons proved ineffective against the initially peaceful crowd, the police fired live ammunition in downtown Nairobi on 25 June. Thousands of demonstrators then stormed the parliament building and partially set it on fire. At least 50 people died in the ensuing chaos and in further demonstrations since then, and hundreds were injured.

"HUSTLER NATION" RISING

In the end, President Ruto gave in to the protesters' demands and did not sign the proposed taxes into law. But the GenZ and Millennial protesters, as they call themselves, were not satisfied with this. They are demanding far-reaching reforms, massive cuts in politicians' salaries and government spending – and the resignation of the president and his government. And they continued to record such major successes that some people are still rubbing their eyes: Ruto dissolved his cabinet in mid-July.

The country seems to be in a frenzy. Young people make up the majority of Kenya's population, with an average age of 19. Ruto collected votes in the last elections by invoking Kenya as a "hustler nation" of young, hard-working people and promising them jobs during his election campaign. The promised jobs did not materialise, the country's economy is in a constant state of crisis due to horrendous debt and inflation – and young people feel betrayed and angry.

With the demonstrations, the young people took back some of their agency. Dennis Ndolo, a soccer referee in his mid-20s, says that taking part in the demonstrations was a highlight that he will remember for a long time. He believes it is important that the youth stand united. "There is no leader, no famous politician or anyone else leading the way. And for the first time, a movement in Kenya is not taking tribal identities into consideration," he says. "We are marching as Kenyans."

The movement chose not to delegate any leaders to speak to the government after the president asked them to do so. The decision was made because this would have exposed individuals to the risk of being easily intimidated, bribed or even abducted. For the same reasons, the movement vehemently defends itself against capture by individual opposition politicians or others and does not want to be harnessed by any party. Instead, the movement has many prominent faces – one of whom we interviewed on the next page – who come from universities, are street activists or influencers.

After refusing to speak directly to the president, the movement decided to issue a counter-invitation and asked Ruto to participate in an anonymously moderated online meeting. Contrary to expectations, the president agreed to talk to the young people via X Spaces, a feature of the platform that enables live audio conversations. This was a first for the country and most likely for the continent.

The unexpected success of the demonstrations can be attributed, at least in part, to the digital savviness of the protesters and their creativity and innovation in using digital platforms. They spread information about the protests, broadcast live from the demonstrations, create viral memes and videos and thus mobilise more people. They understand the power of platforms like X, Instagram, YouTube, Facebook and TikTok.

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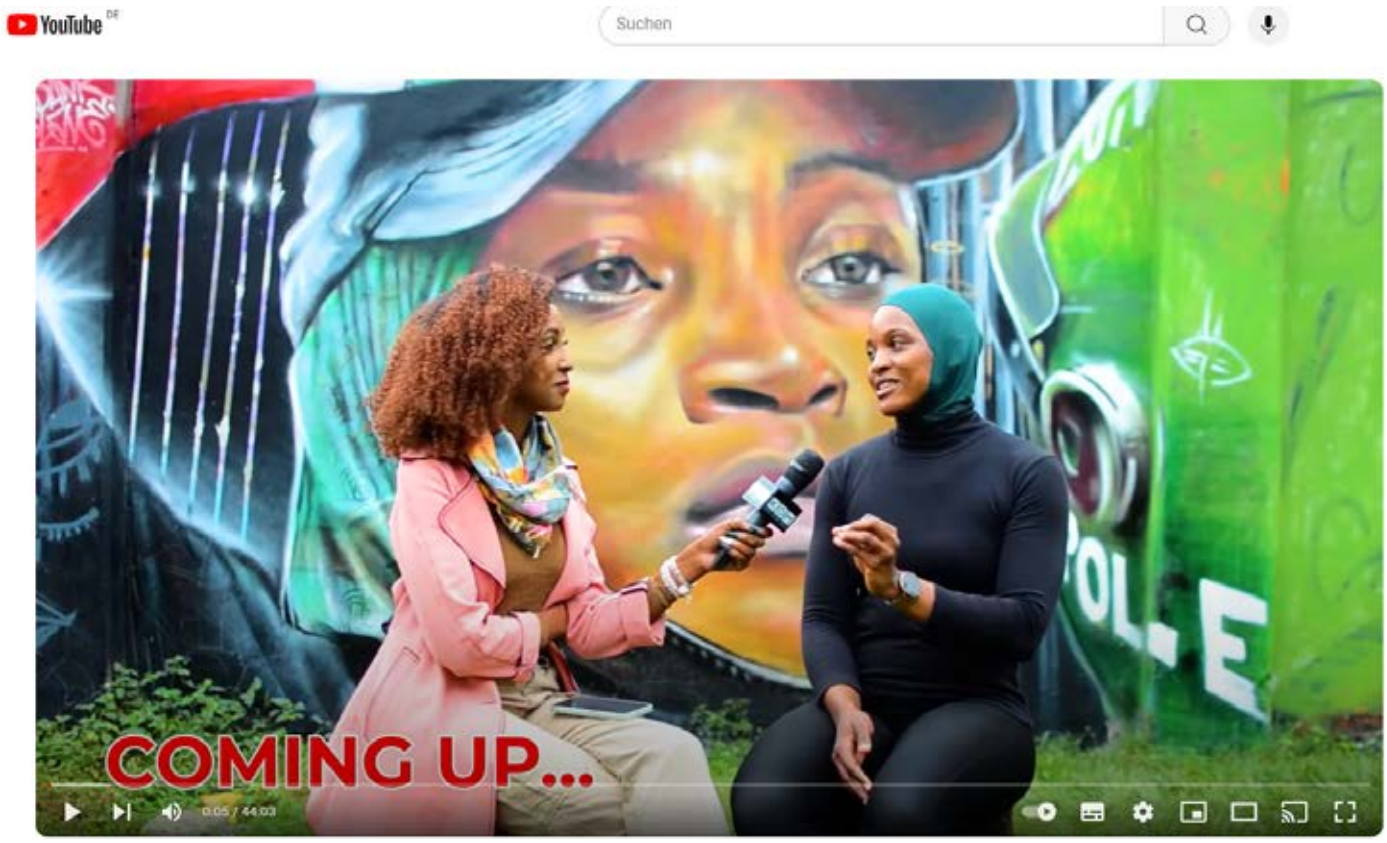
Photo: picture-alliance/ZUMAPRESS.com/James Wakibia



Shakira Wafula's courageous stand during the protests has since earned her many media appearances – and a mural of herself. This is a screenshot from one of her most recent interviews.

YOUTH MOVEMENTS

"I am angry because Kenya is not working for many of its citizens"

Kenya's youth have been taking to the streets against the government for weeks. Sports science student Shakira Wafula almost involuntarily became a face of the movement. In this interview, she talks about what is driving young Kenyans.

Shakira Wafula interviewed by Katharina Wilhelm Otieno

What motivated you to join the recent youth protests in Kenya?

Well, it was the finance bill 2024 (see the contribution of Isaac Sagala on page 18 in this issue). I wasn't really interested in what was happening in politics before. Then I saw that the public participation forums where citizens could comment on the finance bill were being completely ignored and started researching what exactly the bill entailed. I was of course aware of the sad state our country.

The cost of living has skyrocketed. Health services are poor. The public education system does not work. Many places lack sanitation, clean water and electricity. When I saw how much money was being spent on the luxuries of the political class instead of serving people's needs, I became angry.

Kenya is struggling with debt and needs to increase state revenues.

Yes, but government spending is unbalanced. For example, a lot of money was allocated to renovating the president's residence. The First Lady's Office gets budget money too, though she was not elected.

People assessed on social media what that money could do for citizens. Normally, the public gets an opportunity to discuss things before a bill becomes an active law. Because objections were completely ignored, we took to the streets. From day one, we experienced hostility from the police and arrogance from the members of parliament (MPs).

I am angry because Kenya is not working for many of its citizens. It is only working for a few in the political class, which is only serving itself instead of improving all of our lives.

What does it mean to be young in Kenya?

I am 30 years old, which is still young in Kenya. When you come from the middle class, you have some opportunities to develop yourself. You have social support, you can meet your basic needs and you can afford education.

Photo: Screenshot Youtube/Kenya Online Media

But once you leave university, for example, there are hardly any job opportunities. To get one of the few that exist, you have to know someone or pay a bribe. Belonging to the middle class means you are nonetheless still privileged, because you won't starve without a job as your family and other people will support you.

At the same time, there are masses of young people from poor backgrounds. They can barely make a living, let alone get good education. And then you hear that the government wants to increase taxes, even on staple food like bread or cooking oil.

Of those who can, many choose to leave the country. But I think as Kenyans we should have the opportunity to stay here and make the most of our lives here.

A video clip of you at the protests went viral. You were confronting a police officer. It turned you into a face of the movement. How did that happen and how did you feel facing the officer?

It was on the second day of the protests. I had been arrested by plain-clothes policemen on the first day after being separated from my friends. We went there as group for safety reasons. I was beaten and kicked and was detained at the central police station until 8pm. At that point, the independent Law Society of Kenya managed to negotiate the release for all of us – we were many.

> "Of those who can, many choose to leave the country. But I think as Kenyans we should have the opportunity to stay here and make the most of our lives here."

The next day, I felt a lot of anger because of this experience. Then I was again approached by three policemen, and they seemed ready to beat me. I wondered why the police are on the wrong side. They should be supporting their fellow citizens. I was scared, but I told them that the protests were in support of our nation and that I was actually there to defend their rights too. I was lucky that people were filming. I don't know what they would have done to me otherwise. That night, Larry Madowo from CNN posted the clip, and it went viral. My sister noticed it right away and tagged me, but I told her to untag me, I didn't want to be associated with it. The next day, people nonetheless had somehow decided that I had become a face of the protest. Soon people were telling me during rallies: "We're here because we saw this video." So, I'm glad to have inspired people.

Now you have decided to accept the role, and you have started to give TV interviews. Do you worry about your safety?

Yes, I do. As we speak, I am staying at a friend's house because they might look for me at home. I also no longer go to the gym where I work as a trainer as regularly. I have been told that I seem to be on a list of people the security forces are interested in.

I have a little son at home. I have told the nanny who is looking after him to stay indoors and not allow him to play outside. It is scary, but I try not to let fear get the better of me.

What role do social media play in the protests?

Sharing information is the key role of social media. If certain people hadn't decided to inform the public of what is happening, many people would have remained in the dark.

Some people created posts and memes to spell out in simple terms what the government is planning to do and what it could do better. Social media also serve as a protection for us protesters. In my case, the police knew the situation was being filmed. But damage was also done. Some hacked into systems and exposed addresses, companies and mobile-phone numbers of MPs who had voted for the finance bill. Some people unfortunately went as far as to destroy company facilities or attack MPs' homes. Others kept calling them non-stop on private lines.

But all in all, I don't think we would have achieved as much if we hadn't used social media. I think the government knows that too, because at one point, internet connections were jammed.

How did the most recent protests differ from previous ones?

The atmosphere was more hostile. The police seemed to be out for blood. When they use tear gas, they don't usually aim at persons, but let the cannisters drop and explode somewhere. Last week, they pointed tear-gas guns at people. They fired rubber bullets and live ammunition indiscriminately.

It is disheartening that the government does not listen to the citizens but responds with such brutality.

How do you think the protest movement will develop? Will it need to elect leaders at some point? How will it ensure that it remains relevant?

I wonder how we can continue the protests, because they are no longer as impactful as they were at first. More and more people are being injured or even killed.

The government is now inviting to dialog. However, I am afraid this is a strategy that has been used again and again. They pick a few people, shake hands, and those people start to benefit personally from their new acquaintances. They are accommodated, and for everyone else things go on as before.

So, we do not want that kind of dialog. What we need is obvious, but the government is going round in circles. It feels like the only way we can express ourselves is in protests. But given the brutality of the government, I fear we are caught between a rock and a hard place. It's important that we keep meeting online to consider a way forward.

What's next for Kenya?

I see a lot of grey areas. It's not really clear whether the finance bill was withdrawn completely. It has now been replaced with the appropriations bill. Which does not say much on how the government is going to get additional money. And a lot of money is still being wasted.

The cabinet has been officially dismissed, but there is reason to believe that the same people will return, perhaps to different cabinet posts. President William Ruto has proven that he cannot be trusted.

It's time to rebuild the nation, starting from scratch, with values and systems that we are convinced will work regardless of who is in office.

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Former Boko Haram child soldiers taking part in an EU-funded reintegration programme in 2020.

ISLAMISM

Preventing Boko Haram from recruiting young people

The terror group is using brutal force and strategic targeting to spread extremist views of Islam in northern Nigeria. Uneducated youngsters who lack prospects fall victim to their propaganda easily. Government authorities and civil-society organisations need to cooperate with grassroots communities to establish structures that counter Boko Haram.

By Adaze Okeaya-inneh

Globally, extremist groups exploit the basic human need for community to target young people to join their organisations. One prominent example is what is commonly called "Boko Haram" – an Islamist terrorist network operating in northeastern Nigeria and neighbouring countries. The name can be translated with "western education is forbidden" and refers to teachings of Mohammed Yusuf, who led the insurgency until he was killed in 2009. The insurgents do not call themselves Boko Haram, however. Rather, different factions of the group use different names.

In its beginning, Boko Haram vehemently condemned the prevalent corruption and how government agencies mismanaged resources, particularly in northeastern Nigeria. However, the group gradually gained notoriety as an anti-government sect as its members became increasingly violent.

Boko Haram's goal is to impose its vision of an Islamic state. To do so, the group needs manpower. Like other terrorist organisations worldwide, it has a preference for recruiting youths, mainly from Nigeria and the neighbouring countries Niger, Chad and Cameroon.

The majority of these young people are from disadvantaged backgrounds and have suffered neglect, so they are susceptible to indoctrination. Since they are not easily detected in public, the terrorist group uses them as spies, suicide bombers and couriers. They are often trained to fight.

Over the years, the internet has become the most important platform through which Boko Haram and other extremist organisations recruit members and radicalise people. They spread their terrorism propaganda through chat rooms, videos, literature and groups, including social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook and X. By studying young people's interest and creating some level of trust, terrorists find ways into their minds.

Some terrorists join an online group or create a seemingly innocent work, business or religious group to monitor the behaviour of the internet users. They identify those vulnerable or sympathetic to extremism and tailor their messages accordingly.

VARIOUS MOTIVATIONS TO JOIN TERRORISTS

Moreover, radicalisation is an effective strategy used by Boko Haram. The terror group distorts religious demands, targeting young people who trust faith leaders and do not study the holy scriptures themselves. Its members infiltrate Quranic schools, mosques, prisons, markets and football fields. Some young people therefore believe that Boko Haram is doing "God's work". Others are lured to Boko Haram by family members who form part of the group. Some participate because they fear retaliation.

Boko Haram also exploits broken family structures. Its members use youths

Photo: picture-alliance/photothek/Ute Grabowsky

and children from dysfunctional families, orphans and abandoned children to traffic weapons or run errands. It is well known that Boko Haram also uses brutal force to recruit new members, including the indiscriminate kidnapping of school children (see box).

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

Economic and social factors contribute to young people joining Boko Haram and engaging in religious violence. High poverty and unemployment levels coupled with low education create an enabling environment for the terrorists. They propagate religious ideology as a panacea to solve societal ills. Northern Nigeria's socio-economic problems can be found in other West African countries too, with similar effects regarding the willingness of young people to join insurgent groups, for example in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso.

Many children of school age are not enrolled in schools, and the literacy rate is low. If young people cannot read or write, however, they tend to lack the skills to question the narratives of religious extremists.

Boko Haram lures youths with financial incentives, promises of employment and interest-free loans for business. The terrorists also provide money to families of "martyrs". They support families of recruits and veterans as well.

The exact number of youths recruited by Boko Haram remains unknown, not least because Nigeria lacks an accurate database of its population. UNICEF estimates that thousands of child soldiers have been recruited by Boko Haram and other armed groups in Nigeria between 2009 and 2022.

> "Education must be prioritised in Nigeria's north. Young people who read and write and have learned to think for themselves are less susceptible to terrorist propaganda."

Boko Haram consists mainly of unemployed men. However, among the members are also women and influential people. Boko Haram is known to derive its funding from kidnappings and robbery, but also Islamic donations and financial assistance from international terrorist groups.

MEASURES TO TACKLE RECRUITMENT

Nigeria's federal government and other actors should implement measures to prevent recruitment of young people by extremist forces. First and foremost, education must be prioritised in Nigeria's north. Young people who read and write and have learned to think for themselves are less susceptible to terrorist propaganda. Communities and the government must make sure that citizens fully understand the values and benefits of western-style education.

Promoting peaceful and tolerant coexistence is central. This message should be spread widely, from arts and media to town meetings. Radical messaging needs to be countered.

Creating jobs must be a priority as well. The government should set up programmes to promote vocational skills in order to give young people perspectives. Everyone deserves a chance to escape poverty. They need decent jobs so they can make a living instead of relying on funding by extremists.

Moreover, civil-society organisations must implement programmes at the community level to take care of particularly vulnerable children. Adequate funding is essential. No orphan or child from a broken family should be left behind and fall victim to terrorist recruitment.

In order to achieve all this, government authorities and civil-society organisations need to cooperate with community leaders and families. Only together can they strengthen the social and economic structures that prevent easy recruitment of youths in Nigeria by Boko Haram and other extremists.

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School abductions

The Islamist terror organisation Boko Haram has various ways to spread its extremist propaganda and target vulnerable young people in northern Nigeria and other regions (see main text). The terrorists do not refrain from using brutal force too, as repeated attacks on schools show. Mass abductions have occurred several times. Hundreds of schools have been destroyed or forced to close in northeastern Nigeria in the past 15 years.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the abduction of 276 girls from a secondary school in Chibok, Borno state. While some girls were released or managed to flee, 82 of them are still in captivity, according to Amnesty International, the human-rights organisation.

Since the Chibok school incident, Amnesty has documented at least 17 cases of mass abductions with at least 1,700 children seized from their schools by gunmen. Many of the victims suffered serious abuse, including rape and forced marriage. Often, they are forced to choose between two horrific options: join the deadly group or be killed.

"It is shocking that in the 10 years since the Chibok school abduction, the Nigerian authorities have not learned any lessons or taken effective measures to prevent attacks on schools," Isa Sanusi, head of Amnesty's Nigerian branch declared in a press statement in April. She urged the authorities to ensure that the remaining 82 abducted Chibok school girls return to their homes. She also demanded that schools be better protected. The suspected perpetrators should be brought to justice and victims should have access to remedies.

In May 2014, following the Chibok school abduction, an initiative to make schools safer was launched by the Nigerian Government, the United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education, Gordon Brown, and a coalition of Nigerian business leaders. However, Amnesty bemoans that bureaucracy and corruption have delayed its implementation. As a result, the education of thousands of children was interrupted. AO

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

A powerful tool

The world today is home to the largest generation of young people in history. But in many places, they lack prospects. Sport is a proven means of empowering young people to actively work for change in society.

By Katharina Wolf and Jens Elsner

According to UNESCO, there were 1.2 billion young people last year. As this number continues to grow, empowering young people has become an important cross-cutting issue for achieving all of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, in many countries around the world, young people have limited access to quality education, economic opportunities or meaningful participation in decision-making processes.

Empowering young people means enabling them to shape and implement the decisions that affect their present and their future. This involves issues such as unemployment, engagement in civic and political processes and a sense of belonging. In particular, by providing platforms for expression, participation and leadership development, young people can become agents of positive change in their communities. To do this, they also need the necessary resources, opportunities and support.

SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT

One way to create such platforms is through sport. Pedagogically well-designed sport activities teach and strengthen life skills, provide mentoring and thus promote personal and social change in communities. Harnessing this transformative potential of sport is the core of "Sport for Development" (S4D).

Recognised by the UN as a "means to promote education, health, development and peace" and therefore included in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, S4D is a well-established instrument of German development cooperation. On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ) implements S4D together with partners from all over the world. S4D is currently active in Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Western Balkans and has already reached more than 1.4 million children and young people.

Anyone who has ever played team sports knows how sport promotes team spirit and fair play. With the right educational framework, sport therefore not only improves physical and mental health, but also fosters young people's life skills and teaches social values. Coupled with certain training strategies and group reflection, sport has the potential to promote tolerance, adaptability, goal-orientation and self-confidence. S4D also strengthens leadership qualities and skills in communication, conflict resolution and teamwork. The sports in GIZ's programmes range from football, basketball, table tennis and ultimate frisbee to karate, dance and swimming.

S4D coaches develop training sessions that are based on educational objectives and are tailored to the personal and socio-cultural background of the young participants. The coaches act as role models on and off the pitch. When implementing an S4D programme, particular emphasis is placed on reflection during each training session. This process facilitates the integration of skills development and practical application.

With this strategy, S4D can break down prejudices among young people from different cultural backgrounds and promote better intercultural understanding between communities that may hold opposing political or religious views.

At the same time, S4D can contribute to a more gender-equitable society by promoting female leaders and role models, sensitising boys and girls to gender issues and challenging gender stereotypes. In this way, S4D can align with and advance the principles of feminist development policy.

Against this background, S4D can promote the employability of young people too. By acquiring skills and creating a supportive environment, individuals can overcome barriers and improve their prospects of successful integration into the working world. Sport provides life skills that meet the real

Sport for development training on gender equality in Pakistan.

Photo: GIZ

needs of the labour market. It can also help young people to become aware of their own talents, aspirations and expectations regarding their future careers. Finally, it can help to impart knowledge and skills on a variety of development topics such as environmental protection, hygiene and sanitation, media literacy and much more.

UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE

In addition to GIZ's experience on the ground (see box), various studies have emphasised S4D as a valuable tool for empowering youth and thus promoting social change. For example, in Iraq, S4D initiatives in Kurdistan were found to involve children and youth from internally displaced persons camps and host communities. Empirical evidence has shown that these activities promote inclusive behaviour towards people of different religions and ethnicities, thereby strengthening social cohesion. In addition, research has shown that S4D measures help to reduce the acceptance of gender-based violence against women and girls and at the same time promote a more equitable division of household chores. Studies conducted in North Macedonia and Albania furthermore shed light on the impact of S4D on the employability of young people and show that S4D strengthens self-confidence and goal-orientation.

There are more than a thousand organisations active in this field, according to a study published in the Journal of Sport for Development. In cooperation with renowned partners such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC), Special Olympics, the German Olympic Sports Confederation (DOSB), the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), the German Football Association (DFB) and others, as well as with governments and civil society worldwide, GIZ demonstrates how Sport for Development can be a valuable instrument of development cooperation.

Young people can bring about positive change and represent an immense potential that S4D wants to invest in. At a time when both conservative and far-right voices are increasingly sceptical about development cooperation, it is crucial to show how innovative, adaptable and creative Sport for Development can be in achieving the SDGs, with relatively modest financial resources. Sport connects people all over the world and acts as a universally spoken language.

LINK

UNESCO, 2023: Thematic Factsheet. Youth and Empowerment. ***https://www.unesco.org/en/youth-and-empowerment.***

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How GIZ gets young people moving

In short, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ) trains children, young people, coaches and social workers in the Sport for Development (S4D) approach, advises stakeholders in youth, sport and education policy, develops sports curricula and coach licences, designs programmes and produces training manuals. GIZ has set up the Global S4D Community, an open membership platform that combines an online social intranet with offline learning and knowledge-sharing activities. Access is free and open to experts from all sectors.

To empower youth, GIZ's S4D programmes work with government agencies, civil-society organisations and the global sports industry. One of these collaborations focuses on training young women from various partner countries who aspire to or already hold leadership positions in the sports sector, particularly in football. In cooperation with the German Football Association (DFB), GIZ's Sport for Development runs the "Future Leaders in Football" programme, which offers young people training in management, leadership and communication. Given the prevailing male dominance in leadership positions within sports organisations, the programme empowers (future) female leaders and promotes the equality and visibility of women in these organisations. Consequently, this initiative provides a supportive environment for discussing gender-specific power dynamics and thus contributes to positive change in local sports structures and communities in GIZ's partner countries. The programme has so far reached future leaders from 30 countries around the globe.

S4D also uses existing structures and supports grassroots organisations. The recently launched pan-African network "Equal Play Effect Africa" aims to strengthen such organisations by expanding their influence from the local to the regional, national and continental level. It aims to facilitate networking and knowledge sharing between these organisations. During the programme, the organisations will develop their own gender action plans and identify how best to embed gender equality on the pitch for youth participants, on the sidelines for coaches and in organisational governance, design and policy.

S4D creates an innovative framework in which young people take on leadership roles and work for social change (see main text). Through the Youth Ambassadors Programme in Latin America, Tunisia, Pakistan and the Western Balkans, young leaders become experts in S4D. During the two-year training programme, they develop and implement their own sport-oriented initiatives that address key development areas such as gender equality, social cohesion and employability. Through the Global S4D Community platform, they can learn from each other's experiences. KW, JE

LINK

https://community.sport-for-development.com/p/36

POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

Yearning for a peaceful and united Africa

In the conflict-ridden Great Lakes Region of East Africa, young people are involved in a project for peace. Many of them dream of a continent that thrives in unity.

By Lawrence Kilimwiko

The Great Lakes Region in East Africa comprises the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda and Tanzania. Its history is characterised by bloody conflicts: from the Congo Crisis in the 1960s to the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda in 1994 and the current fighting in the east of the DRC. The countries in the region are still among the poorest in the world. They are home to numerous internally displaced persons. Traumatisation caused by violence characterises the everyday lives of many people.

The young people in the region were not spared either: many died in armed conflicts, were mutilated and had to leave their homes. Others were recruited by militias at a young age and forced to become perpetrators themselves under cruel circumstances.

In response to the fact that youngsters in the Great Lakes Region have been involved in violent conflicts for decades, the "Great Lakes Youth Network for Dialogue and Peace" was created. Young people are actively campaigning for peace here. For example, they are committed to the sustainable use of natural resources, since conflicts over resources harbour the potential for violence. Climate change is another important topic, as it also leads to conflicts, for example where it drives people from their homes. Good governance is an important aspect of the network's work as well.

Protests for peace in Goma, DR Congo, in May.

The project is funded by the EU and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS) and supported by five African civil-society organisations: Pole Institute (DRC), Vision Jeunesse Nouvelle (Rwanda), Actions for Democracy and Local Governance (Tanzania) as well as Cornerstone Development Africa and LéO Africa Institute (Uganda). The centre is located in Goma in eastern DRC, with initiatives in Tanzania, Uganda, DRC, Rwanda and Burundi.

The network offers exchange opportunities for youth organisations and other important players. The goal is to contribute to peace and stability, as project manager Jean Claude Twahirwa explains. "We aim to promote the active, cooperative and sustainable role of youth actions and initiatives for peace and stability. It is a crossroad between youth groups and stakeholders in politics, the private sector, civil society and the media," he says.

YOUNG PEOPLE SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES

Activities include annual conferences at which young people strengthen their networks. At the most recent summer school, which took place in Tanzania in September 2023, about 120 young people shared their experiences. It covered sessions on international affairs and development, youth activism and confidence building, as well as responses to the climate crisis.

The gathering served as a launching pad for the establishment of the African Youth Coalition for Peace and Development, which extends beyond the Great Lakes Region to cover the whole African continent. Its mission is a united, peaceful and prosperous Africa. Representatives from Tanzania agreed to host the secretariat based in Mwanza.

It is a step towards what Pan-Africanist Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first president, had yearned for: a united Africa with one government, passport, currency, army and a common foreign policy. The young people discussed related topics during their meeting in Tanzania. "If unity is good for Europe, as proved by the European Union, why not for Africa?" wondered a young person from South Kivu in the DRC.

It is worth remembering that when the Organization of African Unity (OAU), now the African Union (AU), was founded in May 1963, Africa was not ready to unite

Photo: picture-alliance/ASSOCIATED PRESS/Moses Sawasawa

in a strong union of African states along the lines of the United States of America. Quite a few young people see things differently today, however. They want more unity in Africa – and less tribalism.

PAN-AFRICAN EFFORTS

The development partners present were quick to announce their readiness to support an expanded project to cover the whole of Africa. Tilmann Feltes, Country Director of KAS Tanzania, expressed the stakeholders' commitment and emphasized that peace and conflict resolution were their main focus. Emilio Rossetti, Deputy Ambassador of the EU to Tanzania, explained that the EU was funding the project because it adheres to the principle of unity in diversity. Under this principle, the 27 EU member states have not experienced armed conflict among themselves for a quarter of a century. Peace is also possible in the Great Lakes Region, he said.

> "In order to realise their vision of a peaceful Africa, young people need to have a say. They demand to be involved in political decision-making."

In Tanzania alone, according to Yohana Madadi, senior officer in the Prime Minister's office, there are more than 20 million young people between the ages of 15 and 35 in a country of 62 million inhabitants. He pointed out that in view of increasing unemployment and human trafficking, the government is concerned about their safety.

Fred Mwesigwa, the Ugandan High Commissioner in Tanzania, noted that peacebuilding was critical because it is the foundation for development in any political economy. Young people should avoid getting entangled in dangerous activities, he said.

In order to realise their vision of a peaceful Africa, young people need to have a say. They demand to be involved in political decision-making. Established politicians should take their peace efforts as an example. Good governance based on democratic principles is urgently needed. Political interests should be negotiated peacefully. The violence must finally come to an end.

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LABOUR MARKET

One of India's great challenges

To reap a demographic dividend, India needs more and better job opportunities. In spite of high growth rates, masses of people are being left behind – and young people in particular struggle to find good jobs.

By Roli Mahajan

Pratap Singh has been unemployed for about four years. He is from the Azamgarh District of Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous and under-developed state. Even though he has a college degree in plastic engineering, he is applying for some of the lowest-level government jobs in the Indian Railways. He hopes to get a secure and permanent position even though he is qualified to do far more demanding work.

"As a child, I was told that education would help me get a job, so I studied hard," he says. However, he now has no job opportunities to look forward to, so applying for a railway job is the best he can do. He often asks himself whether the effort to go to college was worth it: "If education can't get me a job, then what will?"

Singh's struggle is not unique. Many members of his generation moved from rural districts to bigger towns in pursuit of degrees in engineering, sciences, law or business administration. But even after graduation, they typically struggle to find employment in their fields of training. Many return home and accept any kind of low-skill work. Singh's friend Rahul, for example, studied law, but is now working as a low-level office assistant at a local doctor's clinic.

Singh's wife is trying to find a job as a teacher at a government school. Such positions are only rarely advertised, however, and when they are, many applicants have the necessary qualifications. To get the job, one must often pay bribes. It is not enough to hand in the appropriate documents. This is the fate of many young Indians in one of the world's fastest-growing economies.

According to the World Bank, India's gross domestic product (GDP) is set to increase by an annual rate of almost seven percent for the next three years. The growth data for recent years was similarly good. Nonetheless, these figures did not go along with jobs for the millions of young Indians who enter the labour market every year.

INFORMAL SETTINGS

A key factor is that much of the growth has been driven by the expansion of India's services sector, which is significantly less

labour-intensive than manufacturing. Most people outside the public sector still work in informal settings. There are only very few formally regulated private-sector jobs with full social protection (health insurance, a pension scheme et cetera). Part of the problem is that about half of India's people still depend on ailing, small-scale farms.

In cooperation with the Institute of Human Development, an independent Delhi-based think tank, the International Labour Organization (ILO) released a report on the national labour market earlier this year. It noted that more than 80% of India's unemployed belong to the young generation. It also confirmed that a majority of those unemployed youth were formally educated. In 2022, two thirds of jobless young persons had graduated at least from secondary schools. Two decades earlier, the respective share was one third. Back then, lack of education seemed to be the core problem.

The report also highlighted that India's labour market experienced paradoxical progress in recent years. Despite rapidly increasing GDP, a fundamental characteristic continues to be the insufficient growth of formalised economic sectors. They are not able to absorb masses of agricultural workers who need more productive and better-paying work. In the past decade, informal employment in sectors like services and construction was growing faster than farm employment. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, people have been returning to agriculture, however.

The ILO document highlighted widespread livelihood insecurities. The full truth is that 90% of Indian employment is either self-employment or precarious employment that depends on the employer's immediate needs and does not offer any guarantees to workers.

In theory, India's large young workforce should deliver a "demographic dividend". Economists use that term for a situation where masses of young people drive productive growth without having to take care of many old people and children. High youth unemployment, however, means that there is no demographic dividend. According to the ILO report, inadequate education and lacking skills are to blame. The data show that 75% cannot send e-mails with attachments, for example, and that 90% do not know how to apply mathematical formulas to spreadsheets. While more young people complete schools, those schools are apparently not teaching them the right things.

Unsurprisingly, low rates of female labour force participation (FLFP) persist. India's FLFP is only around 25%. While there has been some improvement in rural areas, educated young women experience even greater difficulties in finding high-skilled work than their male peers. In less developed northern states like Uttar Pradesh, things are particularly tough.

India's central government rejected the ILO document because of alleged "inconsistency in data". Given that the report was released shortly before the general elections, this defensive stance was unsurprising. Indeed, there has been a pattern of credible expert work being belittled and refuted by officialdom under Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

As a matter of fact, many polls and surveys showed in recent months that unemployment is indeed a top concern for most young people in India. Some observers say it had an impact on the elections, in which Modi's party fared less well than had generally been expected. He now depends on parliamentary support from regional parties and can no longer set the agenda on his own.

When he was first elected in 2014, Modi had attracted young people with the promise of creating 250 million jobs over a decade. Ten years later, it is obvious to everyone that his government failed to make that happen.

While India's economic growth remains impressive on paper, the benefits have not yet reached the young workforce, nor weaker sections of society in general. Unemployment remains one of the biggest challenges the government needs to tackle. It would probably do well to heed the recommendations made in the ILO report. The paper spelled out the "five missions" of

- making production and growth more employment-intensive,
- improving the quality of jobs,
- overcoming labour-market inequalities,
- make skills training and other labour-market interventions more effective and
- close the skills and qualification gaps that keep so many young people stuck in joblessness.

Advancements in artificial intelligence (AI), the report warned, make these missions even more urgent. Technology is expected to disrupt labour markets around the world, and India looks less prepared for the loss of white-collar jobs than the other G20 economies.

LINK

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In India, construction work tends to be unsafe in every sense of the word – labourer in Kolkata.

Photo: dem

Pro-democracy protest in Algeria during the pandemic in 2021.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S ATTITUDES

Resignation, not optimism

What prospects do young people have in North Africa and the Middle East a decade after the Arab Spring? On behalf of Friedrich Ebert Foundation, researchers did a survey. The results are mostly sobering.

By Konstantin Auwärter

In the MENA region, young people's hopes for a happy future with self-determined lives have declined in recent years. That is the conclusion of a book with the fitting title "The dispossessed generation". According to the authors, the hopes expressed both during the revolutions of 2010/11 and the protests of 2018/2019 did not come true. Instead, young people have been exposed to Covid-19, political and military conflict as well as economic crises.

The researchers interviewed youngsters in countries from Morocco to Iraq in 2021 and 2022. About 12,000 persons of the age group 16 to 30 took part. They answered questions regarding their personal situation, their values, their social activities and their prospects. It was a follow-up study; the original survey was done in 2016.

The data show that most young people now consider their families' economic situation to be worse than they did in 2016. One third said they were unemployed. At the same time, formal educational achievements had improved. This disparity led to feelings of helplessness and fear of downward mobility.

According to the report, their family remains crucially important to most surveyed persons, with 71% still living in their parents' home. Independent living is often unaffordable. Young families in households of their own, moreover, are stated to be especially exposed to economic crises. Nonetheless, young women increasingly prioritise their professional career over a promising marriage.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had serious impacts. Young people speak of fear, frustration, depression and loneliness. On the upside, many appreciate that society rose to the challenges in a spirit of solidarity.

The data nonetheless show that social disparities and social needs increased during the pandemic. According to 70% of the surveyed, the greatest change in their lives in the past five years was worse food scarcity – ahead of unemployment, increasing violence and climate change.

The authors note that the share of interviewees who consider migration has increased, and they read this trend as a symptom of desperation. However, only a small number of respondents reported to be determined to leave their home country. In the lack of financial and other resources, many wouldn't be able to migrate anyway. This form of imposed immobility, however, is seen as deprivation of opportunities.

According to the researchers, young Arabs' attitude to the state is ambivalent. On the one hand, they would appreciate more support from their government, with 70% saying it should play a greater role in their lives. On the other hand, distrust is strong and interest in politics weak. Politicians have a reputation of corruption and narrow-minded partisanship.

Many authoritarian governments limit the space for civic participation. Nonetheless, the survey data show that 78% of the young people are actively supporting social-welfare causes, mostly in private settings rather than institutional ones, however. The researchers interpret this kind of engagement as an indication of young people still believing they can have an impact on the world around them.

Prospects of young people have obviously worsened since 2021. Striking examples are the humanitarian crises in Sudan or Gaza. The authors are in favour of boosting the evident resilience of the young generation by any means available. By diligently taking stock of complex social realities their study makes a valid contribution to ensuring that young people are not deprived of opportunities.

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KONSTANTIN AUWÄRTER wrote this review during an internship at D+C/E+Z while studying international relations and communications at Erfurt University.

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