



KNOWLEDGE PLATFORM ON INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Boosting youth employment in Africa: what works and why?

Report of the conference hosted by INCLUDE and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

30 May 2017

The Hague, the Netherlands



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1. BACKGROUND

Africa is the most youthful continent in the world, with 226 million youth (aged 15–24) in 2015 – which is roughly 20% of the global youth population. While youth populations in other regions of the world have stabilized, Africa's youth population is growing rapidly and is expected to increase by 42% by 2030. At the same time, youth in Africa face significant economic challenges, accounting for 60% of all unemployed in Africa. Hence, youth employment is a top priority for Africa. In her address at the opening of the 28th ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, Dr Nkosazana Dhlamini-Zuma (then Chairperson of the African Union Commission) pointed out that “[T]he future of Africa belongs to youth, but the quality of that future will be determined by what they do with it today”. The African Union has adopted the theme ‘Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through investments in Youth’ for 2017. In addition, youth feature prominently in the African Development Bank's (AfDB's) High Five Priorities, as supported by the [Jobs for Youth in Africa Strategy](#). A great sense of urgency regarding high youth underemployment in Africa is also visible among African governments, the EU and its member states, as well as donor countries.

In this context, INCLUDE, the knowledge platform on Inclusive Development Policies, and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized a conference on ‘Boosting youth employment in Africa: what works and why?’ in The Hague, on 30 May 2017. The conference was attended by 140 experts from governments, the private sector, NGOs and knowledge institutes in Europe and Africa. The objective of the conference was to use state-of-the-art knowledge to answer the question: *How can we achieve substantial progress in creating employment opportunities for large numbers of African youth?*

In preparation for the conference, the INCLUDE Secretariat developed [a synthesis report](#) outlining the main issues for debate. The report reviews the latest (rigorous) knowledge on the nature of the youth employment challenge in Africa (diagnostics) and identifies what works to promote youth employment and why. It seeks to capture the emerging consensus on the key short-term and long-term priorities for promoting youth employment. The report also addresses the possible choices involved and the roles of the relevant actors, ranging from national governments and the private sector to (international) development banks, NGOs and knowledge institutes. These different actors featured prominently in the audience and programme of the conference, which consisted of key note lectures, break out dialogue sessions and panel debates, including a panel with youth from Kenya, Nigeria, Benin, Rwanda and Uganda.

2. UNDERSTANDING YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN AFRICA: THE PROBLEM, PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES

“The best way to fulfil your dreams is to find a job”, declared **Dutch Minister Lilianne Ploumen for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation** at the start of the conference. Investing in job opportunities creates perspectives and livelihoods for young people in Africa, but is also related to issues like food security and global safety. Moreover, it is our moral obligation to create employment, as Minister Ploumen pointed out. In the short term, agriculture and agro-processing hold the [most promise](#) for creating employment opportunities for young people in Africa, especially when integrating novel techniques. This was one of the key conclusions of the conference. Furthermore, participants agreed that each country needs a specific approach, as challenges and opportunities

¹ Report by [Wereld in Woorden. Global Research & Reporting](#)

differ among countries. Therefore, it is important to learn lessons from what works in creating jobs, where and why. Boosting youth employment requires an integrated approach that addresses the demand side (macro level) and supply side (micro level), as well as linkages between these two in the labour market. This must be supported by sufficient resources, coordination at the country level, and a coherent approach in which opportunities for young people are mainstreamed with existing employment and investment policies. Moreover, at the micro level, young people need good examples in the form of inspiring role models, proper education, the development of soft skills and coaching in order to obtain (and keep) jobs.

Isa Baud, Chair of INCLUDE, and **Christiaan Rebergen**, Director General for International Cooperation at the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, welcomed the participants to the conference. According to Baud the starting point for boosting youth employment is a solid analysis of the diagnostics of the labour market challenges. Rebergen emphasized how the urgency to address the youth employment problem is being felt in policy dialogues with Africa.

2.1 The problem and priorities

Worldwide 71 million youth (aged between 15–24) are currently unemployed. In Sub-Saharan Africa alone, 18 million jobs need to be created annually in order to absorb new entries to the labour market. While the need for job creation is high, [only 3 million formal jobs](#) are created each year in Sub-Saharan Africa, **Minister Ploumen** informed. We also know that six out of ten people in Africa are under 25 years and that six out of ten live in rural areas, where poverty is often the worst. People are increasingly moving to the cities, while most employment opportunities are to be found in rural areas.

Ginette Nzau Muteta, Coordinator of the Jobs for Youth Program of the African Development Bank (AfDB) stated that 31% of African youth are unemployed or ‘discouraged’ and, if nothing is done, this figure could reach 50%. These are alarming figures. Minister Ploumen agreed that if we don’t create more jobs, the already existing disparity between education and job opportunities – the aspiration gap – will grow even further. Although AfDB aims to create 25 million jobs by 2025, this is still low compared to the need, said Nzau Muteta.

Dr Louise Fox, Chief Economist at USAID, emphasized that employment opportunities for youth in the formal and informal sector are determined by the level of economic transformation. “Informal is normal until economic transformation takes place”, she stated. In low-income countries in Africa, the largest group in the labour force consists of people who work for themselves and their families, “[household farms and firms](#)”, said Fox. Worldwide, only a small share of the labour force are employers; ranging from 2% in low-income countries to 4% in higher income countries. These employers are the ones creating the wage jobs that young people are hoping for. When countries become richer, the number of employers increases and, related to that, the number of wage and salaried workers increases (see Figure 1).

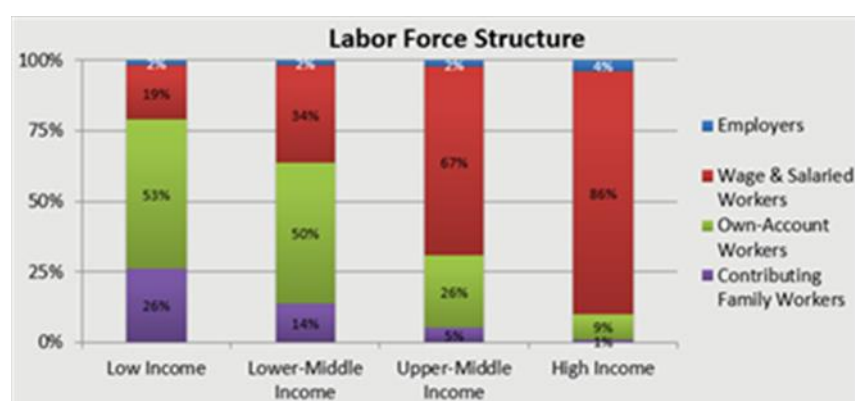


Figure 1. Labour force structure in low, lower-middle, upper-middle and high income countries

2.2 Key challenges

Nzau Muteta said that the key challenges to creating employment for youth are visible at three levels: there are not enough jobs for Africa's working-age population (*demand*); it is difficult to connect skilled youth to employers (*linkages*); and many youth do not have the skills needed by employers (*supply*). There is also a lack of committed leadership 'champions' who are ready to provide opportunities for youth. Moreover, there is a lack of coordination, "we do very interesting things, but we don't act together" according to Nzau. One participant added that coordination requires the commitment of all partners, not only governments, and works best at the country level. There are also huge resource needs, both human and financial. Additional investment is needed for the implementation of youth employment programmes in order to shift the mind set of youth to entrepreneurship and innovation, but also to scale-up. Lastly there are important knowledge gaps in relation to labour market issues, which need to be addressed, such as data on the objective status of youth employment (quantity and quality), keeping in mind that labour, education and entrepreneurship policies help youth to get jobs.

2.3 Strategies

Agriculture 2.0: Next to the gloomy figures on the number of youth who are unemployed, there is also good news, as pointed out by Minister Ploumen. Many young people have graduated and their capacities can be used to help shape Africa. Food security is also high on the agenda and Africa is increasingly attracting investors. The [5th EU-Africa Summit](#), which will take place in November 2017 in Ivory Coast, is a good opportunity to bring forward lessons on what works to boost youth employment. Agriculture is back on the agenda, next to industrialization and ICT. Farming is not what most young people aspire to. Ploumen shared:

I am from a farming family myself. My parents did not have the ambition for their children to end up in farming, but rather wanted them to become ministers [laughing], or at least to find a job behind a desk.

However, there are sophisticated opportunities in agriculture that can make the sector attractive to young people. Facilities like access to an IT engineer (preferably a girl, as Minister Ploumen said), the Internet, and workspace can stimulate employment. Despite these possibilities, one young participant argued that agriculture has a low status and is generally not seen as a business opportunity. How can we change the mind set of youth to see agriculture as an attractive business model?

Supply and demand: In the past, countries have tended to focus on either creating demand or supply, Nzau Muteta stated. Experience shows that programmes should focus on the creation of jobs, education (including secondary education), and the development of the right skills. Fox warned that although micro policies or programmes aimed at promoting youth employment might create job opportunities for youth, it is unlikely that they will create real net employment, as they tend to push other people out of their jobs to make way for youth. Therefore, we also need to focus on macro level employment creation at the same time, e.g. by founding private enterprises. Fox explained:

If you are running a lot of training programmes without considering employment policies, all you are doing is moving the supply curve out. So the group of people who qualify for jobs increases, while only a small group are getting a wage job. We should not only create qualified people, but move the demand curve out. This mainly requires creating more private firms; mostly non-farm and labour intensive.

Fox pointed out that most impact research focuses only on the programme level, but impacts need to be analysed from a broader perspective.

She also emphasized the importance of teaching children basic cognitive skills. Reading tests (PASEC) conducted in various African countries in 2014 showed that although poor children (end of primary students) go to school, they are not learning to read properly. Fox said:

We are mostly thinking of vocational training. But we are trying to train people who don't have the basis to absorb because they lack the basic cognitive skills. So youth employment is also about basic cognitive skills. That said, vocational training and developing 'soft skills' are increasingly important, like the know-how to spot opportunities. Moreover, mentoring and coaching are important.

Sometimes we create opportunities, but young people might encounter problems keeping their jobs. This calls for long-term involvement. Mentorship is also important to mould youth, as bad role models (such as corrupt leaders) also have an impact. Fox agreed and concluded that we need to forge pathways for success. A last key lesson, shared by Fox, was not to focus on youth and non-youth entrepreneurs in isolation: "We should not 'silo youth'". Employers often do not care about age, and youth are the largest part of the workforce.

Integrated or ecosystem approach: Nzau Muteta advocated for an ecosystem approach in which inclusive employment and entrepreneurship, human capital development and better labour market linkages are all taken into account. For this, three pillars are central: integration, innovation and investment. Related to integration, AfDB is mainstreaming youth employment into every programme, including programmes focusing on infrastructure, agriculture and education – and even macroeconomic policies. Under its '[Strategy for Jobs for Youth in Africa, 2016–2025](#)', AfDB has developed several flagship programmes that focus on agriculture, industrialization and ICT. Achievements in 2016 include the approval of an investment facility (the BOOST Africa programme), the integration of the Youth Apprenticeship Programme (YAP) into existing projects, and the establishment of the Youth Entrepreneurship and Innovation Fund. In 2017, the Enable Youth Employment (EYE) index and Knowledge and Innovation Lab concept will be established.

Role of governments and the private sector: Minister Ploumen emphasized that governments should focus on removing obstacles and creating opportunities. Governments can help by creating an enabling environment and providing basic services. However, African authorities often fall short and sometimes move unpredictably. Several participants echoed this sentiment, while also stressing the differences between countries. A member of the youth panel said that setting up a company in Nigeria is difficult and can easily take up to six months. The same applies to Benin. However, in Rwanda it is very easy, said another member of the youth panel: "You register in six hours". Still another young panellist added that young people are often unable to obtain credit or even open a bank account. Hence, the government must ensure access for youth and put proper systems in place.

[The private sector also has a role to play.](#) This role is not limited to simply creating more jobs, as already highlighted by Fox. The private sector can also invest in systems that enable small-scale farmers to be part and parcel of supply chains and help small-scale farmers to earn a living wage. Additionally, the private sector can invest in opportunities for education and partner in the development of curricula for schools and training centres, to make sure that the skills acquired are those that are needed by businesses.

3. YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMMES IN PRACTICE

3.1 What works to boost youth employment: lessons from a systematic review

[Susana Puerto Gonzales](#), Coordinator of the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth, International Labour Organization (ILO) shared some research lessons on the impact of programmes aimed at improving the employment prospects for youth. Together with the World Bank, ILO has executed a [systematic review of active labour market interventions](#). The study focused on counterfactual impact evaluations of programmes focusing on youth (aged 15–35) between 1990 and 2014. A synthesis of the research findings is needed, as not all studies are of the same quality and a single study can misrepresent the balance of evidence. The key findings of this review include the following:

- *Investing in youth through employment programmes pays off:* A third of the programmes studied had positive and statistically significant impacts. These studies showed that context matters and that interventions work best in lower and middle-income countries. The other two-thirds of the studies showed that intensity and scale are also key. However, many programmes are too small to show changes. Therefore Gonzales argued that we need to increase the intensity and scale of programmes.
- *Studies showed a clear time pattern:* Skills develop over time and impacts measured in the long term are more likely to be positive.
- *There is an important role for the ‘how’ questions:* Studies show that adequate profiling is needed in order to develop tailor-made services in line with youth needs. And here it is essential to recognize that youth are not a homogenous group. Different youth have different backgrounds, expectations and needs. Efficient monitoring is needed to ensure feedback and adaptability during the course of a programme. Result-based management and appropriate incentives allow implementers to better respond to youth needs, enhance programme participation and ensure quality in service delivery.

Although this review did not show separate results for young women, some studies showed that in order to reach young women it is important to come up with a holistic approach including (sexual) health services. Also, setting up meeting places can stimulate employment opportunities for young women (for more information see INCLUDE’s [one pager on the systematic review](#) and www.wwinye.org).

3.2 Youth perspectives: The daily reality of youth in Africa

“The time that we were talking about the youth without involving them has past”, moderator Roel van der Veen of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated at the start of the conference. A youth panel consisting of eight young Africans actively participated in the conference. Two members of the youth panel shared their daily life experiences during a plenary session. The session showed that some educated young Africans do return to agriculture and that their educational background is helping them to bring agriculture to a higher level.

Carol Njeri Gathogo (a small-scale farmer from Kenya) comes from a family of farmers. She obtained a degree in marketing and, for some years, worked in marketing on a commission base. But she was unable to find a rewarding full time job. So she saved some money and started a career as a dairy farmer. She does not own her land, has no financial resources, suffers from low and unstable milk prices and ‘lacks attention’ from both the government and in terms of social status, compared to say a bank employee. However, as a member of the Ndumberi Dairy Cooperative Society, she can get a loan and sell her milk. The cooperative also provides meeting space and training. Her education has helped her in this profession; it provided her with the know-how to run a business and to use the Internet and, thus, practise digital farming. “I am different because I have the knowledge, and knowledge is power”, shared Carol.

Francis Arinaitwe (a youth leader from Uganda) is practising agriculture and studying social development at the same time; he uses the income obtained from farming to pay for his studies. He is a volunteer with Restless Development, a youth-led development agency, and a parish youth chairperson in Mayuge district. He is also member of the MasterCard Foundation Youth Think Tank – a group of young people who conduct qualitative research to better understand the economic challenges facing African youth. Francis supports young farmers and connects young people to government programmes. Next to credit, young Africans need information, contact with all kinds of stakeholders and courage, he said. The return to agriculture is, in his view, a consequence of the lack of formal employment in Africa. This forces young Africans into mixed livelihoods and self-employment, which means, in most cases, agriculture. A member of the audience added that even lawyers are returning to agriculture, making it ‘cool and sexy’. Francis’ education has provided him with soft skills, like being able to speak in public, and confidence. He encourages other young Africans to walk the same path and stressed the importance of consulting youth.

Meredith Lee, Deputy Director of the [Youth Livelihoods programme](#) of the MasterCard Foundation gave some insight into the [Invisible Lives Study](#), which focuses on the sources of income of young rural Africans. The majority of the 246 participants (average age: 21) were poor women who had not attended school. The report showed that the ones with formal education performed best. Agricultural production was central, incomes were meagre and wage employment was rare. Furthermore, the report showed that youth-owned businesses were ‘patchwork’ and not capital-intensive, while supportive networks proved to be critical. Moreover, most young people in the study were invisible to development organizations. These youth are not the young bright guys and girls supported in the newest development interventions (Agriculture 2.0), but do represent a large share of the rural youth population. Lee also emphasized the heterogeneity of African youth. These are the youth who are generally invisible to development organizations and governments and who often do not have access to support services. Specialization, for example, in horticulture, is too risky for them. Value chains with low entry barriers, such as poultry may be an option; however, Lee emphasized that for the vast majority of Africa’s young people, improved livelihoods will not come through a programme or project, but through improved social, educational, and economic systems. Not every young person is an entrepreneur and youth are often entrepreneurs out of necessity, not opportunity.

Box 1. What policymakers should do differently

The youth panel was invited to present their views on what policymakers should do differently. It was their turn to speak out while the adults listened – and that is exactly what these young Africans were after: their remarks showed that they basically want their voices to be heard.

- **Jean Bosco Nzeyimana (Rwanda)**: “Governments seem to consider investing in youth to be risky. They usually use intermediaries”. So what would be your advice?, moderator Roel van der Veen asked. Jean Bosco: “Work directly with us, without intermediaries”.
- **Maureen Ayité (Benin)** stressed the need to have access to the Internet to be able to reach institutions and clients. She pointed out the lack of a platform for young African entrepreneurs. Her advice was: “Give us access to the Internet and to social networks”.
- **Mark Odong (Uganda)** not only wanted access to information, but also to finance, which is currently not available for start-ups, is being misused, or the interest rates are too high. His advice: “Design a strategy so that financial institutions can give us loans”.
- **Carol Njeri Gathogo (Kenya)** wanted information to be more accessible. In her view, this could be done through campaigns or seminars, but also using cooperatives, like the one she belongs to.
- **Regis Umugiraneza (Rwanda)** said that governments should empower young people to be role models. Education models should be changed. In rural areas more technical skills have to be taught. His simple advice was: “Listen to young people!”
- **Francis Arnaitwe (Uganda)** wanted the interests of youth to be prioritized before governments come up with policies. “They should not assume what we need, but should come to us and ask us what we need”. He felt that it was important to learn from previous experiences. “The government is still providing tree seedlings, but they know that youth don’t have land and that seedlings take time to grow. Can you please think about that?”
- **Eniola Edogameh (Nigeria)** asked for a review of internships policies. “Sometimes they send inexperienced people to work as teachers in a remote community. This doesn’t work.”
- **Toyosi Oyeboji (Nigeria)** urged public offices to be more accessible: “You knock and knock and knock and nobody opens the door!” She said that it should also be easier to register a company. “Sometimes this takes up to six months”. Her advice was to synchronize platforms, “because many of them do the same job without knowing”.

Some adults posed critical remarks to the youth panel. A member of the audience said: “You are the online generation, go to Internet, governments also have websites”. Francis replied: “But not all of us attended school”.

Jean added that in most cases it is the older generation struggling with communication technology. “We are the first generation to teach our parents”, he said. “I have to explain to my mum how to use the phone”. His final piece of advice to fellow young Africans was: “Go back to the villages and help our communities!” Young people were also challenged to pressure governments: “You can also hold your governments accountable for the various documents they have signed”, one of the panellists pointed out.

4. ZOOMING OUT: PANEL WITH THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK, AFRICAN UNION AND EUROPEAN COMMISSION.

Zooming out and looking at other developments related to youth employment, **Prudence Nonkuleleko Ngwenya Sigwane, Head of Human Resources and Youth Division African Union Commission**, emphasized the importance of taking a balanced approach. The [AU roadmap on harnessing the demographic dividend through investment in youth](#) advances four pillars: employment and entrepreneurship (job opportunities), skills and education, health and wellbeing (including sexual and reproductive health), and rights, governance and youth empowerment.

This roadmap is aligned with the [Agenda 2063](#), which is the AU’s strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of the continent. The debates at the conference clearly connect to the EU-Africa Summit taking place in November 2017. In the run up to the EU-African Summit, the AU will organize conversations with young people in Africa. Additionally, in July/August a pre-summit for young people will take place and existing initiatives will be mapped out. Outcomes will be endorsed by young people and taken to their heads of state in November.

Jean Paul Heerschap of the European Commission mentioned that the messages he heard at the conference, also resonate in Brussels. Like Minister Ploumen said, governments should remove obstacles and facilitate change. However, governments make mistakes and private sector also plays a role, being responsible for 90% of the new jobs to be created. In order to get more youth employed, in the framework of the [Africa-EU partnership](#), the EU is looking at a broad approach, whereby different elements are tackled. The European External Fund for Investment in Africa, for example, also aims at creating employment for youth.

Ginette Nzau Muteta of the African Development Bank reiterated the diversity of youth in Africa and the need to align different programmes with the different types of youth. This is visible, for example, in the distinction that the African Development Bank makes in its [ENABLE youth programme](#), which is aimed at large-scale agribusinesses, and its Rural Micro-Enterprise programme, which provides youth with training, capital and mentoring to establish agriculture-based micro enterprises.

Hans Docter of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that the Ministry focuses on private development and start-ups, and that he believes youth in Africa are generally very entrepreneurially-minded. African youth are both critical and well informed, and they know what they want. “We could all do more to stimulate young people to take the lead”, he argued. Looking at stimulating the processing of products in Africa, which is important to create employment, Docter pointed out that the lobby for importing goods by particular groups at the national level has always been strong (which he experienced as ambassador for the Netherlands to Ghana). In Ghana, local companies importing processed chicken managed to change legislation to their advantage, thereby seriously constraining the opportunities for local producers to enter the poultry market. He argued that we, therefore, have to talk more openly and critically with governments and realize that more general economic policies are crucial to stimulate youth employment.

Discussion: Participants emphasized the importance of looking at youth employment from a broader perspective. As one of the participants stressed, employment creation at the country level is also constrained by international capital and trade flows. More money is leaving Africa than coming in, and the exporting of agricultural products is still limited by EU policies. So, not only do we need to remove obstacles in developing countries, but also in

developed countries. Hans Docter mentioned that his ministry, and especially the embassies, have developed various programmes to help African entrepreneurs meet the high requirements of entering the EU market. He said that he could not mention one African product blocked from being imported in the EU: “In the case of cocoa and pineapple, demand is even higher than supply”.

It was also highlighted that employment cannot depend on youth employment programmes alone. The scale of the problem is simply too big and major transformation is needed. In many cases youth employment is a ‘side effect’ of infrastructure investment. Mapping and tracking and looking at real impact beyond separate initiatives, like those of Rockefeller or the MasterCard Foundation, is, therefore, crucial. It was argued that more could be done to stimulate trade across countries and to ‘unlock’ countries.

Moderator Roel van der Veen of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs compared Africa with Southeast Asia, where massive investments were made in agriculture to stimulate development. He argued that African governments are “a being let off the hook”; they generally do not fear their citizens, which is partly related to people not being organized. He argued that more pressure on governments is needed to stimulate change. He concluded, referring to the name of a youth-led development agency, that: “We need more restless development”.

Another participant emphasized the potential role of the African diaspora. A considerable number of Africans currently living in Europe have gained knowledge and are intending to move back to their countries of origin. However, many governments do not have policies to facilitate young people going/coming back, and for those who return, it is very difficult to start a business. Another participant wondered how to make sure that it is not just the elite who benefit from the new opportunities that are created. “How do we make sure that we keep an eye on equity”, she asked. Here, is it important to remember that education is an ‘equalizer’ and the prime responsibility of the government. “We must catch people when they are still young and invest in children”, she said.

Lemma Senbet, Executive Director of Research, African Economic Research Consortium (AERC), closed the conference by saying that the conference was in the best of INCLUDE’s tradition – delivering knowledge in a multi-stakeholder setting. He added that policymakers tend to respond better when they are under pressure. It is clear that youth programmes should not be seen in isolation, but rather should be mainstreamed. “You have to integrate youth employment programmes in structural policies”, Prof. Senbet concluded.

5. WORKGROUP SESSIONS

5.1 Youth employment programmes in practice: success and challenges

So, what is done in practice to promote youth employment? A large variety of approaches and programmes exist targeting different groups of youth, including youth (rural and urban) at a great distance from the labour market as well as those already integrated in this market. Jointly these programmes form a pool of learning opportunities. In the workgroup sessions, some of the approaches that are central to these programmes were discussed. In addition, successes and challenges were shared to distil lessons learnt. In three parallel sessions, youth employment programmes targeting agriculture, agro-processing and non-farm employment, and ICT were shared.

Session A. Agriculture

Key findings:

- *High potential for large-scale employment*
- *Increased ICT access in rural areas improves agricultural productivity, but is a challenge*

- *Mentorship and coaching are essential (the private sector can play an important role in providing these, as well as skills training)*

“What we learned this morning is that agriculture is a very important sector. [By 2020 one-third of all new jobs will be in agriculture](#)”, said **moderator Karin Nijenhuis**, kicking-off the afternoon session on agriculture. **Ken Lohento**, **Programme Coordinator ICT for Agriculture at CTA (Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation)**, said that he could not agree more. His programme works with young farmers and entrepreneurs to build ICT skills and encourage youth with ICT skills to develop new services for agriculture. CTA supported a start-up in Uganda called [Ensibuuko](#), which evolved into a ‘role model’. Two former students of the programme developed software to address access to finance in agriculture by offering a platform from which to send and receive funds, request, receive and repay loans and check account balances remotely. Today this app is being used by about 500,000 farmers in Uganda through Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies (SACCOs). The students won CAD 500,000 in investment capital from Canada and have just opened franchises in Malawi and Zambia. The participants were convinced that, for the majority of young people in Africa, ICT is the way to go, even if it is only by making use of a mobile phone to inform themselves of crop prices and find potential buyers. Some participants mentioned that they are looking for ways to make young farmers use such tools more actively. A good example of this is a farmer-to-farmer ICT platform in Kenya on which farmers exchange information and share solutions that have worked for them.

Fred Frimpong, from [Solidaridad in Ghana](#), informed the group about the Youth Forward Initiative, a programme set up in partnership with the MasterCard Foundation that aims to create opportunities for young people who are out of school. In Ghana, the programme looked at the cocoa sector, where farmers are getting old (56 years on average), leading to the question what will happen to the economy and the cocoa sector when they retire. At the same time the ‘army of young people’ in these rural areas do not have a sustainable source of income. The programme looks for young people who are interested in a career in the cocoa sector, either as a farmer or entrepreneur, and looks at all of the services required to ensure that these young people succeed. Frimpong said that:

With mentorship and coaching, we go beyond skill training and the supply of planting materials. We believe that it is important to inspire young people and to support them to overcome any problems they may face. We provide young people with one-to-one coaching throughout the programme’s life, until they establish their farming life or business.

One of the participants expressed his concern that neither ICT nor agriculture will create enough jobs. “Which country in history has developed based on agriculture?”, he stated. “The real issue is, how to create employment. How to start the transformation needed?” Frimpong agreed, but added that the two are not mutually exclusive, “Agriculture will always be important in Africa. We have the land, the resources and the young people”.

Session B. [Agro processing and non-farm employment](#)

Key findings:

- *Interventions need to be market-focused (e.g. tailoring training) and services need to be matched to market demand*
- *Demand and supply (and the match between them) should be approached simultaneously*
- *Start-ups with high potential and quality need to be promoted*
- *Focus on quality over quantity*

The focus of [SNV's Opportunities for Youth Employment Programme](#) (OYE) is mainly on inclusive market development, agribusiness and renewable energy. The SNV approach is marked by three elements: push, match and pull. Push factors include skills development. In the stage of matching, youth are linked to markets. In the pull stage, youth are accompanied beyond the programme phase. There is no clear sequence to the push, match and pull. **Roy van der Drift, Coordinator at SNV**, stated that every intervention starts and ends at the market: "In a market, you are not in control. We ideally try to merge these stages. It all depends on what market approaches and value chains are demanding". The focus of the programme, which is funded by the MasterCard Foundation, is mainly on rural out-of-school youth. Van der Drift explained that companies working with the programme made it clear that the programme first had to work on the general skills of young people, before bringing them to the market. Examples include giving a young female entrepreneur guaranteed access to the poultry market and providing a bio fuel entrepreneur with the ability to further expand the market, with the support of the Rwandan government. The programme approach is based on partnerships, with the involvement of financial institutes (to address issues relating to collateral) and governments. Local governments are key players. Only private companies with a business interest are selected, not those with an interest purely born out of corporate social responsibility, as this would be too fragile, van der Drift pointed out.

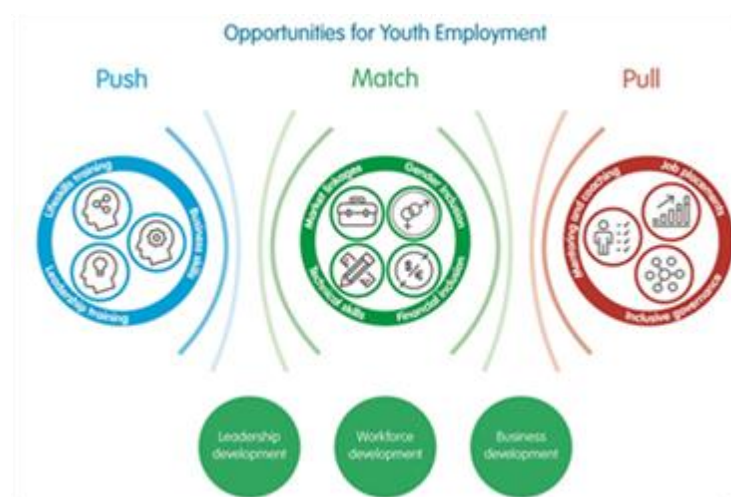


Figure 2. Push, match and pull factors for youth employment

Almoktar Allahoury of CIPMEN agreed that the involvement of governments is key. They always look for public-private partnerships. [CIPMEN](#) focuses on detecting and popularizing innovations with high social and environmental value creation. Several start-ups were accelerated and scaled up, including a programme using neem tree seeds to make soap and anti-mosquito repellent. The programme provided mentoring, financial support, accommodation and access to a large network. Key challenges faced by the programme are access to infrastructure, role models (especially good entrepreneurs with the right mind set) and the market. Allahoury emphasized the importance of a focus on quality programmes instead of a focus on the number of enterprises established (quantity). He emphasized the very specific and challenging conditions in the Sahel region, which is among the poorest in the world and one that is affected by global warming, including drought and famine. Moreover, it is a headquarters for terrorism, with the presence of Boko Haram. Last, but not least, it is one of the fastest growing populations of the world, with the under 15 population making up more than 60% of the total population. CIPMEN's [SahellInnov](#) is an initiative to bring together incubators from countries in the Sahel to share experiences and collectively try to address the many challenges that enterprises in the Sahel are confronted with.

In the discussion the importance of focusing on out of school youth was stressed. Especially the 15–17 age group "falls through the cracks", as one participant put it. Programmes either focus on 14 and below or 18 and above, as those working on employment want to avoid being accused of child labour. However, it was also argued that youth aged 18+ generally do not have a programme to fall back on, as they are considered adults. As one of the participants concluded; we need an inclusive approach targeting all youth groups.

Session C. ICT

Key findings:

- *ICT is an accessible sector for youth, given the rising demand for ICT in Africa and the possibility of learning skills online*
- *A challenge is how to tap into local opportunities and prevent brain drain*
- *'Soft skills' are increasingly important for the further development of employment in this sector*

Information and communication technology is often advanced as a promising sector for employment creation in Africa – especially because employment can be created through global business process outsourcing (BPO) mechanisms, whereby a global multinational organization (MNO), say Microsoft, contracts out specific business processes to a third-party service provider, in this case in Africa. A specific form of BPO is impact sourcing, which is outsourcing that employs people at the base of the pyramid as workers or suppliers; for example, youth from disadvantaged backgrounds are targeted for coding jobs, similar to Heineken purchasing raw materials from small farmers for their beer brewing activities. However, in Africa, the BPO/ICT sector has not grown as fast as expected. It is a USD 5 billion market, but only 100,000 African professionals are currently involved. Africa finds it hard to compete with more mature providers in Asia, and most African countries lack favourable infrastructure and government policies.

Nonetheless, some promising initiatives are being executed and are paying off. In 2013, the Rockefeller Foundation launched its [Digital Jobs Africa initiative](#). The goal of this initiative is to have an impact on 1 million lives in six African countries in six years. To date, 144,000 young disadvantaged Africans have been trained by the programme and 40,000 have found jobs, which has had an impact on 200,000 of their family members, according to [Mamadou Biteye, Managing Director Africa, of the Rockefeller Foundation](#). The majority of the programme beneficiaries have acquired permanent, full-time jobs or have ongoing or long-term contracts. The programme consists of three pillars: increase demand, provide skills training, and create an enabling environment for digital jobs. Biteye noticed the growing adoption of impact sourcing; 39 corporations, including Microsoft, are committed to the initiative. Digital Jobs Africa also launched the Global Impact Sourcing Coalition, representing a combined workforce of 1.6 million BPO workers. Biteye stressed the benefits, which include access to a broad talent pool, high performance for employers, and increased job mobility for participants. The challenges are the reluctance of American companies to be associated with impact sourcing (as this may be considered off-shoring American jobs) and the high cost of training. The strategy which has proved most effective and includes intensive training and matching costs between USD 2,000 and 3,000 per person. Biteye called ICT the most transformational sector in Africa, because it meets business needs, has social impact and empowers young people. He ended on a positive note: Kenya is currently investing USD 110 million in online job opportunities, the African Development Bank uses elements of Digital Jobs Africa in its Jobs for Youth in Africa strategy, and best practices for Digital Jobs Africa are being adopted in the World Bank's [Growth & Employment in States \(GEMS\) programme](#) in Nigeria.

Dutch social innovation studio Butterfly Works is also helping create digital jobs in Africa through the [TUNGA project](#). This project links software developers in East Africa to customers in Europe. The main aim of the project is to allow "Africa to gain control over its own destiny", explained **Bart Leijssenaar of Butterfly Works**. In 2000, Butterfly Works started NairoBits, an ICT education programme directed at youth from disadvantaged backgrounds. Africa has a lot of skilled developers, he stressed, but they are not part of the global online community, just because of their birthplace. TUNGA offers western companies instant access to skilled developers. Its main focus is on Uganda, Kenya and Nigeria, as the language and time zone fit European customers. Apart from technical skills, soft and life skills are also being taught. The programme has shown positive results, however, the quality of the services offered and communication with customers are the biggest challenges, according to Leijssenaar.

The audience was a bit worried about the depth of, and the follow-up to, projects. Are the jobs decent and sustainable? Do developers end up in the formal economy? Is any attention paid to the health of the participants? And what about local markets? These were some of the questions raised. Leijssenaar assured participants that developers are registered and well paid and that TUNGA also addresses local markets and needs. Biteye stressed the importance of accompanying the participants after the project.

5.2 Country employment strategies in Africa

To what extent does the context matter and what can be learnt by the approaches of various governments? The strategies of governments in Africa targeting youth employment differ greatly among countries. Two key factors are central in defining national policies: firstly, the education and skills level of the youth and their access to finance and land, and, secondly, the economic opportunities for job creation. In this session, the country employment strategies of six countries in Africa were discussed in three parallel sessions: Senegal and Benin, Rwanda and Uganda, and Niger and Nigeria.

Session A. [Senegal and Benin](#)

Key findings:

- *A large part of the population (more than 60%) are younger than 25 years and this group is growing*
- *Most employment is currently in agriculture and is mostly informal and vulnerable employment*
- *Integrated macro-approaches for agricultural transformation (Senegal)*
- *Close involvement of national council for youth (Senegal)*
- *Youth employment articulated as a national priority, but little action undertaken (Benin)*
- *Social, economic and political factors hinder starting entrepreneurs (Benin)*

Senegal and Benin are both situated in francophone West Africa. In Senegal, the government is facilitating opportunities for youth to find their way into the labour market. The Beninese government was deemed less effective by participants and speakers, based on its multiple uncoordinated interventions, (the lack of efforts to fight) corruption, and the little impact so far on stimulating employment for young people.

According to **Amadou Lamine Dieng**, Director of Senegalese [National Rural Youth Employment Policy](#), employment is a cross-cutting issue involving several ministries. For instance, the Ministry of Agriculture stimulates the creation of a lot of employment through programmes, while the Ministry of Youth runs various community projects. This is why the government has set up one institution that works together with all ministries to integrate the various programmes.

Yaye Touti Diop of FAO stressed that capacity building programmes can help to restore the dignity of people. Capacity building is crucial in Senegal as 46% of young people looking for jobs do not have sufficient qualifications. Creating opportunities 'at home' is also important to prevent young people from moving elsewhere. "When they have other options, they do not want to leave for Europe", Touti Diop said. Also, for those who have left, opportunities to return could be created.

Remco van Hees, a Dutch entrepreneur running a cashew process factory in Benin ([Afokantan Benin Cashew](#)), said that his company had learnt from "a rich history of failures". The company was set up with support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (PSOM) and had nine years without any profit. The factory was renewed more recently and is now making profit for the first time. After shifting to seasonal labour contracts, theft of, for instance, building materials and raw produce has significantly decreased. Collaboration with the Beninese government remains

challenging, but van Hees sees opportunities for cashew processing and, related to that, employment creation in Benin.

Young Beninese entrepreneur [Maureen Ayite \(Nanawax\)](#) also shared the many challenges of working in Benin. She specifically mentioned the difficulties involved in accessing information about setting up an enterprise: “In Benin, there is no support and there are many barriers, like corruption. When you don’t have the right connections, you are not able to set up a company”. **Moderator [Annelies van den Berg of the Dutch Embassy in Benin](#)** pointed out that Maureen is actually famous and has her own brand of *pret à porter*. Maureen mentioned that her branches in other African countries are much more profitable than those in Benin. Van Hees confirmed this and said that a good investment climate for foreign companies is currently lacking in Benin and companies would rather go to Ivory Coast to set up a business. Knowledge is also missing, like technical knowledge on processing cashew nuts and quality standards for products. World market commodity prices and trade agreements also impact on the job market in Benin; for example, almost all cashew nuts are shipped as raw products to India for processing there, thus, creating jobs in India instead of Benin. “In Benin everything grows, but everything leaves the country”, van Hees said.

Participants in the session were curious about the targeting of youth by, and local ownership of, the Dutch cashew company. Van Hees said that the company does not have a specific policy of hiring youth. “I don’t really care about the age of workers, as long as they are willing to work”. However, a large portion of the company’s employees are youth.

Session B. [Rwanda & Uganda](#)

Key findings:

- *Youth employment prioritized in various policy pronouncements and programmes*
- *Young businesses perform well*
- *There are several challenges, including access to finance and entrepreneurship skills*
- *Entities taking leadership on youth issues can make a difference*

The session was opened by moderator **Sara Ruto**, followed by presentations on Rwanda and Uganda.

George Gitau, National Director of World Vision Rwanda, and **Regis Umugiraneza, co-founder of CARL group and head of the Rwanda Youth in Agribusiness Forum (RYAF)**, discussed the efforts of the Rwandan government to fight unemployment. They highlighted the national Vision 2020, which comprises the [National Employment Programme \(NEP\)](#) and aims to create sufficient jobs and equip the workforce with the skills needed for private sector growth. George emphasized that women and youth do not benefit from Rwanda’s rapid economic growth. Therefore, [World Visions’ CORE](#) (Creating Off Farm Rwanda Enterprise) programme seeks to significantly increase the incomes of youth and vulnerable women, for instance, through creating off-farm jobs and supporting cooperatives. Regis himself received coaching through a government programme and is now the chief executive officer of the [CARL Group](#), a company that produces bread, cakes, chips and soon also spaghetti made of vitamin E-rich sweet potatoes. Regis also heads the Rwanda Youth in Agribusiness Forum (RYAF), a network of 1,400 young agribusiness entrepreneurs that advises the government and other partners.

A good example of a **young job-creating entrepreneur** is 23-year old **Jean Bosco Nzeyimana**. Inspired by his own youth in which he spent two hours every day collecting firewood, he started thinking of alternative cooking fuels. Three years ago he came up with the idea to make fuel briquettes out of collected waste. His company, [Habona](#), currently employs 30 people and provides casual work to another 15. He explained that:

In the long run we hope to scale up our production by mechanization of the process. That way we will be able to deliver more quality jobs for skilled people. But right now we are proud to offer uneducated people quantity jobs and along the way teach them basic skills. What we do is new in Rwanda, so we don't have a ready workforce yet.

Sarah Ssewanyana, Executive Director of the Economic and Policy Research Centre in Uganda, pointed out that Uganda's economy is also growing fast, however, no jobs are being created. She emphasized that Uganda's second National Development Plan aims to mainstream youth employment, but that there is a significant gap between what is written and what the government delivers. Sarah underlined that key factors for success are for the government to create an effective partnership with the private sector and to involve youth in the development of all programmes and policies.

Mark Odong, 20-years old today, showed that success is possible with little support. Originating from the north of Uganda, he was orphaned at an early age. As a child he struggled to earn his own school fees. Later, a foundation paid most of them, enabling him to obtain his national certificate in agriculture. He had no money to start a business. A business plan contest helped out and Mark is now executive director at Consult Agri-Query Solutions, a company focusing on horticultural production and marketing. His mission is to empower youth through the development of agro and business skills aiming to make them self-reliant. Mark shared:

We try to empower them by teaching them skills and show them how to approach farming as a business. We partner with youth, give them credit, land and inputs, and allow them to sell products, 30% of which returns to the company.

Mark's efforts are very much in line with the approach of **Samuele Rizzo**, who coordinates the [Skilling Youth for Employment in Agribusiness](#) (SKY) project of the Dutch embassy. He shared the following:

One of the causes of the high youth unemployment in Uganda is a dysfunctional educational system that provides them with skills that don't match with the demand. We aim to skill the youth through the private sector; several partners for instance offer internships in which working and training are combined.

A participant was worried that the private sector was only after profit maximization. But, according to Rizzo, the private sector is interested in supporting youth, because it needs skilled people to make money.

Session C. [Niger and Nigeria](#)

Key findings:

- *Incubators can play an important role in improving access to jobs, especially for women*
- *Training in soft skills and entrepreneurial skills is essential, as well as coaching, networks and peers*
- *In conflict-sensitive regions, proper diagnostics of youth employment challenges are even more important*

Peter Wobst of FAO is involved in the [Nigeria Youth Employment in Agriculture Program](#) (YEAP) and a nine month action plan for North East Nigeria. He pointed out that 60% of youth in Nigeria are currently unemployed or underemployed and 40 million more young Nigerians will enter the labour market in the next ten years. The Government of Nigeria aims to create N-Agripreneurs (Nigerian agricultural entrepreneurs), together with the Nigeria Youth Employment in Agriculture Program, which is supported by the government at all levels. The challenges are a long inception phase and the fluctuation of revenue. The action plan for North East Nigeria is an emergency programme for the one million displaced persons living in this region, aimed at preventing youth from becoming radicalized and joining armed groups. Participants in the session asked about the impact of the action

plan. This is difficult to answer, Wobst argued: “you should know what young people would have done without the programme. Would they have joined an armed group? We simply don’t know”.

Almoktar Allahoury, CEO of CIPMEN, an incubator in Niger, called security one of the main challenges for his country, together with human development and fast population growth. Youth face problems with radicalization, access to resources and a weak institutional framework. Since 2014, CIPMEN has incubated 17 start-ups and created 150 jobs. The incubator is trying to replicate its model in Mali and Guinea. Answering a question from the audience, Allahoury admitted that finding committed young people is a problem. “Smart people are very busy in Africa. It is hard for them to stay focused. If they don’t promise to stay focused on the programme, we stop working with them”.

Willem Nederstigt, Program Manager of The Next Economy, is busy creating youth employment in Mali, Nigeria, Somalia and Kenya. His programme is based on three pillars: start a business, upscale it, and be prepared for a decent job. He aims to have skilled 4,200 young Africans and create 1,700 jobs by 2018. The Next Economy focuses on the transition from school (or no education) to work. Its emphasis is on developing personal strengths and soft skills, not on vocational training. The key factor is motivation, not education. The programme makes use of inspiring talks, visualizing opportunities and pitching personal preferences. After three months, participants choose between entrepreneurship and employment. The challenges are the competing priorities of the participants, like the need to maintain a family, and how to provide participants with support after the programme.

Selected parts of Nigeria and Niger are experiencing conflict. Countries with conflict also need jobs, maybe even more so than other countries. But how do we create them? And what are the risks involved? **Jos Meesters of Clingendael** dealt with the core argument that idle young people lacking future prospects are vulnerable and, therefore, more likely to become involved in violent activities. Job creation and promoting peace are believed to prevent youth from becoming involved in violence. He stressed that before acting it is crucial to understand the context of a conflict and especially what lies beneath the surface, like political processes and informal institutions. Employment interventions in fragile situations are inherently political. Who gets the jobs and who doesn’t? How are ‘at risk youth’ defined? How does job creation interact with the conflict context? Meesters used the example of investing in cattle herding to stress the importance of first understanding the context. If cattle is basically the domain of one ethnic group, investing in cattle herding can fuel a conflict. The advice of Meesters: checklists don’t work; time should be spent on conflict sensitive analysis, monitoring and evaluation, and adjustments.

6. Conclusion

The conference highlighted that agriculture is making a comeback in Africa. However, decent and rewarding formal jobs are rare. Mixed livelihoods and self-employment are dominating the scene. Entrepreneurship is often born out of necessity and not opportunity. At the micro level, youth need basic skills, like being able to read. In addition, soft skills are important, as well as inspiring role models to engage youth. The conference made it clear that the 21st century young African is emphatically looking for civic space. In many cases, young Africans consider access to information, government transparency and less bureaucracy more important than access to money. Youngsters want to be able to start an enterprise, but also to be able to defend their civic rights. An important step towards boosting youth employment is to conduct proper country-specific diagnoses of the challenges and opportunities. The success of the programmes and policies that follow will depend on substantial investments being made, effective coordination at the national level, and the mainstreaming of youth within existing employment and investment policies to increase the demand for labour. Continuous knowledge sharing on what works and why is essential, particularly to tailor policies to the many national and regional differences in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Conference

Boosting youth employment in Africa: What works and why?

Tuesday 30 May 2017,

Venue: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bezuidenhoutseweg 67, The Hague, the Netherlands

Programme

09:00-10:15	Session 1. Understanding youth employment in Africa: the problem, priorities and strategies
10:15-10:45	Coffee/tea break
10:45-13:00	Session 2. Youth employment programs in practice
10:45-11:15	2a. What works in boosting youth employment: lessons from a systematic review
11:15-12:00	2b. The daily reality of the majority of youth in Africa
12:00-13:00	2c. Youth employment programs in practice: successes and challenges
13:00-14:00	Lunch break
14:00-15:30	Session 3. Country youth employment strategies in Africa
15:30-16:00	Coffee/tea break
16:00-17:30	Session 4. Closing panels: What do these experiences teach us? How to put these lessons into practice and policy?
	4a. Session with youth participants
	4b. Panel with the African Development Bank, the African Union Commission and the European Commission
17:30	Closing and drinks

Co-chairs:	<u>Prof. Isa Baud</u> , Chairperson of INCLUDE
	<u>Prof. Lemma Senbet</u> , Executive Director, African Economic Research Consortium (AERC)
Moderator:	<u>Prof. Roel van der Veen</u> , Chief Scientist, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

09:00-10:15 **Session 1. Understanding youth employment in Africa: the problem, priorities and strategies**

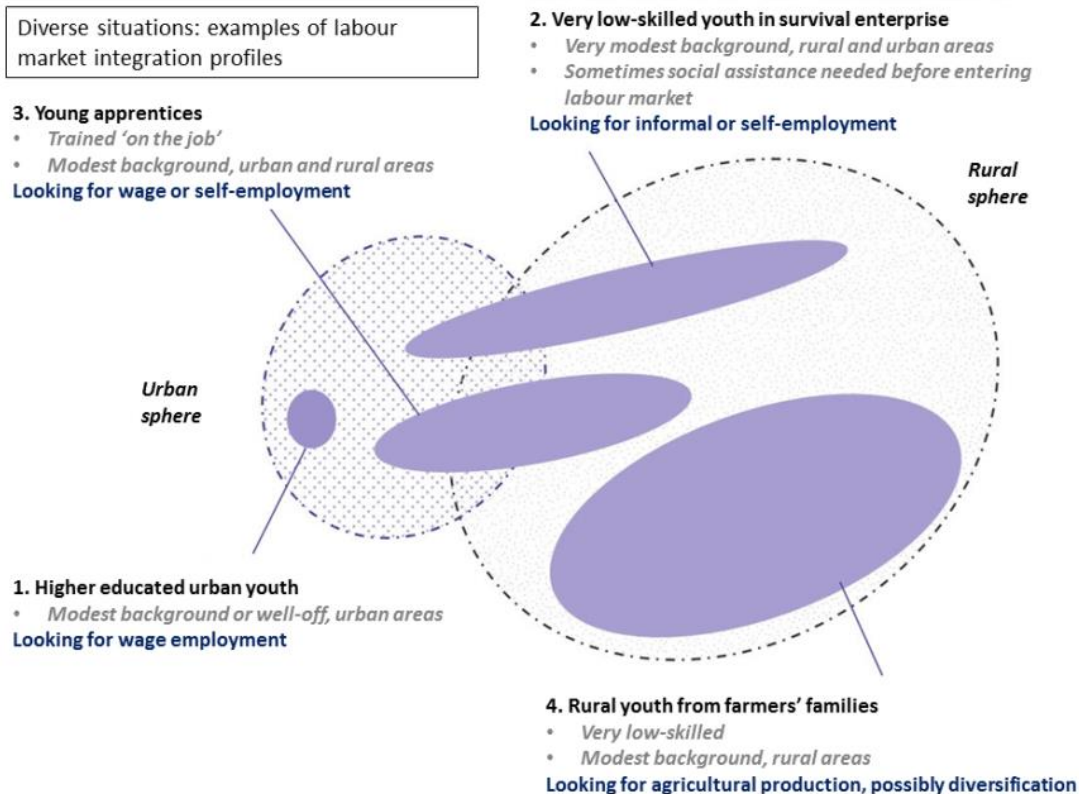
- Opening by Minister Lilianne Ploumen for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation
- Keynote address by Dr Louise Fox, Chief Economist at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
- Keynote address by Ginette Nzau Muteta, Coordinator Jobs for Youth in Africa at the African Development Bank (AfDB)

In this session we identify the nature of the problem of youth employment in Africa and examine short and long-term opportunities to boost productive employment for large numbers of young people. Which sectors have the highest employment potential for youth? What is the skills and education level of young African people? What specific constraints do they struggle with in finding employment or starting a business? Dr Louise Fox, world expert on youth employment, analyses Africa's youth employment challenges and priorities and presents key questions for country level policy makers to develop evidence based strategies that fit a country's specific context. Ginette Nzau Muteta, coordinator of the Jobs for Youth in Africa Strategy of the African Development Bank, explains the Strategy's goal to create 25 million jobs and to positively impact 50 million youth over the next decade (2016-2025). What are the key pillars and strategies towards this goal? What implementation challenges does the AfDB meet?

10:15-10:45 Coffee/tea break

10:45-13:00 **Session 2. Youth employment programs in practice**

This session reviews practices and experiences in ongoing youth employment programs. To understand these practices it is important to acknowledge different types of youth with different aspirations and needs. The large majority is rural youth with little education who are working on the family farm.



10:45-11:15 2a. What works in boosting youth employment: lessons from a systematic review

- Susana Puerto Gonzales, ILO, Coordinator Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth

The ILO/World Bank systematic review on interventions to improve the labour market outcomes for youth analysed more than 100 studies on Training, Entrepreneurship Promotion, Employment Services and Subsidized Employment Interventions in 31 countries. In this session the ILO coordinator of the study explains the lessons learned from the review and how ILO uses the lessons in practice and in policy advice to for example the African Development Bank, national governments in Africa as well as international donors. This presentation will tell us that many past programs had modest impact at best. Programs are more likely to have impact when they have a comprehensive approach: programs should not only address skills and education constraints (supply side) but also create employment opportunities (demand for youth labour). In addition, multiple services are needed tailored to individual youth's needs. Programs should engage with youth for a longer term and include a mentoring process. Finally, programs must be based on performance contracts for service providers.

11:15-12:00 2b. The daily reality of the majority of youth in Africa

- Carol Njeri Gathogo is a member of the Ndumberi Dairy Cooperative Society Kenya and has 7 dairy cows and a coffee plot
- Francis Arinaitwe is youth leader. He was selected to join The MasterCard Foundation Youth Think Tank, a group of young people who conduct qualitative research to better understand the economic challenges facing African youth
- Meredith Lee, deputy director of the Youth Livelihoods program of the Mastercard Foundation

The majority of youth in most African countries live in rural areas, have limited education and are at a great distance from the labor market. In this session a young farmer and youth researcher explain what this means for youth's daily lives and livelihoods. These experiences are put in a broader context by the deputy director of the Youth Livelihoods Program of the Mastercard Foundation (MCF), one of the largest private foundations working on youth employment in Africa. MCF commissioned youth livelihoods diaries research to better understand the behavior, income, and activities of the majority of youth living in rural areas. The Invisible Lives study documents how rural young people pursue "mixed livelihoods" to generate income, combining temporary and seasonal work in the informal and formal sectors by working for themselves and others, in household agricultural production, and on social and reproductive activities, such as cleaning, cooking, and looking after children. Support networks are critical for young people, not only in the form of advice regarding where to look for and how to find employment, skills development, and business guidance, but also proving instrumental in accessing financial resources.

In this session, [five key take-away messages of the Invisible Lives Study](#) are presented. Meredith Lee explains MCF's call for [fundamental shifts](#) in the approach to skills building, access to finance and entrepreneurship. "International development programs favor skills training for formal sector careers over training that can be applied to multiple jobs in the informal sector. The result is that their efforts fall short of reaching the millions of unreached youth on the continent who engage in mixed livelihoods." A video clip on the Invisible Lives Study can be found [here](#).

12:00-13:00 2c. Youth employment programs in practice: successes and challenges

A large variety of youth employment programs exist, targeting different groups of youth: rural and urban, youth at a great distance to the labor market and youth already integrated in the market. In 3 parallel sessions implementers of programs that cover multiple countries and differing contexts, share their approach, key factors for success and challenges faced. Questions to be addressed include:

- How does a program approach or intervention combine training for employability (supply) with job creation or increasing economic opportunities (demand), and how does the program connect youth to employment opportunities?
- What type of training is provided (TVET, soft skills, internships, apprenticeships, business training, etc)
- How is private sector engagement designed and implemented?
- What are the most important success factors in the policy and enabling environment and what struggles do implementers face in practice?
- Can the program be scaled-up?

Session A Agriculture	Session B Agro processing and non-farm employment	Session C ICT
Australia room	Van Kleffens room	Max van der Stoel room
Moderator: Karin Nijenhuis (INCLUDE)	Moderator: Désiré Assogbavi (OXFAM/INCLUDE)	Moderator: Dennis Arends (INCLUDE)
	<i>With translation facilities</i>	
<u>Ken Lohento</u> , Coordinator Policies, Markets and ICT Program, Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA)	<u>Roy van der Drift</u> , Coordinator SNV- Opportunities for Youth Employment Program (OYE) in Rwanda, Tanzania and Mozambique	<u>Mamadou Biteye</u> , Managing Director-Africa Regional Office, The Rockefeller Foundation: digital jobs in Egypt, Kenya, Ghana, Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa
<u>Fred Frimpong</u> , Coordinator MASO/Youth Forward Ghana, Solidaridad: next generation cocoa farmers	<u>Almoktar Allahoury</u> , CEO, CIPMEN and Founder SahelInnov: a network of incubators supporting start-ups in 7 Sahel countries	<u>Agnes Kinga</u> , Manager Segments, Safaricom Kenya
		<u>Bart Leijssenaar</u> TUNGA, linking software developers in East Africa to customers in Europe

13:00 -14:00 Lunch break

14:00-15:30 Session 3. Country youth employment strategies in Africa

When governments define national ambitions and priorities in promoting youth employment they must deal with two key factors: on the one hand the education and skills level of the youth and their access to finance and land, on the other hand the economic opportunities for job creation in the country. Ideally, ambitions and strategies are informed by a solid country level analysis. This session discusses the policy choices and priorities in six countries in Africa. The panelists discuss ambitions and important implementation lessons.

Session A Van Kleffens room Moderator: <u>Annelies van den Berg</u> (MFA, NL emb. Benin) <i>With translation facilities</i>	Senegal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Amadou Lamine Dieng</u>, Directeur Général de l'Agence Nationale pour la promotion de l'emploi des Jeunes (ANPEJ), National Rural Youth Employment Policy • <u>Yaye Touti Diop</u>, implementation officer youth agribusiness support services, Integrated Country Approach Programme, Food and Agricultural Organisation
	Benin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Maureen Ayite</u>, founder Nanawax, boutiques in Cotonou, Dakar, Abidjan and Kinshasa Brazzaville • <u>Remco van Hees</u>, manager Afokantan Benin Cashew, a cashew factory with 70+ employees • <u>Esther Droppers</u>, regional coordinator Africa, CNV Internationaal • <u>Annelies van den Berg</u>, senior policy officer Food and Nutrition Security, NL Embassy in Cotonou, Benin
Session B Australia room Moderator: <u>Sara Ruto</u> (PAL/INCLUDE)	Rwanda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>George Gitau</u>, National Director, World Vision Rwanda, Creating Off Farm Rwanda Enterprise program (CORE) • <u>Jean Bosco Nzeyimana</u>, Founder & CEO, HABONA Ltd: producing affordable and environmentally friendly biofuels from waste • <u>Regis Umugiraneza</u>, co-founder CARL group and head of agroprocessing group Rwanda Youth in Agribusiness Forum (RYAF)
	Uganda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Sarah Ssewanyana</u>, ED of the Economic and Policy Research Centre, on the youth employment policy context in Uganda • <u>Mark Odong</u>, founder Agriquery solutions, northern Uganda: training, inputs and demonstration plot horticulture • <u>Samuele Otim Rizzo</u>, Chief of Party AVSI Foundation - SKY Project: earn as you learn agri-businesses development
Session C Max van der Stoel room Moderator: <u>Megan Price</u> (Knowledge Platform Security and the Rule of Law)	Niger/ Nigeria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Almoktar Allahoury</u> CEO, CIPMEN and founder, SahelInnov: a network of incubators supporting start-ups in 7 Sahel countries • <u>Willem Nederstigt</u>, program manager The Next Economy: creating youth employment in Mali, Nigeria and Somalia (LEAD) • <u>Peter Wobst</u>, Senior Programme Advisor, FAO Strategic Programme on Rural Poverty Reduction and team leader, FAO Decent Rural Employment Team: Nigeria Youth Employment in Agriculture Programme (YEAP) and Nine month action plan for North East Nigeria. • <u>Jos Meesters</u>, Research Fellow at the Conflict Research Unit of Clingendael (CRU) on the functioning of the private sector in conflict affected environments.

15:30-16:00 Coffee/tea break

16:00-17:30 **Session 4. Closing panels: What do these experiences teach us? How to put these lessons into practice and policy?**

In the closing sessions youth and policy stakeholders reflect on the lessons learnt today and how they will use the main outcomes as input into national and international policy processes.

4a. Session with youth participants

- Maureen Ayite, founder Nanawax, Cotonou, Dakar, Abidjan and Kinshasa Brazzaville
- Carol Njeri Gathogo, member of the Ndumberi Dairy Cooperative Society Kenya
- Francis Arnaitwe, youth leader and member MasterCard Foundation Youth Think Tank Uganda
- Mark Odong, founder Agriquery solutions Uganda
- Jean Bosco Nzeyimana, Founder & CEO, HABONA Ltd
- Eniola Edogameh, intern Next Economy Programme, Nigeria
- Regis Umugiraneza, co-founder CARL group and leader Rwanda Youth in Agribusiness Forum
- Toyosi Oyebanji, youth coach and coordinator Next Economy Programme, Nigeria

Youth are invited to share their conclusions of the conference. What changes should policy makers and program implementers make to meet their needs and aspirations?

4b. Panel with the African Development Bank, the African Union and the European Commission

Policy stakeholders indicate which lessons they learned today. What “game changers” can be identified for policy to boost youth employment at scale in Africa? How will the lessons feed into the preparations for a renewed partnership between the EU and Africa to be discussed at the EU Africa Summit in November 2017 in Abidjan?

- Prudence Nonkululeko Ngwenya Sigwane, Head of Human Resources and Youth Division, African Union Commission
- Ginette Nzau Muteta, Coordinator Jobs for Youth in Africa at the African Development Bank Group
- Representative of the European Commission (tbc)
- Hans Docter, Director Sustainable Economic Development, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

17:30 Closing and drinks

Lastname	First name	Affiliation or institute
Abbas	Shabana	Aqua for All
Allahoury	Almoktar	CIPMEN
Amirkhan	Carlos Feroz	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Andel van	Anette	AgriProFocus
Antonie	Joel	Embassy of Hungary
Arends	Dennis	DENNIS ARENDS CONSULTING
Arnaitwe	Francis	RESTLESS DEVELOPMENT
Assogbavi	Desire	OXFAM INTERNATIONAL
Atile	Assefa Admassie	Ethiopian Economics Association/Addis Ababa University
Aude	de Montesquiou Fezensac	CGAP/SPJ, The World Bank
Awortwi	Nicholas	PASGR
Ayite	Maureen	NANAWAX
Baah-Boateng	William	AFRICAN CENTRE FOR ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION (ACET)
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