Youth exclusion and development in war-affected Africa

THE OUTCAST MAJORITY
War, Development, and Youth in Africa
Marc Sommers

The Outcast Majority invites policymakers, practitioners, academics, students, and others to think about three commanding contemporary issues—war, development, and youth—in new ways. The starting point is the following irony: while African youth are demographically dominant, many act as if they are members of an outcast minority. The irony directly informs young people’s lives in war-affected Africa, where differences separating the priorities of youth and those of international agencies are especially prominent.

Drawing on interviews with development experts and young people, Marc Sommers shines a light on this gap and offers guidance on how to close it. He begins with a comprehensive consideration of forces that shape and propel the lives of African youth today, particularly those experiencing or emerging from war. They are contrasted with forces that influence and constrain the international development aid enterprise. The book concludes with a framework for making development policies and practices significantly more relevant and effective for youth in areas affected by African wars and other places where vast and vibrant youth populations reside.

Marc Sommers is an internationally recognized youth expert with research experience in over twenty war-affected countries. He has provided analysis and technical advice to policy institutes, donor and United Nations agencies, and NGOs. He also is the author of seven previous books, including Stuck: Rwandan Youth and the Struggle for Adulthood (Georgia), which received an Honorable Mention for the African Studies Association’s Bethwell A. Ogot Book Prize, Islands of Education: Schooling, Civil War, and the Southern Sudanese (1983–2004), and Fear in Bongoland: Burundi Refugees in Urban Tanzania, which received the Margaret Mead Award.