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Enhancing Engagement of
Vulnerable Groups in Decision-
Making and Public Service
Delivery





**ENHANCING ENGAGEMENT OF
VULNERABLE GROUPS IN
DECISION-MAKING AND PUBLIC
SERVICE DELIVERY**

About the AFRICAN YOUTH COMMISSION:

- The African Youth Commission (AYC) is an independent Pan-African youth network founded by youth leaders to foster synergy amongst youth and youth organizations on the continent and Diaspora.
- Officially inaugurated on January 2017 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the network is determined and committed to provide a space and voice for youth and youth organizations to set and drive their own agenda, promote the involvement of young people as key partners in the implementation of the **Africa 2063 Agenda** as well the UN Agenda 2030 for **sustainable development**, support advocacy actions on the ratification and implementation of the **African Youth Charter**, other youth rights-based legal instruments and contribute to advancing the **AU** Shared Values through a network of locally based youth actors.





Youth, Youth with disabilities and children:

- In our society children and youth are amongst the most vulnerable groups because of their age, social status and their dependence on adults as guardians and care-givers.
- Not tomorrow or future but Today, young people have potential to be the primary agents of positive change at all levels of our society. Yet, their age and social status generally mean they are often excluded from decision-making when important political and social changes are underway. Young women are affected differently than their male counterparts and often in ways that bring stigma and rejection when they speak out about their experiences.

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES
FOR THESE VULNERABLE
GROUPS REGARDING
EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION IN
PUBLIC DELIVERY AND
DECISION MAKING
PROCESSES?



- Stigma still associated with being youth and participating in decision making processes. In the average African Home, it is generally acceptable for a young person to live on their own and get a job after university which is about 23-25 varying. Compared to other young people across the world who start making crucial decision at the age of 16... that is almost 7 years of experience ahead.



- Hardly any legal laws to support people living with disabilities let alone youth living with disabilities. Think for a moment how hard it is to be a youth, move office to office looking for a job. Now imagine how 10 times harder it has to be for a youth living with disabilities. There are not structures in place to effectively include them in the decision making processes.

How can we collectively ensure
effective inclusion of these
vulnerable groups?

Young people and youth with disabilities know best about their needs. As such, they can partner with government and public administrations in finding solutions to the challenges they are facing, for instance by shaping the public policies and services that are important for their transition to adult life. Digital technologies present an important but not the only means to involve young people in these processes.

Young people's participation in policy and service cycle does not take place in a vacuum though. Strong guarantees of their civil rights and liberties such as access to information, freedom of speech and expression and freedom of association and assembly are indispensable as preconditions for youth to participate in a safe space.





Engage young people in public policy making and service delivery through youth-friendly style and various channels (both online and offline) to inform young people about opportunities to participate in public consultations and create spaces for inter-generational dialogue between policy makers and youth



Increase awareness among public officials across Government ministries and sectors for the value added of engaging young people in public consultations, using their fresh ideas and energy to deliver public service



Build capacities of young people, youth with disabilities, and provide incentives to foster wider system change in the public administration



Adopt universal legal age definition for “youth” i.e (UN 15-24 and AU 15-35)



Advocate reforms in electoral laws that hindered participation of young people in politics. Campaigns like the #NotTooYoungToRun should be amplified



Strengthen civic and citizenship education in the school curriculums to ensure children and young people gain the necessary skills, knowledge and information about opportunities to participate in public life, including politics



Encourage public-private partnership to build the capacity of youth in digital skills and enhance their participation in shaping public policies and services through e-governance

LEARN FROM OTHERS DOING IT....

EVIDENCE FROM OECD COUNTRIES

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Evidence from OECD countries demonstrates that youth occasionally participate in the policy cycle but less systematically than other groups such as experts and NGOs.



Some countries such as **France** have created dedicated bodies to involve youth more systematically in the policy cycle. The Conseil d'Orientation des Politiques de la Jeunesse, composed of government stakeholders from central and subnational level, youth associations, experts and social partners, can be consulted on legislative proposals and can examine any question of general interest in the field of youth policy. It can also present proposals to the government.



In **Germany**, the online portal "Ich mache Politik" (I do politics), run by the German Federal Youth Council, invites young people to participate in shaping youth policy and political decision-making processes at federal level. There is a clear process to show how their contributions were taken into consideration.

THE END
