

# Barriers to youth work opportunities

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## Question

*What factors disproportionately hamper young people's access to work opportunities (as opposed to hampering all job seekers equally), and how do these differ for young men and young women, and for different social/economic groups in low income countries?*

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## 1. Overview

There is growing evidence that youth unemployment is becoming a bigger issue and challenge than adult unemployment (Manpower group, 2012). While young labour participants and adult participants can be affected by similar opportunities and barriers to work, youth may experience these barriers to a greater degree and may also face additional constraints. This report explores factors that constrain youth access to work opportunities in low-income countries. Most of the literature focuses on Africa. While there are a few empirical studies, most of the literature is based on qualitative analysis. Barriers to work opportunities identified include demand side factors (economic constraints; labour market failures; poor access to credit) and supply side factors (educational and skills mismatch; lack of social capital). They are cross-cut by social, economic, and political biases against youth (Moore, 2015). Urban youth and female youth are more likely to face obstacles in accessing work opportunities.

### I. Demand side factors

Barriers to employment and work opportunities on the demand side are often not necessarily youth specific but can **affect job seekers generally** (Betcherman & Khan, 2015). These include

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the **state of the economy, absence of a business-friendly environment and infrastructure shortfalls** (Ibid). **Young people are particularly vulnerable, however, to demand-side fluctuations** (Choudhry et al., 2012; in Baah-Boateng, 2016). During difficult economic times, youth are **often the first to be laid off**. This hinders their ability to build skills and experience (see Baah-Boateng, 2016; Manpower Group, 2012). **Young people are also more likely to be affected by** certain constraints, such as **poor employer perceptions of them; lack of entry-level jobs; inefficient information systems; and weak access to credit**.

### **The economy**

Unemployment is closely linked to the state of the economy (Broussara & Tekleselassie, 2012). There is **debate about the role of real gross domestic product (GDP)** on youth employment in Africa. While Anyanwu (2013)'s empirical analysis of macroeconomic determinants of youth employment challenges finds that real GDP growth has a significant positive effect on youth employment, Baah-Boateng (2016)'s econometric analysis finds that real GDP growth has no significant effect on youth employment.

There is consensus in much of the literature on Africa that poor progress in structural transformation of the economy toward a modern, export-oriented enterprise sector has resulted in limited economic opportunities and weak employment generation (Baah-Boateng, 2016; Fox & Thomlin, 2016; Betcherman & Khan, 2015). Baah-Boateng's (2016) study on Africa finds that the quality of economic growth (measured by the share of agriculture and manufacturing value added in total national output) has a significant negative effect on youth unemployment. Growth is largely due to extraction of natural resources and capital intensive service sectors that do not advance labour absorption and youth employment (Ibid; Baah-Boateng, 2014). There is also a low share of the labour force working in private industry, in contrast to Asia or Latin America (Fox & Thomas, 2016). East Asia has undergone a more labour absorbing transformation, with labour intensive manufacturing and services accounting for a greater share of national output and generating sufficient employment (Betcherman & Khan, 2015; Grant, 2012).

Literature on various areas of the world (Africa, the Middle East & North Africa; Eastern Europe & Central Asia) finds that the **limited number of formal jobs** (stemming from economic structures that do not foster job creation) is a **key obstacle to youth economic opportunities** (see Morre, 2015; Malik & Awadallah, 2013; Nkechi et al., 2012; Elder et al., 2015). This youth employment problem is considered to be a subset of overall employment challenges (Fox & Thomlin, 2016), although the degree of impact may vary (Baah-Boateng, 2016).

### **Neglect of employment as a core component of the development agenda**

**Employment has not been a focus of economic policies** in many countries, but has been treated instead as a residual outcome of economic policies (Baah-Boateng, 2014). Even where policy statements do promote employment, few cities actually promote labour intensive growth (Grant, 2012). In terms of agricultural policy, the separation of efforts to accelerate agricultural growth in Africa and job creation has undermined the generation of income and employment for large numbers of young people (Filmer, Fox et al., 2014). Governments have also ignored or undermined the potential of household enterprises/the informal sector, which could serve as a key area of work for young people. Vendors, for example, are often considered a nuisance and sent away from business districts (Ibid).

### **Employer perceptions and lack of entry-level jobs**

Literature on Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia and Pacific finds that employers and enterprises are often **sceptical about hiring young people, citing lack of expertise** and professional and personal immaturity. At the same time, they are reluctant to invest resources in training young people when they could hire more experienced adult workers (Elder & Koné, 2014; Elder, 2014; Grant, 2012; Manpower Group, 2012). (See also section on skills mismatch.)

Labour markets in low-income countries often **lack available jobs suited to entry-level skills**, with job postings requiring substantial work experience (Baah-Boateng, 2016; Manpower Group, 2012).

### **Ineffective labour market information systems**

While the lack of an effective labour market information system is a constraint for job seekers generally, **youth are particularly affected by information asymmetry** due to their limited labour market experience and weak networking (Baah-Boateng, 2014). (See also section on social capital). Many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, do not have efficient employment placement centres to register and facilitate placement of youth in employment (Ibid). Youth may not be aware of how to navigate the labour market or to find and pursue available jobs in the absence of such support (Betcherman & Khan, 2015; Manpower Group, 2012). A case study on Viet Nam finds that weak labour market information systems has resulted in students continuing to apply for courses based on family associations and suggestions that are poorly suited to the economy (Grant, 2012). (See also section on skills mismatch).

### **Poor access to credit and financial services**

**Poor access to credit and labour regulations can disproportionately affect young people** (Betcherman & Khan, 2015). Anywanu (2013)'s study finds that access to credit has a positive and significant effect on youth employment in North Africa. Poor access to agricultural credit and financial services, along with insecure land rights, is a key obstacle for young people interested in agriculture (Moore, 2015; Filmer, Fox et al., 2014). Young people also struggle to gain access to credit to start non-farm businesses, hindering youth employment (Ibid; Baah-Boateng, 2014; Msigwa & Kipsha, 2013).

## **II. Supply side factors**

**Supply side barriers, such as skills mismatch, are more likely to affect young people than adults** (Betcherman & Khan, 2015).

### **Youth bulge**

The increasing young population in Africa and its effect on labour market inflows (against the backdrop of limited job opportunities) – the **youth population bulge - is often cited as a key cause of youth labour market challenges in Africa** (Baah-Boateng, 2014). There are **different findings, however, in empirical studies**. Baah-Boateng (2016)'s econometric analysis finds that the youth population share has a significant effect on youth unemployment in Africa. Anywanu (2013) also finds that the ratio of youth to total population has a negative and

statistically significant effect on youth employment in Africa. In contrast, Lam (2014)'s statistical and regression analyses finds limited evidence that a higher proportion of young people in the working-age population (youth bulge) leads to higher youth unemployment.

The rapid increase in the youth population would not be a concern if young people had the relevant skills to make them useful in the economic development process (Baah-Boateng, 2014); and if the economy had the capacity to absorb them. The labour force in Africa is growing faster than in Asia or Latin America, which makes it harder to transform the structure of employment in the former (Fox & Thomas, 2016).

## Education

Human capital endowment – measured by education, skills and work experience – is considered to be the key determinant of the labour market success of individuals (Baah-Boateng, 2016). **Youth experience greater formal labour market challenges due to their lower level of work-relevant skills.** Literature on Africa, Asia and Pacific, Eastern Europe and Central Asia notes that low levels of educational attainment and skills are key obstacles to finding work by young people (Baah-Boateng, 2014; Elder, 2014; Elder et al., 2015).

**Studies have also observed, however, that youth with higher education** (with at least a secondary school education) in low-income countries (e.g. Africa, Asia & Pacific) are **more likely to be unemployed** compared to the less educated (see Baah-Boateng, 2016). This finding is attributed to **higher employment aspirations** on the part of graduates (who hold strong preferences and find work in the informal sector unappealing); and to their greater resources, which gives them the ability to engage in extensive job search and to hold out for their ideal job (usually the formal, wage sector) (Ibid; Fox, Senbet & Simbanegavi, 2016; Betcherman & Khan, 2015; Elder, 2014; Filmer, Fox et al., 2014). This results in educated youth **competing for few well-paying, formal jobs** in the public sector – and often searching for employment for a long time without success (Fox & Thomas, 2016; Fox & Thomlin, 2016; Filmer, Fox et al., 2014; Elder & Koné, 2014; Grant, 2012).

In contrast, **young people with limited or no education are more likely to engage in informal employment** (household farms and firms) and agricultural work or to accept lower wages. They often come from low income households and have no choice but to earn income more immediately (Baah-Boateng, 2014; Elder & Koné, 2014; Msigwa & Kipasha, 2013; Mitra & Verick, 2013; Grant, 2012). Young people are often overrepresented in the informal sector, experiencing unstable jobs (Perrot, 2015). In such situations, it is not unemployment that is a concern, but rather underemployment, low productivity and low wages (Fox, 2016; Fox et al., 2016; Ismail, 2016).

## Skills mismatch

Despite growing educational attainment, much of the literature cites a lack of skills and experience as key barriers to youth work opportunities in various areas of the world. The **education systems in various low-income countries offer a curricula that fails to foster the skills required** in the contemporary labour market (e.g. problem solving, communication, cooperation, leadership, critical thinking, creativity, interpersonal, computer literacy, vocational and entrepreneurial skills) (Fox, Senbet & Simbanegavi, 2016; Betcherman & Khan, 2015; Baah-

Boateng, 2014; Filmer, Fox et al., 2014; Ajufu, 2013; EFA, 2012; Manpower Group, 2012; Grant, 2012; Nkechi et al., 2012; Roudi, 2011). In Africa and the Middle East, for example, the school system is still geared toward achieving employment in the public sector, which represents an area of low growth (Baah-Boateng, 2014; Roudi, 2011).

### **Lack of social capital**

Alongside lack of work experience and appropriate skills set, **lack of networks and connections** (especially for youth from families lacking significant social capital) and patronage systems **can put youth at a tremendous disadvantage for new job opportunities** (Baah-Boateng, 2014; Malik & Awadallah, 2013; EFA, 2012; Manpower Group, 2012; Grant, 2012; Nkechi et al., 2012). In MENA, for example, limited economic opportunities are rationed by connection rather than competition (Malik & Awadallah, 2013). A report on the Asia-Pacific region also finds that most Asian-Pacific youth search for jobs through informal networks, which can be discriminatory towards less-connected youth, who are excluded from such job networks (Elder, 2014).

## **III. Demographic characteristics**

Demographic characteristics of youth (e.g. sex, education, geographic location) have implications for their work opportunities and barriers to work (Baah-Boateng, 2016). Marginalized youth, such as young women, youth with disabilities, youth from minority populations, youth living in remote rural areas and urban slums, face particular challenges in accessing work and engaging in vulnerable employment (Moore, 2015). As such, youth unemployment needs to be disaggregated and differentiated along categories of youth (Ismail, 2016).

As discussed above, youth with greater levels of education often experience higher levels of unemployment, whereas youth with less education experience underemployment and greater vulnerability in employment.

### **Gender**

Much of the literature, focusing on a range of countries and regions, emphasise that **young women are more likely to have difficulty in accessing work opportunities**. Youth unemployment rates in countries in Africa and Asia, for example, are consistently higher among females than males (Baah-Boateng, 2016 and 2014; Elder, 2014; Elder & Koné, 2014; Msigwa & Kipasha, 2013). Women who do work are more likely to work in agriculture and/or to find jobs in the informal sector (Fox & Thomas, 2016; Ismail, 2016; Elder, 2014; Broussar & Tekleselassie, 2012; Roudi, 2011). In Eastern Europe and Central Asia, young men are more likely to obtain stable employment than young women, despite similar educational levels (Elder et al., 2015). In Latin America, high levels of education among girls have not improved their labour market position (see Grant, 2012). In MENA as well, more educated women are not necessarily able to find a job more easily than less educated women (Roudi, 2011).

Social and cultural attitudes and norms tend to undermine labour force participation of young women in various contexts, such as in MENA and South Asian countries (Mitra & Verick, 2013; Roudi, 2011). International data demonstrates that girls and young women often face barriers in

accessing good quality, non-stereotyped studies and vocational training courses, which limits their professional choices and opportunities when they enter the job market (Perrot, 2015).

### **Urban-rural areas**

Youth are expected to comprise 60 percent of urban populations by 2030 and are over-represented among the urban poor (Grant, 2012, p. 1). There is broad consensus and extensive evidence that **youth unemployment rates are much higher in urban than in rural areas** (Baah-Boateng, 2016 and 2014; Ismail, 2016). Youth, in particular, are attracted to urban life and to the prospect of jobs that pay more than agriculture, but these are not readily available (Ibid; Ajufo, 2013; Grant, 2012). Fox and Thomas (2016) find in the case of Africa that the **transition from school to work is excessively long** for some young people in urban areas – as urban youth can search a long time for a preferred wage job, without success. In Tanzania, young people living in urban areas were found to be five times more likely to be unemployed than employed (Msigwa & Kipasha, 2013, p. 73). In Ethiopia, while youth in rural areas face similar labour market outcomes as the adult rural population, youth in urban areas encounter greater challenges than the adult urban population (Broussara & Tekleselassie, 2012).

### **Other demographic factors**

Youth growing up in poorer and less educated households, with less access to opportunities to build necessary skills and less access to professional networks, will be at a particular disadvantage in entering the work force (Fox, Senbet & Simbanegavi, 2016; Baah-Boateng, 2016; Elder et al., 2015). **Youth with disabilities find it particularly hard to get apprenticeships or job training** that would enable them to enter the workplace (Groce & Kett, 2014).

## **2. International experience – annotated bibliography**

### **Youth and skills: Putting education to work**

Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report. (2012). Paris: UNESCO

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002180/218003e.pdf>

This report provides a summary of progress towards the six EFA goals, and towards spending on education to finance the goals. It also focuses on the skills needs of young people. It identifies **unequal access to skills** as an issue for youth unemployment, which exacerbates the disadvantages experienced by members of marginalised social groups, including women and the poor. It highlights three main types of skills youth require for employment: foundation (literacy and numeracy skills); transferable (problem solving, communication, creativity, leadership and entrepreneurial capabilities); and technical and vocational skills. The report finds, however, that in thirty of the fifty-nine countries analysed, at least half of 15-19 year olds **lack foundation skills** (p. 179). This is the case for twenty-three of the thirty Sub-Saharan African countries in the data set (Ibid). In addition, in most poor countries, girls are less likely than boys to achieve foundation skills. Alongside a lack of skills, the report identifies in some cases **stagnant economics, corrupt politics and nepotism** as factors constraining young people from getting decent work.

## **Urbanization and the employment opportunities of youth in developing countries**

Grant, U. (2012). Paper commissioned for the EFA Global Monitoring Report, Youth and skills: Putting education to work

<http://www.youthmetro.org/uploads/4/7/6/5/47654969/217879e.pdf>

This background paper provides an overview of urbanization patterns across developing countries in relation to economic growth - and implications for urban poverty, particularly among urban youth (under 18 years old). Youth are expected to comprise 60 percent of urban populations by 2030 and are over-represented among the urban poor. The paper emphasises that **urban areas are characterised by high competition for jobs** and youth populations are vulnerable to high levels of unemployment. It identifies the **low level of formal education achievement and lack of entrepreneurial skills** among poor urban youth as a key constraint to work opportunities. Other barriers include socioeconomic factors, such as the **strength of local markets and an individual's own networks** mediate the kinds of opportunities available to youth.

The paper looks at four urban case studies:

- **Brazil:** skilled youth have tended to maintain higher employment than low skilled youths.
- **Egypt:** unemployment is highest among those with the lowest and highest level of education. This may reflect limited options for the poorest youth and a willingness to wait for a well-paying public sector jobs among the university educated youth. Female youth face discrimination in the urban labour market, but less so within the public sector. Most employment creation in recent years has occurred in the informal private sector, whereas the public sector has stagnated and the formal private sector is constrained by labour laws and other restrictions. Personal contacts are important, however, for accessing the informal market, which acts as a barrier for some categories of urban youth.
- **Ghana:** barriers to employment for youth include employer perceptions of their professional and personal immaturity, as well as supervision and training needs.
- **Vietnam:** young people remain in education in urban areas. However, poor labour information systems, poor training quality and failure of training structures to meet the changing requirements of the labour market undermine youth unemployment. Students continue to study courses that are ill-suited to the needs of the economy.

## **Youth unemployment challenge and solutions: What business can do now**

Manpower Group. (2012). Milwaukee: Manpower Group

[http://www3.weforum.org/docs/Manpower\\_YouthEmploymentChallengeSolutions\\_2012.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/Manpower_YouthEmploymentChallengeSolutions_2012.pdf)

This paper looks at the youth employment challenge from the talent-centric perspective. It notes that there is growing evidence that youth unemployment is following a different path to adult unemployment, is shaped by different factors and is trending toward poorer outcomes. The problem persists in good economic times and worsens in bad economic times. Youth participation rates are falling relative to adult participation rates, and youth unemployment rates are consistently 2-4 times adult unemployment rates.

The paper identifies the following as key factors that constrain youth from initial workforce entry:

- **Lack of information, networks and connections** among youth, especially youth from families lacking significant social capital.
- **Lack of skills relevant to the workplace**, due in part to faulty school curricula and poor connections between employers and the educational system. Young people also lack specific contemporary workplace skills, such as cooperation, communication, critical thinking, creativity, and a focus on the needs of the enterprise.
- **Lack of experience and credentials**, which makes employers sceptical about hiring young people. At the same time, they are reluctant to invest resources in training young people, when more experienced adult workers may be unemployed and available for hire.
- **Lack of available jobs suited to entry-level skills**, in some labour markets, especially in the developing world.
- **Lack of consistency**: in difficult economic times, young people are often the first to be laid off, which hinders their ability to build skills and experience.

### **Youth bulges and youth unemployment**

Lam, D. (2014). IZA World of Labour, 26

<http://dx.doi.org/10.15185/izawol.26>

This study demonstrates through statistical and regression analyses that there is limited evidence, especially for developing countries, that a higher proportion of young people in the working-age population (a youth bulge) leads to higher youth unemployment. It should thus not be assumed that declines in the relative size of the youth population will translate into falling youth unemployment without further policy measures to improve the youth labour market.

### **Young, woman and unemployed: the triple challenge**

Perrot, M. (2015). Plan International

<https://plan-international.org/publications/young-woman-and-unemployed-triple-challenge>

This report highlights situations experienced by the most vulnerable young women in terms of accessing decent employment or self-employment in developing and emerging countries; and demonstrates from a grid analysis and field experiences how to mainstream gender at all stages of youth economic empowerment programmes.

The report states that young women comprise the majority of the 628 million young people aged 15-24 who are not in employment, education or training; representing over two-thirds in some countries, such as Pakistan and Niger (p. 7). International data also demonstrates that girls and boys are generally steered into studies in stereotyped areas. Girls and young women also face barriers in terms of entering and staying in school and acceptance on good quality, non-stereotyped vocational training courses. All of these factors limit the professional choices and opportunities of young women when they enter the job market.

The report also highlights that young people and women are overrepresented in the informal sector, often experiencing unstable jobs. In Sub-Saharan Africa, at least eight out of every ten young people are likely to enter the work force in an informal job, and among them, young women are the most affected (see p. 14). In 2013, 85 percent of women in Sub-Saharan Africa and 80 percent in Southern Asia and in Oceania held informal jobs (see p. 14).



### Youth with disabilities

Groce, N. and Kett, M. (2014), Working paper series, no. 23, London: Leonard Cheshire Disability and Inclusive Development Centre

[https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lc-ccr/centrepublishations/workingpapers/WP23\\_Youth\\_with\\_Disabilities.pdf](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lc-ccr/centrepublishations/workingpapers/WP23_Youth_with_Disabilities.pdf)

This paper explores various challenges that youth with disabilities face, including access to work opportunities. Youth with disabilities are often restricted in a wide range of countries in what course of study they are allowed to pursue, with the presumption that they would not be able to translate the degree into work in certain fields. As such, many disabled young people enter the workforce unprepared. Unlike non-disabled youth, youth with disabilities also find it particularly hard to get apprenticeships or job training that would enable them to enter the workplace.

## 3. Regional experience - annotated bibliography

### Africa

#### The youth unemployment challenge in Africa: What are the drivers?

Baah-Boateng, W. (2016), The Economic and Labour Relations Review

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1035304616645030>

This study undertakes an empirical assessment of the main sources of youth unemployment in Africa. Based on panel data of 41 African countries covering the period 2000–2010, it finds a demographic youth bulge and poor economic growth from both supply and demand sides of the market to be key drivers of youth unemployment. Specifically, empirical findings (econometric analysis) include:

- Per capita real GDP has no statistically significant effect on youth employment in Africa (contrary to Anyanwu, 2013 – see below). Real GDP growth showed no significant effect on youth employment.
- On the demand side, the **quality of economic growth** (measured by the share of agriculture and manufacturing value added in total national output) has a significant negative effect on youth unemployment. Growth in Africa has largely been driven by extraction of natural resources (rather than agriculture and manufacturing), which has a **weak employment-generating effect**. Such lower employment-friendly economic growth is a key source of youth unemployment.
- The ability of a country to generate employment (measured by employment-to-population ratio) contributes to reducing youth unemployment.
- **The structure of the labour market** has implications for youth unemployment in Africa: a high rate of vulnerable employment also contributes to a decrease in youth unemployment and vice versa.
- On the supply side, the **youth population share** was found to significantly explain youth unemployment in Africa.
- **Youth unemployment rates are higher among females** than males: of 12 African countries, 10 experienced a higher rate for females than males.
- **Youth unemployment is more highly concentrated in urban than rural areas**: all 12 countries represented have higher urban youth unemployment rates than in rural areas.

Youth, in particular, are drawn to urban life and the prospect of jobs that pay more than agriculture – but these are not readily available.

- **Education does not have a significant effect on youth unemployment.** Youth unemployment rates are higher among the educated (with secondary school education or better) than the less educated or uneducated in Africa. This may be the case because the informal sector does not appeal to the educated and in many cases, they can afford to be unemployed.

### **Youth employment in Sub-Saharan Africa: Challenges, constraints and opportunities**

Fox, L., Senbet, L. W., and Simbanegavi, W. (2016). *Journal of African Economies*, 25 (2), i3-i15  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/jae/ejv027>

This article discusses at the situation of youth in Sub-Saharan Africa in terms of labour force participation. It highlights a **skills deficit** and growing numbers of youth as key challenges to youth employment. Although educational attainment is rising in most SSA countries, the **quality of education is considered weak and ineffective** in building the non-cognitive skills necessary to enter the labour force. Youth growing up in poor households, with less access to opportunities to build necessary skills, will be at a particular disadvantage in entering the work force.

The paper points out that real youth unemployment in low-income Africa is actually very low, because most working age people cannot afford to be unemployed. Many families are unable to fully support a recent graduate while he or she looks for a job. They and youth who do not have secondary school education need to make their own livelihoods, either by getting land and farming, or starting a non-farm business. Under-employment (rather than unemployment) is considered to be a key issue in rural areas. **It is among urban graduates that youth unemployment is high.** They often come from richer households, have the means to engage in extensive job searches and are unwilling to work in the informal sector. Substantial unemployment also persists in upper-income countries, with broader safety nets.

### **Africa's got work to do: A diagnostic of youth employment challenges in Sub-Saharan Africa**

Fox, L. and Thomlin, A. (2016). *Journal of African Economies*, 25 (2), i16-i36  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/jae/ejv026>

This article explores the macroeconomics of the youth employment problem in the low and lower middle income countries of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). It finds that the youth employment problem is a **subset of the overall employment challenges** in SSA. These employment challenges stem from **poor progress in structural transformation**. The slow development of a modern, export-oriented enterprise sector has resulted in limited economic opportunities for youth entering the labour market with 'high aspirations'. The desire for a formal wage job (with a contract) can lead **urban youth to search a long time**, without success. Getting a formal wage job is more likely with more education, but jobs are still limited.

### **Characteristics and macroeconomic determinants of youth employment in Africa**

Anyanwu, J. C. (2013). *African Development Review*, 25(2), 107-129  
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-8268.2013.12019.x/full>

This paper analyses the characteristics of youth employment and unemployment in Africa; and empirically studies the main macroeconomic determinants of youth employment (proxied by

youth employment-to-population ratio for the age group 15–24 over the period 1991 and 2009), using cross-sectional data. It finds that:

- Domestic **investment** rate: is negatively and significantly associated with youth employment in North Africa.
- Government **consumption** expenditures: negatively and significantly affect youth employment in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Rising **inflation**: is negatively and significantly associated with youth employment in North Africa.
- The level of **real GDP per capita**: has a negative and statistically significant effect in both the overall Africa and North Africa youth employment.
- **Real GDP growth**: positively and significantly affects youth employment in the overall Africa, Sub-Saharan and North Africa estimations.
- **FDI-GDP ratio** (globalisation indicator): is only positively significant in the case of youth employment in Sub-Saharan Africa. It has an insignificant effect on youth employment in the rest of the estimations. This thus does not support the view that inflow of foreign direct investment enhances youth employment in Africa as a whole. This may be the case because most FDI inflows to Africa go to the natural resources sectors such as minerals, which are enclave and capital-intensive sectors, creating little local employment.
- **Access to credit**: has a positive and statistically significant effect on only youth employment in North Africa.
- **Infrastructure**: (ICT) is positive and statistically significant in youth employment in North Africa.
- **Education**: has a positive and statistically significant effect on youth employment in the all-Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa estimations. However, the coefficient is negative and significant in the North Africa result, mainly because primary education alone, in a region with higher levels of education, would be insufficient for higher youth employment.
- **Demographic factors**: The ratio of youth to total population has a negative and statistically significant effect on youth employment in all-Africa and North Africa samples. However, in Sub-Saharan Africa, the ratio of youth to total population has a positive and significant effect on all youth and male youth employment.
- **Institutionalized democracy**: has a positive and statistically significant effect on youth employment in the entire continent and Sub-Saharan Africa.
- **Regional effects**: Central Africa and East African countries have more youth employment compared to South, West and North Africa.
- **Oil**: Net oil importing countries have systematically more youth employment compared to net oil-exporting countries in Africa — continent-wide, in Sub-Saharan Africa, and in North Africa. This result suggests that, holding other factors constant, net oil-exporting countries experience lower levels of youth employment than net oil-importing countries. In this sense, our results also suggest that oil-exporting nations have not utilized their huge oil revenues to create adequate jobs for their citizens, especially the youth.

## Youth employment challenges in Africa: Policy options and agenda for future research

Baah-Boateng, W. (2014). Paper presented at the AERC biannual conference in Lusaka, Zambia, December

[https://www.researchgate.net/profile/William\\_Baah-](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/William_Baah-Boateng2/publication/272418275_Youth_employment_challenges_in_Africa_Policy_options_and_agenda_for_future_research/links/553501710cf2df9ea6a417fa.pdf)

[Boateng2/publication/272418275\\_Youth\\_employment\\_challenges\\_in\\_Africa\\_Policy\\_options\\_and\\_agenda\\_for\\_future\\_research/links/553501710cf2df9ea6a417fa.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/William_Baah-Boateng2/publication/272418275_Youth_employment_challenges_in_Africa_Policy_options_and_agenda_for_future_research/links/553501710cf2df9ea6a417fa.pdf)

This paper explores issues in youth employment in Africa and identifies key constraints that youth face in the labour market:

- **Poor quality of growth** (demand side): the weak employment effect of growth is largely due to a focus on low labour absorption extractive and technologically advanced and capital intensive services sectors.
- **Neglect of employment in development agendas** (demand side): employment has not been the focus of economic policies in many countries. Rather, it is often treated as a residual outcome of economic policies.
- **Youth population bulge** (supply side): the increasing young population in Africa and its effect on labour market inflows (against the backdrop of limited job opportunities) is often cited as a major cause of labour market challenges facing the youth in Africa.
- **Education and skills constraints** (supply side): youth experience greater formal labour market challenges due to their low level of skills and the low quality of education, which is often still geared toward employment in the public sector. This results in a skills mismatch in the current labour market, which requires more 'soft skills', such as problem solving, communication, interpersonal and computer literacy.
- **Labour market rigidities**: workers' unions tend to keep wages in the formal segment of the market higher, compelling employers to reduce costs by minimising employment.
- **Ineffective labour market information systems**: youth are particularly constrained by information asymmetry due to their limited labour market experience and weak networking.

The paper also finds the following variations among youth:

- **Gender**: available data indicates that out of 26 selected African countries, 16 experienced a higher youth unemployment rate for females than males at different periods.
- **Geography**: youth unemployment rates in urban areas are far higher than in rural areas. This is explained by the dominance of agriculture activities in rural areas that maintains underutilisation of labour force, instead of unemployment. In addition, youth are often attracted to the cities in search of higher paying jobs that do not actually exist.
- **Education**: there is a higher youth unemployment rate among the educated than the less or uneducated. While youth without secondary school education often do not have the skills to enable them to secure regular or formal sector jobs, those with education are increasingly competing for few formal jobs without considering employment in the informal sector. Young people with no or limited education recorded the lowest unemployment rate as they have no access to formal employment and are forced to settle for informal agriculture and non-technical jobs.

## Youth employment in Sub-Saharan Africa: Taking stock of the evidence and knowledge gaps

Betcherman, G. and Khan, T. (2015). Ottawa: IDRC

[https://www.idrc.ca/sites/default/files/sp/Documents%20EN/Youth\\_Employment\\_Sub-Saharan\\_Africa\\_WEB\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.idrc.ca/sites/default/files/sp/Documents%20EN/Youth_Employment_Sub-Saharan_Africa_WEB_FINAL.pdf)

This scoping paper discusses the critical challenge of youth employment in Sub-Saharan Africa. It finds that:

- **Youth with higher education are more likely to be unemployed:** this reflects the fact that the better-educated generally are more likely to be in the wage sector, or to be willing to wait to find a job in that sector. There are two patterns: in some countries, there is a linear relationship, with youth unemployment rates increasing with more education. In others, unemployment peaks for those with secondary attainment but declines for those young people with postsecondary education.
- **Schooling correlates with where young people work:** the majority who have not completed primary education are employed in agriculture; those with primary or lower-secondary schooling are likely to be in household enterprises; with the better-educated in the wage sector (see Fox and Filmer, 2014). The issue is thus not necessarily unemployment, but underemployment (particularly precarious and low-paid employment in agriculture and self-employment/household enterprises).
- **The structure of employment has not changed:** unlike in East Asia, where agriculture has decreased significantly, with manufacturing and services accounting for a greater share of national output and employment, the structure, the limited structural changes in Sub-Saharan Africa have constrained opportunities for youth. Within agriculture, low productivity is a key constraint to good livelihoods. In wealthier countries, a focus on resource-based industries has also not generated the employment needed to absorb youth.
- On the demand side, many of the employment obstacles faced are not necessarily youth-specific. These include infrastructure shortfalls, governance and corruption issues, absence of a business-friendly environment. Other obstacles, such as access to credit and labour regulations, may disproportionately affect young people.
- **On the labour supply side, barriers are more likely to affect young people** than adults. As elsewhere, African employers often cite a lack of skills and experience as the key reasons for not hiring young people. This is despite growing educational attainment, suggesting a **mismatch between the skills** learned in school and the needs of the labour market. Weaknesses include lack of basic, non-cognitive and vocational skills. Poor health and nutrition also limit the potential of many young people.
- Youth also often have limited awareness of opportunities in the labour market because of poor information and inappropriate expectations.

## What's in a job? The social context of youth employment issues in Africa

Ismail, O. (2016) *Journal of African Economies*, 25(1), i37-i60

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/jae/ejv028>

This article analyses the social dimensions of youth employment strategies in Africa. It emphasises that youth unemployment needs to be disaggregated and differentiated along the categories of youth.

- **Women face higher levels of unemployment**, and are more likely to find jobs in the informal sector.
- Unemployment is highest among **urban, educated youth**; and
- Underemployment and low productivity constitute major challenges for young people active in the informal sector.

It finds in its case studies, however, that there is a changing perception of the model of a good job and career success in Africa – away from the traditional pathway of good education, professional qualification and white-collar jobs to livelihoods, entrepreneurship, enhanced social status and the capacity to influence society.

### **Fostering economic opportunities for youth in Africa: a comprehensive approach**

Moore, K. (2015). *Enterprise Development and Microfinance*, 26(2), 195-209

<http://www.developmentbookshelf.com/doi/pdf/10.3362/1755-1986.2015.017>

This article addresses the barriers faced by young women and men in accessing good economic opportunities. They include: **limited numbers of formal jobs; low levels of literacy, education, and work-relevant skills; and a lack of access to assets**, including land, and to financial services. These barriers are cross-cut by social, economic, and political biases against youth.

It points to the predominance of jobs in the informal sector and informal jobs: school-to-work transition surveys from eight sub-Saharan African countries suggest that between 83-96 percent of jobs held by youth aged 15–29 are either informal employment in the informal sector, or informal jobs in the formal sector. Agriculture is often not of interest to youth, resulting in a **mismatch between youth aspirations and the availability of work**, as youth flock to urban areas. Even if youth are interested in farming, there are often issues with ownership of or access to land, and access to credit, which affect young women in particular.

### **Youth employment in Sub-Saharan Africa**

Filmer, D., Fox, L. et al. (2014). Washington, DC: The World Bank

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/16608/9781464801075.pdf>

This report aims to help African countries develop customized strategies to address youth employment and to invest in better information on how well these strategies are working. It highlights the following points:

- Higher educational attainment improves the chances of working in the modern wage sector. Schooling in Sub-Saharan Africa remains an issue, however, with **weak outcomes in math proficiency and other cognitive skills**; and a **lack of “soft skills”** necessary for employment.
- Young people could have opportunities for productive work in rural areas. However, the **separation of efforts to accelerate agricultural growth in Africa from creating jobs** for young people have undermined the generation of income and employment for large numbers of young people. Poor access to agricultural credit and financial services; and insecure and unclear land rights are key obstacles for young people in agriculture.
- **Household enterprises** (the informal sector) are also a key area of work for young people, outside of the farm sector. However, most **governments continue to ignore or undermine the potential of this sector**. Vendors, for example, are often considered a

nuisance and chased out of business districts. Permits are also not readily provided. Young people also struggle to gain access to credit to start their own businesses.

- The formal wage sector, while small, represents the engine for employment and growth. This is where most secondary-school graduates aspire to work. This export-oriented sector needs to improve its productivity in order generate more jobs.

### **Labour market transitions of young women and men in sub-Saharan Africa**

Elder, S. and Koné, K. S. (2014). Geneva: ILO

[http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/documents/publication/wcms\\_235754.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_235754.pdf)

This report presents the results of the School-to-work transition surveys (SWTS) implemented in eight Sub-Saharan African countries – Benin, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, the United Republic of Tanzania, Togo, Uganda and Zambia – in 2012 or 2013. Results indicate that:

- **Unemployment rates increase with the level of education:** while too many young people are not benefiting fully from the educational system, the lack of education/training is not an obstacle to finding work. However, **the lesser educated remain disadvantaged in terms of wages and access to stable employment.**
- Unemployment among graduates is due to both demand and supply factors. Enterprises complain that recent graduates are not hireable due to factors such as the **lack of technical expertise**. At the same time, **young graduates have high expectations** of good wages and working conditions, and may wait long durations for a 'good' job to materialise. The less educated are more likely to engage in self-employment or to accept lower wages.
- **Young women are at a disadvantage** in the region's labour markets in terms of finding work. The unemployment rate of young women exceeds that of young men in all the countries but Benin.
- Most youth in Sub-Saharan Africa search for jobs through friends, relatives and acquaintances. Fewer than 10 percent of unemployed young people in the eight countries have registered at an employment centre as a means of finding work.

## **Middle East and North Africa (MENA)**

### **The economics of the Arab Spring**

Malik, A. and Awadallah, B. (2013). *World Development*, 45, 296-313

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0305750X1300003X>

This paper attributes the failure to develop an economic structure - in particular, a strong private sector - that can respond to growing population needs, as a key reason behind youth unemployment. The limited economic opportunities that do exist are rationed by connection, rather than competition, which serve as a tremendous disadvantage and injustice to young people.

## **Youth population and employment in the Middle East and North Africa: Opportunity or challenge?**

Roudi, R. (2011). United Nations expert group meeting on adolescents, youth and development, Population Division Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations Secretariat New York 21-22 July.

[http://www.un.org/esa/population/meetings/egm-adolescents/p06\\_roudi.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/population/meetings/egm-adolescents/p06_roudi.pdf)

This paper highlights that alongside the scarcity of jobs available, lack of appropriate education and skills is a key constraint hindering young people from gaining employment. The education sector is considered to be outdated as it continues to be geared toward preparing students to work in the public sector, which used to be – but is no longer – the primary employer of graduates. Representatives of the region’s private sector often note that new graduates lack job-ready, modern skills, such as critical thinking, problem solving, entrepreneurial skills, and the ability to work with new technologies.

The paper also discusses the variation in obstacles faced by young men and women of different socioeconomic backgrounds:

- Less educated men have greater difficulty securing a job than more educated men.
- More educated women are not necessarily able to find a job more easily than less educated women. For women, cultural barriers exacerbate the difficulties of entering the labour force. Young women increasingly work in the informal sector, where the quality of jobs and wages are low.

## **Asia and Central Europe**

### **Labour market transitions of young women and men in Asia and the Pacific**

Elder, S. (2014). Geneva: ILO

[http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/documents/publication/wcms\\_302559.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_302559.pdf)

This report presents the results of the School-to-work transition surveys (SWTS) implemented in five Asian-Pacific countries, namely Bangladesh, Cambodia, Nepal, Samoa and Viet Nam - in 2012–13. Results indicate that:

- Low levels of educational attainment in the five countries are an obstacle to finding work for young people.
- Unemployment rates are lower among the less educated, as university graduates are more willing to wait to find a ‘good’ job. Educated youth are also blocked by employers who cite that they do not have enough technical experience. There is a greater tendency for youth in the Asia-Pacific region to blame themselves for their insufficient education/training or lack of work experience, for example; rather than other economic constraints.
- Most Asian-Pacific youth search for jobs through informal networks (family, friends, acquaintances). Such informal methods, however, can be discriminatory towards less-connected youth, who are left out of such job networks.
- Young women are at a disadvantage in the five countries in terms of finding work. The unemployment rate of young women exceeds that of young men in all five countries. Of



the women who do work, they tend to be disadvantaged compared to young men when it comes to accessing decent work.

### **Labour market transitions of young men and women in Eastern Europe and Central Asia**

Elder, S. et al., (2015). Geneva: ILO

[http://www.ilo.org/employment/areas/youth-employment/work-for-youth/publications/regional-reports/WCMS\\_357353/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/employment/areas/youth-employment/work-for-youth/publications/regional-reports/WCMS_357353/lang--en/index.htm)

This report presents the results of the School-to-work transition surveys (SWTS) implemented in six countries in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region – Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Ukraine – in 2012 or 2013. Results indicate that:

- Educational attainment and training is high, but weak job creation results in missed opportunities to capitalise on educational and training investment.
- University-trained youth are most likely to complete their labour market transitions to stable employment and within a shorter time period. A higher level of education offers at least a chance of obtaining one of the few good jobs available.
- Unemployment is more skewed towards the less skilled than the highly skilled. The young person with primary level education spent, on average, four times longer in completing their labour market transition than the university graduate.
- Young men had a clear advantage over young women in completing their labour market transition to stable employment, despite similar educational levels.
- Socioeconomic characteristics, such as the education level of parents, household wealth and the education level of the youth, influence the time that a young person will spend in transition. Youth with university degrees, from wealthier and more educated households, make faster transitions to stable and/or satisfactory employment.

## **4. Country case studies - annotated bibliography**

### **Youth Unemployment: Ethiopia Country Case Study**

Broussar, N. H. and Tekleselassie, T. G. (2012). London: International Growth Centre

[http://www.youthpolicy.org/library/wp-content/uploads/library/2012\\_Youth\\_Unemployment\\_Ethiopia\\_Country\\_Guide\\_Eng.pdf](http://www.youthpolicy.org/library/wp-content/uploads/library/2012_Youth_Unemployment_Ethiopia_Country_Guide_Eng.pdf)

This case study uses descriptive analysis, relying on nearly nationally representative data collected at four points in time: 1999/00, 2004/5, 2009 and 2011. It describes the main characteristics of the youth labour market in Ethiopia. It finds that improvements in educational attainment in the country have not been matched by an increase in job opportunities for the newly educated. The study also finds variation among youth:

- Gender: Women experience significantly higher unemployment rates than males and work more often in the informal sector.
- Age: The labour force participation of teenagers decreases with educational attainment, indicating that this group has not completed their education.

- For women between the ages of 25-29, there is a positive relationship between educational attainment and unemployment duration. However, for women between the ages of 20-24, more education is associated with less time spent in unemployment.

### **Challenges of youth employment in Nigeria: Effective career guidance as a panacea**

Ajufo, B. I. (2013). *African Research Review*, 7(1), 307-321

<http://www.ajol.info/index.php/afrrrev/article/download/88248/77892>

The paper examines the issue of youth unemployment and looks at potential interventions. It identifies the following as key barriers to employment:

- Skills mismatch: the skills that job seekers possess do not match the needs and demands of employers. This is attributed to inappropriate school curricula that do not teach students the skills required by employers and/or entrepreneurial skills to facilitate self-employment.
- Perceptions of policy makers and youth about employment: the persistent view of equating employment with a job and salary and working for someone else (formal sector jobs) continues to influence the institutions that provide skills and training – resulting in the mismatch discussed above.
- High rate of urbanisation of youth: youth are the largest group of migrants to cities. With limited job opportunities, youth unemployment is a big issue in urban areas.

### **Entrepreneurship development and employment generation in Nigeria: Problems and prospects**

Nkechi, A., Emeh Ikechukwu, E. J., & Okechukwu, U. F. (2012). *Universal Journal of Education and General Studies*, 1(4), 88-102

<http://www.academia.edu/download/33427395/enterprenuership-development-in-Nigeria.pdf>

This paper draws on secondary sources (prior research and analysis; government documents; news articles, etc.) related to the subject of employment generation and entrepreneurship – and reduction of unemployment among Nigerian youths. It finds that:

- The rapidly growing population, generally, has resulted in the rapid growth of the labour force.
- The rapid expansion of the educational system has increased the supply of educated youth.
- The lack of a vibrant manufacturing sector and weak economy has been unable to absorb the large number of graduates.
- The outdated school curricula have produced graduates without employable skills and/or without entrepreneurial skills to enable them to be job creators rather than job seekers.

### **Determinants of youth unemployment in developing countries: Evidences from Tanzania**

Msigwa, R., & Kipasha, E. F. (2013). *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development*, 4(14), 67-76.

[https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Erasmus\\_Kipasha/publication/257272209\\_Determinants\\_of\\_Youth\\_unemployment\\_in\\_Developing\\_Countries\\_Evidences\\_from\\_Tanzania/links/00b49524c147dceb1f000000.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Erasmus_Kipasha/publication/257272209_Determinants_of_Youth_unemployment_in_Developing_Countries_Evidences_from_Tanzania/links/00b49524c147dceb1f000000.pdf)

This study identifies and examines the factors which determine youth unemployment in Tanzania, using Multinomial logistic regression model (MLM). It finds that gender, geographical location, education, skills and marital status are all significant factors in explaining differences in youth employment status in Tanzania:

- Gender is a significant determinant of unemployment. Male youth are much more likely to be employed than female youth.
- Education status demonstrates that both youth who have not completed primary education and those who have completed primary education but did not continue with further studies are less likely to be unemployed over being employed due to their engagement in informal employment activities.
- Geographical location of youth is a significant factor. Youth who are living in urban areas were found to five times more likely to be unemployed than employed.
- Marital status is a significant factor. Single and married youth have a higher likelihood of being unemployed rather than employed as compared to widowed, separated or divorced youth.

### **Youth employment and unemployment: An Indian perspective**

Mitra, A. and Verick, S. (2013). New Delhi: International Labour Organisation

[http://www.oit.org/wcm5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-new\\_delhi/documents/publication/wcms\\_211552.pdf](http://www.oit.org/wcm5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-new_delhi/documents/publication/wcms_211552.pdf)

This paper looks at the situation of youth in India in terms of different indicators of labour market outcomes. Although educational attainment has risen rapidly in recent years, young people have still found it difficult to enter the labour market. In rural and urban areas, young males are usually employed in casual jobs, while female youth tend to be self-employed (often in agriculture). Social attitudes and norms tend to undermine female labour force participation across all age groups. Where women do hold jobs, they are often fired before their male counterparts. Among young women, social conditions are an important determinant of labour force participation. Participation is higher among scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other backward castes, especially in rural areas.

As observed in many developing countries, this paper also finds in the case of India that the unemployment rate increases with the level of education. This can be explained by the fact that youth without education often belong to low income households and thus, cannot afford to remain unemployed for long.

## Annex: Document summary table

Reference (with url)	Region / Country / City	Method	Type of document Peer reviewed journal?	Barriers to work opportunities identified	Groups particularly affected by lack of work
<p><b>Youth and skills: Putting education to work</b></p> <p>Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report. (2012). Paris: UNESCO</p> <p><a href="http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002180/218003e.pdf">http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002180/218003e.pdf</a></p>	International		Report	Skills mismatch; stagnant economics, corrupt politics and nepotism	Women; the poor
<p><b>Urbanization and the employment opportunities of youth in developing countries</b></p> <p>Grant, U. (2012). Paper commissioned for the EFA Global Monitoring Report, Youth and skills: Putting education to work</p> <p><a href="http://www.youthmetro.org/uploads/4/7/6/5/47654969/217879e.pdf">http://www.youthmetro.org/uploads/4/7/6/5/47654969/217879e.pdf</a></p>	International: Brazil; Egypt; Ghana; Vietnam	Analytical; Case studies	Background paper	High competition for jobs in urban areas, with high representation of youth; low level of formal education achievement and lack of entrepreneurial skills; strength of local markets; an individual's own networks; poor labour information systems	Poor urban youth

<p><b>Youth unemployment challenge and solutions: What business can do now</b></p> <p>Manpower Group. (2012). Milwaukee: Manpower Group</p> <p><a href="http://www3.weforum.org/docs/Manpower_YouthEmploymentChallengeSolutions_2012.pdf">http://www3.weforum.org/docs/Manpower_YouthEmploymentChallengeSolutions_2012.pdf</a></p>	International		Paper	Lack of information, networks and connections; lack of skills relevant to the workplace; lack of experience and credentials; lack of entry-level jobs; lack of consistency with young people often the first to be laid off	
<p><b>Youth bulges and youth unemployment</b></p> <p>Lam, D. (2014). IZA World of Labour, 26</p> <p><a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.15185/izawol.26">http://dx.doi.org/10.15185/izawol.26</a></p>	International	Statistical and regression analyses	Evidence-based journal article	Limited evidence of a youth bulge being a barrier	
<p><b>Young, woman and unemployed: the triple challenge</b></p> <p>Perrot, M. (2015). Plan International</p> <p><a href="https://plan-international.org/publications/young-woman-and-unemployed-triple-challenge">https://plan-international.org/publications/young-woman-and-unemployed-triple-challenge</a></p>	International		Report	Poor education and skills development	Girls and young women
<p><b>Youth with disabilities</b></p>	International	Descriptive	Working paper	Poor skills	Disabled youth

<p>Groce, N. and Kett, M. (2014), Working paper series, no. 23, London: Leonard Cheshire Disability and Inclusive Development Centre</p> <p><a href="https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lc-ccr/centrepublishations/workingpapers/WP23_Youth_with_Disabilities.pdf">https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lc-ccr/centrepublishations/workingpapers/WP23_Youth_with_Disabilities.pdf</a></p>				<p>development; school administrator &amp; employer perceptions</p>	
<p><b>The youth unemployment challenge in Africa: What are the drivers?</b></p> <p>Baah-Boateng, W. (2016), <i>The Economic and Labour Relations Review</i></p> <p><a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1035304616645030">http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1035304616645030</a></p>	<p>Africa</p>	<p>Econometric analysis</p>	<p>Peer reviewed journal</p>	<p>Weak employment-generating growth; youth population share</p>	<p>Females; urban youth; more educated</p>
<p><b>Youth employment in Sub-Saharan Africa: Challenges, constraints and opportunities</b></p> <p>Fox, L., Senbet, L. W., and Simbanegavi, W. (2016). <i>Journal of African Economies</i>, 25 (2), i3-i15</p> <p><a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/jae/ejv027">http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/jae/ejv027</a></p>	<p>Africa</p>	<p>Analytical</p>	<p>Peer-reviewed journal</p>	<p>Skills deficit, weak quality of education</p>	<p>Urban youth</p>
<p><b>Africa's got work to do: A diagnostic of youth employment challenges in Sub-</b></p>	<p>Africa</p>	<p>Analytical</p>	<p>Peer-reviewed journal</p>	<p>Poor progress in structural</p>	<p>More educated, urban with "high</p>

<p><b>Saharan Africa</b></p> <p>Fox, L. and Thomlin, A. (2016). <i>Journal of African Economies</i>, 25 (2), i16-i36</p> <p><a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/jae/ejv026">http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/jae/ejv026</a></p>				transformation;	aspirations” – desire for formal, contract job
<p><b>Characteristics and macroeconomic determinants of youth employment in Africa</b></p> <p>Anyanwu, J. C. (2013). <i>African Development Review</i>, 25(2), 107-129</p> <p><a href="http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-8268.2013.12019.x/full">http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-8268.2013.12019.x/full</a></p>	Africa	Empirical analysis based on cross-sectional data	Peer-reviewed journal	Poor economic growth; poor access to credit; weak infrastructure.	
<p><b>Youth employment challenges in Africa: Policy options and agenda for future research</b></p> <p>Baah-Boateng, W. (2014). Paper presented at the AERC biannual conference in Lusaka, Zambia, December</p> <p><a href="https://www.researchgate.net/profile/William_Baah-Boateng2/publication/272418275_Youth_employment_challenges_in_Africa_Policy_options_and_agenda_for_future_research/li">https://www.researchgate.net/profile/William_Baah-Boateng2/publication/272418275_Youth_employment_challenges_in_Africa_Policy_options_and_agenda_for_future_research/li</a></p>	Africa	Analytical	Conference paper	Weak employment-generating growth; neglect of employment in development agendas; youth bulge; education and skills constraint; labour market rigidities; ineffective labour market information systems.	Females; urban youth; more educated

<a href="https://www.idrc.ca/sites/default/files/sp/Documents%20EN/Youth_Employment_Sub-Saharan_Africa_WEB_FINAL.pdf">nks/553501710cf2df9ea6a417fa.pdf</a>					
<p><b>Youth employment in Sub-Saharan Africa: Taking stock of the evidence and knowledge gaps</b></p> <p>Betcherman, G. and Khan, T. (2015). Ottawa: IDRC</p> <p><a href="https://www.idrc.ca/sites/default/files/sp/Documents%20EN/Youth_Employment_Sub-Saharan_Africa_WEB_FINAL.pdf">https://www.idrc.ca/sites/default/files/sp/Documents%20EN/Youth_Employment_Sub-Saharan_Africa_WEB_FINAL.pdf</a></p>	Africa	Analytical	Scoping paper	Weak employment-generating growth, limited structural changes; infrastructure shortfalls; governance issues; lack of business-friendly environment; poor access to credit; labour regulations; skills mismatch.	More educated;
<p><b>What's in a job? The social context of youth employment issues in Africa</b></p> <p>Ismail, O. (2016) <i>Journal of African Economies</i>, 25(1), i37-i60</p> <p><a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/jae/ejv028">http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/jae/ejv028</a></p>	Africa	Analytical	Peer-reviewed journal		Females; urban educated youth
<p><b>Fostering economic opportunities for youth in Africa: a comprehensive approach</b></p> <p>Moore, K. (2015). <i>Enterprise Development and Microfinance</i>, 26(2), 195-209</p>	Africa	Analytical	Peer-reviewed journal	Limited numbers of formal jobs; low levels of literacy, education, and work-relevant skills; and a lack of access to assets, including	Young women



<a href="http://www.developmentbookshelf.com/doi/pdf/10.3362/1755-1986.2015.017">http://www.developmentbookshelf.com/doi/pdf/10.3362/1755-1986.2015.017</a>				land, and to financial services.	
<p><b>Youth employment in Sub-Saharan Africa</b></p> <p>Filmer, D., Fox, L. et al. (2014). Washington, DC: The World Bank</p> <p><a href="https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/16608/9781464801075.pdf">https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/16608/9781464801075.pdf</a></p>	Africa	Analytical	Report	Weak outcomes in math proficiency and other cognitive skills; and a lack of “soft skills”; poor integration of agricultural policy and job creation; government constraints to household enterprise development.	
<p><b>Labour market transitions of young women and men in sub-Saharan Africa</b></p> <p>Elder, S. and Koné, K. S. (2014). Geneva: ILO</p> <p><a href="http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-/-ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_235754.pdf">http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-/-ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_235754.pdf</a></p>	Africa (Benin, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, the United Republic of Tanzania, Togo, Uganda and Zambia)	Survey data analysis	Report	Lack of technical expertise; high aspirations among young graduates.	More educated youth; young women
<p><b>The economics of the Arab Spring</b></p> <p>Malik, A. and Awadallah, B. (2013). <i>World</i></p>	MENA	Analytical	Peer-reviewed journal	Lack of a private sector; jobs gained through connections,	

<p><i>Development</i>, 45, 296-313</p> <p><a href="http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0305750X1300003X">http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0305750X1300003X</a></p>				rather than competition.	
<p><b>Youth population and employment in the Middle East and North Africa: Opportunity or challenge?</b></p> <p>Roudi, R. (2011). United Nations expert group meeting on adolescents, youth and development, Population Division Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations Secretariat New York 21-22 July.</p> <p><a href="http://www.un.org/esa/population/meetings/egm-adolescents/p06_roudi.pdf">http://www.un.org/esa/population/meetings/egm-adolescents/p06_roudi.pdf</a></p>	MENA	Analytical	Report	Scarcity of jobs; lack of appropriate education and skills; (outdated educational system).	Less educated men; young women facing cultural barriers
<p><b>Labour market transitions of young women and men in Asia and the Pacific</b></p> <p>Elder, S. (2014). Geneva: ILO</p> <p><a href="http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-/-ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_302559.pdf">http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-/-ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_302559.pdf</a></p>	Asia and the Pacific (Bangladesh, Cambodia, Nepal, Samoa and Viet Nam)	Survey data analysis	Report	Low levels of educational attainment; employer perceptions of insufficient technical experience; job searching through informal networks.	More educated youth; young women; youth with less connections
<p><b>Labour market transitions of young</b></p>	Eastern Europe	Survey data	Report	Weak job creation	Less skilled;

<p><b>men and women in Eastern Europe and Central Asia</b></p> <p>Elder, S. et al., (2015). Geneva: ILO</p> <p><a href="http://www.ilo.org/employment/areas/youth-employment/work-for-youth/publications/regional-reports/WCMS_357353/lang--en/index.htm">http://www.ilo.org/employment/areas/youth-employment/work-for-youth/publications/regional-reports/WCMS_357353/lang--en/index.htm</a></p>	<p>and Central Asia (Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Ukraine)</p>	<p>analysis</p>			<p>young women; youth from poorer households</p>
<p><b>Youth Unemployment: Ethiopia Country Case Study</b></p> <p>Broussar, N. H. and Tekleselassie, T. G. (2012). London: International Growth Centre</p> <p><a href="http://www.youthpolicy.org/library/wp-content/uploads/library/2012_Youth_Unemployment_Ethiopia_Country_Guide_Eng.pdf">http://www.youthpolicy.org/library/wp-content/uploads/library/2012_Youth_Unemployment_Ethiopia_Country_Guide_Eng.pdf</a></p>	<p>Egypt</p>	<p>Descriptive analysis</p>	<p>Report, case study</p>	<p>Weak job creation</p>	<p>Young women</p>
<p><b>Challenges of youth employment in Nigeria: Effective career guidance as a panacea</b></p> <p>Ajufo, B. I. (2013). <i>African Research</i></p>	<p>Nigeria</p>	<p>Analytical</p>	<p>Peer-reviewed journal</p>	<p>Skills mismatch (inappropriate school curricula)</p>	<p>Urban youth</p>

<i>Review</i> , 7(1), 307-321					
<p><b>Entrepreneurship development and employment generation in Nigeria: Problems and prospects</b></p> <p>Nkechi, A., Emeh Ikechukwu, E. J., &amp; Okechukwu, U. F. (2012). <i>Universal Journal of Education and General Studies</i>, 1(4), 88-102</p> <p><a href="http://www.academia.edu/download/33427395/enterprenuership-development-in-Nigeria.pdf">http://www.academia.edu/download/33427395/enterprenuership-development-in-Nigeria.pdf</a></p>	Nigeria	Analytical	Peer-reviewed journal	Growing labour force; weak job-creating economic growth; skills-mismatch	
<p><b>Determinants of youth unemployment in developing countries: Evidences from Tanzania</b></p> <p>Msigwa, R., &amp; Kipesha, E. F. (2013). <i>Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development</i>, 4(14), 67-76.</p> <p><a href="http://www.academia.edu/download/32181939/Determinants_of_Youth_unemployment_in_Developing_Countries-Evidences_from_Tanzania.pdf">http://www.academia.edu/download/32181939/Determinants_of_Youth_unemployment_in_Developing_Countries-Evidences_from_Tanzania.pdf</a></p>	Tanzania	Regression analysis	Peer-reviewed journal		Young women; less educated youth; urban youth
<b>Youth employment and unemployment:</b>	India	Analytical	Report		Young women (social attitudes)

**An Indian perspective**

Mitra, A. and Verick, S. (2013). New Delhi:  
International Labour Organisation

[http://www.oit.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-new\\_delhi/documents/publication/wcms\\_211552.pdf](http://www.oit.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-new_delhi/documents/publication/wcms_211552.pdf)

and norms); more  
educated youth

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## About this report

*This report is based on five days of desk-based research. The K4D research helpdesk provides rapid syntheses of a selection of recent relevant literature and international expert thinking in response to specific questions relating to international development. For any enquiries, contact [helpdesk@k4d.info](mailto:helpdesk@k4d.info).*

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