



Youth and Employment Policies in Africa: Challenges, Aspirations, and Opportunities

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A powerful
and balanced
voice for business



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Submitted by and on behalf of the African Youth Commission,

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List of abbreviations and acronyms

AYC	African Youth Commission
AU	African Union
AFDB	African Development Bank
ANPEJ	Agence Nationale pour la Promotion de l'Emploi des Jeunes
AJEB	Agence pour l'Emploi des Jeunes des Banlieues
ANAMA	Agence Nationale d'Appui aux Marchands Ambulants
ANAPEC	National Agency for the Promotion of Employment and Skills
CAPMAS	Egypt's Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics
CMPJ	Multipurpose Youth Empowerment Centres
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CNJC	Cameroon National Youth Council
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DCDT	Department of Communication and Digital Technologies
EYE	Employment for Youth in Egypt
FNPJ	Fonds National de Promotion des Jeunes
GoM	Government of Morocco
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IOE	International Organisation of Employers
ILO	International Labour Organization
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
KII	Key Informant In-depth Interview
MINJEC	Ministry of Youth Affairs and Civic Education
NEET	Not-in-Employment-Education-or-Training
NYC	National Youth Council
PAJER-U	Support Programme to Rural and Urban Youth
PANEJ	National Youth Employment Covenant
PIAASI	Integrated Support Project to Stakeholders of the Informal Sector
PDCE	Project de développement des compétences pour l'employabilité
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
YESA	Youth Employment Scheme Abroad
K-YES	Kenya Youth Employment and Skills
YEDF	Youth Enterprise Development Fund
YNEET	Young People Not-in-Employment-Education-or-Training
KYEP	Kenya Youth Empowerment Programme
YLP	Youth Livelihood Program
WB	World Bank

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Executive Summary

The future of work in Africa is intrinsically tied to two key factors: the expansion and modernisation of agricultural activities on the one hand, and to the widespread digitalisation of economic activities on the other. However, these factors face a significant challenge in the form of a surge in youth populations across the continent¹. Despite the potential pressure associated with this demographic trend, it can also be viewed as an asset capable of catalysing the overall development of the continent.

This policy review includes an analysis of existing policies aimed to generate youth employment and youth entrepreneurship in Africa, a brief poll among youth in several countries, as well as interviews designed to give initial indications of themes and issues related to endemic unemployment in this segment of the population. It focuses on the identification of major challenges in the future of work for youth, detection of skills gaps, and exploration of the prospects and opportunities in sectors that remain under-explored. It uses qualitative data drawn from individual key informant in-depth interviews, seeking insights about promoting good policies to increase youth employment, feeding into practical policy discussions taking place at regional and global level, and strengthening the work of the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) in Africa on the Future of Work. The review focused on the following ten (10) selected countries representing the five African Union regions: The Kingdom of Lesotho and Republic of South Africa (Southern Africa); The Republic of Uganda and Republic of Kenya (East Africa); The Democratic Republic of Congo and The Republic of Cameroon (Central Africa); The Republic of Senegal and The Federal Republic of Nigeria (West Africa); The Kingdom of Morocco and The Arab Republic of Egypt (North Africa).

Analysis found significant weaknesses in existing policies in some national contexts, or a lack of programmes focused on youth employment in others. Examples include limited or unsustainable funding opportunities, a lack of feedback on funding applications made by young people, limited presence of youth employment programmes (especially in rural areas), weak coordination among various implementing agencies and local steering committees of youth programmes, and stringent conditions attached to grants and loans offered by funding agencies. Furthermore, there is a noticeable lack of awareness about interventions and policies designed by the government or its development partners to promote youth employment.

The review also found that youth face numerous challenges in securing decent employment, including the low economic growth in some of the selected countries, a disconnect between training institutions and the labour market, deficiencies in the education system, job preferences among an upwardly aspiring youth, and limited access to finance and training for youth. Other challenges of youth employment involve limited funding opportunities as well as the unfavourable conditions attached to some grants and loans which may be on offer by funding agencies and development partners. With oftentimes limited geographic access to existing youth employment programmes, particularly in rural areas, inefficiencies are exacerbated

¹ Projections show that by 2030, the number of youth living in Africa will have increased by up to 42 percent.

by weak coordination across various implementing agencies and stakeholders of programmes on youth employment. These macro- and micro-level factors interplay to compound the problem, limiting the impact, opportunities, and effectiveness of programmes on youth employment intended to reduce high rates of unemployment.

In the light of these challenges, the analysis points to the need for more support to be provided to young people and, in the education sector, to move towards preparing young people for future careers through technical and vocational education training (TVET). It also shows a need to improve access to financing and quality training programmes for youth, promote changes in the perceptions and collective mindset towards certain types of jobs, and enhance coordination across stakeholders in public policies and programmes on youth employment.

For young people, the expansion and modernisation in the agricultural sector and the broader digitalization of economic activities represent strong job prospects, as well as opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurship to generate income. These opportunities can be fully realised and optimised through various initiatives that promote communication technologies (ICT) training and skills development, the simplification of micro-funding programmes and through the digitalisation of economic services, administrative processes, and financial protocols that bring more efficient access to enterprising youth populations.

Chapter 1

The socio-professional situation of young people and current employment frameworks

1.1. Background

Recent demographic trends reveal that Africa's population, currently 1.4 billion, is forecast, to rise to 2.5 billion by 2050². To put things into perspective, this is equivalent to a quarter of the world's population. Understanding this demographic trend means to consider both the future opportunities and challenges for Africa's vibrant young population—where approximately 60 per cent of Africa's population is under the age of 25, making it the world's youngest continent³. The challenge for governments, employers, academics, as well as for civil society, is to find solutions to prepare and incorporate this growing young population as they come of age to enter the job market. In the immediate term, the continent is already confronted with a dire reality, with the number of unemployed young men and women constantly increasing, in a context hampered by a digital divide and the socioeconomic fallout of a global pandemic.

Even prior to Covid-19, the world of work was transforming and opportunities in the 'traditional' forms of work were decreasing due to factors such as low productivity, the collapse of the commodity boom, skills gaps, global competition, and the adoption of new technologies. At the same time, data from the International Labour Organization (ILO) showed that an estimated 90 per cent of young workers fall into the category of informal employment⁴, a systemic condition which creates additional challenges for youth. Furthermore, self-employment constitutes a larger share of informal employment than wage employment.

It is against this background that this review on Youth and Employment Policies in Africa was initiated by the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) and conducted by the African Youth Commission (AYC).

This section provides a detailed analysis of the socio-economic and professional situation of young people, as well as efforts of governments and other relevant stakeholders within the ten (10) selected countries representing the five African Union sub-regions of Central, West, Southern, North and East Africa.

2 Economic Development in Africa Report 2023: The Potential of Africa to Capture Technology-Intensive Global Supply Chains (unctad.org)

3 UNDP, Youth in Africa: a demographic imperative for peace and security, 2023

4 ILO, Report on Employment in Africa (Re-Africa): Tackling the Youth Employment Challenge, 2020

1.2. Central Africa: The Democratic Republic of Congo and Cameroon

1.2.1 Socio-demographic and professional characteristics of young people in Central Africa

The context of young people in Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is very similar. These two countries have the largest population in the Central African sub-region and are the most dynamic in economic terms. With a population estimated at approximately 25 million inhabitants for Cameroon and 84 million for the DRC, both have age pyramids that indicate a high proportion of young people – where more than half of the population (approximately 63%) is under 25 years old (UNDP 2022) – and their configurations reflect the general reality of all the States of this sub-region: young people represent 78 per cent of the rural population⁵.

The unemployment rates for young people are 6.1 per cent in Cameroon (with 65% underemployment) and 7.75 per cent in the DRC (with 51.6% underemployment)⁶. Young women and vulnerable youth (more than 50% of the population) face a particularly difficult situation, exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic and the associated economic downturn.

In these contexts, where informal employment preponderates, Cameroonian and DRC youth face several challenges, which compromise their socio-economic potential. Some of these challenges include unemployment and poverty (i.e., 1/2 young people according to our study data); lack of access to basic social security services; challenges to access the right information and financial resources to undertake or afford adequate training or develop a business; lack of professional qualifications; weak expansion of public and private employment despite some spontaneous recruitment; difficulty in self-employment, etc.

1.2.2 Main policy measures relating to youth employment

The entire sub-region, in particular the DRC and Cameroon, have focused their ambitions and development strategies on growth and employment, upon whose fate or achievement are closely linked to (or co-dependent upon) both the government's ability to address the *current* youth employment situation as well as to drive future possibilities of work. To this end, these governments and their social partners have adopted and implemented measures, initiatives and institutions intended to accelerate-- both formally and informally -- the socio-professional and economic empowerment, and integration of young people as a vulnerable group.

For Cameroon, these include: the National Development Strategy (2020-2030)⁷ which places youth employment at the centre of its concerns,

5 Data from the African Development Bank in 2021

6 Data from the African Development Bank in 2021

7 <http://cdnss.minsante.cm/?q=fr/content/strat%C3%A9gie-nationale-de-d%C3%A9veloppement-2020-2030-pour-la-transformation-structurelle-et-le#:~:text=La%20Strat%C3%A9gie%20Nationale%20de%20D%C3%A9veloppement,de%20faire%20du%20Cameroun%20%C2%AB%20un>

and the Integrated National Youth Strategy (2015-2030)⁸. These important measures dedicated to the socio-economic integration of young people are carried out in collaboration with development partners, particularly in the areas of education, health, and employment.

These include social policies for global development, public health and socio-professional integration, as well as educational and training policies, associating formal education courses (primary, secondary and university) with vocational or practical learning with private companies or approved centres.

This set of measures and programmes is mainly coordinated by a Ministry of Youth and Civic Education (MINJEC), the National Employment Fund, the National Youth Council and several specific projects/programmes listed below:

- The National Youth Council of Cameroon (CNJC): Framework for dialogue, expression, consultation, and action of young people; it is the interface with young people, the government and development partners.
- The National Employment Fund⁹, whose general mission is to promote employment throughout the Cameroonian territory through the dissemination of relevant information, orientation, and supervision of job seekers.
- The Agency for the Promotion of Small and Medium Enterprises (APME) offers services and products contributing to the creation and development of Cameroonian small and medium enterprises (SMEs), as well as making them efficient, innovative, competitive, and responsible.
- Polyvalent Youth Empowerment Centers (CMPJ): Extracurricular structures for supervision and support for youth empowerment.
- The National Pact for Youth Employment (PANEJ): Intended to promote youth employment, it offers opportunities for young people to acquire vocational training and thus increase their chances of employment.
- The Integrated Support Project for Actors in the Informal Sector (PIAASI): Their objective is to provide better supervision for young people working in the informal sector and to maximise the creation of productive, stable, and decent jobs. It is intended to finance around 8,000 micro-projects and the training of their promoters.
- The Rural and Urban Youth Support Program (PAJER-U): This programme aims to create salaried jobs for young people and to finance micro and junior enterprises.
- The PEA-Jeunes¹⁰ set up with the support of IFAD aims to support the development of profitable businesses run by young men and women in promising agro-pastoral sectors.
- There are also several measures to promote youth employment within the United Nations system, including the United Nations Development

8 <http://www.minjec.gov.cm/images/politiquenationale/politique.pdf>

9 <https://www.fnecm.org/index.php/fr/mesures-d-appui-100210/les-programmes/13-missions-du-fne>

10 <https://pea-jeunes.org/>

Programme (UNDP) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) for the promotion of an Integration of the Employment Intensive Investments approach in the new public procurement code since 2018.

In the DRC, the Government relies on its National Strategic Development Plan (2018-2022)¹¹ to promote education, training, and employability of young people through the implementation of numerous initiatives. This is particularly the case of the Skills Development for Employability Project (PDCE - Skills Development for Employability Project – P128628) financed by the World Bank and thanks to which 5,460 vulnerable young people (44 per cent of whom are women) have acquired training and skills to succeed in employment opportunities in several fields, including mechanics, carpentry, hospitality, electrical, plumbing, baking and welding.

The Government of the DRC is particularly striving for inclusive education and training policies in order to offer professional learning opportunities to young people who have not attended school within the framework of technical and professional training. Similarly, intensive literacy programmes and the financing of youth entrepreneurial initiatives are being tested in collaboration with partners such as the African Development Bank (AfDB), the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Particular cases include:

- Targeted Support and Capacity Building Project (PAC-RDC)¹², with a view to access employment, the socio-professional integration of young people and the financial inclusion of young women since 2019.
- A programme to support the economic integration of young people in Kinshasa into decent jobs¹³ with the financial and technical support of Belgium since 2021.

Alongside these state efforts there are numerous self-employment or entrepreneurial initiatives for/by young people, reflecting the dynamic and significant input of the private sector.

However, despite the efforts of the government and all the social partners, the socio-professional integration of young people remains a challenge due to the international dynamics driven or imposed by globalisation and the Covid-19 crisis.

1.2.3 Expectations of young and prospects for the future of work in Central Africa region

Recent socio-economic analyses (World Bank, AfDB and UNDP) combine to the empirical data from this study present agri-food, telecommunications or information and communication technologies, retail trade and in particular

¹¹ <https://www.undp.org/fr/drcongo/publications/plan-national-strat%C3%A9gique-de-d%C3%A9veloppement>

¹² <https://www.afdb.org/fr/documents/rdc-projet-dappui-cible-et-de-renforcement-des-capacites-pac-rdc-en-vue-de-laccess-emploi-linsertion-socio-professionnelle-des-jeunes-et-linclusion-financiere-des-jeunes-femmes-rapport-devaluation-de-projet>

¹³ <https://open.enabel.be/fr/COD/2445/p/programme-de-soutien--l-insertion-conomique-des-jeunes-de-kinshasa-dans-des-emplois-dcents.html>

online distribution chains, tourism, urban development, extractive industries and aeronautics as key sectors for the development of the countries and their youth population, due to their potential for jobs creation and/or incomes generating activities.

Nevertheless, it is worth noting challenges and issues that hinder progress in these areas, namely the need to: update knowledge, in particular with the increasing digitisation of jobs; improve/facilitate access to resources, particularly financial resources, through bank loans or State subsidies; update and modernise the educational systems and the programmes they propose, many of which are obsolete and unsuited to the needs of current labour market.

Likewise, a lack of access to resources – particularly land and finance for entrepreneurial purposes – remain a norm. Without effective guarantees, the rigidity of the banking system grants very little credit to young project leaders and most often with high interest rates. The same is true for administrative protocols, delays and corruption that obstruct the will and dynamics of potential young entrepreneurs.

1.3 West Africa: Federal Republic of Nigeria and Senegal

1.3.1 Socio-demographic and professional characteristics of young people in West Africa

The description of the socio-demographic profiles, as well as the main political and socio-economic measures related to youth employment in Nigeria and Senegal provides us with a comprehensive understanding of the current issues and future trends of work in the West African sub-region.

Nigeria is one of the most dynamic economies on the African continent and the first in West Africa. Despite its dynamism, the country has over the past five years experienced a significant inflation and a slowdown in overall growth, which peaked at only 1.5 per cent (WB, 2021). This results in a high unemployment rate of around 33 per cent, including 53 per cent youth unemployment and 22.8 per cent underemployment (AFDB, 2021). With 200 million inhabitants, the data from the Study reveal that 1 in 3 young people are unemployed (AFDB, 2021).

The Nigerian job market revolves around three key sectors --namely hydrocarbon, agriculture, and services-- and is dominated by self-employment or entrepreneurship. Although 64 per cent the latter activities are informal, their collective contribution to the GDP amounts to 50% and constitutes 99 per cent of all businesses in the country¹⁴.

The Senegalese economy can be described as resilient following the Covid-19 crisis, although growth has decreased from 4 per cent (until 2019) to 1.5 per

14 Growth Sectors, Youth and Employment: Challenges and Way Forward: A Synthesis Paper of Ethiopia, Mali and Nigeria Country Case Studies by Jacob Omolo, AERC Working Paper GSYE-004 African Economic Research Consortium, Nairobi August 2022

cent since 2020 (AfDB, 2021). The country's unemployment rate remains high (20.5%). It is higher in rural areas (22.1%) than in urban areas (12.6%), higher among women (29.9%) than among men (12.6%) and highest for the 15-35 age group. In this context, the socio-professional condition of young people in the Senegalese labour market also remains precarious. More specifically, the unemployment rate is 19.5 per cent for young people aged 20 to 24 and 17.5 per cent for those aged 25 to 29, while it is only 10 per cent for adults¹⁵. So more than 100,000 young people entering the Senegalese labour market each year are forced into informal and precarious activities due to the limited possibilities of formal and decent employment¹⁶. Overall, the Senegalese labour market is marked by underemployment due to a lack of real opportunities and the predominance of the informal sector.

1.3.2 Main policy measures relating to youth employment

Diversification has been a challenge for **Nigeria's** economy with its quest to industrialise since the 60's with its first National Development Plan¹⁷. For decades, the main key sectors in the Nigerian economy have been hydrocarbons (35% of GDP and only generating 7% of employment), agriculture, and services (50% of the economy and jobs) (AfDB, 2021)¹⁸. Yet despite various strategies and initiatives, the Nigerian government has failed to diversify and strengthen the country's economy (AfDB, 2021)¹⁹.

In 2021, Nigeria coincidentally experienced a 3.4 per cent²⁰ economic growth rate, but this growth failed to translate into significant job creation. This situation highlights a critical issue – that overall growth does not adequately address the sluggish performance in sectors with high potential to generate jobs, such as agriculture, manufacturing, construction.

The main economic and employment policy aimed at boosting the competitiveness of the three pillar sectors and diversifying the economy, while effectively reducing youth unemployment. This approach is particularly reflected in the collaboration with development partners such as the World Bank, through the initiative Access Nigeria Jobs Information Management System²¹. This initiative aims to provide a new workforce with the skills and training required by industry (particularly companies) for the purposes of competitiveness and reducing unemployment among young graduates²². Based on a four-pronged approach of assessment, training, certification and integration, the initiative revolves around the promotion of employability in fast-growing economic areas, in particular information technology-based

15 National statistics of Senegal in 2021

16 Programmes d'Appui à l'Emploi et Employabilité des Jeunes dans les Secteurs de Croissance Sénégal 2019-23

17 IMF, <https://www.elibrary.imf.org/downloadpdf/journals/002/2021/034/article-A002-en.pdf>

18 Nigeria, 2021, <https://www.afdb.org/en/countries/west-africa/nigeria>

19 Autorités Nigériennes et Groupe de la banque africaine de développement, Nigeria : constat sur un marché de l'emploi préoccupant, Octobre 2021, <https://perspective.usherbrooke.ca/bilan/servlet/BMAAnalyse?codeAnalyse=3159>

20 2021 Report (Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics - NBS)

21 Nigeria - Information and Communications Technology, <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/nigeria-information-and-communications-technology#:~:text=The%20government%20of%20Nigeria%20recognizes,ICT%20companies%20and%20foreign%20investors.>

22 http://www.anjims.org/?page_id=113

services (ITES) and the service sector, including banking, telecommunications, commercial services, energy, infrastructure, entertainment, and hotels.

Through an information management system, this initiative provides young Nigerian graduates with access to job opportunities in ITES and beyond, as well as granting Nigerian businesses access to a wide pool of talented people searching for a job in various economic sectors.

By virtue of the interactivity of the system, registered stakeholders (job candidates, training providers, employers, and the ACCESS Nigeria team) can thus claim effective placement of applicants. Alongside this public-private initiative focused essentially on the socio-professional integration of young graduates, there is a plethora of private efforts aimed at offering practical skills to those with no schooling nor diploma considering a job in a company or self-employment. It mainly consists of seminars and short or long-term training in digital, entertainment professions (music, cinemas), small business, etc.

In **Senegal**, the government's approach is similar to that of Nigeria. The diversification of the economy and the promotion of youth employability are affirmed through a set of political measures and public-private initiatives (AfDB, 2022). In addition to the traditional sectors of mining, construction, tourism, fishing, and agriculture, which are the main sources of employment, Senegal has set as an ambition to become a producer and exporter of hydrocarbons in the near future (AfDB, 2022).

The government thus intends to leverage these additional resources to enhance its efforts to reduce youth unemployment, both graduates and non-graduates. The Government Action Plan offers not only a panoply of institutions such as the Ministry of Youth, Employment and Citizen Construction, the Department of Projects and Economic Integration, the National Agency for Youth Employment, the National Fund for the Promotion of Youth, the National Fund for the Integration of Young People, the Integration Fund for Young People, but also implemented several tax facilitation measures, including exemptions over a specific period for new entrepreneurs. This set of measures and institutions struggles to demonstrate their effectiveness in a context where social pressure and opportunities remain limited²³. This led the government to establish a unified structure to coordinate youth employment initiatives, the National Bureau for the Promotion of Youth Employment (*Agence Nationale pour la Promotion de l'Emploi des Jeunes*, ANPEJ).

In this context, the Senegalese youth and other private actors are compelled to make the best of their situation to survive day by day, particularly those experiencing the precariousness of the informal sector²⁴.

1.3.3 Expectations of young and prospects for the future of work in West Africa region

The socioeconomic situation of these countries reflects contexts of limited resources due to demographic pressure, economic and numerous political

²³ Data of the study.

²⁴ Ibid.

crises (corruption, insecurity and the ongoing terrorist threat of Boko Haram in Nigeria). Economic diversification, coupled with the creation and enhancement of access to job opportunities, presents a crucial challenge, not only for young individuals but also for respective Governments aiming for competitive and sustainable growth.

The difficulties and challenges faced by young Nigerians reflect those in Senegal. These include (but are not limited to):

- a widespread and rapidly increasing inflation, which starkly contrasts with insufficient wages and socio-economic instability.
- limited access to resources (in particular financing and land).
- the need for adequate infrastructure and political stability in certain localities to limit rural exodus, as well as the necessity to diversify and enhance economic activities.
- lack of technical skills which limits the access of women and young individuals to decent employment opportunities.
- skills mismatch that leaves young graduates ill-equipped for the school-to-work transition.
- administrative and fiscal constraints discouraging self-employment or the determination to undertake entrepreneurial endeavours.

The interviewed individuals indicated that the unemployment of young graduates has become commonplace, if not considered quite normal. In the meantime, the situation of young people without any training or skills leaves little hope for their chances of finding employment.

In West Africa, especially in Nigeria and Senegal, addressing the challenge of the professional social integration of young people requires the consideration of international factors like globalisation or the interconnectedness of economies. Furthermore, it involves the need to adjust and promote specific aspects related to local contexts.

The essential priorities remain the enhancing of digital skills to align with the growing digitisation of jobs, streamlining access to resources (financial, administrative, or land) for self-employment and entrepreneurship, the development of sustainable infrastructures (roads, health centre, and schools), and the reforms/modernisation of training programmes, especially in advanced training. All these expectations centre around the need for sound, inclusive, and effective political governance.

1.4 Southern Africa: Republic of South Africa and Lesotho

1.4.1 Socio-demographic and professional characteristics of young people in Southern Africa

The **Kingdom of Lesotho** is a landlocked state entirely within the territory of South Africa, with which it is economically interconnected. As the least populous State in Africa with about 2.2 million inhabitants (UNDP, 2022),

Lesotho is considered a middle-income country due to a poorly diversified economy relying on imports, international aid, and remittances²⁵.

The economic structure of Lesotho highlights four priority sectors, namely agriculture (5.3% of GDP); mining (10% of GDP); manufacturing, tourism and creative arts and technology and innovation (65% of GDP); whilst the public sector remains the largest employer in the country (approximately 80% of jobs). The export of electricity to South Africa, along with the dynamism of its diaspora, represent significant assets of this modest country²⁶.

South Africa is the most modern and industrialised economy in Africa. It has a diversified economy around the sectors of mining, services (tourism, hotels, etc.), finance, and industries (textiles, trade,) and telecommunications. The country's current growth rate is 4.9 per cent²⁷ although it is challenged by the issues such as the deteriorating public finances, electricity supply, and declining investments²⁸.

The profile of the job market in Lesotho is characterized by a heavily burdened public sector, comprising 80 per cent of the workforce, while the private sector (representing 20% of the national employment), grapples with job creation and unemployment reduction challenges²⁹. Exposed to various environmental risks³⁰, including climate change, Lesotho is currently suffering from a depletion of its natural resources, which further worsens poverty in rural areas, leading to uncertain agricultural productivity and a substantial rural exodus³¹.

Meanwhile in the South African job market, the total number of people employed was 15.6 million in the second quarter of 2022, with the following sectors accounting for the biggest job gains in the economy: community and social services (276,000 new jobs), trade (169,000), finance (128,000) and construction (104,000), manufacturing (73,000) and transportation (54,000)³². Nevertheless, the official unemployment rate in South Africa remained high at 33.9 per cent, with over 50 per cent of young people (or about 2/3 of young individuals) unemployed³³.

In both countries, high youth unemployment is generally explained by inefficient or limited access to information (job offers, training, and other resources necessary for employment and self-employment), the mismatch between labour supply and demand, lack of relevant skills, high burden of disease (especially HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis), poor investment rates, and lack of crucial infrastructures³⁴. This contributes to the increase in health-related stress, juvenile delinquency, prostitution and insecurity, having unemployed

25 African Development Bank concludes dialogue with Lesotho on new country strategy, <https://www.afdb.org/fr/news-and-events/african-development-bank-concludes-dialogue-lesotho-new-country-strategy-27796>

26 Lesotho - Country Strategy Paper 2020-2024, 08-Apr-2020

27 South Africa. Country Profile (mai 2022), <https://www.tresor.economie.gouv.fr/Pays/ZA/fiche-pays-mai-2020>

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

30 Such as drought, soil erosion, land degradation, deforestation, loss of biodiversity and drying up of wetlands and mountain sponges. Ibid.

31 Ibid.

32 Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) – Q2:2022. <https://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=15685>

33 Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) – Q2:2022. <https://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=15685>

34 Empirical and AfDB data

young individuals particularly susceptible to issues such as drugs, alcohol abuse, HIV/AIDS and delinquency³⁵.

1.4.2 Main policy measures relating to youth employment

The Strategy for enhancing youth employability in Lesotho is based on the Country Strategy Paper 2020-2024³⁶. It involves improving access to education and training, emphasizing the quality of primary and secondary education, and developing employability skills. In this regard, the government with strategic partners such as the World Bank, aims to bolster the classical education system and enhance access to short and long-term vocational training programs that align with the labour market's needs for effective integration³⁷.

In South Africa, the government's approach is understood through three major initiatives: The Youth Employment Accord³⁸, the National Digital and Future Skills Strategy of South Africa - Decent Jobs for Youth (2021 – 2025)³⁹, and the Youth Employment Service (YES)⁴⁰.

The Youth Employment Accord

The South African initiative, Youth Employment Accord represents a significant milestone in addressing the challenges of youth and overall employment, which are integral part to the broader decent work agenda. This Accord is the initial step in a series of youth-focused interventions that the involved parties will collaborate on, as it intends to build trust among the parties, showcase the effectiveness of targeted programmes for youth support, explore innovative initiatives, tackle emerging issues, and apply the lessons learned to redesign and scale up programmes to achieve the impact needed.

The swift implementation of the youth employment strategy encompasses components such as:

- Training, internships, and apprenticeships.
- Private sector commitments and programmes.
- Youth brigades aiming at providing young individuals opportunities to serve their communities, gain work experience and training, become part of a social movement, foster social cohesion, and earn a stipend.
- Mechanisms for government coordination, including the identification of a central coordinating department with consolidating various government youth programmes.

35 Data of the study

36 Lesotho - Country Strategy Paper 2020-2024 | African Development Bank Group - Making a Difference (afdb.org)

37 This is particularly the case of the Support Project for the Improvement of the Quality of Education

(PAAQE), implemented since 2008. <https://www.afdb.org/fr/news-and-events/press-releases/au-lesotho-la-banque-africaine-de-developpement-renforce-la-qualite-de-lenseignement-et-de-la-formation-rapport-37096>

38 Republic of South Africa, YOUTH EMPLOYMENT ACCORD, June 2013

39 Implementation Programme for the National Digital and Future Skills Strategy of South Africa - Decent Jobs for Youth (www.gov.za)

40 Home page (yes4youth.co.za)

National Digital and Future Skills Strategy of South Africa - Decent Jobs for Youth, 2021 – 2025⁴¹

This is a national version of a regional programme to expand access to decent employment for young people across Africa, drawn up by the ILO/ITU/AU Joint-Programme, led by the Department of Communication and Digital Technologies (DCDT) in South Africa with the support of the UNDP. This initiative aims to support the development of an ecosystem for digital skills labour market, while also providing youth not-in-employment-education-or-training (NEET) with the development of a digital skills training programmes at the pre-entry level to the workplace, and decent employment opportunities through innovative labour intermediation.

The implementation programme guide has a special focus on digital skills for decent jobs for youth, noting not only that young individuals between the ages of 18 and 35 make up the generation that will empower the South African economy and society with digital skills, but also that more than 8 million young people are currently NEET. This special focus is related to the South African government's engagement with the global campaign for decent jobs, in concert with local stakeholders and global partners. Digital and future skills are crucial components of South Africa's path to enhancing its human resource capacity, and its economic competitiveness relies on the development of those competences. Equally crucial is the emphasis on achieving gender balance and addressing the needs of persons with disabilities. This focus on gender and disability equity must not only be prioritised, but also allocated ample funding in order to ensure skills equity in 21st century South Africa.

The Youth Employment Service ⁴²

The Youth Employment Service (YES) is a business-led collaborative initiative aiming to address the issue of youth unemployment. It encourages businesses – large and small – to provide work experiences and job placements for unemployed youth, while ensuring economic prosperity for South Africa.

Their approach involves introducing and assisting young unemployed individuals with essential job search tools and techniques, specifically focusing on crafting a Curriculum Vitae and a compelling cover letter to enhance employment prospects.

1.4.3 Expectations of young and prospects for the future of work in Southern Africa region

The diversification of the economy and the growing digitisation of jobs in fast-growing sectors such as services, trade, tourism, industry, and digital

⁴¹ Joint Programme on Boosting Decent Jobs and Enhancing Skills for Youth in Africa's Digital Economy Implementation Plan 2021: South Africa

⁴² <https://yes4youth.co.za/>

entrepreneurship, provide a ray of hope to young people aspiring to seize these opportunities.

Therefore, in the context of this sub-region, young people are hopeful for:

- Enhanced access to employment information.
- Increased job creation and labour demand.
- Greater support from public authorities and social partners in terms of skill development and access to the job market.
- The promotion of entrepreneurship and improving financial well-being through financial facilities, including partnerships with banks, grants and other financial institutions/services.

1.5 North Africa: Republic of Egypt and Kingdom of Morocco

1.5.1 Socio-demographic and professional characteristics of young people in North Africa region

The **Kingdom of Morocco** and the **Republic of Egypt** are the most dynamic economies in North Africa. The Kingdom of Morocco has 37.34 million inhabitants (BM, 2021), and an economic growth of 7.9 per cent in 2021 and about 1.5 per cent for 2022⁴³. Although diversified around four major sectors – agriculture and fishing, mining, industry⁴⁴, trade, and tourism and services – the Moroccan economy is dependent on imports of energy and food (WB, 2022)⁴⁵. The country boasts a poverty rate of only 4.8 per cent, the lowest in Africa.

The economy of Egypt is resilient and competitive, experiencing sustained growth of around 6.6 per cent in the first quarter of 2022. This impressive performance positions Egypt as the second-largest economy on the African continent, despite the challenges posed by the Covid-19 crisis and various international factors (AfDB, 2022). Key sectors and policies have played a crucial role in driving this growth. For instance, the dynamics of the construction, communications, and agriculture sectors, while on the demand side, the private and public consumption combined with public investment (many social protection and service projects), alongside the revival of tourism and manufacturing. International factors, such as the war in Ukraine, equally contributes to a rampant inflation (around 15%) – which drives up fuel and food budget, while increasing the instability of the populations⁴⁶. Egypt's young population (individuals aged between 18-29 years old) currently represent 21 per cent of the country's 104 million inhabitants.

43 IMF and WB data. <https://www.imf.org/fr/News/Articles/2022/11/03/pr2271-imf-staff-completes-2022-article-iv-mission-to-morocco>

44 Automotive, aeronautics, textiles, leather, electronics, electrical, chemical-parachemical, pharmaceutical.

45 Morocco Economic Update : The Recovery is Running Dry (English). Washington, D.C. : World Bank Group. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/099529307192239926/IDU020d792070df4a04e830957f0f9fd56c0f71e>

46 AfDB, Egypt Economic Outlook, African Economic Outlook (AEO) 2022

In 2022, Morocco's unemployment rate stood at 11.2 per cent (WB, 2022). With the labour force growing by 300,000 annually, the current job creation rate of 129,000 per year falls short to absorb this influx (WB,2022) of new labour force. This results in a high youth unemployment rate, where nearly 3 out of 10 unemployed people (29.7%)⁴⁷ are young individuals.

Furthermore, high unemployment rate plagued young graduates reaching 60 per cent in 2022, whereas non-graduates faced a 3.6 per cent unemployment rate but grappled with precarious and informal employment. Given these conditions, underemployment is pervasive, with 2/3 of the unemployed and 38.6% of highly qualified individuals willing to accept wages below the minimum wage (WB, 2022). The Moroccan Economic and Social Council emphasises that: "young graduates are the social category hardest hit by unemployment, which is often characterized by long periods of uncertainty. Nearly two-thirds of them experience unemployment lasting over a year. The jobs they undertake are typically low-paying, frequently lacking formal contracts, and are rarely covered by social protection schemes"⁴⁸.

Interviewees also confirm that the increase in the unemployment rate is most notable in urban areas, particularly among young women. Government statistics in 2022 further indicate that nearly three out of four unemployed young people (75.8%) reside in urban areas (of which 67.3% are men and 90.1% are graduates)⁴⁹. Youth unemployment rates are significantly higher in urban centres (46.7%) than the rate in rural areas (15.9%). Additionally, young women face a notably higher unemployment rate, standing at 41.9 per cent, compared to 28.4 per cent for young men⁵⁰, which raises questions on the impact of cultural dynamics and the place of women in the Moroccan society.

Egypt faces similar issues with youth unemployment. As of June 2022, its labour market had an overall of unemployment rate of 7.2 per cent, with young individuals under 30 accounting for 24.3 per cent of the total (WB, 2021). This pattern of youth unemployment is accompanied by various challenges in the Egyptian labour market, such as limited job creation, stagnant productivity levels, growing informal employment, and low wages.

Despite the increase in the level of education of young people and the gradual reduction of gender gaps in education, young Egyptian university graduates face substantial unemployment rates, particularly women – amounting for 42 per cent of the young unemployment rate in 2020.

47 The World Bank in Morocco, 2022, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/morocco>

48 Le Maroc préconise des solutions au chômage des jeunes. <https://www.careersinmorocco.com/articles/details/?id=221#:~:text=Le%20Conseil%20C3%A9conomique%20et%20social,persistant%20du%20ch%C3%B4mage%20des%20jeunes>.

49 Haut-Commissariat au Plan, 2022. Note d'information à l'occasion de la journée internationale de la jeunesse du 12 août 2022 (hcp.ma)

50 Haut-Commissariat au Plan, 2022. Note d'information à l'occasion de la journée internationale de la jeunesse du 12 août 2022 (hcp.ma)

1.5.2 Main policy measures relating to youth employment

The promotion of youth employability in Morocco is the subject of the 10-year National Employment Strategy (2015-2025)⁵¹. This strategy aims to foster the social inclusion of women and the overall youth integration by creating permanent jobs that enhance productivity and reduce labour cost. The strategy is based on four pillars: directing macroeconomic and sectoral policies towards the creation of new jobs (38,000 jobs per unit of GDP, e.g. 200,000 jobs on average per year); strengthening human capital through intensive training, improving qualification levels, and reforming the social protection system; strengthen existing employment programs; and improving governance and labour market functions.

To implement this strategy, the Government of Morocco has established a National Agency for the Promotion of Employment and Skills (ANAPEC). Its action consists of three components: the provision of wage subsidies to the unemployed; a programme which provides training for young people (called “Tehil”); and the promotion of entrepreneurship through training and financial assistance (called “Moukawalati”)⁵². Similarly, the line ministries have adopted three strategies on:

1. Youth integration – to improve the training system and bring young people into the labour market through internships or skills matching.
2. Employment to increase jobs and productivity.
3. Promotion of micro-enterprises by supporting their financing.

On the demand side, initiatives such as Morocco’s Global Jobs and Morocco’s Green Plan aim to promote job creation through macroeconomic and sectoral policies (e.g., compensation reform, flexible exchange rate policy, and sectors conducive to growth)⁵³.

The Egyptian government’s approach to boosting youth employability consists of policies aimed at increasing the competitiveness and resilience of the economy through timely reforms, including increased privatisation⁵⁴. This strategy targets several sectors with high potential for growth and employment, namely the sectors of renewable energies, green hydrogen production, automotive industry, hydrocarbons, education, and banks.

The Government plans jointly with its social partners to examine ways of influencing the perceptions of young people who are uninformed about the skills requirements of employers and the market, as well as designing training models on employment that meets employers’ skill requirements. For their part, young people are striving for entrepreneurship opportunities within the growing sectors mentioned above. As data shows, around 50 per cent of young Egyptians recognise entrepreneurship as an attractive career option⁵⁵.

51 La Stratégie nationale pour l’emploi du Maroc. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--ed_emp/--ed_emp_msu/documents/project/wcms_420201.pdf

52 Labor Market in Morocco: Challenges and Opportunities (worldbank.org)

53 UNDP, Morocco, 2022, <https://www.undp.org/fr/morocco>

54 Moussa Diop, Croissance: l’Egypte consolide sa position de seconde puissance économique du continent, le 06/09/2022 à 15h30

55 Ibid.

1.5.3 Expectations of young and prospects for the future of work in North Africa region

In both Morocco and Egypt, young people confront the shared challenges of gaining effective and inclusive access to the labour market, job insecurity, and underemployment. These issues stem from the informal nature of their economies and widespread inflation, affecting urban and rural areas alike. Additionally, climatic hazards hamper the performance of various initiatives, including agriculture, where productivity remains persistently low.⁵⁶

The expectations of the youth coincide with several recommendations already addressed to the governmental authorities. These include:

- Improving information and intermediation services on the labour market through a more interactive public-private partnership model;
- Supporting small businesses through sponsorship, spin-offs, subcontracting and partnership, as well as the facilitation of financing to encourage self-employment and in particular the development of income-generating activities by identifying the sectors to be rapid growth such as: e-commerce, the service sector, telecommunications, agriculture, and tourism;
- Encouraging/supervising the establishment of short-term employment contracts, ranging from three months to two years;
- Improving vocational training with courses more suited to specific needs; and
- Improving the regulatory mechanisms aimed at more inclusion⁵⁷ and less social and fiscal charges for young entrepreneurs and job seekers.

1.6 East Africa: The Republic of Uganda and Republic of Kenya

1.6.1 Socio-demographic and professional characteristics of young people in East Africa region

Uganda and **Kenya**, with their shared borders, also share similar demographic profiles. Uganda has a population of 42 million, while Kenya's population stands at 47.6 million (UNDP, 2022). With a high proportion of young people (more than 65%), both countries face a set of socio-economic challenges and possess estimated rates of poverty equal to 42.2 per cent (Uganda) and 29.4 per cent (Kenya) in 2022⁵⁸, and inflation rates of around 7.2 per cent (Uganda)⁵⁹ and 9 per cent (Kenya)⁶⁰ in 2021.

56 FAO, APPUI À L'EMPLOI DES JEUNES EN MILIEU RURAL AU MAGREB, 2019.

57 Facilitate the employment of people with disabilities, young women, etc.

58 Macro Poverty Outlook (World Bank 2023) <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKewjEoYONgJuBAxUTRuUKHd9CDP0QFnoECBYQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.worldbank.org%2Fen%2F-publication%2Fmacro-poverty-outlook&usg=AOvWaw1SSkQUK-9dnPb8ca0FWZQ4&opi=89978449>

59 African Development Bank Group (2022) Uganda Economic Outlook | African Development Bank Group - Making a Difference (afdb.org)

60 Central Bank of Kenya Inflation Rates | CBK (centralbank.go.ke)

The Ugandan economy recorded a 3.7 per cent growth in 2021, primarily driven by a dynamic agriculture sector that employs 80 per cent of the active working population. Additionally, there is an emerging focus on hydrocarbons exploitation (AFDB, 2022)⁶¹.

By contrast, the Kenyan economy is characterised by its modern and diversified nature. It combines agriculture with a thriving service economy, including tourism and trade. The economy's growth rate in 2021 stood at 6.7 per cent driven by a dynamic service sector and strong private consumption. Kenya maintains its status as a hub for commerce, technology, logistics in East Africa, and it serves as a regional financial centre. It boasts a robust industrial base and a well-developed road infrastructure⁶².

It is estimated that more than 400,000 young people in Uganda enter the labour market to compete for around 100,000 jobs each year.⁶³ This situation is exacerbated by those leaving the agricultural sector in rural areas in search of job opportunities in urban areas. The unemployment rate in the country, as reported by AFDB data in 2021, stands at 3.4 per cent. However, this numbers are contested by young people interviewed, who estimate it to be over 78 per cent. According to their responses, approximately, one in two young people consider themselves unemployed. Precarious employment in the informal sector remains the primary option for young graduates and individuals with limited formal education in Uganda. The commercial services, coupled with economic digitisation, especially leveraging internet-based opportunities and the hotel industry, serves as the main source of both formal and informal employment for young people.

The Kenyan labour market shows an unemployment rate of 12.3 per cent in 2021 (AfDB, 2021). The causes of youth unemployment are diverse and encompass a wide range of factors. These include school dropout rates, especially among young women due to issues like unwanted pregnancies. Other contributing factors involve a mismatch between the skills possessed by young individuals and those required for meaningful employment, lack of job opportunities, and the absence of necessary skills in the job market. Furthermore, rapid urbanization and the rural-to-urban migration exacerbates unemployment in areas with limited opportunities and resources. This surge in youth unemployed has serious implications, as it often leads to an increase in criminal activities such as theft, violence, rape, and defamation.

1.6.2 Main policy measures relating to youth employment

Youth employment is a significant concern in East Africa, and governments in the region are actively making efforts to address it. In both Kenya and Uganda, young leaders themselves are placing significant emphasis on self-employment and entrepreneurship as a way to circumvent unemployment. Numerous institutions and action plans are therefore actively

61 Uganda Economic Outlook, <https://www.afdb.org/en/countries/east-africa/uganda/uganda-economic-outlook>

62 KENYA : LES INVESTISSEMENTS, <https://www.tradesolutions.bnpparibas.com/fr/implanter/kenya/investissement>

63 Uganda, AFDB data in 2021, Uganda Economic Outlook, <https://www.afdb.org/en/countries/east-africa/uganda/uganda-economic-outlook>

experimenting with providing market-tailored initiatives, subsidies, and other support facilities.

This is notably exemplified by initiatives like the Youth Livelihood programme in Uganda, which is jointly promoted by the government and their social partners to create socio-professional integration opportunities for young people facing disadvantaged circumstances. Launched in 2013, the programme targets individuals aged 18 to 30 across 112 districts and has a budget of UGX 265 billion. One of the main challenges encountered by the programme is that it is very solicited while its operational resources to meet the needs of applicants remain limited.

This is similarly reflected in the adoption of The National Employment Policy for Uganda: “Increasing Decent Employment Opportunities and Labor Productivity for Socio - Economic Transformation”⁶⁴. This policy’s approach includes the following proposals:

- Advocate for a nation youth-specific employment policy
- Advocate for the establishment of youth-friendly employment policies in the public and private sectors.
- Promote entrepreneurship culture among the youth.
- Promote youth participation in agricultural production, processing, and marketing.
- Advocate for relevant and appropriate educational curriculum.
- Establish youth employment bureaus in each region of Uganda.
- Establish youth libraries and information centres in every district.

In Kenya, government measures to reduce unemployment focus on per capita income growth, social safety net programs, and economic recovery (AfDB, 2022). These include short- and medium-term interventions such as “Kazi Kwa Vijana” (KKV) or jobs for young people, infrastructure, and rural development. Other measures taken to create jobs for the youth are the subject of the Youth Employment Scheme Abroad (YESA)⁶⁵, the Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF)⁶⁶, and the Kenya Youth Empowerment Project (KYEP). Despite these efforts, the challenge of unemployment in Kenya persists, predominantly manifesting itself through a robust informal sector and a significant underemployment. Notably, there have been limited structural changes in the composition of recorded employment, while the share of the informal sector has hovered at nearly 83 per cent of total employment over the past two decades.

To address this issue comprehensively, the government is pursuing a multi-sectoral approach that recognises the interdependence and

64 The National Employment Policy for Uganda, 2011, https://www.ilo.org/dyn/youthpol/en/equest.fileutils.dochandle?p_uploaded_file_id=155

65 https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwidp63Ag6KBxWO_h_0HHSO_A5sQFnoECBIQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.rti.org%2Fimpact%2Fkenya-youth-employment-skills-program&usg=AOvVaw0DgaoAaY0Tj_OrFibJxZus&opi=89978449

66 youthfund.go.ke

interconnectedness of various sectors in terms of growth potential. Sectors such as agriculture, transportation, trade, construction, and education are particularly highlighted for their high employment potential among young people, with a focus on leveraging value chain approach.

1.6.3 Expectations of Young (People) and Prospects for the future of work in East Africa region

Data analyses confirm that promising sectors for youth employment in East Africa are agriculture, transport, trade, construction, and education, which with the increased digitalisation of services, offer more opportunities and better insights. Interest in the hospitality and tourism sector is also increasing among this population. The young people interviewed expressed their hopes for:

- Improved promotion and communication of job opportunities and niches to promote greater inclusion and transparency.
- Increased government support or subsidies for self-employment, including training, investment support, and tax incentives.

Chapter 2

Challenges in policy/programme responses to youth employment

The analysis above reveals that in a broad sense, Africa has not lacked policies and initiatives aimed at addressing youth employment issues. However, these efforts, while well-intentioned and focused on understanding and resolving youth employability challenges, are beset by significant shortcomings and obstacles. A brief poll conducted among a selection of youth across the selected countries indicated low awareness levels of existing youth employment interventions. About 63.2 per cent of those polled reported never hearing about the youth and employment policies designed by their respective government or other development partners to create employment opportunities for youth in their country.

Among those who were aware of policies or interventions to drive youth jobs, 35.3 per cent recognised some success in creating employment opportunities for youth, yet a majority (52.9%) opined that such interventions or policies have not really created much employment for youth.

Also, while about two thirds of those polled (65.8%) reported that they never personally received support and were not aware of any friends or relatives who had ever received support (whether financial or other benefits) from any intervention(s) designed to facilitate youth employment, slightly less than a third (31.6%) either personally received or knew someone who had received support from a youth employment promotion programme, with the larger majority citing that it was via financial support.

When asked about the school-to-work transition or entering labour market, roughly half of those polled opined that a person needs at least university education/training to get a decent job these days. In terms of the most useful qualities in finding a good job, 36.8 per cent of them cited 'Information Technology skills', 31.6 per cent voted for 'having completed an apprenticeship or an appropriate training course', 10.5 per cent favoured 'knowledge of the business world', and 13.2 per cent voted for 'scientific or technical qualifications'. For their preferred sectors of work, 36.8% of the group cited 'agriculture' and 18.4 per cent voted for 'transport, storage, and communications'.

Other challenges that emerged from the study encompass both macro and micro level factors. They include low economic growth in specific research-targeted countries, a disconnect between training institutions and the labour market, deficiencies in the education system, and variations in job preferences among youth. Other hurdles in the realm of youth employment include insufficient feedback on funding applications, the sparse physical presence of youth employment programmes (particularly in rural areas), weak coordination among various implementing agencies and stakeholders involved in youth employment programmes, and conditions attached to grants and loans offered by funding agencies.

These multifaceted factors closely interact, contributing to limitations in and a negative influence on the impact, opportunities, and effectiveness of programmes

designed to enhance youth employment and employability. The section below discusses some of the challenges highlighted in the review.

2.1. Low economic growth and slow increase in employment

The findings underscore the numerous challenges that young people face, particularly in the quest for decent employment within economies characterised by slow but consistent growth. Interviewees frequently cited low economic growth and limited diversification in selected countries as the primary causes of reduced labour demand, with particularly adverse effects on youth employment.

In this context, the available job opportunities are insufficient to absorb the influx of working age individuals, and underemployment in the informal sector is becoming increasingly entrenched. Some key informants emphasised that *“the economy is not growing enough, and it is not labour intensive. This has made it difficult for some youth to secure decent employment”*.

While economic growth alone may not suffice to address the high youth unemployment rates, the statement above highlights the imperative for national employment policies and programmes to be fully integrated and regarded as essential pillars of both macroeconomic and sectoral policies. Efforts should be directed toward promoting not just economic growth, but also inclusive growth that generates more employment opportunities. Strategies such as economic diversification, value addition to primary products, and labour-intensive public investments in areas like manufacturing and infrastructure, are crucial for enhancing employment prospects.

2.2 Disconnect between training institutions and the job market

When it comes to employability, young individuals are expected to possess specific skills and abilities essential to the current demands of the labour market. However, a significant challenge lies in the current mismatch between the trainings provided by educational institutions and the actual requirements of the job market.

The disconnect between training institutions and the labour market is also closely tied to the quality of the training programmes available. It depends on factors such as the equipment and facilities of the training institutions, the qualification of the trainers, class sizes, and the duration of training programmes. Many interviewees have shared their experiences of receiving training in areas like business development and entrepreneurship through various projects. However, they often lament that the allocated duration of trainings is insufficient to acquire meaningful skills in business and entrepreneurship. In response to this criticism, one interviewee made the following suggestion: *“The structure and the methods used to deliver some of*

the training programmes need to be changed to make them more meaningful for youth employment”.

2.3 Deficiencies in the education system

While access to education is perceived to have reached universal levels in the countries under scrutiny, the quality of the education system remains a significant hurdle for young individuals in their pursuit of employment and the acquisition of employability skills. Numerous interviewees have pointed to the poor educational outcomes, especially in basic numeracy and literacy, as a major obstacle the training of youth in technical and vocational skills. One interviewee explicitly drew a direct connection between education and youth employability, stating:

“The point I am trying to make is that it doesn’t start from secondary education but the whole education system. It is the whole education system that needs to prepare people [young Africans] for a gainful employment and career path. The quality of the primary and secondary education in parts of the African countries is sub-standard and makes it so difficult. So even if you are coming out of this system, you lack some of the basic numeracy and literacy skills. Then even if you are taking a career path for technical and vocational skills – which can be very interesting -- even there you need to have some basics. For example, if you don’t know how to calculate as a plumber or a mechanic, you will find it very difficult to succeed. These challenges are related to skills”.

A similar sentiment was also expressed by another interviewee, who said:

“One of the major problems because they [youth] are not getting jobs is that one must look at how they were prepared. Usually, their preparation is not properly done. Most of them are school drop-out and although some completed school, they cannot do anything. It is difficult to train these individuals”.

2.4 Job preference and perceptions

A significant portion of interviewed youth highly value professional and administrative jobs (46.4% and 17.9% respectively). These preferences are particularly evident in young people’s willingness to participate in training programmes offered by development partners and to be employed in the non-professional and non-administrative sectors. As explained by an interviewee, *“there are various occupations that can help someone to get a meaningful job such as welding, carpentry, mechanic or even agriculture. But these types of jobs are regarded by some youth as substandard because of societal perceptions. So, you will see that even if you want to take up agriculture for occupation, you are not encouraged or motivated by the society”.* This, combined with other

related scenarios, highlights a mind-set issue concerning work that requires attention at the national, community, and individual levels. Addressing these perceptions about work is essential to bring about meaningful change.

2.5 Limited access to sustainable finance

The limited access to sustainable finance is a challenge particularly pertinent to entrepreneurship. Responses to the interviews highlight the difficulty young entrepreneurs face in securing funding, even when they have viable business ideas. Accessing funds from financial institutions can be arduous due to the exorbitant interest rates, which was reported to hover around 18% in commercial banks and 36% in microfinance service providers across many African countries.⁶⁷ These high rates present a significant hurdle, as few young entrepreneurs can generate enough to meet such demands.

Moreover, the issue of collateral further compounds the problem. Many banks are reluctant to provide loans to young entrepreneurs as oftentimes, young people do not own land or have assets in their names, making it challenging to secure traditional loans.

Interviewees also pointed out the strict and sometimes biased selection criteria for grants or mini-loan schemes offered by development partners or projects. These criteria hinder young people's access to funding, particularly those in the rural areas seeking to initiate or expand their businesses. As one interviewee succinctly stated, *"this makes the financing of business operations difficult for young people"*.

2.6 Limited access to training and strategic employment information

The majority (over 50%) of young people interviewed reported receiving little to no assistance in their job search. In other words, they did not receive any help or advice from the employment services during their job hunt.

While there are some commendable training institutions supporting the young people's employability, it remains challenging to access such institutions in remote areas within most of the selected countries. Consequently, young individuals in these regions are compelled to leave their communities and travel to areas where they can find training institutions. This oftentimes restricts the opportunities available to young people in rural areas. As an interviewee explained: *"I think we have to look at decentralization. There is limited public Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) centres in the rural areas and such movement is contributing to rural-urban drift"*. The prioritisation of urban centres generates an insufficient decentralisation of services, which is reflected on the limited access to training and strategic employment information in non-urban areas. This situation leads to increased

⁶⁷ Survey/feedback from young people and financial institutions during the study.

training costs for those seeking education and, consequently, contributes to youth unemployment and marginalisation, particularly in rural areas.

2.7 Limited decentralization of services

As suggested in the previous session, another major challenge in youth employment pertains to the limited decentralisation of services. Like elucidated by an interviewee: *“Development planning in most of the African nations is highly centralised and this means that most services and basic infrastructures are mainly concentrated in urban areas, and leaving those in rural areas with limited opportunities. For instance, there is currently no training institution in our area and this lack of training institution is the same for other basic amenities such as health facilities”*.

Many interviewees suggested that investing in basic infrastructure and services is essential to create employment opportunities for young people in rural areas.

2.8 Lack of coordination and inclusion of governmental actions or public policies process

Various public policy responses to youth unemployment have revealed the absence of a robust and accountable government body dedicated to monitoring and coordinating efforts on behalf of youth. This absence has compromised the effectiveness of certain public policies and programmes, leading to a continued disconnect between development, social, and economic policies designed to empower youth.

Another significant challenge lies in the limited participation of youth in public policy-making process. The majority of interviewed young individuals expressed a lack of adequate consultation when it comes to formulating policies and programmes related to the youth.

Therefore, enhancing youth inclusion and participation in the design process of national policy, programmes, and strategies to address youth unemployment, is critical to improve public policy responses to the dire situation of the most concerned stakeholders: the youth. As articulated by one interviewee: *“youth should not be regarded as a pitiful group or classified as beneficiaries of development projects. Instead, they should be in the forefront of public policy and decision-making processes. Their views and positions need to be reflected in the entire policy-making process”*.

Chapter 3

Conclusion and recommendations

The findings suggest that the job market within the targeted countries of this review, noting each with its own particularities, possess some common dynamics and influencing factors producing challenges for youth employment. The most relevant dynamics and factors are namely:

- **Lack of inclusion** that translates into limited access to strategic resources (information, finance, land) essential for effective socio-professional endeavours (including self-employment/ entrepreneurship). Similarly, across all areas studied, young people and women experience lower levels of integration into the labour market – women in particular exhibit notably low participation rates, approximately 23% at the country level⁶⁸. This situation is compounded by concerning levels of unemployment and job instability among young graduates.
- **Slow growth of employment opportunities:** The number of jobs created is insufficient to accommodate the growing working-age population. Formal employment tends to be concentrated in larger, well-established companies, while small and medium-sized enterprises struggle not only to operate and expand, but also to offer adequate positions for young people.
- **Poor quality jobs:** The labour market in the studied areas is predominantly characterized by informal work and underemployment. Non-agricultural employment growth is constrained, particularly in the service sector, where jobs are primarily concentrated in low-skilled roles with inadequate social protection and precarious working conditions.
- **Lack of structure and support for self-employment, and specifically youth entrepreneurship:** This pathway to earnings represents a niche that still holds promise (not only for governments, but also as a source of hope for young individuals themselves). Nevertheless, this sector requires better structuring and support, including tailored training aligned with labour market needs and inclusive access to resources for this disadvantaged demographic.

Although this review cannot generalise across the African Continent, it provides an initial analysis of existing policies (or lack thereof) from the studied countries, illuminates both the challenges and the need for further policy development, and brings important insights from key individual interviews. By providing a space for expressing various youth experiences across the continent, this review indicates that there are missed opportunities which could be rectified or re-imagined. In addressing the expressed concerns of this generation of youth, solutions may include:

- **The enhancement of access to strategic information** and provision of support and advice for the socio-professional integration of young people.

⁶⁸ UN, World Population Prospects 2017, <https://population.un.org/wpp/>

- **The boosting of job creation and labour demand, as well as the fostering of self-employment and/or entrepreneurship**, through comprehensive training and improved access to financial and regulatory support.
- **Better training for young people for the job market**, by implementing timely reforms in education systems and offering market-oriented training, especially through accessible technical and vocational programmes aimed at even the most disadvantaged individuals.
- **Improvement of financial well-being for youth**, by streamlining the requirements for grants and loans for business by facilitating easier access to finance, along with other tax and regulatory incentives.
- **The enhancement of digitalisation of skills for job seekers and young professionals**, which is a necessity in the current context of rapid growth in the digital economy and technological innovation.

Realising this promising future may demand specific government programmes, tax-based incentives and educational reforms, each tailored to the needs and aspirations of African youth. These include an educational system with a stronger emphasis on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), as well as more inclusive and incentivising fiscal policies that promote youth employment and the creation of start-ups. These reforms would not only be timely, but they would also appear essential to achieving the aforementioned goals.

Considering the context of challenges that young individuals face in acquiring employment, it becomes plausible to recommend that the governments of the studied countries follow measures such as:

1. **Decentralise quality TVET:** Extend quality Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to reach disadvantaged young people in rural areas.
2. **Enhance coordination:** Improve coordination among implementing partners of youth employment programmes and policymakers.
3. **Boost youth participation:** Increase youth participation in all phases of public-sector policy and program formulation to ensure their views and positions are effectively collected and included.
4. **Expand labour-intensive public works:** Accelerate and diversify economic initiatives, including in labour-intensive public programmes, to create more job opportunities for youth people.
5. **Strengthen data collection:** Establish a robust system for data collection at all levels of the economy to gather comprehensive information on youth employment.
6. **Review legislation and policies:** Review existing legislation and policies related to expatriate labour quotas and business licensing processes to safeguard jobs for young people.
7. **Establish job referral centres:** Promote the establishment of decentralised job referral centres where job opportunities and information are shared, and young

people receive support for processing job applications. These centres could also facilitate apprenticeships and internships for skills development.

8. **Provide follow-up support:** Implement follow up support mechanisms for youth who have received training, including job referrals, placements, and insertion, to ensure their ongoing success.

Given that the future of work in Africa is linked to the modernisation of the expanding agricultural sector and to the widespread digitalisation of economic activities, including the transport sector and various services such as catering and tourism, there are possibilities for intersectoral innovations, like development, simplification, and optimisation of financial services to support agriculture, for example.

When it comes to the future of work for the youth of Africa, governments should ensure participatory processes which include key stakeholders in decision-making, from employers to TVET providers to representatives from civil society—and in particular, youth organisations. This inclusive approach could lead to practical and effective solutions, not only by considering the youth perspective, but also by enhancing the environment for job creation, which will then lead – in a sustainable manner – to streams of income and economic growth.

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Appendix

Table 5. Selected Public Policies related to Youth Employment

Country / Relevant Ministry Or Agency	Policy / Situation of Youth Employment
<p>Kingdom of Lesotho Ministry of Gender and Youth, Sports and Recreation</p>	<p>Youth Employment Stimulus Program 2020-2023 (accessed: August 2022)</p> <p>Current Situation</p> <p>Youth Unemployment has fallen.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 50% in 2000 - 32.8% in 2020 - However, in COVID-19 era - Still one of highest in the world - Gains are being reversed in COVID-19 era due to lockdowns and economic recession - Absence of Unemployment Insurance and Social Protection for Youth - Youth across all economic sectors affected - Youth in Informal Sector blocked by lockdown - Youth with low education have limited options - Semi-skilled youth whose decent jobs were lost in economic recession - University grads with dashed hopes (Skills Mismatch)

Country / Relevant Ministry Or Agency	Policy / Situation of Youth Employment
<p>Republic of South Africa</p>	<p>The Youth Employment Accord (accessed: August 2022)</p> <p>This Youth Employment Accord as an important step to address the challenges of youth employment and total employment as part of the decent work agenda. This Accord is the first of a series of youth interventions that the parties will work with each other on. This is intended to build trust between the parties, demonstrate the value of focused programmes to support young people, experiment with new programmes and address problems which may arise and use these lessons to redesign and expand the programmes to make a major impact that is required.</p> <p>Rapid rollout across the country of the youth employment strategy, which covers among others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training, internships, and apprenticeships - Private sector commitments and programmes - Youth brigades to give youth a chance to serve their communities, provide some work experience and training, integrate youth into a social movement, build social cohesion and earn a stipend - Mechanisms for coordination within government, based on identifying a central coordinating department to bring together the various government youth programmes.

Country / Relevant Ministry Or Agency	Policy / Situation of Youth Employment
<p>Republic of South Africa</p>	<p>National Digital and Future Skills Strategy of South Africa - Decent Jobs for Youth, 2021 – 2025 (accessed: August 2022)</p> <p>A special focus for the implementation programme guide is on digital skills for decent jobs for youth, noting that young people between the ages of 18 and 35 are the generation that will empower the South African economy and society with digital skills, noting too that more than 8 million young people are not-in-employment-education-or-training (NEET). This special focus is related to the South African government’s engagement with the global campaign for decent jobs, in concert with local stakeholders and global partners. Equally important is the focus on gender balance, and the focus on persons with disabilities, as gender and disability balance must be prioritised, must receive as much attention and funding as possible, to ensure skills equity in 21st century South Africa. Digital and future skills are a vital component of South Africa’s human resource capacity growth path, without which it cannot renew its economic sectors, government, and social sectors. Economic competitiveness needs digital and future skills, digital government needs digital and future skills, South Africans need digital and future skills, relevant to the objectives of each.</p>

Country / Relevant Ministry Or Agency	Policy / Situation of Youth Employment
<p>Republic of Uganda</p>	<p>Work and Income for Young Men and Women in Africa: Case of Uganda (accessed: August 2022)</p> <p>It is estimated that over 400,000 youth enter the labour force to compete for 9,000 jobs yearly. This is exacerbated by those who leave the agricultural sector in the rural areas in search of urban jobs. In response, government has attempted to reduce the youth employment problem by designing and implementing several strategies. Among these include provision of start-up capital (youth livelihood fund), providing an enabling investment climate, providing youth skilling programs among others. Youth Livelihood program (YLP) was developed for the unemployed and poor youth in the country. The program started in 2013 targeting youth between ages 18-30 years and covered 112 districts and had a budget of UGX 265 billion. The major challenges of the programs included the high demand vis a vis the limited resources. Others were desire for free funds, youth preferring white collar jobs, and need for immediate results.</p> <p>The National Employment Policy for Uganda: Increasing Decent Employment Opportunities and Labour Productivity for Socio - Economic Transformation (accessed: August 2022)</p> <p>Under the Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship Development of the Policy, component includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advocate for a Nation Youth Employment Policy - Advocate for the establishment of youth-friendly employment policies in the public and private sectors. - Promote entrepreneurship culture among the youth. - Promote youth participation in agricultural production, processing, and marketing. - Advocate for relevant and appropriate educational curriculum. - Establish youth employment bureaus in each region of Uganda. - Establish youth libraries and information centre at every district. - Initiate a model youth business and entrepreneurship project at the national level.

Country / Relevant Ministry Or Agency	Policy / Situation of Youth Employment
<p>Republic of Kenya</p>	<p>Employment Creation Potential for Youth of Growth Sectors in the Kenyan Economy (accessed: August 2022)</p> <p>It is estimated that close to 500,000 to 800,000 youths are entering the Kenyan job market annually. With total unemployment rate in the country at 9.7 per cent and unemployment rate for 15-24 age cohort at 13.7 per cent in 2015/16, the absorption rate of the youth has been low. Unemployment rate has been increasing since the global financial crisis of 2008/2009 and the outlook for the medium term is worsening. The country needs to create 900,000 new every year between 2015 and 2025 as a way of absorbing the high number of youths joining the job market (World Bank, 2015). The government with support from various stakeholders has undertaken short, medium, and long-term measures for employment creation. The short- and medium-term interventions include programs such as the “Kazi kKwa Vijana or jobs for the youth”, infrastructure and rural development. Other measures taken to create jobs for the youth have been through the Youth Employment Scheme Abroad (YESA), Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF) and Kenya Youth Empowerment Programme (KYEP). These measures have not fully tackled the unemployment challenge as the country continues to face unemployment and underemployment challenges.</p> <p>Despite Kenya’s strong economic growth, expansion of employment in the formal sector has been slow over the last two decades. There has been limited structural change in the composition of recorded employment and the share of the informal sector remained at nearly 83 per cent of total employment in the last two decades. Further, although the country has implemented various policy interventions to address youth employment, the interventions have not resulted into adequate job creation in various sectors for the youth.</p>

Country / Relevant Ministry Or Agency	Policy / Situation of Youth Employment
<p>Republic of Kenya</p>	<p>We find that agriculture, transport; trade, construction and education have the highest potential to create jobs for the youth. The agriculture sector has the highest employment multipliers in which livestock, vegetables (horticulture), rice production value chains have the greatest potential to create jobs. We also find that economic sectors in Kenya are interdependent such that expansion of one sector has backward and forward linkages with the other sectors. It is therefore important to adopt a comprehensive multisectoral approach in job creation strategy for the country. Indeed, economic activities vary across counties hence need to stimulate activities where each County and economic bloc has comparative advantage to ensure sustained job creation for the youth.</p> <p>Youth unemployment is attributed to the inability of the economy to create sufficient jobs during erratic economic growth. Moreover, youth access to employment has over the years been hindered by social factors ranging from relatively limited work experience, under-developed personal and professional networks, and limited knowledge of the labour market (Chari et al., 2017). Youth unemployment is associated with poverty and inequality, which in turn causes armed conflict, instability, irregular migration and constrain social cohesion among communities (World Bank, 2018).</p>

Country / Relevant Ministry Or Agency	Policy / Situation of Youth Employment
<p>Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)</p>	<p>Enhancing Youth Skills Development and Employment Opportunities in the Democratic Republic of Congo (accessed: August 2022)</p> <p>The rate of youth unemployment was high in the Republic of Congo, at 30.5 percent. Young women (with an unemployment rate of 31.6 percent) and vulnerable youth faced a particularly difficult situation. It was further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated economic downturn. Many youths lacked relevant skills in demand in the labour market. Moreover, the country’s skills development system was ill-equipped to provide youth with the kinds of in-demand skills sought by potential employers. Under the World Bank-financed Skills Development for Employability Project (PDCE - Project de développement des compétences pour l’employabilité– P128628), 5,460 vulnerable youth in the Republic of Congo (44 percent of whom were women), acquired training and skills for successful employment opportunities in several areas, including mechanics, carpentry, hospitality, electricity, plumbing, baking, and welding.</p> <p>In the Republic of Congo, the youth unemployment rate was high. Many young people lacked a quality education and market-relevant technical skills. Many were also out of school or had limited education. While some technical and vocational training opportunities existed, they were limited in quantity, highly theoretical, and lacked market relevance. The situation was even worse for young women. Moreover, the formal education system had little scope to offer training opportunities for youth to increase their skills. As few young people had savings and needed to earn a daily living, the opportunity costs of participating in training programs were often too high for them to participate.</p>

Country / Relevant Ministry Or Agency	Policy / Situation of Youth Employment
<p>Republic of Cameroon</p>	<p>Youth empowerment in Cameroon: The Special Youth Triennial Plan (accessed: August 2022)</p> <p>According to the African Youth Charter, youth are individuals aged between 15 to 35 years old. Cameroon’s population is estimated at about 23 million. Like most developing countries, the age pyramid is characterised by high proportion of youths with more than half of the population (63%) under 25 years.</p> <p>Challenges for youth in Cameroon</p> <p>Despite this demographic advantage, youth in Cameroon face several challenges, compromising their socio-economic potentials. Some of these challenges include Unemployment, poverty, and; lack of access to basic social security services, just to name a few.</p> <p>Youth empowerment programmes can generate better jobs in the informal sector, improving the prospects of youth regularly contributing to social security scheme available to the informal sector. The government of Cameroon has focused on developing policies and programmes that seek to accelerate the socio-economic empowerment and integration of this vulnerable group of people.</p> <p>Over the years, the government has been focused on developing and implementing specific programmes aimed at providing concrete solutions to the major preoccupation youth face in Cameroon, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to both quality education and adequate professional training - Access to decent jobs - Participation in the day-to-day activities of the community as well as decision making

Country / Relevant Ministry Or Agency	Policy / Situation of Youth Employment
<p>Republic of Cameroon</p>	<p>These important programmes and projects dedicated to the socio-economic integration of youths are performed in collaboration with the development partners, particularly in the areas of education, health, and employment. They programs are coordinated by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Civic Education (MINJEC).</p> <p>The Cameroon National Youth Council (CNJC): A framework for dialogue, expression, consultation, and youth action; it interfaces with the youths, the government and development partners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multipurpose Youth Empowerment Centres (CMPJ): Extracurricular coaching and accompanying structures for youth empowerment. - The National Youth Employment Covenant (PANEJ): Aimed at promoting youth employment, it offers opportunities for young people to acquire a professional training and thus increase their chances of employment. - The Integrated Support Project to Stakeholders of the Informal Sector (PIAASI): The aim is to ensure better supervision of youths operating in the informal sector and maximise the creation of productive, stable and decent jobs. It is intended through initiative to fund approximately 8 000 micro-projects and the training of their promoters. - The Support Programme to Rural and Urban Youth (PAJER-U): This programme is aimed at creating salaried jobs for youth, and funding micro and junior enterprises.

Country / Relevant Ministry Or Agency	Policy / Situation of Youth Employment
<p>Republic of Senegal</p>	<p>Support Programmes for Youth Employment and Employability in the Growth Sectors in Senegal (accessed: August 2022)</p> <p>Economic employment situation</p> <p>The situation of young people on the labour market remains worrying in Senegal (ILO, 2018; PAP plan for 2019-23; ENES survey for 2017). Although the country had a real GDP growth of over 5% per year between 2014 and 2019, it still has not created enough jobs, and the quality of those created remains a worrying issue (PAP for 2019-23, p. 12). The country's unemployment rate remains high (20.5%). It is higher in rural areas (22.1%) than in urban areas (12.6%), higher for women (29.9%) than for men (12.6%), and highest for the 15-35 age group. More specifically, the unemployment rate is 19.5% for young people aged 20 to 24 and 17.5% for those aged 25 to 29, while it is only 10% for adults (ENES for 2017).</p> <p>In addition, more than 100,000 young people enter the Senegalese labour market each year, but, due to limited opportunities for formal and decent employment, most of them end up in the informal sector (PAP for 2019-23).</p> <p>Strategies to promote employment</p> <p>In Senegal, approximately one in two people is under 18 years of age and the average population age is around 23 years (ANSD, 2020). Given this demographic structure, the hundreds of thousands of young people entering the labour market each year are a cause for concern for the country's government. That is why this has taken a number of initiatives by creating several public employment structures, among which are the following: the National Youth Employment Bureau (Agence Nationale de l'Emploi des Jeunes, ANEJ), the Bureau for the Employment of the Youth from the Suburbs (Agence pour l'Emploi des Jeunes des Banlieues, AJEB), the National Bureau for the Support of Street Vendors (Agence Nationale d'Appui aux Marchands Ambulants, ANAMA), and the National Youth Promotion Fund (Fonds National de Promotion des Jeunes, FNPJ). Useful as they were, these structures proved to be ineffective. This led the government to set up a single structure to coordinate youth employment initiatives, a structure called the National Bureau for the Promotion of Youth Employment (Agence nationale pour la promotion de l'emploi des jeunes, ANPEJ).</p>

Country / Relevant Ministry Or Agency	Policy / Situation of Youth Employment
<p>Federal Republic of Nigeria</p>	<p>Growth Sectors for Youth Employment in Nigeria (accessed: August 2022)</p> <p>Nigeria’s population was estimated by the United Nations in 2020 at 200 million people. This population is marked with a high proportion of youths between ages 15 – 34 years therefore indicating a very young population. Even though the Nigerian economy is thriving with high growth in some economic sectors, about 13.9 million Nigerian youths remain unemployed (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020). The problem of employment in Nigeria has manifested in underemployment especially in the informal sector which accounts for 54 percent of the jobs created. In tackling these problems, it is important to identify the promising economic sectors in Nigeria that have high job creation potentials for youth, as well as the political and economic constraints that militate against these sectors coupled with the conditions that will stimulate investment in these sectors.</p> <p>Limited access to employment opportunities is a key challenge because economic growth does not translate into employment. This jobless growth is due to economic and political crises that has plagued the country for years and which needs to be tackled.</p> <p>Evidence shows that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Youth unemployment are on the rise in Nigeria. - Nigeria has untapped potentials in cashew nuts, cocoa and sesame seeds. - Existence of production, trade, and industrial clusters across geopolitical zones in Nigeria. - All 12 sectors had positive employment elasticities ranging between 0.056 to 0.734 with the highest contributor from the financial services sector. - Increased access to finance, improved infrastructure and political stability are conditions necessary for investments.

Country / Relevant Ministry Or Agency	Policy / Situation of Youth Employment
<p>Kingdom of Morocco</p>	<p>Morocco's first national Integrated Youth Strategy (Strategie National Integree de la Jeunesse) (accessed: August 2022)</p> <p>The youth segment of Morocco's labour market is characterized by both high informality and unemployment. The transition to work for youth aged 15-24 make-up 17.5% of Morocco's total population and 26.4% of the working-age population of 15 to 64 years. The labour force participation rate for youth aged 15-24 declined from 45.8% in 2000 to 32.2% in 2014, which was due partly to the increase in schooling: enrolment rate increased from 27.3% to 46.4% over the same period. Also, the increase in schooling contributed to lowering the share of not in education, employment, or training (NEET) from 35.7% to 27.8%⁸⁰. NEET, however, is higher among women and older youth aged 18-24 years. Furthermore, 70% of male NEET are unemployed, while 93% of female NEET are inactive. Slow job creation and entry barriers generate high unemployment among the young and educated.</p> <p>Morocco's working population increases by 300,000 a year, while the job creation rate of 129, 000 per year has been insufficient to absorb the inflow of working population. As a result, youth unemployment rate is twice that of the total population. The rate has worsened among urban youth since the financial crisis growing from 31.3% in 2010 to 41% in 2016. The most affected are those with tertiary education, they are five times more likely to be unemployed than those without an education. Furthermore, unemployment tends to be more long-term, more than a year for about 70% of youth. Due to the scarcity of jobs, the share of the unemployed is higher among those with tertiary education. In fact, two-thirds of the unemployed and 38.6% of the highly educated are willing to work for wages lower than the minimum wage.</p>

Country / Relevant Ministry Or Agency	Policy / Situation of Youth Employment
<p>Kingdom of Morocco</p>	<p>Given the high youth unemployment rate in the country, the GoM launched the 10-year National Employment Strategy in (2015-2025). The policy seeks to promote the social inclusion of women and young people's integration by creating permanent jobs that will support improvement in productivity and the unit cost of labour. The strategy is based on four pillars:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guiding the macroeconomic and sectoral policies towards the creation of new jobs (38,000 jobs per unit of GDP or 200,000 jobs on average annually); - Strengthening human capital through intensive training, improved levels of qualification and reform of the social protection system; - Strengthening current employment programs; and - Improving the governance and functions of the labour market. <p>To this end, the National Agency for the Promotion of Employment and Skills (ANAPEC), the GoM's program implementing agency for employment issues, launched three initiatives to operationalize the strategy. 1) Idmaj provides wage subsidies to unemployed; 2) Tehil delivers youth training; and 3) Moukawalati focuses on entrepreneurship promotion through training and financial assistance. Similarly, line ministries have adopted three strategies on 1) youth integration- to improve the training system and bringing youth into the labour market through internship or skill matching, b) employment- to increase jobs and productivity, and c) microenterprise promotion- to support microenterprise financing. On the demand side, such as Morocco's Global Jobs and Morocco Green Plan aim to promote job creation through macroeconomics and sectoral policies (e.g. compensation reform, flexible exchange rate policy, pro-growth sector strategies).</p>

Country / Relevant Ministry Or Agency	Policy / Situation of Youth Employment
<p>Arab Republic of Egypt</p>	<p>Employment for Youth in Egypt (EYE) (accessed: August 2022)</p> <p>Egypt is a young society with more than 20 million people within the age group (18-29) years, representing about 21% of the total population according to Egypt's Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) latest released statistics. In the past two decades, employment growth in Egypt has failed to keep up with the growth of the working age population. 90 per cent of people unemployed are under the age of 30, and unemployment has reached an unprecedented new high of 31.3 per cent of the active youth population.</p> <p>However, unemployment is only the tip of the iceberg as many young people must accept low productivity, low paid and insecure jobs, far below their capabilities. The lack of decent work is preventing the next generation of Egyptians from gaining the skills, experience, and income necessary for the further economic, social and political development of their country.</p> <p>Entrepreneurship should represent an option for many more young people in Egypt. About 50% of young Egyptians recognize entrepreneurship as a worthy career option. However, very few young persons do start a business, in addition to the fact that the financial market has a missing middle, where the start-up of small and medium-sized projects is poorly served.</p> <p>Despite the increasing levels of educational attainment among the youth and the progressively narrowing gaps between genders in education, young Egyptian university graduates suffer from high unemployment rates, especially females. As of 2020, the unemployment rate for Egyptian youth between 15 to 24 years of age was 30% unemployment, with 25% among males and 42% among females (Danish Trade Development Unit, 2020).</p>

Country / Relevant Ministry Or Agency	Policy / Situation of Youth Employment
<p>Arab Republic of Egypt</p>	<p>This problem of youth unemployment goes hand in hand with other deficiencies embedded within the Egyptian labour market including the modest rates of job creation, stagnating productivity levels, increasing informalities, and low labour wages. A comparison of the youth and adult or prime-age employment patterns usefully differentiates between the problems exclusive to each age group and those which are inherent in the Egyptian economy and labour market. This classification would help design effective targeting policies. Furthermore, it is important to study the dynamics of employment and unemployment during crises, such as the Arab Spring and the revolutions witnessed by Egypt starting from 2011, to investigate their impacts compared to periods before and after the emergence of these crises and distinguish between problems and issues that are temporary and those which are inherited in labour markets.</p>



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