

Youth Task Teams

Terms of Reference

1. Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has without a doubt exacerbated major economic and social challenges across the globe. In Africa, young people, especially the vulnerable youth, have not been spared the devastating effects of the pandemic. The disruption by the COVID-19 pandemic has amplified many of the challenges already facing the continent's youth.

African governments are having to deal with critical issues of disrupted education systems, reduced access to essential goods and services, increased poverty, food insecurity, and exposure to violence, abuse and exploitation. They are also having to deal with vaccine access, uptake and distribution in the context of weaknesses in health systems exposed by the pandemic. But these governments are yet to address growing concerns about authoritarianism and the mismanagement of COVID-19 funds and allocation of resources meant for interventions in health, education and infrastructural development. Corruption, represented in the lack of transparency and accountability during the pandemic, is affecting inclusive and sustainable recovery for youth and other marginalised groups.

Young people, who constitute about 65% Africa's population, have exhibited a high appetite for leading the way in continental pandemic recovery efforts. Many young people have exemplified themselves to be active agents in the fight against COVID-19 by volunteering as frontliners in essential services, while others are constantly innovating to meet the emerging demands for essential products. The challenge for all is to embolden young people to escalate their contributions to the African recovery agenda by spearheading a network of local catalytic solutions, supported by regional advocacy and policy influencing.

It is against this background that Restless Development and YOTA (Youth Opportunity & Transformation in Africa) have launched the Africa Youth Partnership for an Equitable Recovery from the Global COVID-19 Pandemic. With funding from the Ford Foundation, the project is engaging, supporting and empowering young people to put their ideas into action and play a leading role in the recovery. Through this work, we are engendering increased attention to and investment in addressing the critical issues of social and economic inequality that have been escalated by the COVID-19 pandemic. We believe that as duty bearers and stakeholders at local, national and continental levels act decisively in response to young people's voices and engagement, the African recovery agenda will become more inclusive and equitable.

2. About the Youth Task Teams

The Youth Task Teams constitute an important foundation for the Africa Youth Partnership for an Equitable Recovery from the Global COVID-19 Pandemic. In all the participating countries where they are being created, these Task Teams should both represent and draw on the broader national youth constituencies to champion the formulation of youth-inclusive COVID-19 policy actions and lead multi-stakeholder engagements in their respective countries.

In all, ten Youth Task Teams are being set up across eastern, southern and western Africa. The participating countries are Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Each Youth Task Team is expected to be constituted as follows:

- Total number of members of each Youth Task Team should be 15
- At least 50% of members must be young women
- The 15 members constituting each Youth Task Team must represent a diverse youth constituency – student groups, youth-led organisations, national youth networks, women’s groups, professional associations, youth- and women-led businesses, disability organisations, religious groups, geographical (rural vs urban) and socio-economic balance, etc

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Through the Africa Youth Partnership for an Equitable Recovery from the Global COVID-19 Pandemic, Restless Development and YOTA will work to improve the capacities and skills of members of the Task Teams to develop and implement policy accountability frameworks and offer solutions, enabling them to better connect, collaborate and self-organise towards evidence-based advocacy for an equitable pandemic response and recovery on the continent.

With training, coaching and other technical and financial support, the Task Teams will undertake a number of activities, including but not limited to:

- i. Conducting youth effectiveness analyses to identify accountability gaps in key areas of national recovery programmes, including in areas such as economic recovery, education and skills, youth employment and enterprises, health systems and treatment, vaccine equity etc,
- ii. Preparing youth accountability reports, policy briefs and other products that capture the youth position on key recovery programmes, with policy recommendations for how to make the national recovery more youth-inclusive; and
- iii. Designing and implementing national campaigns to advocate for the youth position as captured in those policy products, including extensive workplans for the engagement of governments, the private sector and other national stakeholders to amplify youth voices.

To succeed, members of the Youth Task Teams will need to have the time to participate effectively in regular in-person or virtual meetings, training sessions, and campaign activities.

4. Coordination Mechanism

To ensure effective coordination of the work of the Youth Task Teams, the following mechanisms should be in place:

Each Youth Task Team is expected to be constituted as follows:

- a. Each Youth Task Team elects two leaders (Co-Leads), a male and a female, through a transparent process.
- b. The Co-Leads jointly serve as the main interface between the project partners – Restless Development and YOTA – and the broader membership of the Task Team.
- c. The Co-Leads spearheads all task team activities, including planning and implementation of activities, coordinating meetings and leading engagements with external stakeholder.
- d. Restless Development and YOTA provides the overall programmatic and administrative oversight that each Task Team needs to effectively carry out their work.

5. Membership Criteria

The Youth Task Teams should consist of young leaders across various sectors who are committed to and passionate about contributing to the recovery agenda of their respective countries. Young leaders who want to position themselves as facilitators of meaningful youth engagement in the design and implementation of their countries' economic recovery agenda are particularly best fit for the Task Teams.

The specific criteria for membership in the Youth Task Teams are:

- a. Must be between 18 and 29 years old as of 1st June 2022
- b. Must be fluent in the English language
- c. Must be a national of one of the participating countries, resident or in the diaspora. The participating countries in 2022 are: Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Youth Task Team members may have multiple nationalities, one of which must be a participating country. For example, a Youth Task Team member could have both Kenyan and Japanese nationality, with Kenya being the participating country

- d. Must represent any one of the following or other types of youth platforms: universities or other research institutions, youth-led organisations, national youth networks, women's groups, professional associations, youth- and women-owned businesses, disability organisations, religious groups, geographical (rural vs urban) and socio-economic balance, etc.
- e. Must demonstrate knowledge of and interest in the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on African countries, as well as the recovery efforts across the continent
- f. Must demonstrate current or recent experience as a young leader in any sector relevant for the economic recovery from the pandemic
- g. Must be able to commit up to 5 hours each week towards participating effectively in a wide range of Youth Task Team activities, including in-person or virtual meetings, training sessions, travels, meeting preparation, background reading, research and campaign activities
- h. Must be available for local and international travel whenever necessary to represent the Youth Task Team in various project-related engagements
- i. Young leaders with skills and experience in participatory youth action research, advocacy and policy influencing will be particularly suited for these Youth Task Teams

6. Membership Benefits

Members of the National Youth Task Teams will have the opportunity to connect and collaborate with a vibrant global community of youth organisations, civil society, governments, the private sector and various other stakeholders working around a common cause. They will also lead evidence generation to inform policy, advocacy and design processes, and to take lead in strengthening youth action in contributing to an equitable recovery in their respective countries.

By engaging with Restless Development and YOTA, and with the support of the Ford Foundation, members of the National Youth Task Teams will benefit from the partners' technical expertise, thus strengthening their own expertise in youth programming, particularly around youth social-economic empowerment, youth-led accountability and policy advocacy. This will happen through global and regional connections and networking platforms.

Also, Youth Task Team members can expect to escalate the convening power and global reach of the organisations and platforms they represent. As the project partners perform their roles as influential actors and foster greater alignment between regional/global initiatives and national development strategies, members of the National Youth Task Teams will be able to use their unique position to convene stakeholders around youth empowerment issues, advocating for the development of policies and programmes that empower youth in different sectors.

Membership in the National Youth Task Teams is purely voluntary. This means that there is no salary or financial benefits for members. However, all costs associated with running Task Team activities will, including travel and administrative costs, will be fully covered by the project.

Task Team members will be awarded certificates of achievement upon successful completion of their term.

7. Term

The term of each Youth Task Team is from 1st June to 31st December 2022.

