

**YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN SUB-SAHARAN
AFRICA (YESSA) INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE**

PULLMAN HOTEL, DAKAR SENEGAL



28 – 30 JANUARY 2014

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA (YESSA) CONFERENCE REPORT



The international conference on Youth Employment in Sub-Saharan African was organized by the International Development and Research Center (IDRC) and the Think Tank Initiative at the Pullman Hotel in Dakar from 28 to 30th of January, 2014. Ten years after the Ouagadougou Plan of Action, there is evidence to suggest that youth employment remains a challenge to most policy and stakeholders on the continent. This conference will serve as a prelude to the special session of the African Union's Conference of Labor ministers to be held in Windhoek in April 2014. The conference of the ministers will feed into the extraordinary summit of African Union's heads of states scheduled for September 2014.

The conference on youth employment in sub-Saharan Africa allowed brought together national and regional public policy makers, multilateral partners, experts from Think tanks and African research centers. The conference also gathered researchers from CRES, IPAR, TIPS, IIAS, EPRC, GREAT, CEDRES and CSEA. Institutions such as PEP, WAEMU, OEDC, FAO, OXFAM, ECOWAS, French *Agence Française de Développement*, the ILO, African Development Bank (ADB) and the African Development Fund (ADF) were also represented.

The conference presented through a combination of panel discussions and parallel sessions was held as follows: the first day allowed a critical review of current programs and policy initiatives from multiple countries pertaining to youth employment, the second day helped identify the needs through good quality research and also the importance strategic alliance, and finally the third day was designed to draw a general conclusion on youth employment by the various stakeholders by emphasizing the lessons learned, but more importantly proposing major recommendations for the upcoming African Union's conference of labor ministers.

Here is the report of the discussions and exchange, as well as breakout sessions during that conference.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 28 2014

Opening ceremony and introduction



The conference officially started on Tuesday, January 28 with a welcome message of the Vice-president of IDRC, **Dr. Stephen McGurk** who congratulated all participants and the various actors for their willingness to come together; showing the special interest for youth employment in Sub-Saharan Africa. The francophonie was represented by the chair of the Scientific Committee, **Mr. Hamidou Kasse**, who praised that bright initiative. The WAEMU Commissioner to Human Development, **Mr. Seydou Sissouma** reiterated the commitment of his institution to collaborate and assist all

stakeholders of member states. Was also present the Vice-president and Chief Economist of ABD, **Professor Mthuli Ncube** who emphasized the urgency of youth employment creation, with Africa's fast-growing demography.

H.E Phillippe Beaulne, Ambassador of Canada in Senegal, was delighted to see the political willingness of governments to learn from the past and to find sustainable solutions through platforms of exchange.



The guest of honor of the opening ceremony, **Mrs. Aminata Touré**,

delivered the message on youth employment on behalf of H.E. President Macky Sall, who stated that: "the extensive job search in Senegal is a legitimate and pressing quest". Mrs. Aminata Toure emphasized the necessity to mobilize and put together all the available resources to overcome

this issue by identifying the sectors liable to generate jobs, by initiating the necessary structural reforms and by conducting regular evaluations through consultations with all the concerned parties, including the youth. It's also important to ensure a better articulation of the technical and vocational training programs, to promote youth entrepreneurship, facilitate the identification of some niches for viable opportunities, competitiveness on the labor market, as well as the establishment of reliable information systems. To conclude, the prime minister reiterated the special interest that H.E. President Macky Sall has for this international conference because it will allow a critical review of current programs; and therefore the lessons learned but more importantly a list of recommendations for governments.



Panel 1: African Think Tanks and youth employment

Facilitator: Pr. Mwangi S. Kimenyi: Director – Africa Growth Initiative, The Brookings Institution

- 🚩 Dr. Cheikh Oumar Ba (Sénégal) : IPAR E. D.
- 🚩 Dr. Ebere Uneze (Nigeria) : CSEA Executive Director
- 🚩 Prof. Abdoulaye Diagne (Senegal): CRES E. D.
- 🚩 Dr. Ibrahim Kasirye (Uganda): EPRC
- 🚩 Dr. Kate Philip (South Africa): TIPS
- 🚩 Prof. Idrissa Ouedraogo (Burkina Faso): CEDRES Executive Director



Each speaker briefly presented the vision of their respective institution.









Regarding Think tanks' partnership with governments and the management of their independence, **Dr. Cheikh Oumar Ba** explained that IPAR is currently assisting the Senegalese government in creating the necessary conditions to reach its objective of 200,000 jobs. However, it has been difficult to respond to urgent policy decision making while managing scientific questions (policy makers 'schedule vs. researchers' schedule). **Dr. Ebere Uneze** believes that Think tanks should participate in the elaboration of programs since they have a better understanding of local realities. He also mentioned the lack of monitoring and assessment of ongoing governmental programs. **Prof. Abdoulaye Diagne** added that Think tanks could be used as testers to help minimize unsuccessful government policies and inadequate projects. **Dr. Ibrahim Kasirye** reminded the EPRC's assistance for the evaluation of some government programs in Uganda (definition of eligibility criteria, identification of needs etc.). However, even if EPRC benefits from a noticeable independence with its research, access to data is yet to be granted in a timely manner. **Dr. Kate Philip** stated that Think tanks are often times frustrated because of the lack of implementation of their research, and TIPS has yet to reach a relative independence. On the other hand, she reminded the responsibility of Think tanks to conduct adequate research for adequate policies. **Prof. Idrissa Ouedraogo** believes that researchers do not benefit from the best conditions to produce good quality data, and there is also an inconsistency between the Think tank research outputs and the policies. However, it's important to mention that CEDRES has had a significant independence in conducting research.



In conclusion, partnership is crucial: a dialogue between the various stakeholders including the youth through meetings and exchange is necessary to validate the results of Think tanks' research. It's also important that Think tanks work with several partners, not just one and that they get basic funding if they want to increase their independence. The research conducted by the Think tanks should be tested and implemented through policies; explaining therefore the importance of good quality data and information. Think tanks should be able to suggest new directions for more successful policies.

Parallel session 1: Session A: Countries perspectives

Chair: Dr. Félix Nzue : Program Director, Unit of Economic Policy Analysis - ECOWAS






-  Dr. Ibrahima Hathie: Research Director – IPAR Senegal
-  From Underemployment to indecent employment: the dilemma of rural youth
-  Dr. Ebere Uneze: Executive Director – CSEA Nigeria
-  Job creation and employment generation in Nigeria
-  Mr. Asclepiade Mufungizi (DRC)
-  Practical Experience in the platform Diobass Kivu
-  Dr. Ibrahim Abba (Cameroon)
-  Promotion of youth employment: The Cameroonian experience

According to **Dr. Ibrahima Hathie**, in Senegal the unemployment rate is higher in the north than in the south; this justifies the agricultural crisis affecting mainly the “bassin arachidier” and delta areas. He is recommending an articulation of agricultural and employment policies in order to maximize the contribution of agriculture in youth employment. **Dr. Ebere Uneze** explained that in Nigeria, the positive growth was not materialized through an increase of youth employment. Agriculture is the dominant economic sector, but involves a small portion of the working population. Issues hindering youth employment: lack of inadequate skills and trainings, job regulations imposed by the government do not encourage businesses, young people are not aware of job opportunities sometimes, high social expectation, and poor investment climate. **Mr. Asclepiade Mufungizi** presented the example of the platform Diobass in Kivu where some interventions took place: disarmament, demobilization and rehabilitation of former young fighters. He also believes that a good networking between the different parties across Africa could be beneficial. **Dr. Ibrahim Abba** spoke about the National Pact on Youth Employment in Cameroon that allowed the following: the creation of an exchange platform for young people to obtain information of job opportunities and trainings by providing the variety of jobs but also the required skills, mobilization of human resources from the diaspora, assistance in activity creation, regulation of the job market.

In conclusion, governments should create the conditions that would enable the youth to have access to resources. It's important to offer creative activities to youth in rural areas. Youth migration towards urban areas is not only a result of income search, but also a need to access new technologies and infrastructure.

Parallel session 1: Session B: Countries perspectives

Chair: Dr. Rosemary Atieno - University of Nairobi

-  Prof. Vimal Ranchhod: Associate Professor - SALDRU
-  Youth Unemployment in South Africa: An overview
-  Dr. Cyriaque Edon: University of Abomey-Calavi
-  Paradox of the labor market in Benin: the case of youth employment
-  Dr. Guillermo Cruces : Co-director CEDLAS

🌐 Trends & scaring effects of youth unemployment and informality in Latin America, with policy responses

Prof. Vimal Ranchhod presented these statistics for South Africa: unemployment rate is high in general, 33.5% are between the ages of 15-34 (in 2008). The current context is: consequence of racism, high female unemployment, higher employment rate in rural areas, and absence of low-scale farming activities. A subsidized employment policy was initiated in the past, but without noticeable results. **Dr. Cyriaque Edon** talked about a paradox: in Benin, the unemployment rate that is seemingly low is actually characterized by a high proportion of underemployment. The young graduates suffer more from unemployment. **Dr. Guillermo Cruces** demonstrated that youth unemployment and implication in the informal sector will naturally derive to the same issues during adulthood (example of Brazil & Argentina).

In conclusion, it is important to underscore that a low unemployment rate does not necessarily translate into an increase of jobs for the youth. As a matter of fact, we can see this paradox in Benin where the underemployment remains very high among the young graduates.

Plenary session: Multi country youth employment initiatives

Facilitator: Mr. Henri Bernard Solignac-Lecomte: OECD Head of Africa, Europe & Middle East

🌐 Ms. Marie-José Fortin: Director of International Partnership Programs, Association of Canadian Community Colleges

Education for employment and self-employment from 36 different institutional partnerships in Senegal, Tanzania and Mozambique

🌐 Dr. Amadou B. Diallo: Senior Economist, Human Development Department - AfDB

The AUC-AfDB-ECA-ILO joint initiative on youth employment in Africa



🌐 **Mr. Steve Cumming** : Program Manager, The Mastercard Foundation
Lessons from the economic opportunities for youth strategy

🌐 **Mr. Mamadou Bitéye**: Managing Director of the Africa Regional Office – The Rockefeller Foundation; *The “Digital jobs Africa” initiative: Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria and South Africa*



🌐 **Mr. Drew Gardiner**: The Youth Employment Network, ILO, UN & World Bank; *Stimulating microenterprise growth in Africa*

Ms. Marie-Josée Fortin spoke about the Education Program for Employment (EPE) whose objective is to reduce poverty by contributing in the development of the private sector. EPE aims at improving youth employability through education and trainings. **Dr. Amadou B. Diallo** reiterated that Africa counts 200 million young people, with 72% of that youth living with less than 2\$ per day. The obstacles to youth employment: poor implementation of the projects and declarations, fragmented efforts, poor involvement of the youth in employment programs and projects, absence of reliable data on the youth employment market, lack of private sector involvement and exchange of experiences at the regional level. He also explained that applications to the AU-AfDB-ECA-ILO joint initiative must be submitted formally through heads of states or governments. In general, the conference attendees lobby the concerned ministry and the latter will solicit decision makers. The AfDB also has an interest for “green energy”. **Mr. Steve Cumming** believes that it’s necessary to facilitate youth transition to the job market, but also improve young men and women capacity to get jobs or create their own businesses. Countries that are currently part of the program: Ghana and Uganda, and later Tanzania and Rwanda. **Mr. Mamadou Bitéye** encouraged the promotion of inclusive economy. 100 million \$ have been invested for youth employment by the Rockefeller foundation for a period of 7 years. He also did not miss to point out that despite a positive growth in most of our countries; the youth unemployment rate remains high overall. **Mr. Drew Gardiner** described some relatively satisfying results in Uganda when loans and credits were associated with a commitment to reimbursement, even without training.



In conclusion, youth employment in Africa is essentially concentrated in the informal sector. It’s unanimously clear that young people need adequate training, access to information and capital; the challenge is therefore to find ways to provide all these elements at an affordable cost. The positive economic growth observed in most of the countries did not lead to job creation for youth. The successful experiences at the local level are to be extended to public policies in order to generate a systemic effect through structural transformations. It will be necessary to ensure coordination between the

various development projects to minimize the management costs, but also learn the lessons from the past: it’s time to move forward and find new solutions to the issue of youth employment.

Dinner Debate

Facilitator: M. Mamadou Biteye: Managing Director, Rockefeller Foundation



Prof. Aly M’baye: Dean & Professor of Economics – UCAD, Demography and unemployment in Sub-Saharan Africa: Challenges & Opportunities

According to **Prof. Aly M’baye**, demographic pressure is very high in Africa, while resources are not enough. Some countries show low unemployment rates that don’t reflect the true situation on the

ground (example: 0.7% in Benin); therefore to have an accurate analysis of the data, it's necessary to consider unemployment rate + underemployment rate. Job insecurity remains constant (short term contract vs. long term, no contract at all etc.). Informality is predominant in most countries and the high cost of labor and energy hinder investments. National economies and active sectors need to be internationally more competitive, it's also important to identify productive sectors and create a centralized business environment (Industrial parks).

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29 2014

Parallel sessions 2: Session A: Countries perspectives



Chair: Dr. Zuzana Brixiova: Advisor to the Chief Economist and Vice-president AfDB

-  Dr. Damien Lankoande: Director of Research – CEDRES
-  The labor market in rural Burkina Faso: Perceptions and concerns of young people
-  Dr. Rosemary Atieno: Researcher - University of Nairobi
-  Addressing the challenge of youth unemployment in Kenya
-  Dr. Kate Philip: Advisor to the South African President on short term strategies for job creation and Sector Specialist at TIPS
-  Innovations in public employment: South Africa's Community Work Program

Dr. Damien Lankoande declared that hardly 15% of the job demand is covered in Burkina. 80% of the working population is concentrated in agriculture. However, the incomes remain low in that sector; forcing the youth to migrate to urban areas. An internalization of the issue (PNE, PNJ), a better coordination of the initiatives, evaluations and adequate trainings would be necessary. **Dr. Rosemary Atieno** stated that employment is also a challenge in Kenya: it's noted a positive economic growth whereas youth unemployment rate remains high. Employment is mainly characterized by the informal sector, and agriculture doesn't generate high incomes despite its important contribution to the GDP. He recommended the following: good quality data, employment policy mapping, cautious analysis and diagnosis of sectors, facilitation of loans for young entrepreneurs, investment attraction. **Dr. Kate Philip** added that South Africa is also experiencing youth employment crisis: the official rate is 25% but could reach 37% if the discouraged workers are included. Community Work Programs (CWP) were initiated to help increase public employment capacity through part-time work on an ongoing basis (2 days/week, 100 days/year). She recommended: more investment to build a stronger civil society, manage the risks of corruption, ensure good quality community work, a better partnership approach, create career streams where market opportunities are limited.

Parallel sessions 2: Session B: Countries Perspectives

Chair: Ms. Céline Gratadour - Agence Française de Développement

-  Dr. William Boateng : Former Advisor to the Minister of Labor and Researcher – IASCIEE
-  Youth employment and unemployment in Ghana: Issues and policy options

- 🚩 Mrs. Guiomar Alonso : Head of Culture Division – UNESCO
- 🚩 UNESCO report on Africa
- 🚩 Prof. Colman Titus Msoka : Deputy Director – Institute of Development Studies – University of Dar Es Salam
- 🚩 Urban street vending, youth employment and the informal economy
- 🚩 Prof. George Kobou: Former Dean, faculty of economics, University of Yaoundé 2
- 🚩 What policy for youth employment in Cameroon?

Dr William Boateng spoke about an annual growth of 5.1% from 1984-2010 that was not converted into a good quality job creation for the youth. Sectors with high labor absorption such as agriculture and industry are in crisis. Unsuccessful governmental interventions are also noted: National Service Scheme, STEPP, and NYEP (today GYEEDA). His recommendations: investing in infrastructure (energy, roads, private sector), initiating educational reforms besides vocational and professional trainings, collecting accurate data from the job market.



Prof. George Kobou explained that in Cameroon 60% of youths are under the age of 25. Formal education is barely in adequacy with the rural world and job opportunities remain scarce in general. It is therefore necessary to diversify the economy through investments that require high labor force and promote entrepreneurship, enhance human capital (education that comply with the market needs), and finally create a transparent job market (job search assistance, mobility of youths on the job market, information on market realities).

M^{me} Guiomar Alonso suggested a more balanced distribution of resources, a thorough research on value chains in order to identify sectors with considerable employment potential. UNESCO also helps identify potential entrepreneurs in the informal sector. **Prof. Colman Titus Msoka** explained that the majority of youth works as street vendors in urban areas. Youth employment is also a major issue in Tanzania: while the annual job offer stands at 300,000; there are between 600,000 and 800,000 job seekers per year; explaining the extensive migration. It is therefore necessary to: promote sectors with high economic impact that would create employment opportunities, make the agricultural sector more attractive by developing SMEs in that sector, and find ways to make informal sector contribute to the economy, assist young entrepreneurs by providing enough capital but also adequate vocational and professional trainings.

Ministerial panel: Policy coordination and youth employment in Africa

Facilitator: **Mr. Seydou Sissouma** – WAEMU



✚ Mr. Salomon Shalby (In replacement of H.E. Alassane Soumanou): Ministry of Secondary Education, Technical and Vocational Training, Retraining and Integration of the Young

✚ Mr. Bagayogo (In replacement of H.E. Moussa Dosso): Director of the Office of Employment - Ivory Coast

✚ Mr. Sow (In replacement of H.E. Mansour Sy): Ministry of Public Service, Labor and Social Dialogue and Professional Organizations

✚ H.E. Benoit Sambou: Minister of Youth, Employment and the Promotion of Civic Values - Senegal

Mr. Salomon Shalby judged the quality of human resources still unsatisfactory. It's crucial to increase vocational and professional trainings: trainings need to match the market needs. Youth entrepreneurship should also be encouraged. Some projects have been initiated: the Office of youth rehabilitation and integration, the Office for the promotion of employment. **Mr. Bagayogo** stated that the civil war in Ivory Coast aggravated the youth unemployment crisis. The objective is to create 200,000 jobs per year by 2015. The National Policy of Employment (PNE) aims at sustaining a high inclusive growth by assisting the private sector, without neglecting the public sector (priority to education and health). To overcome the challenges, it would be necessary to: identify the main actors, list all employment initiatives, elaborate a mapping of initiatives, create a data base for ongoing projects to ensure better reviews, and quantitatively evaluate their impacts. **Mr. Sow** gave an unemployment rate in Africa of 37% (3 out of 5 are young). In Senegal, tools such as the labor and investment codes have been used. The maximum entry age for employment in public administration is 35. **H.E. Benoit Sambou** reinforced that agriculture has been targeted as a sector capable of generating sufficient number of jobs. He added that the government is working closely with AfDB to help young people find jobs in the agricultural sector. As already mentioned by the prime minister, it's crucial that the government actively contributes to the creation of opportunities for youth by making them more competitive. The lack of good quality data has been a major constraint in finding solutions to youth employment. In Senegal, youth employment is a governmental dynamics where all actors should be involved through the establishment of a steering committee, coordination unit, a research and planning unit for project assessments. According to Mr. Sambou, it's worth mentioning that education is not always the only explanation to youth unemployment, social pressure also contributes to it a great deal, hence the necessity to increase communication strategies to "rid young people of complexes". The agricultural and handicraft sectors need to be reinforced. We could make better use of value chains by introducing new elements (service provision, food conditioning and not just production).



In conclusion, human resources remain a key element: training is valuable for job seekers but also managers. It's necessary to create a favorable business environment through training centers for managers to increase professionalism, but also useful bank privileges for entrepreneurs. It is essential to not solely refer to the multiplicity of stakeholders on the youth job market, but rather the relevance of initiated projects and programs in order to obtain operational solutions. Access to health care in the agricultural sector should also be taken into account.

Parallel sessions 3: Session A: Youth employment in agriculture

Facilitator: **Mr. Seyni Hamadou**: Director of Agriculture – WAEMU



✚ Prof. Gyimah-Brempong: IFPRI Program Leader & Professor at South Florida University; *Agricultural transformation and youth employment in Africa: the example of Nigeria*

✚ Mrs. Francesca DallaValle : FAO; Youth employment and food insecurity: *Why more and dedicated agricultural investments are needed?*

✚ Dr. Gbassey Tarawali : Director of International Institute of Tropical Agriculture; *The Agripreneurs' initiative in Nigeria*

✚ Dr. Saidou Mbowa : EPRC; *Opportunities for youth in the agricultural value chain in Uganda: the case of coffee and maize*







Professeur K. Gyimah-Brempong explained that agriculture possesses a potential to generate enough jobs for young people, but needs some reforms: modernization and increase and improvement of food production. In fact, even with a portion of 42% of the GDP, incomes in the agricultural sector remain very low compared to urban activities. **Mrs. Francesca DallaValle** stated that in Benin, FAO has funded an investment plan for 200 million \$ for a duration of 5 years for agro-businesses, and 220 million \$ in Nigeria for the same time frame for young agricultural entrepreneurs and producers. She suggested a close partnership between governments, groups, unions of farmers and young entrepreneurs. **Dr. Gbassey Tarawali** shared the experience with the IITA initiative (International Institute of Tropical Agriculture) which aims at transforming agriculture into a job creation platform by maximizing the value chains of the sector: make the concept of agripreneurs popular across Nigeria and outside. **Dr. Saidou Mbowa** qualified maize and coffee as crops that could generate high incomes; hence influence job

creation. The agricultural sector could provide jobs for all age groups if productivity is increased, entrepreneurship is encouraged, and coffee production is doubled.

In conclusion, agriculture is a considerable asset in creating jobs for youth. However, its status must be reviewed: farming could become a valuable job by turning farmers into successful entrepreneurs. It's necessary to modernize the sector to obtain better results on production, productivity (market competitiveness), and ultimately higher incomes.

Parallel sessions 3 : Session B: Countries Perspectives

Facilitator : Professor Vimal Ranchhod : Associate Professor - SALDRU

-  Dr. Kasirye Ibrahim : EPRC; Gender and youth employment in Rwanda
-  Mr. Cheikh Baye Beddy : Deputy Coordinator – MCPA
-  Experiences of public policies, programs and initiatives for youth employment in Mauritania
-  Mr. Emmanuel Edudzie : Executive Director – Youth Employment Synergy
-  An analysis of donor support for youth development in Africa
-  Dr. Stijn Broecke : Directorate for Employment, Labor and Social Affairs – OECD; Tackling graduate unemployment in North Africa through employment subsidies: A look at the SIVP Program in Tunisia (before revolution data)




According to **Dr. Kasirye Ibrahim**, Rwanda has been able to reduce the portion of uneducated youth. Female employment rate has decreased: 86% between 2005/6 to 77% in 2010/11. Women tend to involve in non-paid family activities, hence justifying the influence of social values on the job market. **Mr. Cheikh Baye Beddy** shared the experience of employment programs and projects in Mauritania: Supporting individual initiatives (AGR), National Program for the Integration of micro-enterprises (PNIME), integration programs (vocational training and integration of unemployed graduates), and creation of training centers. However, some organizational, human, material and institutional insufficiencies remain. **Mr. Emmanuel Edudzie** cited the following 3 countries that were used for his case study: Canada, Denmark, and Germany. These donor countries are very aware of the importance of the youth in development; explaining the increase of investments in formal and informal education for the youth. Unfortunately, the absence of quality data on youth and local realities that vary from one country to another, make the programs less efficient. **Dr. Stijn Broecke** explained that the SIVP program targets the unemployed graduates: in Tunisia, the unemployment rate is much higher among the graduates. In general, it's believed that governmental subsidized jobs policy has some sort of effect on employment: businesses tend to hire more when the wage costs are low. However, there is a still a controversy on the reviews due to a lack of good quality evaluation programs.

In conclusion, there are still very few impact evaluations on donors' programs. A breakthrough on that matter is definitely expected from this conference, considering the numerous questions raised in that regard. The impact reviews require enough resources, and not all countries can afford to implement steering committees like in South Africa. In general, the available data for reviews is very limited. Also, young people with less professional skills could benefit more from subsidized jobs, since they have a

lower productivity; long term unemployed could also fit in that category. Socio-cultural reasons could explain the weak presence of women on the job market.

Plenary session: Regional organizations & youth employment in Africa

Facilitator : Professeur K. Gyimah-Brempong

-  Prof. Mthuli Ncube : Vice-president and Chief Economist - AfDB
-  Dr. Felix Nzue : Program Director, Unit of Economic Policy Analysis – ECOWAS
-  Mr. Amadou Tchambou : Social Affairs Officer – WAEMU

Prof. Mthuli Ncube stated that AfDB contribute to inclusive growth through youth entrepreneurship, infrastructure development, assistance to private sector especially SMEs. The bank also funds the creation of vocational and professional training centers. Regarding collaboration at the regional and institutional level, the professor reiterated that even if states may have different motivations, their approach on youth employment is in general quite similar. It's obvious that regional solutions are needed (common visa, acknowledgement of diplomas and mobility of talents). AfDB is very much involved in entrepreneurship at the regional level. Prof. Ncube also announced the imminent creation of a platform called "African Information Highway" that will connect the statistics from the offices of all 54 countries, which will be accessible to all. **Dr. Felix Nzue** added that the ECOWAS Department of Human Development deals with employment questions in all 15 member states by witnessing the initiated programs and assisting in harmonizing the various policies. It's important to remind that ECOWAS only reinforces the initiatives already put in place by member states. Regarding collaboration, ECOWAS has initiated a regional policy on job and employment; and also an action plan for youth employment. ECOWAS helps countries that don't have employment policies in place. The institution also assists with trainings for youth, but also migration through a policy of acknowledgement of diplomas at the regional level. Regarding partnership with other institutions, ECOWAS is already working with AfDB on the elaboration of data and statistics. **M. Amadou Tchambou** explained that WAEMU focuses on macro-economic aspects by making sure that economic growth leads to a creation of jobs for youth through an improvement of the employability of young graduates. For WAEMU, collaboration should start with a



platform of exchange and consultation between the ministries of employment. WAEMU contributed to the identification of promising activities through training engineering, good data collection, research funding, graduates employability (regional centers of excellency). When it comes to partnership with other institutions, WAEMU works with ILO to identify employment indicators, but also with AfDB which is the major donor for advanced education statistics projects.

In conclusion, it is clear that all development stakeholders should be involved in the process,

including Think tanks. Statistics must be articulated. ECOWAS recognized having worked with consultants a lot, but has nevertheless asked for Think tanks expertise in order to assess the efficiency of countries taxation systems. WAMEU believes that the establishment of observatories requires a minimum consultation to evaluate the indicators. In regards of free circulation, WAEMU made a strong commitment towards the acknowledgment of graduates at the regional level. ECOWAS ensures the free circulation of people between the member states but recognizes not possessing a sanction unit to manage the imperfections of the established programs. This raises the issue of the governments' true willingness as far as regional collaboration is concerned.

Dinner Debate

Facilitator: Dr. Martha Melesse: Senior Program Specialist – IDRC

Speaker: **Prof. Mwangi S. Kimenyi** : Director of Africa Growth Initiative – The Brookings Institutions *Employment opportunities and risks in Africa*

Prof. Mwangi S. Kimenyi reminded that most 2013 conferences focused on: strategies for an inclusive economy, natural resources management for economic growth and employment, urgency of African integration. This reveals the unanimous conclusion that economic growth from the recent years did not stimulate an employment creation for the youth. It's therefore crucial to increase growth by targeting key development sectors that generate jobs. Agriculture is a development lever in our countries: reinforcing the sector must be a priority.



Panel 2: Data, strategic research to policy planning and youth employment in Africa

*Facilitator: **Dr. William Baah Boateng**: Expert, University of Ghana – Legon*






- + Mr. Henri-Bernard Solignac-Lecomte – OECD; Data and strategic research planning
- + Dr. Louise Fox : Expert, former WB Lead Economist, Africa Region – World Bank; If you don't know where you are, how to know how far you can go?
- + Dr. Amadou B. Diallo: Senior Economist - AfDB
- + The AUC-ECA-AfDB-ILO Joint Initiative for youth employment
- + Mr. Alexandre Kolev : Head Social Cohesion Unit – OECD
- + Developing an action plan for promoting decent youth employment

Mr. Henri-Bernard Solignac-Lecomte reminded that up until the eve of the revolution in 2010, Tunisia was considered the best model in terms of strategies against unemployment, because high unemployment among the graduates was overlooked. Out of 41% of workers, only 7% have a decent job. It's been noticed that most young Africans wish to work in the public sector (government), but it would be more rational to target the private sector or self-employment. Beyond the lack of adequate education and training, it would be fair to point out that the job offers remain very low compared to the demand (insufficient number of businesses and projects). According to **Dr. Louise Fox**, the lack of data makes the employment issue more complicated. It gets hard to establish a comparative study of African issues simply because the terms and definitions are used differently most of time. The solutions that work in developed countries do not necessarily succeed in Africa. The 7 day deadline suggested by the ILO is too short: it would be interesting to have reviews that cover a period of 12 months in order to take into account secondary activities (see presentation). **Dr. Amadou B. Diallo** explained that data collection is done through employment and household surveys in Africa. Therefore, good and adequate quality data is crucial. He added that even AfDB does not know the exact specific criteria of employment in the agricultural and informal sector (see presentation). A harmonization of key indicators is necessary. **Mr. Alexandre Kolev** believes that employment quantity and quality, plus transition period from school to employment should be considered as key youth employment indicators. He suggested: ongoing training for young employees, informal education for school drop-outs, subsidized jobs and public work initiatives for discouraged or long term unemployed young people, creation of job search programs.

Parallel sessions 4: Countries Perspectives




Chair: Prof. Kouakou Kouadio Clément: Centre for Micro-economic Development Research – University Felix Houphouet Boigny

-  Prof. Massa Coulibaly: Executive Director – GREAT; The problems of youth employment in Mali
-  Mr. Momar Sylla : ANSD; Profile and youth employment in Dakar
-  Dr. Gemma Ahaibwe : EPRC; Creating youth employment through entrepreneurship: the Uganda Youth Venture Capital Fund

Prof Massa Coulibaly demonstrated that unemployment is higher among the graduates (only 15% of graduates find jobs). Northern Mali has a higher number of uneducated youths, hence more unemployed people. He recommends more flexible hiring and firing regulations, limited minimum wage policy, low income taxes, combination of emergency actions and long term strategies. According to **Mr. Momar Sylla**, the Senegalese youth population is defined by *the* age group 15 to 35. The population in labor age (PAT) is 10 years and plus. The youths represent 51.6% of the PAT. The unemployment rate according to ILO: 10.3%. Mr. Sylla described the job seeking approach as follows: responses to advertisements, tests/exams, family or personal relations, search for partnerships or funding. **Dr. Gemma Ahaibwe** shared the Uganda experience where the positive economic growth did not translate into an increase of youth employment. Some programs were initiated through an encouragement of skills development, favorable climate for investments for the private sector, contribution to youth entrepreneurship using the Youth Venture Capital Fund. YVCF did not have a significant impact on job creation for the youth. Only a close collaboration between the various stakeholders could lead to a sustainable solution

Parallel sessions 4: Session B: Countries Perspectives

Chair: Mr. Alexandre Kolev: OECD

-  Dr. Dickson Malunda : IPAR-Rwanda; *Innovative approaches to incorporating youths into labor markets in East Africa*
-  Dr. Zuzana Brixiova: AfDB; Youth entrepreneurship in Swaziland: *Policy analysis and evidence from Swaziland*
-  Mr. Bruno Losch : CIRAD; *Structural change and employment in Africa – State of play and development challenges*

Dr. Dickson Malunda stated that underemployment remains a significant issue in Rwanda, even if poverty level has been reduced: productivity and quality of jobs must be improved. It is necessary to put in place projects that generate incomes, include rural areas in the business development projects, encourage the youths to develop passions besides formal education. According to Dr. **Zuzana Brixiova**, AfDB analysis allowed to draw these conclusions: assessing governmental project impacts while considering equity, entrepreneurship training is more efficient when it's targeted, not decentralized, the importance of skills and trainings has been confirmed through our case study analysis on entrepreneurs.

Mr. Bruno Losch reiterated that Africa has a good employment potential but it would be necessary to target sectors with high priority. The political instability noted in most countries does not facilitate the resolution of employment issues. Africa is certainly diverse but the equation is the same everywhere: agriculture remains a key element in our economies and urbanization is characterized by a lack of industrialization. It is therefore urgent to boost the agricultural sector through an improvement of work conditions in particular and rural life in general.

Sessions parallèles 5: Session A: PEP

Chair : **Prof. Bruno Loch** – Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement (CIRAD)



- ✚ Mr. Bekele Shiferaw: PEP; *Highlight about PEP*
- ✚ Mr. Ismael Fofana; *Perspective for growth and employment in Senegal : Matching demand and labor supply for a sustained reduction of youth unemployment*
- ✚ Dr. Daniel Joloba; *Beyond the technical skills training: the impact of credit counselling on entrepreneurial behavior of Ugandan youth*
- ✚ Prof. Joseph François Cabral; *The cartography of youth employment in Senegal*

Mr. Shiferaw explained that PEP targets an inclusive economic growth by maintaining a society with poverty. PEP is represented in Dakar by CRES and is involved in 54 developing countries around the world, and has supported over 200 research projects. PEP also contributed to the training of over 600 researchers. According to **Mr. Fofana**, the focus should be on agricultural questions by facilitating data access for national and international institutions, sharing results of research through networking.







Dr. Daniel Joloba confirmed that employment opportunities are scarce in Uganda and the high population growth makes the matter more complicated. To tackle the issue, some initiatives were taken: information access centers for loans, funding opportunities but also discussions on the conditions of successful businesses. However, like other places in Africa, the numerous programs are yet to produce efficient and

sustainable solutions to youth employment.

Prof. Joseph François Cabral explained that high youth population growth could be advantageous, but could also become a handicap when that significant quantity invades the job market. Low employment is noted among the graduates. Female unemployment rates are also very high. Unemployment lasts longer for adults, and also in urban areas.

Parallel sessions 5: Session B: Countries Perspectives

Chair: Mr. Tchegoun Adebo Koba: ILO Associate Expert, Child Labor Focus Africa Strategy

-  Prof. Kouakou Kouadio Clément : CRMD University of Felix Houphouet Boigny; *Effects of active employment policies on the life of urban youth unemployment in Ivory Coast*
-  Mr. Ouissem Ghorbel : CEO NUMU Consulting; *Field experience : the Tunisian example*
-  Mr. Ehud Gachugu : Director of Youth Empowerment Project; *Policy experience from Kenya*
-  Mr. Beit Allah Ahmed : General Manager - ANAPEJ; *Policy experience: the example of Mauritania*

According to **Prof. Kouakou Kouadio Clément**, unemployment is high among the young graduates. The initiated programs did not produce significant results (access to property, self-employment, the National Fund for Solidarity). He reinforced that a lack of program evaluation costs more to governments than the actual evaluation itself; since it causes a continuous repetition of the same unsuccessful programs. **Mr. Ghorbel** revealed that in Tunisia, they had more of a quantitative and the post-graduates suffered more from unemployment: 120,000 individuals enter the job market every year, 2/3 are post-graduates and only 15,000 will be effectively hired. The Tunisian revolution has helped developed the following: job creation through entrepreneurship and micro-enterprise, maintaining the already-employed population, help youths in their job search. The targeted sectors for the above actions were: health, education, army and police. It would necessary for governments to define a vision, include all on-the-ground associations including the youths, coordinate the various programs and draw measurable objectives. **Mr. Ehud Gachugu** suggested for Kenya these solutions: elements for program reviews, collaboration and partnership between all stakeholders (government, institutions and private sector). **Mr. Beit Allah Ahmed** shared ANAPEJ experience in Mauritania, which targets training, professional development and adaptation, as well as rehabilitation programs, promotion of entrepreneurship through management skills and funding for micro-projects, but also information and orientation for job seekers.

In conclusion, beyond the general question of youth employment, underemployment is another aspect of the crisis in several African countries. In fact, young graduates suffer more from unemployment in some cases.

Closing plenary session

🌐 *Keynote presentation by Dr. Louise Fox :*
Youth employment in Africa (World Bank's Report)

According to Dr. Louise Fox, there is no comprehensive list of recommendations, but a model of organization could be suggested for specific contexts. Priority should be given to the increase and development of sectors with modern incomes. It's worth noting that human capital development is crucial (better quality education and professional skills), the reduction of fertility rates, accurate data collection that reflect the local realities by determining each country's priorities and opportunities.



In conclusion, governments should consider employment as an economic value; and not just as a simple activity. Countries must contribute to the growth of businesses in terms of quantity but also quality. Lack of education and adequate training are not always the causes to low productivity. The example of Vietnamese farmers is a perfect illustration of that statement. Despite, their low education level, they have been able to remain competitive on the international market. Governments must make employment a top priority on their agenda lists because the populations need incomes to survive.

Closing panel

What lessons for the AU conference of Ministers of Labor?

*Facilitator: **Dr. Bekele Shiferaw***

Prof. Mwangi Kimenyi (The brookings Institution) suggested: a more productive collaboration between governments and Think tanks, governmental policies for long term solutions to the employment question, increased productivity and capacity of job creation. **Mr. Alexandre Koley** (OECD) encouraged a continuous effort on project reviews through an improved knowledgebase. Youth employment is a macro-economic question, and it is necessary to take into account good quality growth, not just quantity. Flexibility in youth employment should also be initiated. Continued support to statistical systems that help to identify the major constraints to youth employment should be promoted. **Mr. Henri Bernard S. Lecomte** (OECD) defines youth unemployment as a multi-sector issue; therefore it would important to pay a particular attention to ongoing urbanization (skilled young people would expect better jobs). Extractive industry,



agro-industry and manufacturing industry are niches to be exploited. The informal sector could be used positively. A stronger willingness to change public policies is important as well. **Mr. Drew Gardiner** (ILO) turned the youth employment question into a matter of youth productivity. In terms of implementation, it is important to have an accurate database in order to submit effective recommendations to governments. The private sector should be encouraged and supported. **Dr. Arjan de Haan** proposed a combination of the above solutions, but also an awareness of initiated programs in neighboring countries, without overlooking the local realities of each region. Reducing the gap between research results and the actual policies is also important. **Mr. Ibrahima Guéye** (In replacement of the minister prof. Mary Tew Niane) reaffirmed that youth employment is a macro-economic question that should join policies from all sectors. A combination of various interventions and a mobilization of all economic actors (public, private, partnership) are crucial. Tax and investment reforms are also required (taxation should not be the same for both SMEs and multinational enterprises).

Farewell cocktail/End of the Conference

Thank you message from the minister Mr. Benoit Sambou on behalf of H.E. President Macky Sall. To demonstrate the strong dedication of the Senegalese government towards youth employment, the minister added this quote “if we don’t take care of the youths, the youths will take care of us”. He also reiterated his commitment to take the recommendations to a higher hierarchy, and to his African peers.



Simon Carter, Director of IDRC/ROSSA



**Arjan de Haan, SIG (Supporting Inclusive Growth)
Programme Leader**

Conference on Youth Employment in Sub-Saharan Africa (YESSA) 28 – 30 January 2014 – Dakar, Senegal

Recommendations



Organized by the International Development Research Center – IDRC from Canada, in collaboration with the Partnership for Economic Policy – PEP, OECD, the WAEMU Commission, the African Development Bank and the Dakar Think Tank IPAR, over 100 researchers, decision makers, NGOs and youth representatives from all over Africa and beyond gathered in Dakar, Senegal for the international conference on “[Putting youths to work in Sub-Saharan Africa](#)” to reflect and share experiences on the available options for a sustainable solution to the issue of youth employment.

I) Necessary coordination between the concerned stakeholders

Given the complexity of the impacts of youth unemployment, the experts underscored the necessity of a consultation on a regular basis between the concerned stakeholders in order to implement active and will-based policies for the promotion of youth employment and entrepreneurship through considerable public investment.

II) The importance of data and the key role of research

In the objective of finding sustainable results to the critical issue of youth employment, the participants recommend:

- Clarification and harmonization of concepts and appropriate definitions of a job and employment adaptable to the local African context
- Conducting employment and entrepreneurship surveys on a regular basis
- The adoption and strict application of a free access policy to survey data in general and job market information in particular.
- Necessity of thorough and continuous program reviews, followed by a capitalization of lessons learned
- Support of good quality research targeting public policies designed for youth employment and entrepreneurship in order to initiate new policies.

III) The importance of infrastructures and private sector development

Experts recognize the essential role of good quality infrastructure for the development and expansion of private firms, therefore recommending an urgent energy offer and communication infrastructures including telecommunication and transport. Experts also recommend that governments support an emergence of an African middle class and local business people that can contribute to the economic growth and the job creation alongside foreign investors.

IV) The importance of regional and international mobility of people and goods

Acknowledging the key importance of the demand aggregated in the stimulation of the offer for goods and services, the experts recommended the imperative elimination of the obstacles and constraints to the mobility of labor but also international and regional trade.

V) The importance of training and adequacy between education and job

Acknowledging the importance of the know-how and skills in the improvement of work productivity and competitiveness, the experts recommended the institutionalization of internships and mentorship, combined with adequate trainings adapted to the labor market needs. Regarding entrepreneurship, more than funding, experts recommend the creation of empowering mechanisms and fiscal initiatives to accompany young entrepreneurs during the early years. Experts also recognize that the elaboration of a coherent entrepreneurial education system, since elementary school, is essential.

VI) Youth empowerment and national strategies

Convinced by the potential and dynamism of African youth, the experts recommend the implementation of empowering mechanisms through a coherent supervision strategy of youth entrepreneurship.

Validated, January 30th 2014 in Dakar, Senegal

Acronyms

ADB	African Development Bank
ANAPEJ	National Agency for the Promotion of Youth Employment
ANEJ	National Agency for Youth Employment
ANSD	National Agency of Statistics and Demography
AUC	African Commission Union
CEDRES	Centre of Studies, Documentation and Economic and Social Research
CRES	Consortium for Economic and Social Research
CSEA	Center for the Study of the Economies for Africa
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
EDRI	Ethiopian Development Research Institute
EPRC	Economic Policy Research Center
GREAT	Research Group Theoretical and Applied Economics
IDRC	International Development Research Center
IEA	Institute of Economic Affairs
IIAS	International Institute for Advanced Studies
IPAR	Institute of Policy Analysis and Research
IREEP	Institut de Recherche Empirique en Economie Politique
OECD	Organization for Cooperation and Economic Development
PARIS21	Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century
PSCE/JF	Special Program of Job Creation for Young People and Women
SALDRU	Southern Africa Labor and Development Research Unit
SIG	Supporting Inclusive Growth
TIPS	Trade and Industrial Policy Secretariat
UCAC	Catholic University of Central Africa
UCAD	University of Cheikh Anta Diop
WAEMU	West African Economic and Monetary Union
WB	World Bank