Africa’s Youth Bulge – Strategic Implications for Growth & Economic Development

Ambassador (Dr.) Robin R Sanders
Founder, FEEEDS Initiative
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http://ambassadorrobinreneesanders.com, www.twitter.com@rrsafrica
Blog: http://blogitrrs.blogspot.com
Interactive Maps


Keep in Mind…

Presentation will focus on:

- Importance of *Population Demographics*;
- Key sub-elements (drivers) of Africa Youth Bulge (liability or asset)
- Current Stats
- Liability/Challenge or Asset/Positive—my view Asset
- Every-Country not Cookie-Cutter Response
- What do we do/what can you do
- President Obama’s YALI Program
Demographics @ Strategic Issue

My Premise

Demographics are a strategic issue and have a role in strategic thinking in today’s fluid global environment & national/country politics & economic development. Hence a key strategic issue for us as regards to Africa is its large young population more commonly called the *Africa Youth Bulge.* *(all use of term Africa refers to Sub-Saharan Africa, SSAfrica).*

Remember Demographic includes: population, gender, age, race, diversity/culture, regional issues, migrant numbers, (U.S. election all played role, impact +/- on development, economy, politics
SCENE SETTING FACTOIDS

- Africa is on track to be home to 2.4 billion people by 2050 & Sub Saharan Africa’s population is young. [Link](http://www.prb.org/wpds/popup.html#regional-close-up)

- Half of the people living on the Continent are under the age of 19 (btwn 15-19yrs, median age for most countries next 3-5 five decades, not years, but decades). [Link](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-25869838)

- Current continent-wide population growth rates averaging 2.45% & estimated to remain on that level upwards to 3%, upping 2050 population estimate [Link](www.data.un.org/data).

- Africa is 3rd largest continent now, but fastest growing, one billionth person born there in 2010; In 2050 will be Continent with largest population [Link](www.overpopulation.org/Africa.html; http://www.prb.org/wpds/popup.html#regional-close-up).
SCENE SETTING FACTOIDS

- If the trajectory remains the same, Africa would be host to 29 per cent of world’s total population
- Average birth per African women 5.2 children (http://www.prb.org/wpds/popup.html#regional-close-up)
- World’s poorest region; Home to 2 of world’s countries with most inequitable wealth distribution (South Africa topping list for world+region, followed by Namibia; Haiti most)

What are the Sub-Elements (or Youth Drivers) We need to Focus on

With these Factoids in mind – here are some key demographic sub-elements of the Africa Youth Bulge (ages 15-19/25-35):

I. Driver=Under/Unemployment

1.) Globally, over 200 million people are unemployed, many of them in SSAfrica;

2.) On top of this - Africa on course to add 122 million workers between 2010-2020, more than any other region in the world. [http://bit.ly/jobSSA](http://bit.ly/jobSSA);

3.) 72 million wage-job needed along w/entrepreneurs per year just to keep pace with population growth
What are the Sub-Elements or (Youth Drivers) We need to Focus on (cont.)

4.) 2035-SSAfrica will have the world’s largest (mostly unemployed) labor force, exceeding China & India.

5.) Today – Only 28% of SSAfrica workers are wage earners, not enough to combat poverty.

II. Driver=Poverty

1. Most people are engaged in subsistence agriculture or informal self-employment

2.) 63 percent of the total labor force engages in some form of self-employment or “vulnerable” employment, such as subsistence farming or urban street hawking.

What are the Sub-Elements or (Youth Drivers) We need to Focus on (cont.)

3.) Most make 1-2 dollars a day

III. Driver=Philosophy (Clash of Civilizations)

1.) Clash of Civilizations; Philosophically Different Values & View of the World of What is Important or not Important.

2.) Difference views of where they want their country or the continent to go – (Will there be an African-form of the Arab Spring, and what will it look like? Like Mali, Like Northeast Nigeria, Like Kenya).
IV. Drivers=Food shortages & Famine

1.) Cycles of food shortages in certain areas making quality of life & stability problematic for youth, their families & livelihoods.

2.) With large youth population, sheer size of continent, affects food security & more famine cycles because of climate change – food shortages will hit Africa harder than any other region.
What are the Sub-Elements or (Youth Drivers) We need to Focus on (cont.)

V. Driver = Gender
Young female population slightly larger than male

VI. Driver=Diversity
Wide Definition – includes ethnic, cultural & tribal differences; how do people get along w/o conflict over resources (land & water, employment, quality of life-meaning education & health services)

VII. Driver=Regional Differences
Certain things (e.g. religion/Islam) have more import than others to different regions, or sections of a country.
Consequences/Impact of Drivers different for different states


**Anti-fragile states:** nations can sometimes adapt to radical changes & come out the other end stronger (Is this Egypt, Somalia case? (US recognized Somalia 1/17/13));

**Fragile states:** resistant to change, making constant instability the order of the day in regions of the country (Is this case w/Mali, coastal Kenya Northern Nigeria?)
Potential of SSAfrica Youth Bulge
Is Africa’s Youth Bulge a liability (Negative)?–Not necessarily if countries & donor nations focus more on:

Here are some challenges/areas needing attention:

- **AGILE INNOVATION**: Education platforms; development projects; financial literacy/tools; **TRAINING**: meaning particularly vocational and entrepreneurial, SME development; **POWER; ENVIRONMENT; INFRASTRUCTURE; AGRICULTURE; HEALTH, HOUSING**. **CHALLENGES**: rural-to-urban migration, urbanization, corruption, further efforts to assist women/girls, rise in drug use (Afghani heroin, East Africa, TZ 30% young people hooked)

- **ADDRESSING ALL OF THESE**, adequate/quality secure food & water sources; improve agriculture & manufacture outputs help job creation in turn address 71million wage-job deficit
Challenges cont.

- Build on current economic gains - 7 of 10 growing economies are in SSAfrica, but benefits have not yet reached the masses – wealth inequality/disparity issue, need to share wealth, improve life-quality, address idleness or what in places like India as “pass-time”

- Nigeria, for example, announced April 7, 2014 it was now Africa’s biggest economy as it revamped its GDP baselines. Great news, but most population, not “feeling the love…”

- Even with large population, only 331 million in middle class
Positive News

- Economic reset on capital markets in Nigeria, SA, Ghana, Kenya

- GDP growth up in 10 countries, which also weathered global economic crisis better than Europe & US (Botswana, Ghana, Nigeria, etc.)


- Foreign Private Investment up; More Young Entrepreneurs and business leader – but just the “ears of the hippo” as much more is needed
Youth Bulge As An Asset: Positive News

- Has world’s largest amount of arable land & water, human, and natural resources
- Discretionary Income on the rise – 31 million households moving into the middle class
- World’s Brain GAIN (Not Brain Drain) of talent (innovative agile technologies, i.e. education, health, ICT, most new apps coming from developing world – 30 million apps)
Youth Bulge As An Asset

- Source for US exports and Investment
- Reversal of HIV/AIDS rates
- 5-7 years, this 15-19 year group moves into the prime wage earning years, to the political, social, economic young adult years – need to have some fulfilling to do & quality of life
Keep in mind...not a cookie cutter

*Three Drivers* - I believe outstrip management & development of youth potential, and help funnel youth toward other options:

- Seeing terrorist activities as answer to philosophical world view differences, unemployment, lack of education, etc.

- (NB: My experience in North Nigeria is that the philosophical world view driver may not be a driver we can win against, but we need new ways to take it on as a demographic strategic issue & finds ways to address it.)
What Can You Do? – Keep In Mind:

- On Your projects look for opportunities to pull youth in as: Workers on projects
- Providing vocational training (transfer your skills by providing skills training)
- Working together might provide for mutual understanding, which might assist with better understanding – but it is a long road. Remote areas only know what they are told about Americans
- Seek ways to engage, can you address their daily needs
Thinking Ahead On Policy – What Should be on Your minds

1.) What should US policies be toward Africa’s Youth?
2.) What are the consequences of not looking ahead and the sheer numbers and the drivers?
3.) What are the development issues?
4.) Who are our partners on the continent and elsewhere?
My Answers to Question 1-4

1. Engage in every way possible, even if there are philosophical world view differences – goal not to have them plan to kill us; find a way to live with differences (hearts & minds approach is not working; mutual understanding might).

2. Not looking ahead – we do so at our peril because the sheer numbers will be upon us before we know it.

3. Development Issues – food security, education, training (vocational, entrepreneurial, develop SMEs) health services, good governance (anti-corruption), human rights – all things previously mentioned.

4. Local NGOs, local media, int’l orgs; Countries: ?
Depends…on circumstances & our desired outcomes – might be China.

Thank You