



Provisional programme

Wilton Park series: Putting African Youth at the Centre of COVID-19 Recovery

Co-creating approaches to build back better: employment and entrepreneurship

Thursday 19 November 2020 | WP1847V2

Africa is the world's youngest continent, with 60% of people under the age of 25. This generation can power the continent's prosperity – but only if young people can access the opportunities they need to fulfil their potential.

The African Union's *Roadmap for Realising a Demographic Dividend Through Investments in Youth* sets out the investments in education, employment and entrepreneurship, and empowerment required for young people in Africa to realise their potential. But COVID-19 is threatening progress against each of these areas:

- **Education:** An estimated 262.5 million children in Africa were out of school due to COVID-19 in April 2020 and UNESCO estimate that, globally, 11 million girls may not return. School closures have disrupted learning for children across the continent, with a disproportionate impact on the poorest often unable to access remote learning.
- **Employment & Entrepreneurship:** 93% of young workers in Africa are employed in the informal sector, making them more vulnerable to economic crises. COVID-19 has had a disproportionate impact on the employment of young people, women and workers in the informal sector – adding to the existing challenge of creating 20 million jobs each year to 2030 to keep pace with workforce entrants.
- **Empowerment:** The indirect impacts of COVID-19, and decisions taken on how to respond, have particular impacts on young people – and it is crucial that they participate in decision-making on the response. At the same time, COVID-19 has had acute impacts on women and girls – women's economic activity has suffered,

In partnership with:



violence against women and girls has risen, sexual and reproductive health services have been disrupted, and more girls are at risk of child marriage.

The African Union's Virtual Youth Consultation Series on COVID-19 brought together 400 young people from 42 countries to identify their biggest concerns and develop their ideas on how to respond to the crisis. These were followed-up with Intergenerational Dialogues with African leaders. Young people highlighted the impact on jobs and food security and sought intergenerational co-leadership in the response.

This series of Wilton Park convened policy dialogues has been organised in partnership with the African Union Office of the Youth Envoy and UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. It will bring together young people and development partners with the objective to:

- Amplify the outcomes and recommendations from the Policy Paper "Facts & Figures on Africa Youth Agency, Challenges and Roadmap on COVID-19";
- Hear directly from young people about their experience of the impact of COVID-19;
- Discuss the response to date, sharing successes that can be replicated and identifying gaps where renewed action is required;
- Develop proposals for action from African governments, institutions and development partners, informed by the experiences and aspirations of young people; and
- Foster partnerships and create a network of institutions working together over the long term to help young people recover from the impact of COVID-19 to fulfil their potential and enable their countries to realise demographic dividends.

In partnership with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and the African Union Office of the Youth Envoy

(Speakers invited and themes proposed * denotes not yet confirmed)

Thursday 19 November 2020

1045-1100

Orientation session

Technical check ahead of the official start of the meeting

1100-1125

Welcome and introduction

Alison Hilliard

Programme Director, Wilton Park

Chat to your neighbour exercise

1125-1155

1. Stock take: How has COVID-19 impacted young people's employment, and how will it change jobs in the future?

This session will set out the evidence on the impact of COVID-19 on young people's employment to date, the likely long-term impacts, and the outcomes of the AU's youth consultation series

- Youth representative who will summarise the conclusions of the AU youth consultation series on education, including young people's concerns and young people's proposals for response

A youth-led presentation that:

- sets out young people's lived experience of the impact of COVID-19 on employment, career prospects and aspirations

1155-1235

2. Plenary discussion: What does a youth-centred approach to COVID-19 employment challenges look like and how can this be realised?

A plenary discussion focusing on the measures governments and international partners must take to mitigate the impact on young people's employment, create new jobs at scale, and support young people to access these. This should build on the conclusions of the Wilton Park Youth Dialogues on employment and in particular on the initial work of the Wilton Park Friends of Youth Employment in Africa group - adapting to the new challenges created by COVID-19. Speakers will consider:

- Approaches taken to date to support youth employment, what we have learned, and how these must be adapted to meet the challenge of COVID-19 – in particular considering whether COVID-19 is hastening digital transformation, and what this means for youth employment
- Approaches taken to date to support youth employment, what we have learned, and how these must be adapted to meet the challenge of COVID-19 - including by capitalising on the digital transformation
- Young people's perspectives on the impact on the individual, the adequacy of the response to date, and ideas on what is needed in the future, including ensuring young people have the necessary digital skills

1235-1245

Digital photograph and break

1245-1250

3. Introduction to break out groups

Alison Hilliard

Programme Director, Wilton Park

1250-1320

4. Breakout Session: Co-creating partnerships to bring about change

Participants will break into smaller groups to explore what partnerships are needed to mitigate the long-term impact of COVID-19 on young people's employment and create new jobs during and after COVID-19. Groups will consider:

- What should the priority actions be to support employment and entrepreneurship opportunities during and beyond the time of Covid-19?
- How should the group convened by this series work together to develop and deliver a response? What partnerships are needed between African and international organisations?
- How can young people be fully engaged in this process?

1320-1345

5. Feedback from break out groups and reflections

Feedback from break out groups and reflection

1345-1400

6. Conclusion, commitments and next steps

Brief concluding session, with an opportunity to pledge commitments to ensure African youth are at the centre of a C-19 economic and employment recovery.

Alison Hilliard

Programme Director, Wilton Park

This is a preview programme and as such may be subject to change.

This is an invitation only conference.

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