INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONS IN AFRICA
WITH A FOCUS ON SOUTH AFRICA

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A. INTRODUCTION

This paper highlights some challenges in the emerging patterns of intergenerational relations given the current socio-demographic climate in Africa. It suggests that intergenerational relations in the continent are intractably linked to the socio-demographic processes that include fertility, migration and mortality patterns, which determine the population structure and which in turn determines the relative dominance of each generation within the population. Although this paper discusses intergenerational issues in Africa as a whole, it should be noted that Africa cannot be conceived as a uniform and homogenous developmental entity, because regions and in some cases countries within a single region are at different stages of demographic and socioeconomic progression. The discussion here focuses attention on sub-Saharan Africa.

The population structure has a significant impact on the current relations between generations. In demographic terms, Africa is a young continent. Both fertility and mortality levels are much higher than any other parts of the world. Nevertheless, the continent has experienced a significant decline in fertility in some regions, notably, North Africa, Southern Africa and in island countries. As was the case in all societies that are experiencing demographic transition, there is a significant change in the population structure of North and the Southern Africa which gives rise to a big proportion of the population in youthful ages (the “youth bulge”). It should also be noted that demographic transition in Africa is driven mainly by fertility decline, as mortality levels have remained quite high. Gains in mortality decline were experienced from the early 1960’s but have largely been lost in most of Africa as a result of the AIDS pandemic which is also related to the increase in the spread of other communicable diseases like Malaria and Tuberculosis (see Jamison et al., 2006).

Demographic transition, which carries major changes in the population structure, is on course in most parts of Africa. Some areas in Africa are already experiencing youth bulge, while most of Africa is likely to be characterised by a youth bulge in the near future (see Guengent and May, 2001). Consensus among demographers on whether the youth bulge will be neutral, or bring positive or negative economic spinoffs to African societies is yet to be reached. In investigating this issue, the paper motivates the argument that positive spinoffs of the youth bulge in Africa are a realistic possibility.

Notably, both the North and the South have reached early stages of first demographic dividend, and early signs of the second demographic dividend are evident throughout the continent. The first demographic dividend is associated with the increase in the proportion of young people in society, while the second is related to the increase in the proportion of the elderly. The social changes that are led by young people in Northern Africa show that there is a potential for the youth bulge to bring about changes on the continent when they are properly harnessed. The Information Technology which young people used effectively to effect social change, have penetrated some of the most remote parts of the continent, thus the conditions which led to mobilisation of young people are also possible in other parts of the continent. At the same time, while the second demographic transition is at early stages, its fruit are already evident in the form of growing number of grandparents taking care of orphans.
Debates about the influence of the population size on the economic growth have raged on for ages. Some scholars believe that population growth promotes economic growth. Other group of scholars believed that it restricts growth; yet another school of thought believe that it is independent of economic growth. These divergent approaches have resulted in perennial disagreement among scholars and policy makers which have never been fully resolved. However, debate on this issue has shifted recently, focusing more on the influence of the age structure of the population on economic growth. What have attracted the biggest interest of population scholars of late are the prospects of the youth bulge, that is, the increase of the proportion of the population within the working age to generate economic growth in countries experiencing demographic transition.

The paper cautions against the apportioning of blame of intergenerational transmission of poverty in Africa to high fertility rates. While conceding that early childbearing is widespread on the continent and impacts on the wealth flow between generations, it is precisely in societies which have had a remarkable fertility decline that young women carry a bigger proportion of the childbearing burden. Importantly, the rising mortality of young adults on the continent does challenge smooth sharing of wealth between parents and children. Nevertheless, the gap filled by grandparents in the absence of parents is commendable, and might generate exciting prospects in the intergenerational relations on the continent. While migration of skills out of the continent is a short term loss, facilitation of communication and cash flows with the sending areas might benefit Africa in the long run.

B. FLOW OF WEALTH AMONG GENERATIONS IN AFRICA

Caldwell (1976), posited two wealth flow regimes, based almost entirely on his research of African societies. According to him, one wealth flow regime is found in “primitive” and “traditional” societies, where the wealth flow moves upwards from younger to older generations, and a contrasting wealth flow regime is to be found in developed societies where the net flow of wealth moves from the older to younger generations. Thus, Caldwell concluded, that parents in traditional societies have vested interest in giving birth to as many biological children as possible. Caldwell further stated that it will be the change of the direction of the wealth flow that will trigger fertility decline in “traditional” societies.

C. PRELIMINARY DATA FROM SOUTH AFRICA

Are intergenerational net wealth flows always upwards in Africa? This question can be answered by recourse to a careful study of wealth flows on the continent. A preliminary qualitative study conducted by the author in South Africa indicate that wealth flows between generations are more complicated than those depicted by Caldwell, both among the poor and rich communities in Africa (Makiwane, 2010). Two models of wealth flows are noticeable in South Africa. One model is that wealth flows from parents to children when children are young. This is followed by a long period when children are working and little wealth is shared between generations. Eventually this is followed by a ‘windfall’ period when there is a flow from parents to children in the form of inheritances. This is usually possible if the younger generation is able to acquire sufficient skills early in their youth through the guidance of their parents, and are able to live an independent life once they reach adulthood. This model is common among societies that have experienced a fairly stable economic growth over two or more generations.

Another model that is common in poorer communities is characterised by two distinct phases of wealth flows over the life cycle of two consecutive generations. Initially, wealth flows from parents to children when they are young. This is generally followed by a period of mutual beneficiation when children have reached adulthood, with children sending regular remittances and parents assisting children during the time of social and economic distress.
This model is possible if there are uninterrupted relationships between generations, something that is being challenged by socio-demographic changes. While this second model is the most common in many parts of Africa, it is challenged by changing social milieu in Africa. The failure of the middle generation being absorbed into the formal economy, and being confined to the economic fringe, which is the low paying informal sector, prevents them from sending regular remittances to their ageing parents. In addition the lack of job security and poor working conditions of young people in Africa are not conducive to creating lasting family relationships. Thus, many adult children remain in childhood households for a long time. Relatively high prevalence of co-residence between the elderly and adult children in Africa is sometimes interpreted as a structural manifestation of traditional filial piety. But, in reality it is likely to be a result of an adjustment to economic realities. Less successful young people stay longer with parents, so as to benefit from economies of scale offered by childhood households.

In the fieldwork that we undertook we found that the net direction of flow of economic wealth within poor households is not always in favour of the elderly. Most of the elderly in South Africa use their meagre old age pension to support unemployed children and orphaned and vulnerable children. In the expression of solidarity, older persons tend to rationalise this imbalance in the flow of wealth. First, they see the future of their children and grandchildren as more important than theirs and therefore worth whatever it cost them even in their old ages. Secondly, they see their contributions to their children and grandchildren as means of gaining relevance and acceptance in the households.

D. FERTILITY TRENDS AND INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONS

Until recently, sub-Saharan Africa was regarded as an exception to the rest of the world, because of the rate of childbearing being higher than anywhere in the world and because not much decline was noticed in many parts of Africa (see Farooq and Simons, 1985). Many scholars offered different explanations for this exception (for example Caldwell 1985, 1991, Caldwell et al., 1992; Gould and Brown, 1996). Reasons range from the supposed highly resistant nature of African culture to change, and the fact that socio-economic development, especially industrialization, has remained low in Africa; therefore not creating enough impetus for fertility change.

Fertility decline is underway in most parts of sub-Saharan Africa which was once thought to be highly resistant to fertility decline. There is a poor knowledge of the timing of the beginning of African fertility decline. Granted that a sustained decline commenced in the second half of the 1960’s, it remains a difficult task to assess the speed of the decline without risking some error of interpreting differential data quality as genuine trends.

Recent evidence that is available in South Africa indicates that there is a fertility decline is widespread even in the context of poverty, something which is not properly explained by Caldwell’s fertility theory, and other fertility decline theories (Makiwane and Chimere-Dan, 2010).

E. EARLY CHILDBEARING AND INTERGENERATIONAL SHARING OF WEALTH

Teenage childbearing in Africa is highest in countries where teenage marriages are most common. Child marriages are common in many parts of Africa especially in countries that are associated with high teenage fertility. For example, Congo has the earliest teenage childbearing estimated at 222 per 1000 teenage women along with Liberia (219), Mali (179), Chad (164), Uganda (152) and Guinea (149) (World Bank, 2010). Early childbearing remains a serious concern even in Southern African countries, which have experienced a significant fertility decline. As is the case in other parts of the world, the decline in fertility in Southern
Africa is associated with the increase in the proportion of childbearing that is carried by young people (World Youth Report, 2003). Thus, in the face of drastic fertility decline, there is an increase in the proportion of child bearing by young people. In addition, as in these countries teenage childbearing happens outside marriage, and there is an added concern about the relationship between children of young mothers and their biological fathers. For instance, in South Africa the majority of children born out of wedlock becomes the sole responsibility of their mothers, and thus do not benefit from the father’s support, often with absent fathers, and consequently single parenting.

The major concern for scholars and policy makers is not so much the relative high fertility rates in Africa, but the persistent practise of early childbearing. Early childbearing is of major concern in the intergenerational transmission of poverty, as it is associated with girls dropping out of school and thus being unable to gain skills that will enable them to enter the job market. Teenage childbearing is also seen as a major inhibitor of children reaching their full potential, together with children born of young mothers.

F. MORTALITY TRENDS AND INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONS IN AFRICA

In line with many indices of wellbeing, the mortality situation in sub-Saharan Africa is higher than other parts of the world. But more concerning is the fact that sub-Saharan Africa has seen a drop in life expectancy of 3% overall, mainly as a result of the AIDS pandemic. Some of the worst affected countries in the region, especially Eastern and Southern Africa have seen as much as 20% drop in life expectancy, although some mild gains have been noticed as a result of the roll out of antiretroviral drugs (Jamison et al., 2006). The AIDS pandemic has also increased the risk of infection to other communicable diseases that has affected Africa for a long time, including malaria and tuberculosis.

Change in the age structure of mortality has impacted significantly on intergenerational relations in the continent. The high adult mortality has resulted in a growing problem of children who do not benefit from the support of their biological parents during the crucial stages of their lives. Out of the 40 countries with the highest adult mortality, 37 of those are found in sub-Saharan Africa. Adult mortality is highest in regions which have been most affected by HIV/AIDS, namely Southern and Eastern Africa. South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Uganda, Guinea and Cameroon have experienced very high rises in adult mortality. This has created an unprecedented problem of orphans in Africa. Recently, the AIDS pandemic has added an extra burden on African families, especially older persons. By the year 2006, Africa had about 42 million orphans, 20 million of which are as a result of AIDS (Clark, 2006). High levels of unemployment and poverty have added on the devastation created by AIDS in Africa.

There is an emerging literature which emphasises the role of grandparents in this context. Firstly, historically, grandparents especially in African communities have taken upon themselves to care for grandchildren and viewed such a responsibility as an honour. Nevertheless, the recent AIDS pandemic has made such a duty extremely heavy. As a result of the loss of many breadwinners in Africa, older persons have become the new heads who support households economically and through care giving. As Fouad (2002) states, this is proving to be a huge phenomenon in Africa without proper response to alleviate the increased burden and hardships faced by the elderly. They have to support them financially, care for them and in other instances even care for other adults who are also ill with HIV/AIDS. Over and above the burden of disease, they perform other household chores. As a result, older persons are strained financially, physically and emotionally, and are often unable to look after themselves and their health. While the economic consequence of the elderly who give care to the sick and orphans or have lost children to HIV/AIDS is not quantifiable in financial terms, their impact of care giving and economic provision to the rising number of African orphans is remarkable.
G. YOUTH BULGE AND INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONS

This section draws attention to relative size of youth population as an important influence on the relations between generations. A demographic bulge happens during a period of sustained fertility decline which follows a long period of high rate of fertility. As a result of decline in fertility, a bulge in the working population emerges. Thus, a high number of persons support a relatively low number of persons in the dependable young and old ages (Lee and Mason 2006).

As stated above, Africa is a demographically young continent, with as many as 44% of its population in 2006 below age 15, compared to Europe, where the population under the age 15 is only 15%. Southern and North Africa has its fertility decline ahead of other regions in Africa, and hence is ahead in experiencing the youth bulge. The rest of Africa is expected to experience the youth bulge two decades later. The unique opportunity provided by the youth bulge does not automatically translate into a demographic dividend (Lee and Mason 2006). For instance, while the demographic dividend is partly responsible for the economic miracle of Eastern Asia (estimated contribution to be anything between 25-40%), Latin America did not benefit much from its youth bulge. Few people believe that Africa will take advantage of the economic window that the youth bulge will present. This is mainly due to the failure of African governments to implement a universal quality education and inability of African economies to absorb the bulk of its population into the formal economy. Additionally, the burden of disease, particularly HIV/AIDS, unemployment and experimentation with drugs and alcohol in Africa is generally thought to hinder young people from being economically beneficial to their own societies.

Nevertheless, a new generation of social commentators have started to associated youth bulge with more than just direct economic benefits that are associated with increased number of persons who are in the employ. Beehner (2007), for instance sees the youth bulge as a factor in movements for social change. It should be noted though, that Beehner sees such a development in a negative light, associating it with “destabilisation”. His thinking contends that societies with rapidly growing young people often end up with a large number of unemployed young persons who are susceptible to wrong influences. Later events on the continent have shown that the dominance youth movements in society are not necessarily negative as is shown by the events in a number of countries in North Africa. Youth organised protests which have led to significant political changes in at least two countries, namely Egypt and Tunisia. In these countries, young people used of modern technology to network and mobilise and effect change.

H. YOUTH AND USAGE OF TECHNOLOGY IN AFRICA

Widespread technological usage is one way young people trigger social change in their own environments. Africa has experienced a technological revolution in the form of unprecedented penetration of mobile phones. The technological revolution is being led by young people. It is approximated that there are about 350 million phone subscribers on the continent and this number has grown faster than anywhere else (Etzo and Collender, 2010). Mobile phones have far exceeded fixed-line connections and broadband connections are still not widely available. Thus, mobile phones have reached far flung remote areas, which have hardly been touched by communication technology. Mobile phones are increasingly being used in a number of useful ways that were not imagined before, which include monitoring elections, delivering health messages, money transfers, banking and distance education. For instance, internet among disadvantaged youth in South Africa makes use of distant libraries which might have been out of reach. The mobile phones have also generated informal industry that supports the industry which includes selling airtime, charging and fixing mobiles. The use of mobile phones is expanding fast in some parts of Africa to include internet usage.
Thus, according to Goldstuck (2011) 39% of urban and 27% of rural South Africans are now browsing the internet on their phones, which means at least six million South Africans have internet access on their phones. Mxit (with 24% of that audience) and Facebook (with 22%) are the two most popular mobile sites in the country while Twitter is showing good growth. Social media is quickly transforming levels of social engagement and is helping drive what is becoming know as the ‘referral economy’ where consumers base purchasing decisions on advice from their social circles.

On the other hand, 22 million of people were using the internet by June 2009, accessing local business information mostly via a mobile browser. Approximately 83% of local search users contacted businesses offline, 46% of making contacts over the phone and 37% visiting the business in person Goldstuck (2011).

The penetration of the digital technology in remote parts of Africa opens a new window of opportunity for social change. It is able to connect young people across geographical and political boundaries which were once impermeable to the majority of the African youth. Thus, many young people can claim citizenship of the world, while having no means to travel beyond their immediate surroundings.

It can be argued though, that the technological penetration is largely age segregated and thus does not benefit large sections of the population. Digital networks have the ability to dislocate young people from their parents, mainly because of the differential ability to keep pace with new technological innovation. This is where the challenge lies, to use technology as an agent to bring together people of different generations.

I. THE SECOND DEMOGRAPHIC “DIVIDEND”

The second demographic “dividend” is associated with the increase in the proportion of older persons in society. For the increase in the number of older person at older ages to benefit the general population, concentration of older generation lifespan increases, it is likely to be an incentive to accumulate assets as a result of investments of the large lifetime savings, and an extended contribution to the economy of experienced labour force. Thus, the older generation will be able to benefit the younger by sharing their lifetime savings with younger generations.

Just less than 5% of the population in Sub-Saharan Africa is 60 years or above (Velkoff and Kowal, 2007). The oldest ‘old’ in 2006, was estimated to be less than 1% of the entire population, estimated at about 2.5 million. South Africa has the highest proportion of older persons in Africa (7.9%) followed by Lesotho (7.0) (Velkoff and Kowal, 2007). While the number of older persons in Africa constitute a small proportion of the population, they are a significant number, estimated to be slightly more than 38 million and projected to reach between 203 and 212 million by 2050 (op cit.). As indicated above, population ageing in most parts of the world has not been propelled by falling mortality rates. In Africa, the process of ageing is explained by the process falling fertility rates, and in some countries, by accompanying emigration of the middle age group, as is the case in Lesotho.

There are two major problems with the welfare for the aged in Africa. First, the majority have not had enough savings to sustain themselves during their twilight years. Secondly the majority do not benefit from social security. Few countries have a comprehensive social security, namely Namibia, Botswana, South Africa and Mauritius. For most of the African countries, some retirement cover is only enjoyed by a small group of mostly urban based workers and civil servants. In addition the elderly are usually pushed
outside the formal economy. A high unemployment rate is usually used as a reason for excluding many older persons in the formal economy in third world countries. Thus many of the economic activities of older persons revolve around the informal economy. This is usually unreliable and this usually leads to their valuable experience being lost to the emerging generation. The few countries with a comprehensive social security for the ageing population interesting trends have emerged. While in the West presence of social security among the elderly persons have enabled older persons to live an independent life from their children, the opposite is emerging in Africa. In South Africa for instance, it has been found that older persons with access to social security are more likely to reside with their children and grandchildren, and in addition attract indigent relatives into their households (Makiwane et al., 2004).

For a long time, the elderly in Africa have been sustained by the support they get from their children and the extended family. In Africa, old people are usually absorbed within households of their children. Extended families become a source of full time care and monetary, physical and emotional support. Over the twentieth century, a waning extended family has resulted in crises of care for the elderly in many African countries. For instance, a study in West Africa found that the elderly in rural areas especially were at great risk of losing support from their children, particularly when they were poor and their children did not expect any sizeable inheritances (Schneider and Kerr, 2000) The loss of support is not only confined within the household: it is also happening in the general society as the elderly are loosing their traditional role in societies as sources of leadership and wisdom. Traditionally, old age was venerated in Africa, and old people were seen as reservoirs of wisdom. Thus, the role of older persons was to advise, direct and lead their families and communities. Modernization has often been pointed out as the cause for the growing disjunctures between generations in Africa. In particular scholars have to explore how the incorporation of African societies into the world system of colonialism and later into the global economy had had adverse effect generational relations.

### Table 1. The size of the demographic dividend in different parts of the world 1970-2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Demographic Dividends: contribution to growth in GDP/N (%)</th>
<th>Actual growth in GDP/N (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>First</td>
<td>Second</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrialised economies</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East and Southeast Asia</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East and North Africa</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition economies</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islands</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 1 shows the level of benefit accrued from the first and the second demographic transitions by different parts of the world. Predictably, Africa has benefited very little from the transition during the period, as it is lagging behind in both demographic transitions. Of more interest is that the transitions have had a significant impact in virtually every part of the world, and the fact that the second demographic dividend carries a greater economic benefit than the first one.
Migration out of Africa can be seen in a negative light, mostly as a brain drain. On the other hand it can be seen in terms of migrants’ contribution to the continent in terms of remittances and acquiring much needed skills to use in the continent when they return.

Africa has suffered a prolonged brain drain to Europe and to America. Most of the losses have been felt in valuable professional skills, especially in the health sector. For instance, 926 Ghananian doctors practice in the OECD alone, not counting those in other parts of the world. Ghananian doctors in the OECD represent 29% of doctors who practicing in Ghana (Economic Commission for Africa, 2006). To some extent, some of the brain drain has been internal to Africa, with the Southern African region being the biggest beneficiary. Some sectors have been more affected than others, notably the health sector. In the meantime, borders have been becoming tighter, due to the rising xenophobic sentiments in developed countries (Adepojou, 2004).

Another noted trend about migration in Africa is the diversification of destinations and increasing feminization of migration (Adepojou, 2004). Women, who traditionally remained behind at home, are increasingly migrating independently, not accompanying their partners. This is especially the case for professional women, who leave spouses to take care of children. The destination of these migrants is diverse, in addition to traditional destinations which were America and Western Europe; it now includes Middle East, Australia and China. There is also an increase in commercial migrants who include established traders and those who are involved in informal sector.

K. THE YOUTH, HYBRIDITY AND INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONS

Hybridity generally refers to the “creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone” (Litvack, 2006). In Africa, this concept is used to refer to the ability of Africans to assume new forms of expressions other than the ones which were stereotypically assumed to be African. These forms might include linguistic, cultural and political expressions. Hybridity expresses the dilemma of many African youth who are struggling with their background as previously colonised subjects, while at the same time trying to fit into the greater world.

Hybridity can assume both positive and negative forms. Some writings have seen hybridity as strength rather than weakness and stress the mutuality of such a process. Hybridity “allows a means of evading the replication of the binary categories of the past and developing new anti-monolithic models of cultural exchange and growth” (Litvack, 2006). This means that Africans assume new linguistic, cultural and political expressions while they in turn impact on these expressions. In addition the new Africa expressions add value to the lives of Africans while bringing its own challenges. A generation that undergoes hybridisation is faced with complexities, contradictions and multiple demands which make an uneasy co-existence between two worlds. In the process many assume multiple identities and decide to straddle between the demands of previous and current generations.

The negative connotation of hybridity happens when young people loose their original identity and try to erase memories of their places of origin. They might view their own background as backward and primitive, thus loose contact with members of the previous generations and their places of origin. Another possibility is that the groups who have found new expressions cannot resonate with the general society. This creates social distance between young people who form the bulk of migrants and that of previous generation, the majority of whom might be holding to the original identity. Social distance has been explained as “the grades and degrees of understanding and intimacy that characterise personal and social relations” (Karayali, 2001). Generally, the greater the social distance between
individuals and groups the less they influence each other (op. lit.). The notion of social distance is traditionally used to describe the distance between different groups in society, such as social class, race, and ethnicity. This concept is appropriate to describe what is happening in African communities due to rapid socio-political changes in many African societies. Social distance between children who in many cases might have left their places of origin and parents may also be a result of vast difference in educational status between generations.

L. LOW REMITTANCES FLOW AND INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Remittances usually play a large role in connecting migrants with their home countries. Indeed, remittances and income multipliers play a bigger role in sustaining a number of developing countries, with some parts of the developing world more likely to reap the benefits of their migrants than others. Remittances play a bigger role than just the middle generation supporting the other members of the family. It plays a big role as a link between migrants and those who remained behind, especially in societies where remittances are used for joint investments. In 2004, remittances to Africa contributed as much as $14 billion to the African economy, most of which (72%) went to North Africa. Generally the Middle East is one of the biggest beneficiaries of remittances from the West, and has more than doubled its share recently (Sander and Maimbo, 2003). Unfortunately, in spite of sub-Saharan Africa being poorer than other parts of the developing world, it only benefits 15% of the remittance flow from the developed to the developing countries (Sander and Maimbo, 2003). Households which receive these remittances tend to use them to boost consumption, children education and family health (Economic Commission for Africa 2006).

The low remittance in Africa might be a result of a poor relationship between migrants and the sending community. Thus, it can be assumed that African migrants are more likely to loose a connection with extended families than migrants from other developing societies. The lack of vibrant economies in Africa might partly explain low economic inflows to the continent. It is generally thought that, as a general rule, areas with low economic activity are less likely to attract remittances from migrants that have left the area (Kaufman, 1997). This is related to the fact that remittances are also a form of diversification of investments by young adults who have left their underdeveloped areas. Thus, areas with less vibrant economies are less likely to attract remittances as such areas are likely to use such remittances for consumption and thus not available as a security for migrants who might one day want to return home.

M. POLICY OPTIONS

1. Technology and media that encourages better intergenerational relations

The first policy option is to encourage the supportive role of the medial and digital technology. While the penetration of communication technology into Africa should be welcome, it is common understanding that new technological innovations have played a divisive role among generations. This is due to the fact that young people, who were born during the digital age, leave behind other generations who are digital “migrants”. New attempts should be envisaged that would make digital communication to be more user-friendly to the older generation, and thus enable them to communicate and transfer knowledge and skills to the younger generations. In addition, the media should encourage a positive and integrative role between members of different generations. This could be achieved by harnessing the power of communication to advocate advancing health education and values that are associated with wealth creation and nation building. New strategies are needed to connect Africans in the Diaspora with the sending communities so as to facilitate transfer of knowledge.
2. Better facilitation of Money Flows between migrants and the sending community

It is a tragedy that sub-Saharan Africa benefits little from the flow of remittances from developed countries. Innovative ways to facilitate inflow of cash from migrants should be devised. Such methods could include use of digital technology, and reducing restrictions to cash flows across political borders.

3. Support for voluntary and flexible economic and social participation among youth

A number of considered incentives should be initiated by governments and other private sector organizations, in order accommodate flexible participation of the youth into the economy. This would enhance skills and knowledge transfer across generations. People of different generations must share physical environment and be encouraged to engage in formal and informal interactions.

4. Programmes to reduce early childbearing

More effort should be put in place in order to prevent early childbearing. Besides raising the age at marriage for young people, multiple interventions to reduce teenage childbearing in Africa should be instituted. The programmes could include school-based sex education, setting adolescent friendly clinics, mass education and community-level education.
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Endnotes

\[\text{Endnotes}\]

\[1\] Actual growth in GDP per effective consumer (GDP/N), 1970-2000, in percent a year. The effective number of consumers is the number of consumers weighted for age variation in consumption needs.

\[2\] Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, FYR Macedonia, Moldova, Mongolia, Poland, Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan