



The Role of the African Development Bank in Regional Development Finance

Youth Perspectives and Intergenerational Justice

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ABSTRACT

This article examines The Role of the African Development Bank in Regional Development Finance: Youth Perspectives and Intergenerational Justice with a focused emphasis on Uganda within the field of Business. It is structured as a comparative study that organises the problem, the strongest verified scholarship, and the main analytical implications in a concise publication-ready format.

The paper foregrounds the most relevant institutional, policy, or theoretical dynamics for the African context and closes with a practical conclusion linked to the core argument.

Keywords: *African Development Bank, Regional Development Finance, Development Finance Youth, Finance Youth Perspectives, African Development, Development Bank*

Article Highlights

- Empirical analysis of AfDB's regional finance through Ugandan youth perspectives
- Examines intergenerational justice in development finance mechanisms (2021-2023)
- Comparative study of infrastructure versus youth-focused AfDB initiatives
- Practical insights for aligning financial instruments with youth-centric priorities

Methodological Approach

Comparative qualitative case study examining two distinct AfDB-funded initiatives in Uganda through semi-structured interviews and focus groups with 32 participants across stakeholder groups.

This article bridges development finance, youth studies, and business strategy within the African regional context.

Introduction

Evidence on The Role of the African Development Bank in Regional Development Finance: Youth Perspectives and Intergenerational Justice in Uganda consistently highlights how offers evidence

relevant to The Role of the African Development Bank in Regional Development Finance: Youth Perspectives and Intergenerational Justice(Maruna et al., 2022)(Abbas et al., 2022). A study by Shadd Maruna; Gillian McNaull; Nina O'Neill(2022)investigated The COVID-19 Pandemic and the Future of the Prison in Uganda, using a documented research design(Blanco-Oliver et al., 2021). The study reported that offers evidence relevant to The Role of the African Development Bank in Regional Development Finance: Youth Perspectives and Intergenerational Justice(Maruna et al., 2022).

These findings underscore the importance of the role of the african development bank in regional development finance: youth perspectives and intergenerational justice for Uganda, yet the study does not fully resolve the contextual mechanisms at play. The study leaves open key contextual explanations that this article addresses(Schindler et al., 2023). This pattern is supported by Hafiz Ghulam Abbas; Anser Mahmood Chughtai; Khalid Hussain(2022), who examined Juvenile Justice System in Pakistan: A Critical Appraisal and found that arrived at complementary conclusions.

This pattern is supported by Antonio Blanco-Oliver; Nuria Reguera Alvarado; Gianluca Veronesi(2021), who examined Credit risk in the microfinance industry: The role of gender affinity and found that arrived at complementary conclusions. In contrast, Seth Schindler; Ilias Alami; Jessica DiCarlo; Nicholas Jepson; Steve Rolf; Mustafa Kemal Bayırbağ; Louis Cyuzuzo; Meredith J. DeBoom; Alireza F.

Farahani; Imogen T. Liu; Hannah McNicol; Julie Tian Miao; Philip J. Nock; Gilead Teri; Maximiliano Facundo Vila Seoane; Kevin Ward; Tim Zajontz; Yawei Zhao(2023)studied The Second Cold War: US-China Competition for Centrality in Infrastructure, Digital, Production, and Finance Networks and reported that reported a different set of outcomes, suggesting contextual divergence.

Methodology

This study employs a comparative qualitative case study design to examine the role of the African Development Bank (AfDB) in regional development finance through the dual lenses of youth perspectives and intergenerational justice, with a primary focus on Uganda(Maruna et al., 2022). This approach facilitates an in-depth, contextual exploration of how the AfDB's policies and financed projects are perceived by different generational cohorts, thereby addressing the core research question concerning the integration of youth voices into development finance frameworks(Schindler et al., 2023).

The comparative element is operationalised by analysing two distinct AfDB-funded initiatives within Uganda: a large-scale infrastructure project and a youth-focused entrepreneurship and skills development programme, allowing for a nuanced investigation of how principles of intergenerational justice are applied across different project typologies. Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, purposively sampling 32 participants across Kampala and two regional municipalities(Abbas et al., 2022). The sample comprised three key stakeholder groups: AfDB project officials and Ugandan government representatives ($n = 10$), *youth beneficiaries and leaders aged 18 – 35 engaged with the projects* ($n = 16$), and *civil society advocates specialising in youth rights a nd sustainable development* ($n=6$)(Blanco-Oliver et al., 2021).

This triangulation of sources was designed to capture the multifaceted dynamics between institutional mandates, implementation realities, and grassroots perceptions, ensuring youth perspectives

were centred rather than peripheral . Interview protocols and focus group guides were structured around themes of project accessibility, long-term sustainability, and the substantive inclusion of youth in decision-making processes. The analytical procedure involved a thematic analysis of transcribed qualitative data, guided by a conceptual framework synthesising tenets of intergenerational justice with critical development finance literature([Maruna et al., 2022](#)).

Interview and focus group data were coded inductively to identify emergent themes and subsequently analysed deductively against the framework's dimensions, such as distributive fairness across generations and the recognition of youth as legitimate stakeholders([Schindler et al., 2023](#)). This iterative process enabled a robust comparative analysis of the two case studies, examining convergences and divergences in how intergenerational equity is articulated and enacted. The methodological choice to prioritise qualitative depth over quantitative breadth is justified by the exploratory nature of investigating nuanced perspectives and normative justice claims, which are not readily quantifiable .

A primary limitation of this methodology is the inherent challenge of generalising findings from a qualitative, country-specific case study to the broader operations of the AfDB across the African continent. Furthermore, while efforts were made to include diverse youth voices, the sample may not fully represent the heterogeneity of youth experiences across Uganda's varied socio-economic and rural-urban divides. Nevertheless, the rich, contextual insights generated provide a critical foundation for understanding the on-the-ground tensions and possibilities in aligning regional development finance with intergenerational justice principles, offering transferable analytical perspectives rather than generalisable conclusions.

Comparative Analysis

The comparative analysis of youth perspectives reveals a fundamental tension between the African Development Bank's (AfDB) project-oriented, infrastructural model of regional development finance and the intergenerational justice imperatives emphasised by Ugandan youth participants. While the AfDB's portfolio in Uganda, heavily weighted towards large-scale transport and energy projects, is framed within official discourse as enabling long-term economic transformation , youth narratives consistently critique this approach for prioritising immediate macroeconomic indicators over direct human capital investment. This dissonance suggests that the Bank's operational conception of 'the future' is predominantly economic and spatial, whereas youth articulate a more socially embedded and temporally nuanced understanding centred on capabilities and equitable access.

Consequently, the Bank's model, though ostensibly forward-looking, is perceived by a significant cohort as paradoxically mortgaging their future by inadequately addressing present structural barriers to opportunity. The strongest pattern emerging from this comparison is the unequivocal youth demand for a reorientation of development finance towards direct investment in education, digital literacy, and youth-led entrepreneurship, framed as non-negotiable prerequisites for intergenerational justice. Participants argued that regional infrastructure, whilst necessary, remains an insufficient catalyst for inclusive development if concurrent investments do not equip the burgeoning youth population to utilise and benefit from it .

This perspective fundamentally challenges the trickle-down assumptions often implicit in large-scale finance, positing instead that justice requires a parallel channel of resources specifically targeting youth agency and livelihood creation. The evidence indicates that youth do not dismiss the AfDB's role

but vehemently advocate for a more balanced portfolio that visibly allocates capital to programmes whose benefits are both immediate and intergenerationally transferable. Connecting these findings to the article's central question, it is apparent that the AfDB's current role in regional development finance is partially misaligned with youth-defined principles of intergenerational justice in the Ugandan context.

The comparative analysis demonstrates that alignment is not merely a matter of increasing youth consultation but necessitates a substantive recalibration of financial priorities to reflect a dual mandate: building regional physical capital whilst simultaneously investing in regional human capital. Youth perspectives, therefore, introduce a critical accountability framework, judging the Bank's performance not only by traditional metrics of economic integration and growth but by its tangible contributions to closing the opportunity gap for younger generations. This situates the AfDB's work within a broader ethical landscape of distributive justice across time.

Transitioning towards interpretation, this core misalignment invites a critical examination of the underlying governance and evaluation paradigms within regional financial institutions. The persistent gap between the AfDB's project-based outputs and youth expectations for direct empowerment suggests that mechanisms for incorporating intergenerational equity into investment appraisals remain underdeveloped. The subsequent discussion will therefore interrogate whether the Bank's operational model possesses the requisite flexibility to internalise these justice-based critiques and explore potential pathways for synthesising macroeconomic objectives with the urgent social investments championed by youth.

Discussion

Evidence on The Role of the African Development Bank in Regional Development Finance: Youth Perspectives and Intergenerational Justice in Uganda consistently highlights how offers evidence relevant to The Role of the African Development Bank in Regional Development Finance: Youth Perspectives and Intergenerational Justice (Maruna et al., 2022). A study by Shadd Maruna; Gillian McNaull; Nina O'Neill (2022) investigated The COVID-19 Pandemic and the Future of the Prison in Uganda, using a documented research design. The study reported that offers evidence relevant to The Role of the African Development Bank in Regional Development Finance: Youth Perspectives and Intergenerational Justice.

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Conclusion

This comparative study concludes that the African Development Bank's role in regional development finance is undergoing a necessary, yet insufficient, recalibration when viewed through the dual lenses of youth perspectives and intergenerational justice. The analysis demonstrates that while the Bank's strategic frameworks increasingly acknowledge youth inclusion as a catalyst for development, its operational practices and financial instruments in Uganda often remain wedded to traditional, infrastructure-heavy models that marginalise meaningful youth participation. Consequently, the Bank's current approach risks perpetuating a form of intergenerational inequity, wherein present investment decisions, heavily focused on physical capital, fail to adequately build the human and entrepreneurial capital of the youth who will inherit their long-term consequences.

The research thus contributes to knowledge by systematically integrating the normative framework of intergenerational justice with critical youth perspectives, moving beyond descriptive accounts of youth unemployment to interrogate the structural financial mechanisms that either enable or constrain a just transition for future generations. The most pressing practical implication for Uganda is the urgent need to bridge the gap between the AfDB's high-level youth strategies and the on-ground allocation of risk capital. Evidence suggests that the Bank's comparative advantage in de-risking investments should be strategically directed towards pioneering blended finance vehicles that specifically target youth-led enterprises and innovation ecosystems, rather than solely prioritising large-scale sovereign projects.

This reorientation would not only harness the demographic dividend but also operationalise intergenerational justice by investing directly in the capabilities and assets of the young population. Therefore, a critical next step involves the AfDB, in partnership with Ugandan authorities and youth networks, co-designing and piloting a dedicated Youth Intergenerational Fund, which would serve as a tangible mechanism to align long-term finance with the priorities of the youth. Future research should build upon this foundation by conducting longitudinal, comparative analyses of such innovative financing mechanisms across different African regions to assess their efficacy in delivering both developmental outcomes and intergenerational equity.

Ultimately, for the African Development Bank to fulfil its mandate as a truly transformative regional institution, it must institutionalise the principle of intergenerational justice as a core criterion for all its financing decisions, thereby ensuring that the voices and futures of Africa's youth are not merely consulted but are fundamentally embedded in the architecture of its development finance.

Contributions

This study makes a distinct contribution by empirically analysing the African Development Bank's (AfDB) regional development finance mechanisms through the specific lens of Ugandan youth. It provides novel, field-based evidence on how intergenerational justice is perceived and operationalised within contemporary project financing (2021-2023).

The findings offer practical insights for the AfDB and Ugandan policymakers to better align financial instruments with youth-centric development priorities. Furthermore, it enriches scholarly discourse by bridging the fields of development finance, youth studies, and business strategy within a specific regional context.

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