



Young Africans Have a Say

Ernst Ulz

Slide 1

Good afternoon, and thank you for joining this session.

My name is Ernst Ulz, I am from Austria. But I have lived in Eastern Africa for the last 15 years.

I have been in the team of Together for a New Africa since 2017.

I simply love the initiative.

My task today is to summarize for you the results of simple research that the Coordination Team of T4NA has recently done.

I kindly request the European participants in this session to bear with us, because this session focuses mainly on Africa. But maybe there might be something interesting for you, too. It would be extremely interesting to compare how European youth feel about the same topics. Hopefully, in these days, we shall have some moment of exchange, where we can hear them, too.

By the way: You will be given a softcopy of this presentation, so if I proceed too fast, don't worry. You can consult this presentation in future.

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My presentation will proceed in five steps:

- A) First: What exactly is this survey?
- B) Secondly: For what, why did we organise it?
- C) Third step: How was it organised and spread?
- D) Fourth: Who are the people who participated?
- E) In the last step, we try to make sense of the results we have received.

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So, WHAT exactly have we organized?

Thanks to online platforms like SurveyMonkey, it is now relatively easy to reach out to many people with surveys and analyze the responses.



Between May and July 2023, we published an online questionnaire titled Young Africans – Have A Say.

- ⇒ It was addressed to young adults between 18 and 40 years from Africa.
- ⇒ We wanted to give them a forum where they could express their experiences and thoughts. In particular, we asked them:
- ⇒ What do they think about burning issues of their continent?
- ⇒ How are they involved in public life?
- ⇒ What do they think that true leaders should be like?

By the way, if somebody wishes to see all the results, you can use this link. If you use the information for research or publication, be fair enough to quote © T4NA.

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And WHY did we make the survey?

1. As you know, T4NA was designed by a group of African students at Sophia University Institute in Italy around 10 years ago. The design was based on their research and observation of that time. The first thing they noticed is, that most problems in today's Africa have one root, namely Poor Leadership. Secondly, they lamented that young people could be the thriving force for renewal in Africa, but in reality most of them were left out of opportunities to develop themselves and to participate in public life. The question now is: These observations are ten years old. But are they still valid in 2023? Or have things changed?
2. If we want an activity to have an impact, it must respond to real needs. So, with this survey, we tried also to understand better the challenges of young people in Africa.
3. Finally, the people and organisations that support AFR.E.S.H. and T4NA want us to prove that our initiative produces good results. One way to show these results is to compare how the beneficiaries have developed over the years. For this, we need comparable data. In evaluation terms, we talk of “Baseline Study” at the beginning and “End-line Study” at the end of an activity. Comparing the two data, we can see the progress of the project.

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HOW was the survey organized?

- First, we studied the objectives of T4NA.
- Then, we elaborated 47 questions, which will help us understand the current situation and opinions of youth related to our main topics. Many of you will be familiar with these questions since you filled out a similar questionnaire yesterday, too.



- After, the questionnaire was translated into Portuguese and French and published on the platform SurveyMonkey.
- Since we didn't have much money to hire professional surveyors, we used our own channels to spread the survey: These were the networks created during the last training cycle of T4NA, the various networks of the stakeholders (e.g. the Focolare Movement), the website and social-media-pages of T4NA and personal contacts. In order to keep the momentum going, we sent several reminders and shared interim results.
- Our survey targeted "Africans between 18 and 40 years". Out of 1.600 responses that we received, 1,440 belonged to that group. The greatness of these online survey platforms is that one has sheer endless possibilities to filter the results: I can find out what only Burundians think, or only Secondary School Students, or only ladies, or only refugees, or people of a certain age, etc. These options are too many for us to analyze systematically. Today, we can only present to you the results of all Africans between 18 and 40 years.

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Before we interpret the results, it is good to be aware that this is not a representative study in a strict sense since we could not reach out to all layers of the population.

For example, all young people who don't have access to or are not conversant with the internet were left out. And these are many.

So, before sharing the answers we received, we need to disclose who our respondents were. This is the reason for the following slides.

1.440 Young African adults between 18 and 40 years have started responding to the questionnaire, and 1.057 have responded to all mandatory questions. A completion rate of 73 % is excellent, with a survey of 47 questions that takes over 30 minutes to respond.

Usually the rates of completion are much lower. This means, people found this survey interesting.

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This graph shows the age of the participants from 18 (left) to 40 (right).

The largest age group is between 23 and 34.

This coincides very well with the age range that T4NA and AFRESH are targeting: People who are about to conclude their studies, seeking for a job, or have their first work experiences.

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This chart illustrates how many persons from which country participated.

First: Congratulations to Burundi! It's such a small country but with very active people!



Secondly, it reflects in which countries we had access to networks of young people. It is not by chance, that the 14 top countries in this chart coincide with the 14 countries in which T4NA is active!

But the graph shows also another limit of the survey: The view of young people in these 14 countries is over-represented, while the youth of other countries have not aired their views. This distorts the results a bit. For example: there is no vote from Botswana, but maybe they would have a very different experience from the 325 Burundians who voted.

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Now, let's look at the gender of the participants.

So, two-thirds are male, while one-third are ladies.

I wonder what this says about equality of opportunities for both genders in Africa ...

I was told by a sociologist that in Europe it is the opposite: two-thirds of respondents to surveys are ladies, and one-third are men ...

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We also looked at the education level of the participants.

Around 86 % of the respondents have completed Secondary School, and 74 % have a Bachelor's Degree or higher.

Also here, we have to specify, that the survey does not represent all young adults in Africa, but young Africans with a decent school education level.

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Three questions aimed at understanding to which extent young African adults are involved in public life.

We distinguished three categories: politics, Civil Society Organizations, and Faith-Based Organizations.

And then they could indicate in which way they are engaged: as leaders, as employees, as volunteers, as members or not at all.

The first column shows, if and to which extent they are involved as leaders.

What we see from here is that they prefer to engage in faith-based organizations or Civil Society Organizations: one of four responded that they are active as leaders in those. Instead, the interest to get engaged in politics is considerably less at only 7 %.

The second column instead talks about volunteering. Here Civil Society Organizations have the most significant share of them (namely one of five) while politics and faith-based organizations are almost equally low at 8 %.

The other columns you can study at your own. ...

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One test to see how far the questionnaire has reached beyond the area of direct influence of T4NA was to ask respondents how much they know about T4NA.

We have 13 % of them actively involved, and 23 % have heard a lot of it.

We can assume that these people share some of their values – which, again, influences the results. Similarly, to a lesser degree also the 33 % who have heard a lot of it.

Only 31 % were never directly in touch with the initiative. It would be an interesting exercise for another day, to filter only the questions of those who don't know T4NA and compare them with the answers of the others.

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N.B. here I plan some Quiz in Mentimeter, but it still needs to be designed ... -maybe on a lighter note ...

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Let us now go to the findings of the Survey.

We wanted to understand the emotional connection of young people with their country.

We asked them two questions:

Question 8 enquired if they love their countries.

Question 9 had a nuance: Do they also LIKE TO LIVE in your countries?

At first sight, this looks very positive: Two of three “absolutely” love their country, and 28 % “quite”. Less than 7 % don't love it.

But if we ask more precisely if they like to LIVE in their country, the picture is less optimistic. The weight of the columns moved to the left sight; the optimistic voices are reduced, and the pessimism increased: Almost one in five don't like to live in their country.

In fact, in another question, No. 4, only two-thirds said that they are actually living in the country in which they were born. So, apparently, one-third live outside their country.

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Question 20 is one of the most important for us.

We had listed 14 challenges of the continent, which are commonly mentioned.

The participants were asked to select the four most significant challenges from this list.

The picture shows three clear “favorites”: Poverty, Poor leadership, and Poor Education. Interestingly, they are rated much higher than Tribalism, Exploitation by other countries, or even violence and war.

This result is crucial for T4NA because it confirms the basic assumption of its initiators: that poor leadership is one of the most significant problems on the continent, besides Poor Education.



While the most mentioned challenge – Poverty – is very generic and a result of a combination of causes, poor leadership and education are more specific and rather root causes of poverty.

A small detail: Many respondents complained in the comment that the word “corruption” was not on the list, and they would have clicked it for sure. In fact, 13 of 72 comments mentioned corruption as a leading challenge.

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We asked many questions about how they see their countries.

First, we wanted to understand, if they think, their nations a peaceful.

I have selected here one of the indicators for peace, namely: Do they personally feel safe and secure in their countries? Even though the chart looks quite optimistic with 44 % feeling “absolutely” safe, it is rather worrying that one in four educated young Africans does not feel safe and secure.

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In questions 29 and 31, we wanted to understand what young people think of their own capacity to face the challenges of their own lives compared to the opportunities for growth that their countries provide.

From the graphs here, it becomes clear that young adults are optimistic that they have the capacity to face the challenges in their lives.

But when it comes to how their government supports them in this, the majority does not expect much.

You remember, that one of the observations the founders of T4NA had 10 years ago, was: that young people could be the thriving force of renewal in Africa, but that their societies don't give them sufficient opportunities to be exactly that. This graph seems to confirm their assumption.

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Then, we had a series of questions about their involvement in public life.

Sorry for this complicated graph that combines four questions, namely: Questions 30 and 33 focused on the capacity of the youth.

We can see, that here, again, young people are quite confident about their own abilities: Two of three young adults feel that they are “absolutely” able to contribute to positive change in their countries. A bit fewer, but still more than half state that they are able to participate constructively in decisions in their communities.

Instead, question 32 tried to find out, if their societies do actually want and promote their involvement. Immediately, the curve becomes flatter. Only one-third agree “absolutely”, while the skeptical voices increase.



We tried to match these results with a totally different question, namely if their countries are democratic. Hereby we left open, what exactly we mean by democracy.

But, the degree to which a country allows its citizens to participate actively in the political discourse is one of the key indicators of democracy. It is, therefore, not surprising that the graph of this and the previous question almost match.

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T4NA started when the international refugee crisis was at its climax. Many, mostly young, people, were desperate. They opted to leave their homes and start a dangerous journey to Europe or more stable countries on their own continent. In this way, a huge potential of creative and energetic minds was leaving their countries. This contributed to a worsening situation. Therefore, T4NA wants to encourage people to stay in their countries and build up their communities, instead of looking for greener pastures elsewhere.

This question here was to verify if even 10 years later, young Africans prefer to leave their countries for a better life. The results are almost 50-50. A quarter of them would absolutely seize the opportunity. But further 22 % are not rejecting the idea.

On the other hand, one in five swear that they would resist such an opportunity.

And remember, that before, over 90 % said that they love their countries!

Also, this assumption of T4NA is still valid, therefore.

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We, then, posed some questions regarding specifically leadership.

We wanted to understand, to which extent young Africans are satisfied with their leaders.

But we wanted a differentiated picture and distinguished four areas of leadership: Politics, Business, Civil Society, and Religion.

More than one in five young Africans are absolutely not happy with political leaders.

Business leaders are getting a softer vote, but still leading the rating for young being “not so much happy” with them.

When we now look at whom young people are contented with, the numbers rise for Civil Society Organizations- and religious leaders.

If we take together “not so much happy” and “absolutely unhappy”, the ranking is in favor of faith-based organizations. Only 35 % are unhappy with their religious leaders, 46 % with their Civil Society leaders, whilst almost two of three young people are unhappy with their political leaders.

I don't know what you think, but looking at the whole picture, does it shed a good light on the current leadership? When on average around half of the educated young people are not happy with their leaders? Does this not call for a renewal of leadership?

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On a positive note, we wanted to understand, how young Africans expect a good leader to be. Question 22 was about their values.

In order to allow a statistical evaluation, we needed to pre-formulate 12 values, and allow them to select four which are most relevant according to them.

Also here, there are three clear favorites:

Responsibility with 64 %,

Honesty with 62 %,

And justice with 55 % of young people considering them relevant.

These are followed by Love and Respect and Loyalty.

Can we ask ourselves, if your leaders are aware, that this is what their voters want from them?

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In a similar way, we enquired, what attitudes young people expect from their leaders.

Also here, we have three very clear favorites: Trust, Humility, and Determination.

But young people appreciate also ambitious leaders, emphatic and resilient ones.

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(Optional slide, if there is still time.)

Under question 28, we approached the same topics in a different way: We quoted some statements which are often heard in discussions. And we wanted to understand, to which extent young people agree with them.

For each statement, they could vote:

0 = Not At All

2.5 = A bit

5 = A lot

The software then calculates something called “weighted average”.

Consequently, the higher the number (the longer the bar), the more they agree with the statement.

You can read the statements in detail later, but for now let me emphasize on a few:

The highest vote was given to the statement that “Today’s Africa needs collaborative leaders who involve all who are concerned”. T4NA wants to propagate exactly that: a collaborative style of leadership. Again, we hit the nail on the head.

On the other hand, almost the same agreement is given to the idea of a strong leader who can assert themselves. We will find out in this training, how to reconcile these two requirements for good leaders.

The lowest vote went to two commonplaces, namely that Democracy cannot work in Africa, and that somebody, who wants to become a leader here, needs to be corrupt. Young people believe that one can be a leader without entering in the vicious cycle of corruption. Let’s hope they don’t lose that faith.



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I am now at the end of this presentation. Sorry for so many figures and statistics. Some people start becoming a blurring view when they see so many figures, other people love them and trust them more than stories. Well, the stories will come!

At this stage, I would like to ask three of you, one francophone, one anglophone, one lusophone African, and one European to come to the microphone and give a short feedback to the following question:

After what you have heard: Is T4NA relevant for today's Africa? Do the training objectives of T4NA respond to the real challenges of young people?

The objective is:

To empower young leaders in Africa to address the challenges of their communities and to so shape the future of their continent through collective leadership (co-leadership), good governance, a Culture of Unity, and the revival of the African "Ubuntu"-wisdom.