



International  
Labour  
Organization



# AFRICA'S RESPONSE TO THE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT CRISIS

## *Regional Report*

**Synthesis of Key Issues and Outcomes from  
Eleven National Events on Youth Employment  
in the African region**

March - May 2012



# **Africa's Response to the Youth Employment Crisis** *Regional Report*

*Synthesis of Key Issues and Outcomes from Eleven  
National Events on Youth Employment in the African region*

March - May 2012

## Acknowledgements

The information in this report builds largely on feedback that the ILO gathered from various stakeholders engaging in youth employment initiatives in Africa. These stakeholders have shared their experiences, success stories and concerns during national consultative meetings on youth employment, which took place in Ethiopia, Egypt, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Madagascar, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Zambia and Zimbabwe in 2012.

The ILO wishes to thank the organizers and the participants of these events, which have made it possible to share information on youth employment perspectives and initiatives through a bottom-up approach. The report was written by Ms. Marie-Katherine Waller, an independent consultant. A word of thanks also goes to Ms. Van Doorn, for her coordination support and to the Regional Communication Team for advocacy and promotion.

ISBN 978-92-2-126428-6

Copyright © International Labour Organization 2012

First published 2012

The designations employed in the ILO publications, which are in conformity with United Nations practice, and the presentation of material therein do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the International Labour Office concerning the legal status of any country, area or territory or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers.

Reference to names of firms and commercial products and processes does not imply their endorsement by the International Labour Office, and any failure to mention a particular firm, commercial product or process is not a sign of disapproval.

ILO publications can be obtained through major booksellers or ILO local offices in many countries, or direct from ILO Publications, International Labour Office, CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland. Catalogues or lists of new publications are available free of charge from the above address, or by email: [pubvente@ilo.org](mailto:pubvente@ilo.org). Visit our website: [www.ilo.org/publns](http://www.ilo.org/publns).

# Table of Contents

Foreword	1
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1. Overview of the National Events	3
<b>2. Characteristics of the youth employment challenge in Africa</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1. Economic Growth, High Youth Population and Creation of Decent Work	4
2.2. Deepening Inequalities	6
2.3. Preparedness for the School to Work Transition	7
2.4. Youth Participation	8
2.5. Workers' Rights and Labour Laws	8
<b>3. What are countries doing on youth employment?</b>	<b>9</b>
3.1. Creating an enabling policy environment	9
3.2. Innovative Youth Employment Initiatives	11
<b>4. The Way Forward: Youth as agents of socio-economic change in Africa</b>	<b>18</b>
4.1. Action Points	18
<b>5. Proposed Partnerships and Networks</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>6. Conclusions</b>	<b>26</b>



## Foreword

This first Regional Report on Africa's Response to the Youth Employment Crisis is a synthesis of key issues and outcomes of 11 national events held in: the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Zambia and Zimbabwe, in the period March to May 2012. The report highlights the fact that the majority of Africa's population is below the age of 30 years and, despite some progress, youth unemployment and underemployment in Africa remains a major challenge. The global youth unemployment rate remains at crisis peak levels and is not expected to reverse until at least 2016. Young women and men are almost three times more likely than adults to be unemployed. Around the world, only one young person out of two is active in the labour market. In addition, young people account for almost a quarter of the world's total working poor. And in most regions, young women continue to be the hardest hit by unemployment and discrimination at work. In the last few years, high levels of economic growth have not been fully translated into productive employment for Africa's fast growing young population. The mismatch between required skills and labour market imperatives has been at the heart of these challenges. This report documents some of Africa's responses to these trends in the framework of its tripartite mandate of promoting decent work and youth employment for social and economic development. It highlights the fact that young women and men in Africa are looking for participation, productive opportunities and social inclusion. The report argues that, despite low-levels of productivity and youth unemployment on the rise, there are a number of good practices and lessons learned that can induce progress. The need to invest in human resources through education and skills development remains a priority for Africa. Promoting youth employment should be at the forefront of Africa's development agenda. The ILO recommends the following policy steps:

- A transition from jobless growth to an employment rich-growth: making full employment and decent work a key macroeconomic objective;
- A transition from primary to higher levels of education and skills;
- Better connecting the world of learning and the world of work;
- Moving from top-down development policies to participatory governance.

As showcased in this report, young people need to be empowered so they can voice their concerns, express their recommendations and participate in decision-making processes. But nobody can do this alone, hence the strong focus on partnerships in our work.

This report underscores the potential of innovative youth employment measures, such as youth entrepreneurship schemes, financing for youth programmes and rapid labour-intensive employment programs.

We wish to thank all those who have contributed to the national events taking place and those who have prepared this report, which highlights the views and experiences of young leaders, policymakers and development partners who actively promote youth employment in Africa.

We hope that this report will help increase awareness and assist all stakeholders in identifying good practices that can be used at all levels, with a view to ensure that young people become key assets and agents of change for the national development agenda.

The national youth employment events have shown the readiness of Africa's young women and men to determine their own destiny. This will stimulate further dialogue and the ILO, both in the region and at headquarters, will continue to build on these first key achievements, by accompanying Africa's youth and tripartite constituents in the movement towards decent work for all young women and men.

*Charles DAN*  
*ILO Regional Director for Africa*



## 1. Introduction

Today's youth have aspirations to become active citizens and to contribute to their countries' development. They call for more rights, more opportunities and for their voices to be heard. One critical factor to making the transition into adulthood is having the right skills and opportunities to access decent work. Globally, youth aged 15 to 24 are three times more likely than adults to be out of a job. For those who do have a job, they are typically underemployed, in part-time or temporary work, and in the informal sector in poor working conditions. This global youth unemployment crisis imposes a heavy cost, both in terms of depletion of human and social capital and loss of opportunities for economic growth for present and future generations.

Youth unemployment in Africa reflects this global situation but with the additional challenge of a youth population much higher than most other regions worldwide, weak national labour markets and persistently high levels of poverty. The majority of Africa's population is under 30 years of age and the median age is just 18 years. Youth unemployment in Sub-Saharan Africa is twice that of adults (12.8 for youth and 6.5 for adults) and triples that of adults in the case of North Africa (27.1 percent for youth and 7 percent for adults).<sup>1</sup> Unemployment is only the tip of the iceberg. African youth are more likely to be underemployed and among the working poor than the general population.

The recent social uprisings of young people in North Africa are a critical reminder of the urgency for action to address young people's rights to enter and stay in the labour market. If youth unemployment is left to persist, there is the growing risk of greater inequalities and social and economic instability across the region.

Recognizing the urgency of this issue, the ILO decided to address the "Youth employment crisis" at its 101th Session of the International Labour Conference (ILC) taking place in Geneva in June 2012. To strengthen the consultation processes leading up to the ILC discussion, a series of events were organized, including a series of national events on youth employment in 40 countries across the world, and a global Youth Employment Forum in Geneva from the 23 to 25 May 2012.

This regional report presents a synthesis of eleven national youth employment events that took place across Africa from March to May 2012. It highlights the region's specific youth employment challenges and what African countries are doing to address the issues; particularly emerging good practices. It summarizes recommended strategies and actions for improving current responses. Special attention is paid to young Africans' concerns and priorities. The report serves to contribute to African and global efforts to enable youth to gain decent work.

<sup>1</sup> International Labour Organization (ILO) *Global Employment Trends* (2012: 93); See also (ECA): *African Youth Report*, (Addis Ababa, 2011: 1) and International Labour Office (ILO): *Global Employment Trends for Youth: 2011 Update* (Geneva, 2011).



## 1.1. Overview of the National Events

National events were held in Ethiopia, Egypt, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Madagascar, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The events sought to bring key stakeholders and partners together to discuss the decent work agenda for youth and to share good practices. More specifically, the national events aimed to:

1. Establish a platform for interaction among young people, policy makers and social partners – employers’ and workers’ organizations – on national youth employment challenges;
2. Identify and share good practice on youth employment policies and programmes implemented at country level; and
3. Strengthen youth employment action and partnerships at the country level.

Overall, the events succeeded in bringing together a broad range of key stakeholders from government, social partners and youth groups, as well as from universities, training institutions, NGOs, private sector partners, donor representatives, UN agencies and the media. The tripartite platform allowed the various actors to learn from each other and to discuss and debate gaps, good practices and needs for improvement.

Youth leaders presented concerns from youth in opening sessions and thematic discussions, while others shared their personal struggles in finding employment. Youth communiqués and declarations for action were developed for youth by youth participants to ensure youth concerns and priorities were front and center. The events enabled youth to both share their positive and negatives experiences. Some shared stories of success and others directly challenged policy makers for not addressing youth employment issues in any significant way.

“A key solution coming out of the events was cultivating and supporting youth entrepreneurship.”

### 1.1.1. Main Regional Specific Messages

All eleven events discussed the situation of youth unemployment at country levels. On the demand side, African countries face the challenge of very high youth populations compared to all other age cohorts and weak capacity and economic growth to create the jobs needed to absorb these youth. On the supply side, African youth are not properly prepared to compete for the limited quantity of jobs available due to under-funded educational, technical and professional systems that fail to respond to labour market needs. Many youth are discouraged and disenchanted. Socially marginalized groups, who already face disadvantages based on gender and their socio-economic background, face even more disadvantages in the job market.

A key solution coming out of the events was cultivating and supporting youth entrepreneurship. Equally important, all relevant government ministries, employers’ organizations, the private sector, workers’ organizations, youth organizations and diverse youth must work together to create relevant youth-specific entrepreneurship and technical skills training, education, and access to labour market information combined with financial and technical inputs to develop businesses.

Youth called for the full implementation of new and existing policies for youth, backed by adequate financial and human resources and scaling up national youth employment programmes. Such programmes must:

- Be fully integrated into national development agendas;
- Build upon existing evidence-based best practice;
- Create public-private partnerships so that financial institutions provide financing and entrepreneurial and business skills training and employers provide work placement, internships and apprenticeships supported by the government; and
- Reach out to the most marginalized youth such as young women, rural youth and youth living with disabilities because they face greater barriers to accessing the job market.

There was also a call for countries to continue working with the ILO to make this happen. More attention must go into revitalizing and developing national youth employment action plans, programmes and information systems to understand the changing situation. National inter-ministerial and multi-stakeholder taskforces must be established to coordinate and monitor implementation of all youth employment related interventions with strong youth participation.



## 2. Characteristics of the youth employment challenge in Africa

Presentations and discussions on the main barriers facing African youth to access productive and decent work centred on the challenges of both the demand and supply sides.<sup>2</sup> The key factors raised during the national events are summarized below:

### 2.1. *Economic Growth, High Youth Population and Creation of Decent Work*

**Weak economic growth and national capacity to create sufficient quantity and quality of jobs in the formal economy** were seen as interconnected with high rates of youth unemployment and underemployment. While African economic growth improved in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the global economic and financial crisis undermined many gains to the job-poor growth patterns of the pre-crisis era before 2009.<sup>3</sup> Many African macroeconomic policies are too heavily focused on export-commodities. In countries like Zimbabwe and Zambia, there is an over-dependence on a few industries and thus with the global economic and financial crisis leading to declines in the formal sector, industries close down and few new jobs are created.

In Zambia, the concentration of growth in highly capital-intensive and urban-based sectors, like mining, and the resulting low absorptive capacity of the labour market for new entrants were identified as barriers to youth in gaining access to jobs. Approximately 280,000 new entrants join the labour market annually and create a “reserve army” of the unemployed. In Tanzania, about 800,000 people enter the labour market each year. The Government of Tanzania can only absorb 40,000 or 5 percent of the workforce.<sup>4</sup> In Egypt, the majority of jobs created are poor-quality, low productive waged jobs. This is highly problematic considering young Egyptians of today have the highest educational attainment in comparison to past generations. They end up competing for the few good jobs available mainly in the retrenched public sector. Similar challenges were raised in Madagascar. Young people find themselves last in and first out of the labour market.

In Kenya, Zambia and Tanzania, weak regulatory frameworks to support enterprise growth including weak infrastructure, complicated and expensive licensing requirements, inadequate access to business advice and support services were blamed for the lack of youth-led micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs).

2 ILO: Youth: Pathways to Decent Work Report VI, (Geneva, 2005: 8).

3 ILO: *Global Employment Trends for Youth: 2011 Update*, (Geneva, 2011: 7-17).

4 *Integrated Labour Force Survey* (Dar Es Salam, 2006).

### **High youth cohorts and ongoing high population growth increase youth vulnerability to unemployment.**

In all the national events, the fact that the majority of Africa's growing population is under 30 years of age was viewed as one of the biggest challenges. From North to Southern Africa, countries are experiencing a clear "youth bulge" in which the proportion of young people in the population is increasing more significantly compared to other age groups.

Youth have fewer options for accessing decent work. In Togo, youth unemployment for 15 to 29 year olds is 10.4 percent as compared to the overall adult unemployment rate of 6.5 percent, with young women particularly vulnerable.<sup>5</sup> In Zimbabwe, the youth constitute the bulk of the unemployed, accounting for 62.1 percent in 1994, 65 percent in 1999, 67.5 percent in 2002 and 59.6 percent in 2004.<sup>6</sup> In Madagascar, the current workforce is youthful with an average age of 32.1, underemployed and poor. 24.7 percent of children between 5 and 17 years of age and 55 percent of those aged 15 to 17 years of age are involved in the worst forms of child labour.<sup>7</sup>

In recent years, Ethiopia has been one of the fastest growing economies in Africa with growth averaging above 10 percent annually. Nevertheless, the challenge of youth employment remains formidable. The results of the 2010 urban employment/unemployment survey show that the unemployment rate stands at 24.5 percent. The youth cohort of 15-29 years is more likely to be unemployed and underemployed as compared to adults.

**Underemployment and poor working conditions in the informal economy are key features of youth employment in Africa** due to insufficient quantity and quality of jobs available in the formal economy. Desperate to find work, many youth resort to taking on precarious, underpaid, and seasonal work mostly in the informal economy. Already socially and economically marginalized youth groups face even more challenges. Young women may be pushed aside as many employers favour men. Even educated youth turn to underpaid work out of economic necessity.



A common remark across all events was that there are very few employment opportunities for youth that take into account quality. Most youth are employed in jobs characterized by low return, long hours, limited personal and job security, zero social protection and high levels of decent work deficits. In Zimbabwe, given the inadequate employment opportunities in the formal economy, most youth are forced to join the informal economy where working conditions may be very difficult with long hours, poor pay and problems of exploitation. Youth are typically engaged in activities such as vending, street car washing and menial work.

In Ethiopia, just over half of the active youth labour force population is employed in agriculture and informal sectors both of which are characterized by the prevalence of underemployment. Disguised unemployment is a feature of the rural labour market while open unemployment is prevalent in urban areas. In Tanzania, among those who are employed, three out of four work on small farms as either self-employed workers or as unpaid family labourers.

In Kenya, due to limited access to decent work and career advancement, Kenyan youth are often trapped in part-time or temporary, casual or seasonal employment. In discussions during the Kenyan event, the need for more formal sector jobs with proper contracts, regular income, reasonable working conditions and at least some social protection was raised.

**Emergence of increased discouragement and disenchantment among educated youth aggravated by financial crisis** is another dimension of the youth employment crisis. Across Africa, youth are faced with bleaker life prospects and are disenchanted with policies and established institutions for failing to provide them with opportunities to fully reach their potential and to live in dignity. In Zimbabwe, young people are losing interest in being educated because wages and salaries are low and unattractive. They are also experiencing unfair labour practices. Youth are migrating away. Likewise, Tunisia and Egypt are losing some of their most educated youth to the "brain drain".

**Weak enabling environment undermines good policy commitments to promote youth employment.** In DRC, Tunisia and Tanzania, ongoing corruption, lack of good governance and transparency in government structures were said to be encouraging unfair recruitment practices that disadvantage youth. In DRC and Tunisia, problems of *clientelism*, political nepotism and tribalism were reported.

5 Etude sur la Situation de l'Emploi des Jeunes au Togo (2008).

6 Zimbabwe National Population Census (1994; 1999; 2002; 2004).

7 Enquête nationale sur le travail des enfants à Madagascar (2007).





## 2.2. Deepening Inequalities

**There is deepening inequality of wealth and status among youth workers** with rural youth, young women, out-of-school youth and youth living with disabilities particularly denied their rights to decentwork. In the Kenya event, limited labour market prospects for youth were linked to differences in gender, age, ethnicity, educational level, family background, health status and disability. Disadvantaged youth are facing deepening poverty because of unequal access to economic and social goods and services.

With the global economic crisis, there are reduced opportunities for decentwork and increased likelihood of labour market discrimination based on social and economic status. More competition for fewer jobs leads to increased marginalization and exclusion of already marginalized youth.

Young women's transition from school to work is typically more protracted compared to young men. In the formal labour market, employers often prefer hiring male youth over female youth.<sup>8</sup> In the Kenya discussions, young women, particularly young single mothers, were reported to be more prone to unemployment, discrimination, sexual harassment and underemployment. In Tanzania, male dominance, early marriage and domination of gender norms that influence girls' self confidence to work in certain sectors deny young women equal access with young males to the few decent work opportunities that are available in the market.

Rural and urban disparities in unemployment are quite marked. In some countries like Madagascar, rural youth aged 15 to 24 years of age encounter the greatest obstacles to accessing jobs. In Tanzania, the opposite situation was described with 31.5 percent of urban youth in Dar es Salaam unemployed, compared to 7.1 percent in rural areas. A similar pattern was reported for Zanzibar but with higher numbers of unemployed rural youth than for Tanzania mainland.

Prolonged conflict and social and economic strife in DRC and Madagascar have deepened inequalities. DRC as a country has experienced decades of civil war which has left many youth victims/survivors of war socially, economically and geographically marginalized and excluded.

Social protection schemes and anti poverty measures such as grant schemes and the social protection floor reach many people in South Africa, yet despite this, some youth are still excluded from social protection. This is particularly the case for youth that do not have access to information about available protection measures.



There are some distinctive features of youth unemployment in North Africa. In Egypt, young people are four times more at risk of being unemployed than adults. 24.5 percent of Egyptian youth aged 15-29 years of age are unemployed. The gap between jobs available and youth entering the labour force helped spark recent youth-led uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt.<sup>9</sup> Across North Africa, youth with higher educational attainment represent a higher proportion of the unemployed youth than south of the Sahara, and gender disparities in employment are much greater in North Africa. In North African countries, "the participation rate for young men is higher than that for young women by 28 per cent"<sup>10</sup> whereas many countries south of the Sahara have more equal rates between young women and men. In Egypt, 45.7 percent of young women are unemployed compared to only 17.9 percent for young males. This rate is even higher amongst those with university degrees, whereby 26.9 percent of males and 55.1 percent of females are currently unemployed.<sup>11</sup>

8 ILO: *Empowering Africa's People with Decent Work. Report of Director-General* (Johannesburg, 2011).

9 ILO (2011:p.1).

10 ECA: *African Youth Report* (Addis Ababa 2011: p.14.)

11 ILO: *Empowering Africa's Peoples with Decent Work* (Johannesburg, 2011).

### 2.3. Preparedness for the School to Work Transition

**Weak labour market and youth employment information systems to track the issues and best approaches were raised as a major gap.** In Ethiopia and Zambia, because there is no regular systematic research conducted or system to understand the multifaceted youth employment challenges or mechanisms to share what works, policies and programmes are not as relevant and responsive to addressing the most pertinent issues. There is a lack of accurate data disaggregated by sex, disability, and rural versus urban area on youth employment, unemployment and underemployment to facilitate prioritization of issues in programming.

In Zambia and Tanzania, young people attributed the skills mismatch currently faced in the labour market to the poor flow of information regarding the skills demanded by potential employers. In Zambia, it was noted that although efforts have been made for job fairs, they were inaccessible to most young people outside the capital. Aside from this, no other national platform with a wide reach exists for networking, dissemination of information and awareness-raising to support youth job seekers and to help potential employers attract and recruit more youth from urban and rural areas.

**There is a lack of relevant and sufficient numbers of accessible, well-equipped, vocational, professional and educational training/institutions to support youth integration into the economy.** In Africa, there is a mismatch between higher education, vocational and professional training and skills development and what the job market actually needs. Schools and universities provide mass education rather than quality service. There is a general deterioration of infrastructure, and a lack of collaboration between the educational system and potential employers, as well as poor accessibility of training services, in many countries in the region.

Inadequate funding and government support for technical, vocational and educational institutions and services (TVET) mean African youth are not acquiring the appropriate skills to remain competitive nationally, regionally and internationally. In the DRC event, employers stated that youth are often discriminated against because of their low levels of training, lack of knowledge on work ethics and culture, lack of practical skills and work experience. Interestingly, at the Tanzania event, the Association of Tanzania Employers (ATE) reported that hard skills only account for 15 percent of skills required in the job market. In contrast, the need for strong soft skills such as confidence, commitment, good English language skills, entrepreneurship, motivation and innovation was said to account for 85 percent of what employers need in the job market.

In Zimbabwe, most institutions lack up to date equipment, such as modern ICTs, that meets current developments in technology. In Tanzania, the educational system does not prepare youth to be competent in either Kiswahili or English.

**Tertiary education is eminently biased towards academics and preparing students for formal sector wage jobs.** As a result, the educational system produces thousands of graduates every year who are not being absorbed into the labour market. Such systems fail to respond to the realities of the African formal and informal economy. Considering that the educational system in countries such as Egypt has not been updated in decades, young people are unprepared for a competitive and global labour market.

**There is a shortage of school to work career counselling guidance and role modeling services** with proper labour market information given to youth to facilitate the school-to-work transition. Educated youth are not being prepared for how to market themselves and are unaware of potential job openings which increases the likelihood of these youth being unemployed for longer periods and resorting to less secure employment.

**Lack of access to relevant entrepreneurship training, technology, credit and finances in both urban and rural contexts are huge disincentives for youth to engage in business.** In Tanzania, there has been weak investment in youth MSMEs in the agriculture sector. Youth have no access to inputs, markets, infrastructure and capital. High interest rates and bureaucratic barriers in the availability of capital such as to access presidential funds have caused many youth to develop a negative attitude towards agriculture.

**Weak public-private partnerships have lead to a general lack of work placement, internship and apprenticeship opportunities to ease the school to work transition.** In Zambia, Zimbabwe and Kenya, participants discussed the low numbers of internships and apprenticeships offered by employers and lack of government policy to create incentives for industries to develop such programmes in partnership with universities and training institutions and services. At the Egypt event, an underlying cause of youth employment being discussed was the fact that the country continues to have amongst the lowest incidence of formal workplace training. In Kenya, industrial attachment has degenerated into a new source of cheap labour for employers. Most interns are overworked with no allowance.



## 2.4. Youth Participation

**Today's youth have acquired reputations for having poor work ethics and attitudes which have created further disadvantages for them to be hired or considered equal partners in decision-making.** In several events, youth were described as lacking the necessary skills, drive and initiative to become employed. In DRC, Ethiopia and Tanzania, negative stereotypes of youth being undisciplined, immoral and lazy were shared. In Zambia, Ethiopia, DRC, Tanzania and Zimbabwe, government and other social partners supporting youth expressed concern over the fact that young people have poor work ethics.

In South Africa it was highlighted that youth should focus on what they can contribute to their country, rather than focussing on materialistic issues. The National Volunteer Service was identified as one of the options through which youth could contribute to the development of the country.

In several events, youth were described as having too high aspirations and lacking entrepreneurial *savoir-faire*. In Ethiopia and Tanzania, some employers stated that youth have too high expectations to be hired instead of trying self-employment. In DRC, Tunisia, Zambia and Tanzania the point was made that youth do not value entrepreneurship as a good employment option and have much greater interest in finding formal jobs. In Kenya, small and medium-sized businesses were described as thriving but observations were made that the majority of youth see small businesses as a temporary solution. In Zambia and Tanzania, it was mentioned that youth are over-ambitious about the kind of work they want and once employed, are not committed to work. In Zambia, even once youth are offered work, they may refuse to engage in certain technical or vocational businesses because they do not see value in them. Such attitudes have led many employers to mistrust young people and refuse to hire them.

“In several events, youth were described as having too high aspirations and lacking entrepreneurial *savoir-faire*.”

In Kenya, youth explained that they are excluded from policy making because they are viewed as a burden and lazy and if they are involved, their participation is based more on tokenism than genuine interest for them to actively engage. They mentioned being manipulated to play a “decorative role” such as wearing t-shirts and singing or being assigned to volunteer for projects by adults. These social factors contribute to unemployment and young people's particularly disadvantaged position to actively participate in policy or programme decisions related to them. A vicious cycle is created where youth feel discriminated against and frustrated by potential employers.

Meanwhile, employers continue to assume youth do not have the soft or hard skills to do the job. Youth also face other negative attitudes and forms of discrimination. This can make youth vulnerable to exploitation, and deprive them of training opportunities. Young women and persons with disabilities are particularly affected by these attitudes and prejudices.

**There is a lack of platforms and spaces for youth to voice and participate in national decision making regarding their needs and interests in employment.**

Youth voiced their limited engagement in policy dialogue, implementation and M&E related to supporting youth employment. Youth argued the government had failed to turn policy promises into action and to consult effectively with youth in policy dialogue. As a result, youth were unaware of policies and programmes available to help them enter and stay in the labour market.

## 2.5. Workers' Rights and Labour Laws

**Young people are more vulnerable to unfair treatment in the workplace because they are unaware of workers' rights and labour laws.** In Zambia, young people expressed their gratitude to hear about workers' rights by workers' organizations. Lack of awareness on rights at work was attributed to the absence of a unit within the government that could specifically address the unique challenges faced by young people in Zambia's labour market. Similar points were made in DRC and Madagascar. In South Africa, the consultations brought forward that laws on workers' rights are often not being enforced. Young workers are less educated and aware of their rights, so their rights are often not respected.





### 3. What are countries doing on youth employment?

This section discusses emerging good practices and ongoing challenges of national youth employment-related policies, programmes and partnerships shared during events. A key criterion for identifying a good practice is *proven* effectiveness in providing decent work opportunities for young people. Despite efforts to find good practices, very few programmes have evaluations that clearly demonstrate overall impact and results; there is a real need to strengthen the full integration of monitoring and evaluation in policy and programme design and implementation. Only with improved evaluation will it be possible to identify and share best practices for improving programming impact. For this reason, the discussion below focuses more on emerging good practices and innovative approaches. Further work will have to be done to actually access to what degree results were achieved.

#### 3.1. Creating an enabling policy environment

African governments have recognized the need to address youth employment in national efforts to reduce poverty and promote socio-economic growth. They have responded in various ways either by having national youth specific policies and/or youth employment action plans and related programmes and/or have integrated the issue into national development agendas, and/or in specific sector policies. The majority of countries that hosted events have developed National Youth Policies and/or specific National Action Plans for Youth Employment and are implementing national programme(s) with bilateral and multilateral donor support. Many policies were designed within the last decade, with support from the ILO and are now under the leadership of a designated

Ministry responsible for youth. Madagascar is one exception. Youth employment is supposed to be addressed under its National Employment Policy.

Some countries face challenges in effective implementation because they lack national tripartite structures and coordinating mechanisms to develop the kinds of concerted and integrated responses required. Tanzania has a National Youth Development Policy with various ministries responsible for different components of the policy. Both the Madagascar and Tanzania events raised the need to strengthen national structures to respond better to youth employment. In Tanzania, they called for establishing a lead ministry to better manage and coordinate youth issues across government ministries.

An emerging good practice is countries that *mainstream youth using a twin-track approach of both integrating youth issues in national development plans and across many sectors and programmes combined with targeted youth specific employment policies and programmes*. Ethiopia, Kenya, Egypt, South Africa, Tunisia, Zambia and Zimbabwe have these kinds of comprehensive policy frameworks to address youth employment.

Ethiopia's most recent national development Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) (2010-2015) identifies employment creation as a priority and aims to create millions of jobs in the next five years. The plan commits to mainstreaming women and youth issues across all development plans and has women and youth empowerment and equity as one of its strategic pillars. A national employment policy and strategy, with support from the ILO, has been drafted and will address youth employment. The National Youth Policy prioritizes youth



entrepreneurship to immediately improve youth work prospects and is closely linked to the expansion of the private sector.

The GTP has identified development and expansion of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) and increased financial support to Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) as primary pathways to increase employment especially for youth. Job creation is meant to be enhanced through increased public investment in infrastructure, education and health. A TVET policy focuses on preparing young people for the labour market and includes supporting industrial attachments for students to get on the job training. Other youth sensitive policies are the Ethiopian Industrial Development Strategy, the MSE Development Strategy and Proclamation for Establishing MFIs all of which respond to youth employment challenges.



Ethiopia's policy response is an emerging good practice because the government has made youth employment central to its national development plans by addressing youth as a cross-cutting issue. It has recognized the need to support youth employment across several sector policies relevant to addressing the issue by prioritizing youth entrepreneurship, improving TVET and making MSEs and financing through MFIs more accessible to youth. The approach is also linked to government commitments to advance gender equality.

Despite these good intentions, many countries have only made limited head way in effectively implementing the various policies and programmes to address youth unemployment. A major obstacle is having an inter-governmental coordinating mechanism to oversee at a national level, opportunities for creating synergies between sectors and programmes and monitoring and evaluating overall effectiveness.

Establishing ***national steering committees*** to coordinate national responses is a step forward in helping African governments strengthen integrated response efforts. Under its Decent Work Country Programme, Zimbabwe established a national tripartite steering committee (government, social partners and youth) for decent work in 2011 to coordinate national efforts regarding youth employment. This tripartite structure works across several levels of the youth employment policy and programming response. In Zimbabwe, each national youth employment programme has a tripartite project advisory committee to ensure multi-stakeholder consultation and decision making. These committees feed information back to the national committee to allow for improved coordination, planning and sharing of good practices.<sup>12</sup>

In the DRC event, ***mechanisms for ensuring youth consultation and active participation in national policy development*** were discussed. DRC has a National Youth Policy and National Action Plan for Youth Employment. To ensure effective policy implementation, the government put in place a National Youth Employment Programme (PROYEN) and has supported youth organizations to have voice and take leadership on youth issues, specifically through the Consultative Group for Youth Employment (GCEJ) and the National Youth Council (CNJ). DRC's second Growth and National Poverty Reduction Plan Strategy (DSCR2) was designed in consultation with youth groups. One of the plan's central pillars is employment with youth employment as a sub-issue.

Ethiopia and DRC have recently developed ***educational policies that aim to reform educational systems to respond better to labour market needs***. DRC's Memorandum of Understanding between the Federation of Congolese Businesses (FEC), the Chamber of Commerce and the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and Ministry of Tertiary Education sets out to ensure curriculum development is informed by employment demand. Inter-ministerial and cross-sector partnerships to inform educational programmes should be established.

In 2008, following a study which showed that the educational system was not preparing young Ethiopians for current national and global labour demands, the Ethiopian Government reformed its Higher Education Policy to focus on a progressive 70:30 approach favouring sciences over humanities to respond to shifting national and global labour market demands. The strategy is based on study findings that graduates of medicine, engineering and technology are more likely to find work than those in the social and natural sciences.<sup>13</sup>

12 ILO: *Decent Work Country Programme Internal Review (2009-2011)* (Harare, November 2011).

13 ECA: *African Youth Report* (Addis, 2011, p.50-51).



### 3.2. Innovative Youth Employment Initiatives

The emerging good practices and innovative initiatives described below offer particularly promising benefits to youth entrepreneurship; have potential to be replicated elsewhere or have proven effective to build youth capabilities and/or provide them with decent work opportunities. The examples vary from local, national and multi-country level interventions and are drawn primarily from national events and recent ILO/UN mappings of youth employment interventions in Africa.<sup>14</sup> A few additional technical cooperation projects from the past five years are mentioned to enrich the analysis. Emphasis is put on innovative approaches to fostering and supporting youth leadership, entrepreneurship and skills-building in recognition of the call from the events to prioritize youth entrepreneurship and employability for promoting youth employment locally and nationally. Where available, information is provided on the main implementing partners and donors, total budget, principle objective(s) and results.



#### 3.2.1. Holistic, integrated and sequenced programme approaches to youth entrepreneurship development and employment

**ILO's Youth Entrepreneurship Facility in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda (YEF)** has a well-designed programmatic approach to youth entrepreneurship with the main objective "to contribute to the creation of decent work for young Africans both as means of

self-employment and as job creation for others."<sup>15</sup> The facility integrates multiple interrelated components such as nurturing a national youth entrepreneurship culture; creating an enabling policy environment for young entrepreneurs; strengthening service delivery of educational and training institutions for youth entrepreneurship; business development; and providing youth-to-youth financing for youth led entrepreneurial initiatives that create jobs for other youth.

Promoting a national culture of youth entrepreneurship is particularly relevant to addressing a central challenge raised in the events, that African youth have not been given opportunities to value or adopt an entrepreneurial spirit or know-how. YEF's promotion of an entrepreneurial culture uses innovative youth-appropriate social mass-media based programming, e.g. TV, radio, public events and campaigning to create tailor-made shows and events by youth for youth. Other striking activities are Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award Schemes to promote youth entrepreneur role models.<sup>16</sup> In its first year (2010-11), YEF reached out to an estimated total of 10,546 young people resulting in increased awareness of entrepreneurship and conducted 28 entrepreneurship culture promotion events. In the first evaluation, project beneficiaries reported being particularly satisfied with entrepreneurship culture change campaigns.<sup>17</sup>

There are several other emerging good practice programmes with similar well-designed multi-pronged approaches to youth entrepreneurship development. One singled out at the Zimbabwe event and in recent ILO mappings is the **Youth Employment Support (YES) for Unemployed and Marginalized Young People (JUMP) in Kenya and Zimbabwe** (2009-12) funded by the Government of Germany and the ILO. The programme recently ended but focused on unemployed and marginalized young women and men using evidence-based participatory and community-driven job creation and sustainable livelihoods interventions and served to improve the policy environment. Its main objective was to contribute to poverty alleviation efforts in Kenya and Zimbabwe through creating decent and sustainable jobs for poor and marginalized youth by assisting local communities in three selected pilot districts in each country, in collaboration with employers' and workers' organizations, to create 1,000 decent jobs in each country (more than half the beneficiaries being young women). The two main immediate objectives to achieve this were: (i) a total of 1,000 decent and sustainable jobs are created for young women and men in each project country; and (ii) selected national and local partners are able to design and implement their own youth employment projects.

14 Key evidence-based mappings for addressing youth employment in Africa include but are not limited to: African Youth Report (ECA, 2011), Mapping of Youth Employment Interventions of the ILO in Africa (2010, 2012 (Forthcoming)) and Mapping of Youth Employment Interventions in Africa (RCM/ILO 2011).

15 Danida-led Africa Commission (The Government of Denmark) is the main donor and ILO and country governments are the main implementers. The project's total budget is \$US23 million (2010-2014).

16 Please see: [www.yefaafrica.org](http://www.yefaafrica.org).

17 "Unleashing African Entrepreneurship Facility: Independent Mid-term Evaluation (Phase 1 2010-2011) (January 2010-July 2011).



YES-JUMP supported the strengthening of entrepreneurship capacity through using the contextualised Start and Improve Your Business tool adapted to the Zimbabwean context and supported green business development such as bee-keeping, horticulture and waste management.

A very important good practice was the full integration of the project's activities with other complementary programmes to maximize outreach and services offered. It was implemented in close coordination with ILO's "Skills for Youth Development and Rural Economic Empowerment Project" (TREE) and "Improving the Quality of Informal Apprenticeships (QIA) and Skills Training Systems" to provide needs-based apprenticeships. A multiplier effect was achieved with the combined good practices of these different programmes. QIA is working with industry experts to improve the business of master crafts persons in selected demand driven trades – art and craft, welding and metal work, carpentry and joinery, motor vehicle mechanics and renewable (solar) energy. In turn, master craft persons provide on-the-job skills training, mentoring for youth and wage and self employment opportunities in three cities in Zimbabwe. Synergies and collaborative initiatives among YES-JUMP, QIA and TREE have offered a fuller package of both skills and entrepreneurship training, work placements and financing for microenterprise development to strengthen the supply and demands sides.

Evaluations of both YES-JUMP and YEF highlight that one of the reasons for success is their design and programme management structures of having Tripartite steering committees at national, regional and local levels involving the government, social partners and youth organizations. In addition, both programmes were designed to be closely aligned with national government development priorities and programmes, involve many other important global and local partners and build strong partnerships with these various stakeholders. YES-JUMP encouraged positive interaction and dialogue between government and labour, whose relationship had been characterized by suspicion and lack of cooperation prior to the project. All the evaluations concluded that YES-JUMP is replicable in other countries.

**CIDA/ILO Decent Workfor Egypt's Young People – Tackling the Challenge Together (2011-2015)** is funded by the Government of Canada (US\$9.63 million) and also received an in-kind contribution of US\$5.3 million from the Government of Egypt in the form of office space and staff. It was presented as a promising initiative during the Egypt event to respond to the need to create much stronger public and private partnerships (PPP) between educational systems and employers/the labour market. Aligned with Egypt's National Action Plan for Youth Employment (NAP), the project's main objective is to increase decent employment opportunities for young men and women, especially vulnerable groups, through

capacity building and skills development. To achieve this, it offers a package of integrated interventions: mobilizing public employment services (PES) offices, education institutions and the media.

Youth units in PES provide career guidance services, counselling and assistance to job seekers in close consultation and cooperation with relevant stakeholders like trade unions, employers, youth/training centres, and technical schools. The project prepares youth for the labour market; strengthens ties between competent authorities and employment offices; and cooperates with establishments that offer job opportunities for youth in five governorates of Egypt. The innovation lies in the package of integrated and sequenced services involving youth, social partners and government. Another strong intervention is the establishment of a National Steering and Advisory Committee (NSAC) with members from key ministries, representatives of governorates and labour organisations.

### 3.2.2. *Financing for Youth*

#### **a. Innovations in National Youth Financing – Youth to Youth**

A very important emerging good practice is supporting youth friendly micro-financing. After building the skills of youths, YES-JUMP Kenya and Zimbabwe supported financing for youth by building the capacity of Micro Finance Institutions, NGOs and youth-led saving and credit cooperatives (SACCOs) to offer financial services to young entrepreneurs who have followed the Start and Improve Your Business modules. The SACCOs promote democratic business institutions that allow youth members to make decisions on major issues like loan interest rates, repayment periods, and collateral to make loans more accessible to young entrepreneurs. The creation of a total of 2,956 jobs (53.6 percent being women) against the project target of 2,000 jobs in both countries clearly shows one best practice; skills building combined with improved access to youth friendly loans can be a catalyst for growth and employment for marginalized and unemployed youth.<sup>18</sup>

**The Youth Entrepreneurship Facility in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda** has a very similar innovative intervention, the **Youth-to-Youth Fund**, to enable young existing and new entrepreneurs to directly access youth-friendly and youth-to-youth financing for businesses. It has established partnerships with microfinance institutions for its finance windows.

<sup>18</sup> Youth Employment Support –Jobs YES-JUMP Independent Evaluation Report (April 2012).



A promising practice is supporting youth-led organizations – NGOs, cooperatives and associations that propose “smart projects” on how to increase entrepreneurship among youth. Projects are chosen based on innovation, sustainability and results measurement.

Thematic business plan competitions are part of the criteria for accessing youth-to-youth awards and represent innovation in themselves because they inspire and motivate young people to create innovative entrepreneurial solutions to youth unemployment and community issues.

Other innovations are the kinds of thematic windows chosen for awards. In 2011, the Youth-to-Youth Fund in Tanzania and Uganda focused on **young women’s entrepreneurship** development to fund implementable project ideas that contribute specifically to the development of entrepreneurship and business opportunities for young women. In Kenya, the focus was on a green window for proposals that support the establishment or expansion of green enterprises or businesses. After one year of operation, 35 youth led organizations received funding to support decent job creation for their peers.<sup>19</sup>

Kenya’s government-initiated and largely government-funded **Kazi Kwa Vijana (Youth for Work) programme** has a national youth fund to finance youth businesses and entrepreneurship. It involves engagement with microfinance and other financial institutions to provide loans and credit services at repayment rates that youth can afford as well as youth led implementation and management structures. It has mainly been the initiative of the Government of Kenya with a National Steering Committee led by the Prime Minister’s Office and inter-ministerial participation. However, following a few challenges, it has only recently been supported by the Youth Employment Network (the ILO and the World Bank) to scale up national youth funding to reach more male and female youth strengthen M&E and learning.

Zimbabwe has an innovative private youth fund provided by a multi-national business entitled **Old Mutual’s US\$10 Million Kuerra-Ukondla Youth Empowerment Fund** for youth business enterprise development in agriculture, manufacturing, services, retail and horticulture. As of February 2012, 3,000 applications had been submitted with 69 projects approved to the value of US\$ 250,000. The impact of the projects is not yet known but offers a unique case of a large private youth fund for generating jobs for youth.

19 “Unleashing African Entrepreneurship Facility: Independent Mid-term Evaluation Phase 1 2010-2011 (January 2010-July 2011) and ILO Technical Progress Report: Unleashing African Entrepreneurship Facility (December-July 2011).





## b. Local private sector entrepreneurship and financing services

A few national events identified private companies as good practice models for providing entrepreneurship training and technical and financial support services to build youth entrepreneurship and businesses. **Youth Investment Trust of Zambia (YAPYA)** is a youth development trust that offers a promising methodology, an integrated mentorship and technical and financial support package to facilitate youth microenterprise. In its first year, it supported 147 youth enterprises that generated 750 jobs. These small scale private sector engagements offer many promising methodologies for supporting youth entrepreneurship that could be scaled up and replicated as part of larger multi-stakeholder public-private partnerships and programmes for youth employment.

## c. Global private-public partnerships

**Barclays Bank International-UNICEF Banking on Brighter Futures** is a global partnership programme funding individual projects in approximately 14 countries around the world. The main objective is to support young people's skills development targeting specifically disadvantaged youth and children to access decent schooling and to increase youth employability and microenterprise development.<sup>20</sup> All individual projects have a strong emphasis on M&E impact and are designed to ensure sustainability long after the projects end. Such partnerships between business and development experts leads to innovative multi-dimensional national programmes that involve public and private stakeholders and deal with the supply and demand sides of youth employment.

Two programmes supported by this global partnership, Barclays Bank, Zambia and UNICEF Partnership/Programme, and the Barclays Bank Egypt and UNICEF Meshwary Project were shared as emerging good practice initiatives during the Zambia and Egypt events. Meshwary offers marginalized youth life skills building, entrepreneurship training and work placements and works in partnership with a national youth organization. Based on progress to date, it has benefitted 45,000 Egyptian youth between 13 and 24 years of age, trained 832 facilitators, and established 9 vocational and guidance centres in Youth Association for Population and Development branches in nine Egyptian governorates.

Barclays Bank, Zambia and UNICEF Partnership/Programme's most innovative approach is institutional strengthening of existing youth resources centres already offering courses in skills training, community outreach and enterprise development to integrate more market-based driven educational activities into daily recreational facilities to help reduce high risk behaviour among youth. In its first phase (2007-11), the programme sought to reach 15,000 children and youth infected and affected by HIV and AIDS, supporting eight centres found in Northern, Eastern and Southern provinces and in urban and rural areas of the country.

With the successes of its first phase, the project's next phase is a three-year project focused on building the institutional capacity of four youth centres located in four provinces in Zambia to provide 5,400 young people with business skills, basic vocational training and career counselling. The second phase will allow approximately 800 of 5,400 young people trained in business skills to take part in a specific ILO evidence-based entrepreneurship training programme called Gender and Entrepreneurship Together (Get Ahead) to start their own businesses, gain skills, become entrepreneurs and be provided with follow up support necessary through the youth centres. It will facilitate at least 3,000 young people to gain valuable work experience opportunities within the private sector. Other innovations are developing a corporate volunteer programme to have mentoring and coaching in business skills using Barclays Bank staff and supporting work placements.

“Rapid labour  
employment  
generation is  
considered a best  
practice for  
creating jobs.”

20 In 2010 alone, US\$90 million was invested in projects around the world.

The programme is a highly innovative and sustainable collaboration, partnering with government ministries and UN Agencies, as well as NGOs and local organisations and the Technical and Vocational Entrepreneurship Training Authority (TEVETA).

These initiatives illustrate the value of public-private partnerships that are both global and national to support wide-reaching national programmes that offer a full gamut of both educational and technical training and financial services combined with other social and sexual health services.

### 3.2.3. *Rapid Labour Intensive Employment Generation*

Rapid labour employment generation is considered a best practice for creating jobs. The labour intensive approach “employs local labour and utilises local materials creating 3 to 5 times more employment, resulting in 10-30 percent savings in financial terms, and reducing foreign exchange requirements by 50-60 percent.”<sup>21</sup> ***Kazi Kwa Vijana (Youth for Work) programme*** supports innovative labour intensive public works projects that can be rapidly set up, employing urban and rural youth. The different public works are implemented by different line ministries in areas like road maintenance, water harvesting, afforestation and waste collection. In its first year alone it benefited between 200,000 to 300,000 Kenyans, mainly youth, to generate work opportunities based on their needs and interests in rural and urban areas.

Ethiopia’s ***National Cobblestone Project*** (2007 to present) trains young women and men in the traditional craft of cobblestone paving using local resources in a labour-intensive process to pave roads and improve public spaces using environmentally friendly techniques. The project has a tripartite structure involving government, employers’ and youth organizations.<sup>22</sup> Sustainability has been assured by establishing on-the-job training, institutionalizing training in TVET particularly targeting youth, strengthening quality and standards nationwide and creating a supportive policy environment. By the end of 2009, more than 90,000 new jobs in 140 towns and cities were created with almost half of the employees women.

Rapid income generation from cobblestone paving has encouraged the creation of micro and small scale enterprises, and provided opportunities for entrepreneurs and small businesses. To date, more than 1,700 micro and small enterprises were created and have enabled chisellers and pavers to get contracts not only from cities and universities but also from the private sector.

### 3.2.4. *Innovative Educational and Skills Building Programmes for Vulnerable Youth*

***Youth Entrepreneurship Facility in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda (YEF)*** strengthens institutional capacity of educational and training institutions to offer business development services for in-school and out-of-school youth. What is a novel practice is helping local service providers develop youth specific business development products such as business mentoring and apprenticeship programmes. An innovative intervention is introducing entrepreneurship education in school curricula by adapting and further enhancing ILO’s well-tested Know About Business (KAB) programme. The programme trains and certifies local providers and out of school young women and men in business development services in specific sectors and value chains to train other youth.

***UNICEF’s National Talent Academies*** are a recent innovative approach to strengthen the resilience of fragile states to create educational and skills building opportunities for out of school or unemployed youth. These academies are relevant to both the Tanzania and Kenya events’ recommended action points to support youth sports and arts talent as a means of generating youth employment and role models.

The ***National Talent Academy in Kenya*** was identified as a good practice initiative in the national event. It was set up by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in partnership with UNICEF to establish the first ever National Talent Academy in Kenya to support young talent to make a living out of it. It is an innovative educational programme for educating and training selected talented young people in performing arts and sports. It caters only to out of school youth or unemployed youth in special areas of talent.

---

21 ECA 2011: 51.

22 Stakeholders include youth associations like the Addis Ababa Youth Association, Ministry of Capacity Building, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Works and Urban Development as well as Ministry of Industry; and works under the University Capacity Building Programme (UCBP), engineering capacity building programme (ECBP) and originally the Urban Governance Development Programme of the then GTZ.



The curriculum focuses on identifying and helping young people develop their talents through intensive training while also providing them with remedial education in the basics of literacy, numeracy, science, ICT, and life skills, while they are mentored for employment. It uses a decentralized approach to reach out to rural and urban youth with twelve regional centres found in all provinces.

As the initiative started in March 2010, it is still too early to know how effective the academy has been. As of June 2011, 1,200 students from different parts of Kenya had received this alternative learning.<sup>23</sup> So far, youth who have graduated have started successful businesses in their area of talent and ventured into international arenas.

The National Talent Academy intervention can be replicated in accordance with country needs. The Kenyan academic full curriculum for various talent areas can be adopted and adapted. Talent training can be incorporated in high school or tertiary institution curriculum.<sup>24</sup>

The Coastal Regional Government in Tanzania has established the *Pwani Youth Centre for Excellence (PYCE)* to collaborate with youth to offer entrepreneurship and vocational training combined with life skills, civic education and business support. Youth are supported to build low cost housing and to engage in agro-forestry businesses like tree planting, bee-keeping and horticulture farming. The combination of practical entrepreneurial and vocational training with life skills and civil education is another promising practice for supporting youth social and economic empowerment.

### 3.2.5. *Mainstreaming and Specific Targeted Interventions for Marginalized or Disadvantaged Youth*

National event discussions pointed to the fact that young women are generally more vulnerable to underemployment and poor working conditions. The best solutions are mainstreaming gender into all aspects of a programme combined with targeting young women specifically. As an example, YES-JUMP is gender-sensitive, aiming to have at least 50 percent young women in its target group and ensuring diverse and gender-balanced representation of youth in its governing structures. It also offers women-specific entrepreneurship opportunities. Most recent project results show that its gender commitments are being effectively implemented and monitored. Likewise, *CIDA/ILO Decent Work for Egypt's Young People* has a gender mainstreaming strategy across the whole programme. It aims to ensure at least half of the targeted project beneficiaries are women and

its project activities offer tailored activities for young women's empowerment. Other community-based forms of inclusion are promoted such as providing particular attention to mainstreaming vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, as well as designing interventions specific to their needs.



*Barclays Bank, Zambia and UNICEF Partnership/ Programme's* has integrated ILO's Women's Entrepreneurship and Gender Equality (WEDGE) approach, which focuses on building capacity of local partners to support the specific needs and interests of women entrepreneurs. As a global programme, methodologies and tools used are based on multi-country evidence of effectiveness. The *'GET Ahead' entrepreneurship programme* differs from conventional business training materials because it highlights essential entrepreneurial skills from a gender perspective applied to starting or improving an individual, family or group business.

*Empowerment and Livelihoods for Adolescent Youth (ELA), Tanzania* is funded by the Nike Foundation and implemented by the international NGO BRAC. It is an economic empowerment programme designed to socially and financially empower vulnerable teenage girls aged between 13 and 19 years of age exclusively. ELA is small scale compared to most ILO-supported programmes but as a programme designed specifically for young women, it offers noteworthy interventions that are needed for the specific needs and interests of young women to move out of unemployment. Such programmes must be tested for their effectiveness and potential replicability at national scale.

23 UNICEF: *Education in Emergencies: Post-Crisis Transition* (Nairobi, June 2011: p 6).

24 UNICEF is currently documenting the lessons learnt from the Talent academy to be shared once published.

The programme combines innovative livelihood and life skills training with a customised microfinance programme and is a promising model of a specific adolescent girls' economic empowerment programme that builds girls' entrepreneurial and business skills while responding to the need to empower them socially. The aim is to build the girls' capacities to lead a life of self-reliance and dignity, and become active agents of social change in their own families and communities. It combines innovative livelihood and life skills training with a customised microfinance programme. It provides various services, such as: (a) Entrepreneurship: livelihood training activities that promote self-reliance and financial literacy training for better management of accounts; (b) Social empowerment: life skills-based education modules that provide basic training on health, reproductive health, risky behaviours, family and relationships and planning; and (c) Microfinance for small-scale enterprise to promote self-reliance.

### 3.2.6. *Information, Knowledge and Communication*

**Tunisia's National Youth Employment Observatory** was set up in 2002 to conduct national studies and surveys of young people's condition in the country. It acts as a platform for youth to participate in national decision making. So far, it has organized four national youth consultations to inform the national development agenda.

**Youth Entrepreneurship Facility** in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda has as a cross-cutting component for all its activities to support youth employment policy makers and promoters to make evidence based decisions for better resource allocation and programme design. Emerging innovative practices include committing to conducting one evaluation and initiating and sharing results of two impact assessments per year. In 2010-11, it accomplished this intended result. One relevant longitudinal impact assessment will be conducted during 2012-13 to test whether the entrepreneurship education support provided in Uganda "has an attributable impact on labour market outcomes such as business start-up and employment creation and if so make this evidence available to policy makers across Africa."<sup>25</sup>

**The ILO is Promoting Productive Employment and Decent Work** in Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia has an institutional strengthening component to build capacity of these governments to formulate, monitor and evaluate evidence based policies and programmes in youth employment. This component includes knowledge development initiatives and innovative methodologies such as peer reviews and good practices and regional knowledge sharing mechanisms. Such regional initiatives are important for generating new ideas and sharing evidence-based best practises across African sub-regions.

These national policies and programmes attest to the strong commitment among African countries to support youth to enter and stay in the labour force. While challenges remain in terms of how to ensure policies are fully and effectively implemented and how to scale up good programmes to reach more youth, these good practice examples demonstrate what can be done if there is government commitment backed by proper resourcing and donor support.

---

<sup>25</sup> "Unleashing African Entrepreneurship Facility: Independent Midterm Evaluation (Phase 1 2010-2011) (January 2010-July 2011: p. 16).





## 4. The Way Forward: Youth as agents of socio-economic change in Africa

Youth played active and influential roles in discussions on the way forward. Youth-led communiqués and declarations of action were leading action points. In the below summary of recommended action points and partnerships, youth voices are highlighted.

### 4.1. Action Points

#### 4.1.1. Policy level

##### ***Develop a comprehensive integrated national approach***

- Youth called for developing and updating all youth related policies [All events]. Finalize draft National Employment Policies in order to comprehensively address youth employment challenges [Ethiopia and Kenya]. Revise the National Youth Policy and Action Plan for Youth Employment in Zimbabwe [Zimbabwe];
- Ensure effective implementation of policies on youth employment. This also requires that sufficient financial resources be made available. Achievements at the government level can be tracked by establishing targets on youth employment creation [South Africa]; Establish one focal ministry responsible for youth issues rather than only dividing youth issues across ministries [Tanzania];
- Establish a multi-sector multi-stakeholder approach to dealing with youth, labour and employment issues together [Kenya, Zambia and Zimbabwe];
- Government should launch a campaign to foster a 'patriotic' mindset. The population, the business sector and the government should share the responsibility of youth employment creation [South Africa];
- Mainstream youth and other related social issues (i.e. gender) in national development planning, programmes and budgeting [Zimbabwe]. Youth urged policy makers and social partners to mainstream youth issues into their policies and programmes and to facilitate and improve dissemination of information on youth activities, programmes and policies to all youth [Zimbabwe and Ethiopia];
- In the DRC event, a youth leader, who had participated in youth consultations for developing DRC's national PRSP (DSCR2), emphasized that only if youth issues are fully integrated into national government priorities and action plans, will youth issues be properly addressed;



- Youth can influence policy formulation, yet their role in this process must be recognised and sustained [South Africa];
- Create a national inter-ministerial and broad-based coordinating mechanism comprised of relevant ministries, worker and employer organizations, educational and training institutions, private sector and youth organizations to ensure proper coordination and integration of the response to youth issues;
- Use evidence-base decision making to create national youth employment initiatives like setting up youth-specific national funds and public work schemes;
- Set up a Youth Desk in key government offices in order to follow up on youth employment issues on a regular basis [Ethiopia];
- Develop targeted youth policies for specific vulnerable groups rather than just a common standard policy to cover all youth social groups [Tanzania];
- Establish a national professional regulatory authority to oversee professional market demands and guide career development paths for youth [Tanzania];
- Support national policies for gender equality to increase young women's political representation and equal rights to citizenship [Egypt].

### ***National policies to promote business and entrepreneurship***

- Create policies that foster innovation and creativity [Zambia and Kenya]. Identify talented and skilled entrepreneurs at grassroots level who should be selected to participate in the business incubation and mentorship programmes entitled "Business Plan/Venture Capital Competition for TEVET and University Students." This should be coupled with access to finance and markets to encourage them to become Growth Oriented Entrepreneurs [Zambia]. Mainstream science and technology and promote research and innovation [Kenya and Zimbabwe];
- Reduce the cost of doing business for MSMEs run by young people, particularly start ups, by introducing tax waivers, lower borrowing interest rates and/or free registration for start ups until such a time that business cash flows are stable and the business is up and running. This grace period should last for at least six months [Zambian Youth Communiqué];

- Extend tax relief for employer organizations that create the highest numbers of jobs and subsidize tax to these organizations to offer training and skills development [Tanzania].

### ***Develop Information systems, monitoring and evaluation, measuring results***

- Develop a national monitoring and evaluation system and undertake impact assessments of existing policies, programmes and strategies currently in force, addressing the challenge of youth unemployment [Zambia and Zimbabwe];
- Measure the success of training systems based on outcomes or results, such as through put rates, employability and productivity of graduates, rather than on enrolment numbers [South Africa];
- Upscale identified good practices in order to increase their impact on generating opportunities for youth employment [Many events]. Replicate innovative apprenticeship programmes involving government, employers and workers [Kenya];
- Establish a national labour market information system and update it on a regular basis to guide development and updating of youth employment interventions and policy responses [Many national events];
- Conduct a youth mainstreaming "audit" in order to assess to what extent relevant government and non-government institutions are effectively implementing youth related policies and programmes [Ethiopia];
- Enhance information dissemination regarding youth employment policies and programmes that are for and to the most vulnerable groups in rural areas. Consider diverse dissemination mechanisms based on target groups. Inform youth on international opportunities for work [Kenya and Tanzania];
- Establish a labour survey [Kenya]. Monitor and ensure a balance in the labour force in terms of the numbers of degree holders and other cadres such as technicians and artisans to avoid the danger of having too large a pool of a specific group in the labour force [Tanzania];
- National employer associations and training institutions must work closely together to provide updated information on labour market requirements [Tanzania];



- Establish decentralized information centres or youth desks that will relay information on youth activities, projects, programmes and policies. These centres could be established through cooperation with local authorities as these have direct links and access to local communities [Zimbabwe]; The events and the analysis of good practices have revealed that there is very limited information on what has been achieved in terms of reducing youth unemployment in Africa. It is therefore imperative to invest more efforts in monitoring achievements and evaluating the impact of any initiatives geared towards youth employment. This information should also identify good practices, and identify commonalities among the good practises, so that future initiatives can apply these lessons for increased impact. These lessons can be used to improve the design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of youth employment initiatives.

### ***Reform and Revitalize National Educational Systems***

- Reassess and reform all educational, technical and professional employment training services to meet market demands. Make the educational system more practical oriented to support relevant skills development, entrepreneurship and offer career guidance in partnership with private sector and relevant government sectors [Zimbabwe, South Africa and Tanzania];
- Create multiple exit points in the education system, to ensure that students that do not graduate, can still acquire relevant skills and a matching certificate [South Africa];
- Renew education programmes to better prepare young women and men to successfully compete for jobs outside the country, such as within the East African Community (EAC) and globally [Tanzania];
- Revitalize youth poly-techniques [Kenya];
- Provide secondary and tertiary financial-need based awards (bursaries) that do not have to be repaid [Kenya];
- Integrate entrepreneurship education coupled with in-school microfinance programmes in high schools [Kenya];
- Establish competitions for jobs for recent graduates [Tunisia];
- Integrate improved language acquisition and competencies in English and other international languages to improve African youth's edge to compete in national and global job markets [Tanzania].

### ***Foster Entrepreneurship, Life Skills and Strong Work Ethics***

- Conduct regular education and awareness raising campaigns to change attitudes towards work and work culture among youth and parents;
- Education systems should be geared towards inculcating an entrepreneurial spirit among youth, rather than preparing them for the job market. It is important to inculcate values of hard work ethics, self-confidence, personal discipline, and entrepreneurship among young people as shared responsibility of government, youth organizations, universities, churches and parents associations [Many events]. Take into consideration the socio-economic conditions of the youth that is trained [South Africa];
- Higher education institutions and further education and training institutions should provide compulsory school-to-work programmes [South Africa];
- Review and address social and cultural forms of discrimination against youth in the work place [Tunisia];
- Establish youth empowerment centres [Kenya];
- Provide civic education for youth to become more active citizens aware of their rights and roles [Egypt].

### ***Strengthen and Raise Awareness of Youth Specific Social Protection***

- Young people expressed the need for greater awareness raising campaigns and training by employers' and workers' organizations so that they may learn more about the opportunities and challenges faced in the world of work [Zambia]. Worker associations must defend employees' rights and interests [Tanzania];
- Government and social partners should develop a comprehensive social protection for youth [Zimbabwe];
- Design national affirmative action policies for youth to ensure a certain percentage of jobs are allocated to youth [Kenya];
- Strengthen wage policies and their implementation [Kenya];
- Develop social dialogue on social protection in order to define how to expand social protection coverage to youth [Tunisia].

### ***Strengthen Employment-Centered Macroeconomic Policy Initiatives***

- Across all events, both youth and other participants emphasized that the youth represent the biggest part of the population and therefore they must be supported in order for countries to regain their growth;
- Invest in economically beneficial sectors where there are opportunities for youth. Invest in job creation in agricultural plantations, the mining sector, the construction sector, infrastructures and industry. Multiply and decentralize the economic centres for job creation. Support the creation of decent jobs in the informal sector [DRC]. Invest in information and communications technology, agriculture and agro-processing, tourism, wholesale and retail, business outsourcing, off-shoring, and manufacturing [Kenya];
- Invest in the sports sector to create more jobs [Kenya and Tanzania];
- Invest more in creating decent employment among members of the East African Community (EAC). Use the Common External Tariff and Market Protocol to increase employment opportunities and trade [Tanzania]; Support youth led business ventures in agriculture in countries like Tanzania and Ethiopia where it is one of the main sources of economic revenue. Cooperate with other stakeholders such as investors in making agriculture more attractive to young people by providing inputs, infrastructure, experts and reliable market information and access to create employment in rural areas and limit rural-urban migration [Tanzania];  
Government should promote social enterprises, as a way to ensure that businesses focus on job creation for youth, rather than focussing on profit maximisation [South Africa].

#### ***4.1.2. Programmes***

##### ***National Youth Employment Initiatives***

- Develop national programmes for the promotion of youth employment based on the best practices and recommendations coming out of the national events with full engagement of the tripartite participants in collaboration with the ILO and other financial and technical partners;
- Develop evidence based programmes such as high labour intensive public works [Tunisia, Kenya, South Africa and Madagascar];

- Transform the modus operandi of the youth wage subsidy. Use this fund not for wage subsidies, but instead to finance industrialisation programmes, which can be an engine for job creation, and which can increase the competitiveness of the country with other (processing) countries [South Africa].

##### ***Youth Entrepreneurship and MSEs***

- Establish youth-specific development funds supported by private-government partnerships. Government must allocate specific funds from national budgets [Several events]. Create a national youth employment programme that has its own youth fund to offer youth specific credit and savings to finance youth businesses and engage and strengthen microfinance institutions to offer these youth friendly services and financial products. [Madagascar]. As part of funding, promote model youth entrepreneurs and research into the best niches for youth entrepreneurship [Togo];
- More investments must go into youth friendly resource, skills and entrepreneurship centres in cities and small towns across the country [Zambia];
- Put in place guaranteed loans and support for youth businesses using a youth friendly approach [Togo];
- Strengthen support to youth for establishing cooperatives and access to credit and special funds for youth with lead of government and youth organizations [DRC]. Cooperatives provide opportunities for youth to save, mobilize resources and to empower more marginalized youth [Kenya];
- Pursue active labour market interventions to enhance the integration of vulnerable and marginalised social groups and sectors (should be at the core of all employment initiatives for the youth);
- Conduct action-oriented researches and programmes to be evidence based so as to make them effective in responding to young people's needs and difficulties in getting jobs [Ethiopia and others];
- Raise awareness of financial services/opportunities to youth for developing their own businesses;
- Strengthen business linkages with large multinationals as well as creating government contract quotas to increase income generation for youth;
- Youth requested increased access to land, capital and labour opportunities. Governments must increase current budgetary allocation to youth development and engage the private sector in providing youth-friendly financial and business services to every region in a country.



### ***Design and Scale up targeted interventions for socially marginalized youth***

- Expand outreach of youth programmes and activities to disadvantaged marginalised youth – disabled, rural and young women. These youth groups have no access to the programmes and activities being offered to the youth, therefore there is need to make deliberate efforts to ensure that all programmes and activities take them into account. Expand upon good practice programmes such as the Skills for Youth Employment and Rural Development and the Youth Employment Support Jobs for Unemployed and Marginalised Young People (YES-JUMP) to promote youth employability and inclusive decent job creation;
- Expand microfinance outreach to excluded groups (i.e. out of school youth) and adapt MFI products to meet their needs and interests [Kenya].

### ***Support Local Economic Initiatives***

- Establish local economic development initiatives for youth to harness potential growth within local communities.

#### ***4.1.3. Integrating training, work experience and labour market services***

### ***Promote Youth Entrepreneurship and Practical Skills Training in partnership with Employers based on Labour Market needs***

- Government and its partners should commit to financing entrepreneurship, training, and skills development for young people using informal and formal channels of training. [Zimbabwe];
- Invest in entrepreneurship education and development of practical technical skills [Most events]. Youth want to learn more about how to be enterprising and employ themselves and others. National training and vocational bodies (TEVETA) must take leadership on this [Zambia];
- Rehabilitate the infrastructure and upgrade equipment and other training aids in all the vocational training/ youth resource centres by government. Create a conducive training environment and provide relevant skills to young women and men [Zambia];
- Emphasize both hard and soft skills training [Tanzania].

### ***Apprenticeships, Internships, Work Placements and Industrial Attachments***

- Increase internships and apprenticeships programmes for graduate students and new employees, and make existing apprenticeship programmes more effective [Tanzania/Responsibility of Association of Tanzania Employers, South Africa];
- Create incentives for employers to take on young people as interns and apprentices to promote more formal and informal apprenticeships and work related exposures, such as the government offering subsidies to employers or establishing a youth employment quota system [Zambia]. Such a system should encourage employers to recruit young people without experience and from more marginalized groups [Madagascar];
- Use the social compact between the government and the private sector as a way to place youth into internship programmes. Government and the private sector should take an equal share in providing such work experience places [South Africa];
- Set up mentorship and coaching programmes to coach and guide youth on issues such as career choices [South Africa];
- Strengthen national industrial attachment and apprenticeship programmes to enable trainees to gain relevant work experience [Kenya];
- Government should play an active role in employing young people [South Africa].

### ***Counselling, Mentorship and Career-Guidance Services***

- Create more flexible and accessible professional training to reduce early entrants with involvement of government, youth organizations, universities, and employer and worker organizations [DRC];
- Strengthen career guidance and counselling sessions so that students make informed decisions based on labour market demand [Zimbabwe].

### ***Make Educational System more relevant to labour market***

- Create a financing mechanism for youth in the areas of science, technology and ICT by government and social partners [Zimbabwe and Kenya];
- Establish and strengthen entrepreneurship education in schools and tertiary institutions to foster the development of an entrepreneurial culture among the youth to facilitate self-employment [Zimbabwe]; Strengthen the education and training sector so that skills will be offered that meet the demands in the labour market. Create linkages with the private sector, to improve the match between skills and market demands [South Africa]; Community learning centres should be geared towards the needs of young people, especially those who have dropped out of school [South Africa].



### ***Advocacy and awareness raising on youth employment issues***

- Intensify awareness-raising on girls' education [Madagascar]; Youth organizations must be vigilant and advocate for any promises made by government or other partners to be supported by concrete budgetary commitments [Several events];
- Trade unions can engage in advocacy for youth employment. Some trade unions have established a youth desk, to increase their lobbying and impact on youth employment issues [South Africa].

### ***Working conditions and workers' rights for youth***

- Strengthen regulation and work place inspections to verify compliance with and respect for international labour standards;
- Workers' organizations must educate young people about their rights as workers, considering that young people are often the worst treated. Other spaces for informing youth about these regulations are using career counselling and youth centre services [DRC];
- Reduce the informality and the precariousness of youth employment, and reduce abuse that is commonly linked with informal youth employment [South Africa];
- Improve safety and health conditions at work [Ethiopia];
- Do not overlook the quality aspect of job creation for young people [South Africa]; Speed up the ratification of Convention No 184 relative to health and security in the agricultural sector. Revise the labour code to be in line with international labour laws [Togo].

### ***Social dialogue***

- Social partners should play a key role in formulating and implementing policies and strategies on Decent Work for young people [South Africa];
- There is a need for more initiatives of collective bargaining on youth employment [South Africa]; Create a bottom-up approach to social dialogue on youth employment. Involve grass roots organisations, such as social clubs, street committees, hubs and sports groups [South Africa].





## 5. Proposed Partnerships and Networks

### *Strengthen Multi-Stakeholder Coordination and Support*

- Establish a follow up committee to the event to track whether recommendations from national events have been implemented [several events]. In Togo, it was agreed that this committee should comprise the key line ministries in charge of youth employment (Ministries of Youth and Sports; Public Services, Labour and Social Regulations), employers' and workers' organizations, youth organizations, universities and training centres, civil society and the ILO;
- Work with the ILO, other multilateral and bilateral development partners, and NGOs [Togo];
- Establish multi-stakeholder and multi-sector taskforces to ensure policy coherence and integration;
- Create bodies where key actors from all relevant ministries, private sector and other public actors can partake in discussions on youth employment. Such bodies must strengthen coordination and synergies among key social partners such as between universities and the private sector. Such bodies could also be in charge of creating national information systems for these key actors to know what technical and financial services and programmes already exist to link into them or meet gaps;
- Create partnerships among various groups, such as women, youth and persons with disabilities [South Africa].

### ***Public-private Partnerships***

- Establish, develop and expand upon Public and Private Partnerships (PPPs) and programmes. Private institutions must provide both financing and technical and entrepreneurship training and mentorship on how best to conduct business and marketing, and offer opportunities for work experience [Zimbabwe];
- Incite and engage the private sector, e.g. the banking system to support innovative projects [Tunisia];
- Establish partnerships between government and private sector and industries to institutionalize internship and apprenticeships for smooth transition from school to the labour market [Several events]; and
- Create partnerships between employers and educational and training institutions for the development of curricula that respond to labour market demands.

### ***Youth Participation and Leadership***

- Create a mechanism to engage youth in all policy and programme design, planning, implementation and evaluation concerning youth employment [Most events];
- Set up a youth umbrella organization and youth desk to represent all youth issues in national policy decision-making [Zambia];
- Strengthen youth organisations so that they can effectively fulfill their mandate. Undertake marketing and awareness raising of the existence and role of youth organisations [South Africa];
- Increase consultations with youth organisations and networks [South Africa]; and
- Establish or strengthen tripartite partnerships and youth-to-youth specific partnerships for better exchange of innovative business ideas and possible creation of youth revolving funds.



## 6. Conclusions

The most important outcome of the national events across the African region was the call for African youth perspectives and recommendations to lead the way forward. To make this happen, task forces of government, social partners and diverse youth must be established immediately to follow up on the action points from the events. Government ministries responsible for youth employment must bring the event recommendations into ongoing decision-making processes on policies and programmes related to youth employment.

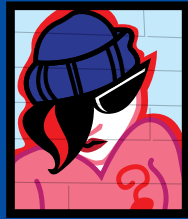
The most important strategy advocated for youth and by youth was to promote youth entrepreneurship and employability. To facilitate this, the main action points were developing comprehensive integrated national approaches, policies and programmes; and setting up a national multi-stakeholder coordinating body with mechanisms to consult diverse youth during design, implementation and M & E.

National youth employment strategies and programmes must be based on best practices such as: developing national youth funds; holistic, relevant and cutting-edge educational, professional, and technical training focused on practical skills building; job market and workers' rights information; and career counselling and work placement services. All training and services must be based on solid job market analyses and needs with specific outreach programmes for the most socially and economically marginalized youth, i.e. gender sensitive and spread across urban and rural areas. Awareness-raising and attitude change in support of an entrepreneurship culture must be promoted among youth and parents under the responsibility of all relevant actors.

Private-public partnerships must be at the core of national programmes. Private sector partners (i.e. banks and industries) and other social partners must support financing for youth businesses and cooperatives and provide skills training and work placement opportunities, i.e. paid internships. Governments must create incentive systems for private partners to hire young people, such as subsidies. Information systems on tracking changes in the youth employment situation and opportunities for sharing good practices and lessons learned must also be established at national and multi-country levels. ILO, other bilateral and multilateral development partners and NGOs must support these best practice policy and programme initiatives, bringing in regional and international experience.







[www.ilo.org/youth](http://www.ilo.org/youth)

**ILO Regional Office for Africa**

[www.ilo.org/africa](http://www.ilo.org/africa)