

## Introduction

By Chazha Ludo Macheng

George Shaw once famously said “youth is wasted on the young!” A truly acerbic quote, and wryly funny. ~~Inferring implying~~ that the young are showered with numerous opportunities, optimism and good health, but ~~they~~ end up squandering it instead. ~~However w~~ We at YALDA ~~AFRICA~~ beg to differ. We instead believe in a long-standing African proverb which asserts ~~that~~, “It is the young trees that make up the forest.” ~~A~~ appreciating the simple fact that Africa's youth will determine its future. Etched in these pages are the stories of Africa's unsung heroes and heroines who courageously accepted and aggressively confronted the realities they were subjected to.

If ever you ever underestimated the power and bravery of African youth, the compelling Soweto uprising of 1976 would surely change your mind. The Soweto uprising was a series of demonstrations and protests that began on the morning of 16 June 1976 led by black school children in South Africa ~~challenging the systems that prohibited their right to education. that began on the morning of 16 June 1976.~~ The sheer audacity, courage and conviction ~~that saw these young children in just blazers and ties, challenging the systems that prohibits their right to education, still to this day remains one for the history books. Although the protests of June 16 resulted in a number of casualties, the youth of 1976 played a role in fighting and overcoming the inequality and oppression caused by apartheid.~~ Many paid with their lives, ~~and yet their~~ steie fight to overcome the inequality and oppression caused by apartheid stand for their rights changed the course of history. The sheer audacity, courage and conviction these young children demonstrated in mere blazers and ties ~~The exploits of the young bloods of 1976~~ resonate all the more with the current unrest and struggles of this continent at a time when COVID-19 has severely contributed to the empty pockets and stomachs.

~~Thus as we end the first quarter of the year, we breathe a sigh of relief and appreciate the efforts that we have made this past year with a merry heart despite the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic across the world. Etched in these pages are the stories of Africa's unsung heroes and heroines who courageously accepted and aggressively confronted the realities they were subjected to.~~

The “Africa rising” narrative has been facing headwinds that call its authenticity into question for some time now. According to This Is Africa website, approximately 240 million people go to bed hungry, while malnutrition kills more than 50% of Africa's children, most of whom die before the age of five. Africa is a young continent with a rapidly growing population, yet the vast majority of young people are unemployed. Hence, it takes a strong-willed people, humbled and inspired by the challenges, ~~inspired~~ to rise to the occasion and turn opportunities into tangible realities for the collective benefit of all. The successful establishment and implantation ~~and establishment~~ of the AfCFTA ~~o~~ in January 2021 has thankfully allowed given us the some much needed relief. With the full free movement of people, ~~both in both~~ the formal and informal sectors, business and personal ~~and~~ investments, and the accelerated establishment formation of a continental customs union ~~accelerated~~, there is little ~~much~~ left to do but remain hopeful and excited as we watch Africa take its next bold step.

Thus, as we end the first quarter of the year, we breathe a sigh of relief and appreciate the efforts that we have made this past year with a merry heart despite the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic across the world. Our message to the youth of Africa is that this, is Africa's time, truly like never before, – and there are no excuses for missing this moment. Now more than ever ~~What is required is for the~~ African youth ~~to must~~ rise and pull together as a people with a common vision, ~~now more than ever~~, in the spirit of Ubuntu. ~~If they did so, young people would be and making~~ their rightful contribution to a truly African 21st century ~~that is a truly an African one~~. Africa's rise is not a myth and the youth should be right there at the forefront!

**Commented [RL1]:** PUB: This paragraph felt a bit out of place, I've moved the first sentence down to the conclusion, and the second sentence up to the intro.