

## Documentation

# African Youth in Waithood

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@ Patrizia Gapp

Edited by Franz Schmidjell

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**Franz Schmidjell:** Good evening, dear ladies and gentlemen, dear friends. I welcome you in the name of the VIDC to the discussion about African youth in waithood. What ‘waithood’ means will be explained later on. My name is Franz Schmidjell and I’m in charge of the Africa policy desk at the VIDC. My special thanks and welcome go to our guest speakers on the panel, Professor Alcinda Honwana and Mr. Belhaj Salah. I would like to thank our partners, the Diplomatic Academy for hosting this event, the Austrian Development Cooperation for their financial support, and my colleagues from the VIDC for their support in organizing this event.

Why we are organizing this event? Next week the EU Africa Summit on Migration will take place in La Valletta. One diplomat said that the EU member states want to discuss their issues like improving border security, return agreements, whilst the African partners want to focus on mobility and migration. In La Valletta the so-called root causes of migration will be on the agenda. Some European governments, including Austria, demanded to link development cooperation with so-called return agreements, meaning more returns of migrants, more development aid, less returns, less development aid. This demand demonstrates the lack of understanding of the root causes and the realities on the ground. Although we’re not going to discuss the migration issue today, this issue is closely related to our subject, the situation of the African youth. The research about the waithood generation by Professor Honwana provides the chance to get a deeper understanding about today’s reality of youth in African countries. Omar Belhaj Salah will share the concrete struggles in which the Tunisian waithood generation or youth is involved today, nearly five years after the Tunisian revolution.

The youth in Tunisia and many other African countries are affected by high unemployment and underemployment. Every year, another fifteen to twenty million people enter the African labor market. But the waithood generation is not limited to Africa. According to a recent study by the Bertelsmann Foundation, some twenty-six million children and young people in Europe are threatened by poverty and social exclusion. Over five million youth, that’s the age bracket between fifteen and twenty-five, are neither employed nor in education or training and belong to the so called “NEET” generation. So it’s also a European issue.

But now I’d like to hand over to our moderator. Mrs. Monika Kalcsics is an award-winning journalist and radio producer. She works on current affairs and produces documentaries for the cultural channel Austria One (Ö1). In 2007 she founded, together with other colleagues, a company to promote underrepresented news. In 2012 she presented a research paper about the interdependence of media and aid organizations in a competitive market at the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism in Oxford. Thank you for being our moderator tonight, and I wish you an inspiring debate and thank you again for coming.



**Monika Kalcsics:** Thank you very much Franz for your welcoming words. Good evening everybody, welcome to the Diplomatic Academy. I'm excited to have both of you here with us, because looking at the challenges around us, I think we need many more voices from people who know the realities on the ground when we talk about the continent Africa.

Alcinda Honwana, born in Mozambique, you are a visiting professor at the Open University in Milton-Keynes in the United Kingdom. Your latest publications are *Youth and Revolution in Tunisia* and *The Time of Youth: Work, Social Change and Politics in Africa*. We, sadly, don't have the books with us tonight, but you know, as we live in a global world, where to get it. And you hold a PhD in Social Anthropology from the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London and you were the Chair in International Development at the Open University. Great to have you here tonight.

Omar Belhaj Salah is from Tunisia. You are a researcher and you recently started a master's program in Advanced European and International Studies at the European Institute of High International Studies in Nice, France. Your research interests are in history, politics, and religion. Before this you worked with an NGO in Berlin, which focused on democracy reporting internationally.

We want to discuss the concept of waithood, which the African youth is facing and what it means in our relationship between Europe and Africa. We want to go a little bit further and tackle possible ways forward. Alcinda will start with a presentation of the waithood concept and she will also include issues like youth radicalization and migration. Omar will follow with his perspective from Tunisia. Afterwards we want to have a panel debate with your contribution.



**Alcinda Honwana:** Good evening, thank you very much for coming tonight. It's really a pleasure to be here in Vienna. It's my first visit to Austria. I've been working on youth for over fifteen years and for my last publications I did field work on young people and I was just interested to know how young people saw themselves in the world, how young people understood

the world around them, and how young people felt fulfilled in the world. So I decided to do research in four countries in Africa: Mozambique, South Africa, Senegal, and Tunisia. In my talk tonight I will be organizing in three main topics. First of all, I'll start by explaining the concept of waithood, what it means, what it involves, and where the strange word comes from. Second, I will talk about young people's responses to waithood, what are they doing, how are they coping, is this the end of the road for them or are they doing things to deal with waithood. And exactly what are those things? Thirdly, I will talk about young people's involvement in political protests and come with a big question for all of us, which is to ask whether this waithood generation will indeed be able to drive political change in the continent, but also more globally, whether there is space for the younger generation to change the status quo.

In making my presentation I would like to make four fundamental arguments. The first argument I'll make in this presentation is that indeed in Africa, the majority of young people are living in a state of waithood. But waithood is not just an African problem – it's becoming more and more a global problem. That is my first argument. The second argument is that waithood, although it's a very debilitating state, it's not the end of the road. Waithood, by virtue of its conditions, also creates the space for young people to be creative and inventive. It's a space for becoming creative within the margins of the formal system, within the margins of the state. My third argument is that although we often talk about African youth as the lost generation or we talk about them as apathetic, in fact it's the contrary. Young Africans are very aware of what is going on around them and what is going on around the world. They fully understand that their particular situation derives from not just corrupt governments within the continent, but from a broader international system that makes it possible for those corrupt leaders to exist or often connives with them and global capitalism. My last argument is that I believe that this waithood generation has already started a process of political change. But there's a big question mark where this process is going to take us. Will these street protests in themselves be the silver bullet? Because young people are not taking on power. We saw what happened in Tunisia. They went to the streets, they defeated the regime, but then new political forces took over, the same in Egypt, the same in Senegal. The youth is not taking on power; they are remaining in the fringes of power. The question is, is it possible to really make change from the periphery of politics, from civil society organizations, or do they need to create structures and participate more fully. The youth have indeed already started a process that makes many leaders think twice about introducing measures people might dislike or trying to amend constitutions to run for the third term. We saw two weeks ago, Congolese young people in Brazzaville came out to the streets to say no to the referendum.

Waithood means, in fact, waiting for adulthood. It's a combination word, it's a portmanteau which has the word "wait" plus the suffix "hood", which comes from childhood, adulthood, the different stages in life. Why does this happen? Because when young people are ready to make it into adult life, they are finding obstacles. They are finding difficulties. For example, some finish education but they cannot get jobs. Others who are unable to finish education don't get stable livelihoods. So more and more, young people are not making the transition to adulthood. Someone asked me whether this idea of adulthood was an idea of the young people themselves or societal perceptions and expectations of what an adult should be like. And I think it is both. It is societal expectations, in certain societies you become an adult when you get a salary, you can be independent, you can take care of yourself. But also you can contribute to others, be it your offspring, your elder relatives, and even being a taxpayer. That is being an adult, to have your own home, either rented, built or bought. If you can start your own family, marrying, having children, living that life. For some young people, being fulfilled and having a salary is a marker of being independent and adult. If we look from the societal expectations as well as from the point of view of young people's fulfillment, we see that it's not happening in today's world.



Young Africans feel frustrated, because more and more they are unable to make their transition. This has changed from previous generations. For example, in my country Mozambique, in the past, young men at the age of eighteen would leave the village and go and work in South Africa in the gold mines. After a year of being in the contract, they would earn some money, come home and pay for the dowry to marry.

They would get a wife. They would go for a second contract, come back with enough money to build a hut. They would go again, start doing a business, being able to pay for their families, and that was the way young men in southern Mozambique would find their adulthood. So the journey to South Africa had a function as a rite of passage into adulthood. Those who were educated at university or finish high school, there would be a job waiting for you, because education was not so massive. If you finished a master's, a bachelor's, you would have a job. There were pathways to adulthood in place, but those pathways do not exist today. Society has not been able to recreate new pathways, and there are no jobs available for young people, both educated and uneducated.

So there is a crisis in the transition to adulthood and that's precisely where the term *waithood* fits in, because although it starts as an economic constraint, it then becomes a social constraint. For example, if you cannot marry, it means that young women will not become wives, will not become mothers, because they are unable to, young men are unable to pay dowry. It means that family formation is delayed; there is a general sense of unfulfillment, of unhappiness, of things not getting right within society. But *waithood* is also global, as I said. Because if we look at the Western World after the large economic crisis that happened recently, one of the implications was the lack of jobs and the high rates of youth unemployment in Europe, the United States and even in some countries in Asia like Japan. What we've been living with for quite a while in Africa, you are also feeling in Europe. Graduates are not working in areas that they studied for. Instead of being engineers and doctors, they might be waitressing, might be doing lower grade jobs. New terms are used, like in Britain they talk about the boomerang generation. They go out to university and should take care of themselves, but after university they return home to the bedroom they used to have at home, because they cannot afford a flat. Or they talk about the yo-yo generation. They go back and forth, they try to be independent, they can't afford it, they go back home. In Italy they use the term *bamboccione*. *Bamboccione* in Italian is kind of a sarcastic term for big, dirty boys that go back home for mama's pasta, for their bedroom again. In Japan they use the parasite *chinguru*, which in Japanese means single parasites, which is the young men and women who are not married because they cannot afford the rituals of marriage.

How are young people responding to this? First of all, life goes on. They're coping. Otherwise we would be wiped out, because this trouble has been there for a while. Some people see the causes of this problem as being linked to bad economic policies, structural adjustments, policies that the Bretton Woods institutions have imposed in some African countries, but also local issues of governance, of corruption, of the inability of the governments to uphold the social contract with their citizens. You are alone. We don't have a large middle class in Africa. In Europe, with a large middle

class it means that young people in waithood can crash in their old bedroom at home, can have the parents' support for a while. But in Africa those protections are not there. So people have to cope. They are becoming creative; they are trying to beat the system. In the informal economy they are becoming street vendors. They do petty robberies; they take from here, sell there. They try to sell on the streets where it's forbidden and then they escape from the police who are coming. They become drivers of the *matatus*, the minibuses in East Africa. Some of them have no proper driver's license. That's why there are lots of accidents and many of those young men are in waithood. They don't stop at red traffic lights, and they say, because my survival is that red light, because if I beat the red light, I get the next client. If I stop at the red light, someone else will get my client. It is a question of survival for them. That survival is often in the borders of proper and improper behavior, legal and illegal behavior, licit and illicit behavior.

For example, young women in Mozambique travel to South Africa to buy beauty products and beautiful clothes to come and resell in Mozambique at a higher price. But for them to make some profit, they have to bribe the border officers so that they don't pay tax, so that they can sell the goods. So again, they're beating the system there, either offering sexual favors to the guards or paying a little bit, but it's less than the tax, or giving some products to them. That is one way they're coping and another way of coping is just accepting underemployment, be it within the formal system or informally. If you're working informally, you have no contract. Your employer can pay you whatever, can hire you whether you're a graduate or not, at their own pleasure. If you work for the state, you will have to accept taking a lower grade and a lower job, because that's the only thing available. The system doesn't allow people to make long-term plans. Today they have a job, tomorrow they don't know if they will have the job and often the pay is low. And so there are others that even operate in the fringes of the margin, which are the ones that join criminal networks, joining drug dealers or kidnappers. But it doesn't mean that everything young people do is illegal. Because many become very serious entrepreneurs in the informal market by starting little things that then develop into big companies.

Then migration is also a response, trying to find greener pastures elsewhere. Of course migration is something that is part of the way societies function. You always hear people moving from one area to another. But in this case, there is a lot of movement of young people frustrated within the continent. They pay loads of money, some die on their way to Lampedusa in southern Italy or to Spain or Greece, others make it. But it's not just international migration; there is also internal migration. Young people in Africa are moving from the rural areas to the cities, hoping to find better opportunities in the cities. They move within their region, young Mozambicans, young Malawians, young Zimbabweans, young Tanzanians, they're moving to South Africa because it's more prosperous. There's a stronger economy there. You might have heard about xenophobic attacks of young unemployed South Africans against fellow African immigrants in South Africa, chasing them away. There is a much larger migration movement within the continent than the thousands that are crossing the Mediterranean Sea. Therefore it will be interesting to see the discussion in this European African Summit on Migration.

But there is also a migration of Europeans down south. European graduates going to Africa, to Latin America to try and find jobs. Since 2011, around 200 young

Portuguese have been arriving in Mozambique every day, young Portuguese, to work in Mozambique. It was organized by the Portuguese government to deal with youth unemployment in Portugal. There is a government program in which unemployed Portuguese under thirty years with a graduate degree can get a grant from the Portuguese government to go to another country to work in a Portuguese company. They can work there for six months and then the company can absorb them or they're left there to try to find a job. The international Organization for Migration issued a report I think one year ago in which they were saying that the European movement or migration towards Latin America in the past three years has been much greater than from Latin America to Europe. And people from Spain, Italy, Portugal, Germany, England are going down to Latin America trying to find jobs. A lot of Brits are going to try and find jobs in New Zealand, Australia, South Africa or even in Kenya, specifically in the tourist industry.

Young Africans understand that their predicament is not just an Africa problem but a global problem. When they migrate, they are saying to Europe and they are saying to the West, we are your problem too. We are your problem, because the conditions that we have there are derived from a global socio-economic system that has not been able to provide a decent life for the majority of the population of this world. There are a lot of foreign companies and development agencies operating in Africa and we have all this economic growth which is not creating jobs, for example, extractive industries. It doesn't create transformation of the economy. It just takes the raw materials.

Radicalization, which is another option, is when young people who feel frustrated become vulnerable to indoctrination and to recruitment by radical organizations. A lot of young people are joining organizations like Boko Haram in Nigeria, Cameroon or Niger. There is al-Shabaab in Somalia, a lot of East Africans from Kenya and other countries around East Africa, are being recruited into al-Shabaab. But there is also ISIL, al Quaida, and Salafist movements, especially in North Africa, that are capitalizing on some disenchantment from the Arab Spring. What are young people looking for in these organizations? Maybe they're looking for a purpose in life? Are they looking for some kind of ideology? They feel frustrated. In these organizations, they feel vulnerable and some kind of camaraderie and being part of an ideal. Some of them are also looking for a thrill and an adventure, this idea of holding guns. It is during your youth that you get indulged into those kinds of things, ideas of masculinity that people would get from, in the past, being a hunter or whatever. Going to war and being part of some kind of a group, it's empowering for some young men. But also and maybe more important, there's the financial gain, because these organizations are paying these young men now. They do make money rewards to their recruits and this helps sort out a number of problems.

But then there's also the group that decides that we will engage the state at home. We will not join radical organizations. We will not migrate. We will be coping, but we will not stay silent. We will go to the streets and protest. We will protest against the rise of school fees, foodstuffs, bad governance, lack of upholding the social contract, anything that they are against corruption. We saw that after the Arab Spring, after 2011, there have been a growing number of street protests in Africa, but also elsewhere in the world. We saw the *Geração à Rasca* in Portugal, we saw *indignados* in Spain, we saw the London riots in the UK, Occupy Wall Street in America, and also the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong. Today I was listening to the news and



there is this big street protest in Bangladesh due to killings. We saw what happened in Senegal when the young people stood up against President Wade and we saw in Burkina Faso how they drove President Compaore out of power. Young people are really engaged, and recently in South Africa, all the universities were paralyzed because of the student protest against the rise of university fees

and Jacob Zuma was forced to withdraw the hike in school fees. So they are making some strides, but it's just the beginning. The Burundese, they tried to block president Nkurunziza from being reelected, but they were defeated by state repression. We are waiting to see what's going to happen in Congo Brazzaville, the referendum went on against protests. But so, in a way they are coming out and there is a lot more protest going on that we don't see, because the media is not reporting it.

The question is, will they be able to drive long term and stable political change? Are they going to transform themselves into some kind of structure that can stand up and compete for power? So far the youth movements have been very horizontal. You don't have very strong youth leaders that have been able to go and say we represent this constituency. Somehow young people have been very good at saying what they don't want, but it has been very difficult for them to articulate what exactly do they want. They can say we want jobs, we want a better life, we want a modern life, we want to live well. But what does it mean in terms of creating a political agenda, in terms of creating a new political system which will be able to deal with corruption, with bad governance, with making a society operate, making a social contract to be upheld. What does it mean? My view is that the problems of waithood will be resolved by the youth themselves. There's no one else who will be able to resolve it. Young people have understood that and they are not sitting and waiting. But social change is a process, it doesn't happen overnight.

**Kalsics:** Thank you very much for your very precise and clear input into the concept of waithood. I have one question of understanding. You said waithood is seen also as a space for creativity. Is it also seen as a space for emancipation? You took the example of Mozambique, where men and women get married later, because there is no money. So does it mean that women become more emancipated because they don't need to be wives so early in their lives?

**Honwana:** Yes, absolutely. What's happening is, young women, and this is a very interesting point, the fact that young women are marrying later, they are staying in school longer, they are becoming more independent in the sense that some of them don't feel that marriage is something that's important for them in the same way as it was before. There is another phenomena, which is a response to waithood, which is the fact that there are a lot of changes in intimate relations amongst young people. Young women who are struggling with university fees, costs of living and with buying beauty products are engaging in relationships with so-called "sugar daddies", meaning older men who have a lot of money that can pay young women for casual sex. It's not the same as prostitution, because it is a kind of a transaction, but it's more of a relationship of offering services in a way that it creates relationships of intimacy. For example, the sugar daddy often might put the young woman in a flat and he pays visits to the flat. She will cook for him. What is interesting to look at is that some of

these young women have boyfriends, regular boyfriends. When the boyfriend discovers that they have a sugar daddy, not all boyfriends go away because the boyfriend lives on the money of the sugar daddy, because he's in waithood. So what happens is you create kind triangular intimate relationships in which the girl and the boyfriend live on the rich sugar daddy. So what does it do to intimacy, to relationships of love, of trust, of jealousy? It is empowering young women as well. Sometimes young women have three or four sugar daddies. One pays for the school fees, another sugar daddy pays to go to the club, another sugar daddy pays for the clothes. In a way it is empowering them, because they are controlling those relationships. They have the money, they become independent, and they have the power, even in the relationship with the boyfriend. Because they're the ones bringing in the money. So it changes gender relations, it changes notions of masculinity, it changes notions of femininity as well. So it changes society.

**Kalsics:** Alcinda, you mentioned the massification of education. Is the problem that more people have access to education, like we have the case in Tunisia? Or is the problem not the access to education, but that there aren't enough jobs available?

**Honwana:** It's both. There's more access to education as part of the millennium development goals, the countries had to massificate education, both primary and secondary, but there has also been a mushrooming of private universities.

**Kalsics:** And who can afford them?

**Honwana:** Oh, people afford them. Yes, people afford them, not only rich people. Some students get scholarships and these private universities also allow that fees are paid gradually for certain courses. You don't have to pay everything at once. The Mozambiquan government, for example, also had some quotas from certain provinces where people are more underprivileged. In South Africa that uprising of young students was because the government increased the fees. If you have high fees, university will become just for the middle class and Blacks can't afford university anymore. But for now, universities are heavily subsidized by the state, which brought a massive enlargement in access to education.

**Kalsics:** Is this the same case in Tunisia, that you have a lot of graduated students but no job possibilities?



**Belhaj Salah:** Yes, I think it's very similar. There's a disproportion between the number of people graduating from universities and people with no job, no employment, no training. The reason is that the old regime planned to produce graduates for the sake of numbers. It sold them to the international community, to the United Nations, in order to get some agreements and funding for projects. Now we see this problem in Tunisia, 40% of graduates, youth graduates, are unemployed. And that's due to their policy of rendering the university, effectively, at the end of unemployed youth.

I would like to refer to another point that Alcinda made, that social change requires time and what is the role of youth. I think there are very brilliant initiatives on the ground, of course a lot of obstacles, a lot of issues remain, development of the economy right now, it's a big challenge. I think changing the participation of youth is part of the success of whatever Tunisia is going to do; it's not the whole solution. In my understanding right now, the participation of youth is still limited, but interesting to follow and to encourage. There are four types, four categories of youth in Tunisia. There are those, there's like a core group of people who are engaged, who are dedicated to a certain cause, in an association, an NGO or even in political parties. That core group is not huge, it's fairly limited, but very active and it's very important what they're doing. The second category is people who are interested in politics, in culture, who are concerned about substantial critical issues around them, but they're simply not involved in organizations or political parties. They share their opinions in cafes and it's all on the markets. This is a bigger category. The third category is people who have no interest in politics or cultural issues. They simply have other interests, like fashion or sports maybe. The fourth category is the people who got quickly radicalized – religiously radicalized. There are a lot of reasons why they became radicalized, but still I emphasize that this is a minority within the youth spectrum in the country. So it's important to recognize all of these categories at once and bring some nuance. It's not just youth. As Alcinda mentioned, youth are not typically apathetic. They are interested, but the forms of engagement and the degree of activity differ.

Another aspect in Tunisia is that there are already established structures that are not willing to abandon the scene for the next twenty years. And there are many old people who worked for the previous regime. They are still in power and they're, in a way, an obstacle. But part of resolving the conflict in Tunisia is to include them and to acknowledge that they are there, and not exclude them. So the problem remains how to increase the number of youth engaged in democratic building.

**Kalsics:** So before we go deeper in our debate, I would like to ask you how the situation is in Tunisia today.

**Belhaj Salah:** It is better than five years ago – and worse. Why better? There are achievements like freedom of speech, although the situation is still a bit fragile. But people express themselves freely and there is less fear. A second major achievement is the constitution. There are the political mechanisms to peacefully resolve conflicts after the revolution. That was very important and that was actually crowned recently through the Nobel Peace Prize. The disadvantage, the bleak thing is regarding youth involvement in general. It's not as strong as it was in the beginning. There's no more of this enthusiasm of changing the situation, so a lot of people got disenchanted, dissatisfied quickly and withdrawn.

But still this core group that is still working remains. I would like to simply mention some examples of organizations. I think they're very, very interesting and they are somehow balancing the power between politicians and civil society. They are the dynamo of civil society. One organization is called Bawsala. Bawsala is an engineer working in the parliament, and since the revolution they got into the national assembly. They watched very closely the debates, the discussions in the committees, they reported on every single detail. It's like hundred percent transparency. They



developed their projects to cover the coming municipal elections. And they are mainly youth, male and female, working there. Another organization is called Youth Decides. They focus on getting more youth involved in technology and innovation. This is also famous and it attracts a lot of young men and women. Then there's the Jasmine Foundation. They try to attract youth at a local level and get them involved in the local decision making. This is a new NGO which stresses youth leadership, so they're kind of lobbying to get more youth into political parties. They recently received important support from the EU and the United Nations. There's another very, very important organization called I Watch Tunisia, and they're incredibly active. They had started a project called Jomaa Meter. Jomaa is the name of a former prime minister and they supervised his work. He made promises A, B, C and D. They just followed closely how far he achieved these promises. And now they're doing the same thing with the new government. They observe the elections and now they just developed a project to make regular citizens vote on the laws that were passed in parliament. These are some of the youth organizations.

**Kalcsics:** And how do you think it can happen? I mean, you yourself, how much did you engage in it? Do you see yourself as the waithood generation?

**Belhaj Salah:** I can start with the revolution. In 2011, I was very active. Before that I was involved in an organization for cyber activism. That was the main concern, because it was not possible to go on the streets. But then during the revolution, it became cyber activism, and then we organized street protests and provided a framework, a common ground for people who come from different cities. So it's mainly organizational work. I was also involved with some organizations, like one was called "power of constitution." We did a lot of work on the constitution drafting process and to inform youth about that process. There was an online magazine and I contributed to that online magazine, and we talked about what's going on in the national Constituent Assembly.

**Kalcsics:** There's one interesting initiative, which was started, this is a question to both of you, by the African Union, which declared the period starting 2009 until 2018 as the decade on youth development in Africa. I have the impression many saw it as something very progressive and optimistic, some maybe not.

**Honwana:** Well, I think those kinds of programs exist and if you go to each country they have a youth strategy. Because it's beautiful to have things on paper. But in reality they are not really making an impact. I was consulting this in my research, having this youth entrepreneurship strategy, saying that we recognize that there are not lots of jobs so we have to give young people a possibility of becoming entrepreneurs. I think they have grants, I don't know if it's from some international donors for youth entrepreneurship. There were two such programs during Ben Ali in Tunisia. We have these programs in Mozambique, in South Africa and elsewhere. But what happened is that relatives of those in power, relatives of party members like Ben Ali's RCD in Tunisia or FRELOMO in Mozambique, and those who have good connections have been awarded a grant maybe up to \$20,000 to start a business. In Senegal the same thing happened. But if young people receive money and have no

training how to manage the resources or how to become an entrepreneur, the grants don't reproduce, and they are unable to pay back anything.

**Kalsics:** This is the moment where I would like to pass on the questions to you. If you have a question, please take the microphone.

**Audience:** My question is not so much a question, but it's to address the sugar daddy tangent that Alcinda went on, because two things, first of all, it's not really a new concept to introduce a problem like this. People have been doing that all over the world for the longest time. And secondly, I wouldn't consider any aspect of a relationship between a sugar daddy and a woman to be empowering for the woman. Because especially like the fact that a woman can maneuver several sugar daddies on the phone the sugar daddy gave to her, that's not an entrepreneurial quality. She's trapped in a hierarchy.

**Honwana:** Well, I think you have an opinion and I will take that opinion. But the thing is that it's a strategy of survival. So, no one is glamorizing the women with sugar daddies. It's very sad that people would have to do that. But what becomes empowering in my opinion is that if you look at the subordinate position of women in those societies, they are always in the receiving end and there are very few instances in which they can get some control. Empowering might be a very strong word, but they do have control over a situation. The fact that they are the ones getting money, they are the ones who are able to feed their money back into their love relationships with their boyfriends, but also, something I didn't mention, they often send money home for the young children. For the girl, there is a sense of empowerment, because she is getting some kind of recognition for bringing in the money, for helping others, even if the means to get that are not the ones that we would judge to be the most appropriate ones. And maybe also to consider that it's not just the women's phenomenon. Men are also going to sugar mamas.

**Audience:** I have a comment. I think most young people in Africa are in waithood because of cultural aspects or social expectations. Young people aren't expected to question or challenge the status quo. If you do so, you are considered a misfit and therefore won't get opportunities. You're expected to wait for adults to allow you to do whatever you want to do with your life.



**Audience:** I'm not sure if I understood what this change is or the tendencies towards a new structure. Will the socioeconomic and cultural changes which are going on entail a loss of tradition and rites of passage? Will it mean new rituals that will get someone out of waithood?

**Honwana:** I think I got what you mean, for example, when I gave the example of Mozambique, of people going to the mines. There was something that existed, there was a tradition that allowed a right of passage into adulthood. So today we live in a different world. Young people don't want to just go to the mines. Young people are open to the world, to globalization. Young people can see in real time what is happening in North Korea, South Korea, the US, here. So their level of expectations is

also much higher. So society has to create new mechanisms that respond to the aspirations of this generation. It doesn't mean that we have to recreate old rituals to make sure that the transition for adulthood is there, but we need to create new ones, which are commensurate to the times we're living in.

**Audience:** Professor Honwana said the youth is the weapon to solve this problem. I would like to ask you how you want the youth to solve this problem when there are no opportunities for them, for example entrepreneurship programs. Will the programs be implemented and the jobs created by those in power when it is proposed by the youth? Graduates from university cannot get positions in government institutions, internship programs are not implemented. So, how do you want the youth to solve the problem?

**Honwana:** I think you are right, you are absolutely right if you think small. You're thinking of a job tomorrow, you're thinking of entrepreneurship. But I'm talking about systemic change, creating a new system. You can make a thousand more jobs here and make programs there. But it will not be enough, because the magnitude of the problem is too large. Some people might be able to resolve their problems gradually, but there's a bigger problem. A systemic change will take time. It is the new generation that has to create a new kind of society. Because maybe you will not see that change, but hopefully your children, the children of your children will see some systemic change. But if you're talking about getting a new job, getting a grant, it will go through those processes in which governments will try and get a small change here, a small change there.

**Audience:** My question was somehow related to his question, but I'm coming back to the creativity. How can we support this kind of creativity if I don't find a job to cover my daily costs of living? How can a society support this creativity?

**Honwana:** There is a lot of creativity of young people in popular culture. Music, graffiti, internet, blogs, this generation is very savvy on cyber social networks, the kinds of debates that are going on amongst young people. There is a lot, for example, the domestication of the American rap culture through contestation of the status quo through music. For example, if you look at the "Y'en a marre" movement in Senegal, it was started by rap musicians in Senegal, through lyrics. They were able to mobilize large crowds of young people. The same in Burkina Faso. Smockey and the others from "Le Balai Citoyen" also were rappers or journalists. Others use theater as a way of criticizing the status quo and pass on messages and mobilize their peers. Now, how can you support them? Today African governments are unable to create conditions for their citizens to be fulfilled. They are unable to uphold a social contract in which the government, the state, has obligations toward the citizens and the citizens have obligations toward the state. We can say they should do that. But it doesn't take us out of the equation, we can't turn it around. So what I'm trying to do is open up. How do we solve this problem? Y'en a Marre would say we will take on power in Senegal and try to make the society we want to make, we will create the jobs for young people. It's hard, it's difficult, but we can't continue just to point fingers at those in power. I'm not saying there is no responsibility. I'm very critical of them. But it's not changing. It's the time for the youth to take it on.

**Kalcsics:** I would like to pass on your question to you too, how can society support creativity in the sense of social engagement?

**Belhaj Salah:** If I'm living under a repressive regime, my field of creativity will be how to defy them and how to go beyond the restrictions. That's the only perhaps marginal creativity that I will have but a good point from which to start meaningful creativity. If I'm free to express myself, if a society is free to express itself, creativity will flourish. Then people have to make creative use of the instruments, the tools, the means, the financial support to implement projects. But first you have to think how to get free. Afterwards we can talk about other types of creativity, for example academic or intellectual creativity.

**Audience:** My name is Youssouf Diakité. I'm the president of the African Student Association in Austria. I'm very glad to be here today to talk about waithood, because most of our members already have three or four master's degrees because of waithood. They don't want to go back home unless something is waiting for them. My second point is: You talked about waithood as being an engine to create change. In Africa around 40 percent of the population is under 18 years. But there is a lack of representation of youth. What we really want as a solution is the participation of the young people, the inclusive participation of the young people.

**Audience:** I'd like to understand a bit better how the creative youth can actually create more than just temporary change. The existing political systems in Africa are one thing. But I want to expand that into a global context, because often these countries are held under external political pressures. So how could we actually create something more permanent taking that into account?



**Honwana:** I think that's the big challenge. It's not just the challenge of creating something more permanent, but also knowing what that permanent thing will be. I don't think there is clarity on what that is. We know exactly what we lack, we know exactly what we would like to see, but how do we do that? The younger generation within the continent understands that Africa is dependent. We know we're dependent on aid. It's not government money – it's aid money. The governments get grants from the IMF, from the World Bank, from the European Union to resolve some social issues. This is a big constraint. I think people understand that just finding their leaders at home, it's part of the solution, but it's not the total solution. The fact that Senegal and Africa is not working, it has to do with Europe. If our leaders are corrupt, someone is corrupting them. Because African money is not in Africa, they are part of this big chain, and they have to be part of the solution as well. But, you know, I wish I had a solution. I don't.

**Audience:** You mentioned that the problems are global and that the solution is not only to take to the streets. So my question is, are the political strategies changing with these young people having networks? Is there sort of a political education that's obviously needed?

**Honwana:** When Le Balai Citoyen started operating in Burkina Faso, they went to Senegal to get their experience from Y'en a Marre. When the Keffiyeh and the 6<sup>th</sup> of April movement in Egypt started preparing the uprising against Mubarak, they spent

time in Tunisia with the other cyber activists. Now Y'en a Marre and Le Balai Citoyen have been in Congo Kinshasa for a summit organized by youth activism organizations, and that summit was forbidden by the government as being subversive. But so there is communication, there is exchange. And some young people from these organizations are talking about creating a pan-African youth movement. There are also some negotiations with young groups in Zimbabwe. So there are youth groups mushrooming everywhere in the continent and trying to get a strategy. They are off fighting for their rights as they go along. For example, one of the big issues for them is the constitutional amendment to let these old leaders blink to power. But I don't think they are actively looking at a strategy for change, you know systemic change.

**Audience:** My specialization is international politics in government analysis. There are thousands of youth organizations in Africa and in Europe, there are gatherings of African youth from every African country and also in Europe. I'm just coming from an African youth meeting in Amsterdam. We need that for political participation. But what's important is to create a dialogue between youth and decision makers in Africa. I would like to ask you which kind of dialogue between our decision makers you see.

**Honwana:** Well, I don't know what the solution is, but what I hear from the cases that Omar just mentioned in Tunisia, there are some interesting strategies in terms of the dialogue between the youth organizations and the government. He mentioned, and I even took notes here, I Watch Tunisia as an organization created by young people in which they're focusing on the work of government. In a way they are doing the checks and balances that the government needs to and kind of upholding the ideals of good governance, open and transparent governance. How is the parliament taking the decisions, which parliamentarians voted which way? The youth, people under the age of 24 constitute 60% of the African population. So imagine your power if you go to the polls and you are informed for whom you vote, for whom you don't vote.

**Audience:** I would like to know something about the role churches and religion play in African society and movements related to this question, especially the new movements. Another aspect is the condition under which young people live. I'm not sure if in Austria, a democratic country, the youth could and would do these big changes. But if you have to fight and if you have to fear prison, is it really possible to have, is it really possible for the youth to change something, despite the fact of being in fear...

**Kalsics:** I would like to take your question as a kind of last question to both of you for tonight. If we look into the future, is change possible, especially as mentioned here, as asked here, despite repression? And if it's possible, from your point of view, what do you think is the most important element, which you want to be changed.

**Honwana:** Well, I'm an optimist. I would say, if change is not possible, what else? Change has to be possible. But when? How? I realize that change is very hard. People resist change, especially people who are going to lose, who have the power, will resist it. They will repress it. When people go out to the streets to manifest, they are repressed with tear gas, with bullets sometimes. Systemic, deep change, it's hard to achieve. It will take years, it might take generations. But societies have to evolve, we can keep enumerating the problems, but it will take time. The youth in a certain way, you are not alone. There are your parents who sympathize with what you're going

through, who support you. When the young Tunisians went to the street to get rid of Ben Ali, they had a falling back position. There were the mothers cooking for the activists. There were the teachers out supporting the activists. So you are not alone, and people understand your pain. So change will come, but you have to fight for it. You cannot be watching things from afar. That's what I think.

**Kalsics:** And Omar, if you think about the change and the way you want the system to be changed, what is the first element you think we need to change?



**Belhaj Salah:** Maybe first have a revolution. Start from there. No, seriously, I can talk about the change, the process of change taking place now in Tunisia and talk a little bit about the element of resistance, how, where resistance comes from in Tunisia today. It's basically coming from, first of all, the deep state structure, the oligarchs who are old biologically and cannot adapt to what's going on on the ground, and the second, people in society, middle class or people over 40, who actually are the people who went to vote for the 87-year-old Tunisian current president, who promised actually not a change, but he promised more stability and he promised to exclude the people who are going for change from politics. I also would like to come back to the question of religion.

Religion is there in Tunisia, in society and some people tend to be religious, tend to be Muslim. What happened in Tunisia, with the first independence experience, there was a secular president who heavily proposed a French style secular system, who completely suppressed religious expression from the public. The result was on the one side the revolution and another side the fact that Tunisia is the highest exporter of Jihadists to Syria and Iraq. More than 3,000 jihadists were officially recorded and they're not only fighters, they're leaders. This raises a lot of questions and I think part of the answer comes from the experience of the post independence state building, which suppressed religion in the public. Ben Ali, who came after Bourguiba, was even more radical in suppressing the radicals.

**Kalsics:** So, instead, what should have been done?

**Belhaj Salah:** Instead, what should have been done? Today, people eventually understood that they have to sit at the same table and cooperate on the common ground, which is national interest, and avoid fanaticism and isolate fanaticism in society. That's the best way to do it for people who claim to be secularists and people who claim to be religious when we look at the future and we want to have less radicals.

**Honwana:** In terms of changing society and creating change, I think it's not only a problem for Africa. For example, let's look at what's going on in the West today. There are two or three new leaders that are emerging, that are attracting massive numbers of young supporters. Let's start with the U.S. Bernie Sanders who has radical policies against taxing, against inequalities in the American system, free education for everyone, free healthcare for everyone, to reduce the power of the big corporations in politics, and getting the rich and wealthy, the 1%, to pay more taxes to be able to expand. So very left wing, very liberal agenda, but it's attracting a lot, a lot

of young supporters. In Great Britain, Jeremy Corbyn, exactly the same strong socialist left wing policies, taxing the rich, stopping austerity measures that would put a strain on the poor and on the middle class, supporting the middle class free education. Let's look at Spain, Podemos. That new party, exactly the same, left wing. Let's look at Greece, Tsipras and his party. And those phenomena are attracting big, big numbers of young supporters. So the young people are behind those big charismatic leaders that are trying to change. So we are not alone in Africa. Change one day will happen somewhere, but I think we are at a moment in history where the old structures are getting weak but we don't know the new ones. Probably this is the beginning of something, where in twenty years time we might be living in a different kind of society.

**Kalsics:** Thank you very much, Alcinda for your last words. I take them as an optimistic invitation for all of us. I thank you very much, Alcinda and Omar, for your contribution and also for your contribution from the audience. We are sorry that we could not accept all of your questions, but the evening is not over yet. We welcome you warmly to our reception in the next room where you can continue a dialogue. Thank you very much and have a good evening.