

# What the experts say: Coronavirus and Sub-Saharan Africa

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It was expected to be the worst hit, but instead Africa is waging an effective campaign against the pandemic. The youngest continent on earth, with the average age just 18 years old, sub-Saharan Africa has experienced only a fraction of the death toll elsewhere in the world. But this has come at a massive cost to children and young people.

## Solidarity for progress

COVID-19 is a reminder that no one is safe until all are safe. International solidarity and sharing as an investment in future resources can consequently leverage the most innovative and transformative ways to move forward.

## Investing in human capital is key

Key solutions lie in the quality of human capital. Young people are a lever for change but Africa's young population, its demographic dividend, is a neglected asset. Adopting out-of-the-box solutions can help, including cash transfers; debt relief; learning from Southeast Asia and China by increasing spending on children early on, creating jobs through foreign direct investments in manufacturing.

## Youth leadership to break cycle of panic and neglect

Young Africans have lost faith in the older generation leading to a breakdown of leadership and an erosion of trust between governments and citizens. Youth are crying out for accountable leaders who deliver on promises, invest where it matters most (like education and protection), and create an environment of peace and stability.

WATCH THE RECORDING: [YOUTUBE.COM/UNICEFINNOCENTI](https://www.youtube.com/UNICEFINNOCENTI) 



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The COVID-19 crisis is an opportunity to resolve those that existed before the crisis.

A shock doesn't have to become a crisis. Early action, preparedness, and regular investment will sustain progress.

The game changer will be to stop talking about Africa as the continent to be saved. Young Africans need to be central to solutions.

Local solutions that incorporate green jobs that benefit the worst off will trigger more active engagement on climate action on the African continent.

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