



Youth at Heart Principles

These principles are a call to action for governments, civil society, private and public sector, bi- and multilaterals and knowledge institutions to invest in the prospects of young people so that they can build a better, more resilient world and to work in partnership with young people. These principles call upon organisations to recognise and invest in an inclusive manner and specifically in the opportunities of vulnerable youth- recognising the unique challenges they face and ensuring that no-one is left behind.

These principles have been developed by approximately 1200 young people from East- and Horn of Africa, Middle East and North Africa and the Sahel Regions, coordinated by Restless Development. These youth-led Principles constitute the voice of young people and mark the Youth at Heart virtual forum, which focuses on the prospects of young people in Africa and the Middle East and is organised by the Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign of Affairs, in cooperation with international partners.

PRINCIPLE

1

Build a more relevant, sustainable and effective enabling environment for education and work systems for young people, that recognise their rights and will.

1. Prioritise inclusive access to education as a means of and to social justice, enabling the participation of young people in society and the exercising of their rights.
2. Ensure education systems respond to changing job markets and demand, providing young people with the key skills that will ensure their employability such as soft skills, critical thinking and adaptability.
3. Invest in and create inclusive access to digital tools and learning systems that will support the education and skills development of young people, ensuring that they will not get further left behind by advancements in technologies.
4. Private sector and governments should take responsibility for the creation of decent work for young people by creating opportunities such as; paid traineeships and mentoring, and access to finance for all young entrepreneurs.

PRINCIPLE

2

Involve young people at all levels in decision making processes that will affect their lives.

1. Partner with young people as leaders and experts at all stages of policy making, including the follow up and review of policy implementation to ensure accountability.
2. Create inclusive platforms and shared safe spaces (both digital and physical) for young people to inform policies and programmes that impact their lives.
3. Address structural and legal barriers, and negative perceptions of young people that prevent the participation of young people in decision making processes, ensuring opportunities to engage young people are widely accessible and adapted to their specific needs.
4. Invest in youth-led initiatives and programmes that are working to promote and ensure more accountable, responsive and inclusive governance at local and national levels.

PRINCIPLE

3

Partner with young people to build a better, more resilient world for all generations.

1. Ensure young people's knowledge and insight inform crises response and recovery efforts at all levels.
2. Partner with and trust young people to participate and lead response and rebuilding efforts, providing adequate resourcing and support to strengthen their capacities and the impact of their work.
3. Invest in youth-led initiatives that are the forefront of responding to Covid-19 and particularly those organisations that provide support to the most marginalised and vulnerable youth.
4. Recognise the negative impact Covid-19 has on young people's wellbeing and mental health and provide ongoing psychosocial support to young people through formal interventions and programmes.