

African Youth Favor China's Development Policy Over that of the U.S.

Africa's youth recognize China's contributions to the continent.

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According to a recent survey by Ichikowitz Family Foundation, African youth favor China's involvement on the continent over that of the United States.

In an article from the VOA-Voice of America, [China wins battle of perception among young Africans](#), they report:

"Seventy-seven percent of young Africans said China was the 'foreign actor' with the greatest impact on the continent, while giving the U.S. an influence rating of just 67%. In a follow-up question on whether that influence was positive or negative, 76% said China's was positive, while 72% said the same of the U.S.

"By contrast, U.S. influence has dropped by 12% since 2020, according to the survey of more than 4,500 Africans 18 to 24 years old and living in 15 countries across Africa."

One of the primary reasons for their choices is: *"Beijing's investments in infrastructure development on the continent and China's creation of job opportunities in African countries."* (Emphasis added)

Ivor Ichikowitz said:

"Young Africans are telling us that they are seeing tangible, visible and very impactful signs of the role that China has played in the development of Africa."

"Albeit that there is significant criticism of Chinese investment in Africa, it's very difficult for African governments not to value China because China is providing capital, providing expertise, providing markets at a time when Europe and the United States are not."

China Embraces Economic Transformation of Africa

The *Journal of International Development* published in May of this year, [*Economic Transformation in Africa: What is the role of Chinese firms?*](#) This research paper explains why China has surpassed the U.S. in favorability among African youth.

The abstract of this paper bluntly states exactly what Western geopolitical ideologies still refuse to accept:

“Africa-China trade leads to mixed results, while Chinese investment and infrastructure construction are found to contribute positively to transformation. Chinese firms are also found to support capacity building, spillovers, and innovation in African countries.”

The authors have identified a central concept. African nations need *Economic Transformation* (ET), which is not equal to simplistic and false notions of economic growth measured by *Gross Domestic Product* (GDP).

They correctly explain the difference in their introduction:

“The process of economic transformation (ET), indicating the changes affecting the structure of an economy, is at the core of development. While GDP growth is often used as a metric for development, it simply points to an expansion of a country’s economic size, but it does not guarantee that the economy has become more diversified, resilient to shocks or inclusive. Conversely, ET, indicating a transition from an economy based on traditional agriculture to one where modern sectors take the central place, can deliver job creation, diversification, and inclusive development.

“Today, African countries face an ET gap. While many African economies have grown over the last few decades, their structure has not transformed. In contrast with other regions of the world, where the majority of people are employed in the secondary and tertiary sectors, a large share of Africa’s labor force works in agriculture and related activities, where average productivity is lower.

“When Chinese economic engagement with Africa started intensifying at the turn of the century, it raised hopes for ET. China’s extraordinary growth and poverty reduction performance could be a model for African countries; and with China as a trade, investment and development partner, African economies could hope to follow a similar path. African engagement with China was deemed particularly promising for industrialization on the continent. (Emphasis added)

Regrettably, both for the U.S., and Africa, and the rest of the developing sector, the West no longer believes in *economic transformation*. The U.S. in particular, is no longer devoted to fostering economic development for itself or other nations, contrary to many outstanding periods of its history. Whatever shortcomings exist in China’s relationship to Africa, China is committed to promoting real economic development i.e., *economic transformation* on the African continent. Yet Western governments continually attack China and its *Belt and Road Initiative* for assisting African nations in addressing the most critical deficiency in their economies; the lack of infrastructure and a manufacturing sector.

Many people, including so called economic experts fail to understand that money is not the basis of economic growth. The addition of all the monetary values of an economy’s goods

and services measured in GDP, does not determine economic growth. The only proper, scientific measure of economy is not monetary values, but the ability of each particular mode of economic production to provide an increased standard of living to an expanding population. A physical economist like myself understands, that it is those physical inputs that lead to an increase in the performance-output of the productive powers of labor that determines real economic growth. Infrastructure and manufacturing capacity are crucial physical inputs required for *economic transformation*.

That is what the Chinese are providing for Africa, unlike the West. Could that be why young Africans think more approvingly of China's policies in Africa than the U.S.?

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