

**BOOSTING
DECENT
EMPLOYMENT
FOR AFRICA'S
YOUTH**

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EMPLOYMENT AT THE CROSSROADS OF CRISES: THE EXPERIENCE OF AFRICAN YOUTH

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Coronavirus crisis began to reach global dimensions at the start of 2020. Health, but also economic and social crises affect countries with varying intensity, depending on their situation and prior vulnerabilities. The interweaving of long crises combined with various tensions (environmental, political, economic) and the consequences of the pandemic has important consequences for all workers. In Africa, young people are generally in a more difficult position than the elders, facing more uncertain prospects for finding decent work. Thus 94.9% of the young work in the informal economy (BIT, 2019). Young people, especially young women, are particularly sensitive to crises and even more so when they are poorly qualified and live in rural areas where infrastructure is scarce. Some crises are structural and can sometimes last for several decades. They become a part of the daily reality, affecting young workers, especially the poorest:

- **Chronic poverty:** it restrains stable and decent employment. 41.5% of young people in sub-Saharan Africa are working poor, living on less than \$ 1.90 per day (OIT, 2020a, p. 46).
- **Deteriorating climate:** the frequency of droughts in sub-Saharan Africa has doubled since 2005, from once every six years to once every three years (Cheik, 2020b). At the same time, agriculture, and fishery in case of the coastal countries, are the main activities of the unskilled rural youth in this area and constitute a significant labour pool.
- **Long-term conflicts:** young people are the main victims but also relevant actors of conflicts. In 2015, 90% of those killed in conflict were young people (UNFPA West and Central Africa Regional Office, 2018b), but simultaneously many young people chose to join the armed groups. Their professional reintegration after a conflict is complex and the scarcity of employment cannot be considered as the only reason influencing their participation. Women are particularly affected by tensions. They constitute the majority of the displaced persons and suffer a great deal of violence.

Young people are also the most affected by shocks or more or less lasting deteriorations of given economic, environmental or social situations:

- **Economic crises:** the 2009 crisis increased unemployment among the young graduates who suffered about three years of delay in professional integration. The economic crisis of the 1990s increased the feminization of rural poverty (Johnston-Anumonwo & Doane, 2011). The economic crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic weakens the employment of precarious young people as 4 in 10 young people are employed in highly affected sectors (OIT, 2020a). Shocks also affect the future perspectives by stopping or interrupting education and studies.
- **Epidemics and pandemics:** they affect first and foremost women, in particular young women, as they tend to provide unpaid care to their family members. As a consequence women constitute 75% of deaths from the Ebola virus in Liberia (UNECA, 2015, p. 101).

In the light of the above factors young people are forced to adapt and develop survival strategies which often turn out to be risky or even dangerous:

- In general, young people are forced to be flexible, to accept more difficult jobs or to delay their professional integration.
- Young women, for example, may engage in prostitution, often in increasingly dangerous forms.
- Men in turn tend to integrate into conflict contexts and grey economy i.e. activities ranging from illegal to criminal.

Policies and projects that enable strengthening of the capacities of young people and limiting the extent to which they are forced to resort to the above mentioned strategies rely on social dialogue, integrated and mixed approaches, prevention and innovation. Thus:

- Policies incorporating capital, training and psychosocial support tend to have most tangible results in the long term. When they are extended and reinforced after sudden shocks (disasters, pandemics, coups d'état, etc.) these policies enable quick and large scale counteractions.
- Insuring the most vulnerable, protecting the hardest working and informal workers can reduce the impact of shocks.
- Companies in the formal and informal economy can take on an active role in responding to crises.
- Young people, particularly women, can be better protected when policies are adapted specifically to their care needs, such as maternal and child health, and based on the principle of inclusion.

Recommendations

We recommend that policies should be tailored to the specific needs of groups whose employment is most affected. If during crises such as a flood or a drought the whole population must be supported, programs should make a point of taking into account and answering the needs of the youngest. Following elements are particularly important:

- Promotion of decent employment, even in times of crises. While lack of employment itself cannot justify the violence arising during crises, it is worth noticing that decent forms of employment contribute strongly to the promotion of peace. (Izzi, 2020; United Nations and Folke Bernadotte Academy, 2021).
- Coordination of financial aid and active policies supporting the youth employment. The most effective policies and projects are those that reinforce each other by addressing structural obstacles and taking into account the intertwining of crises (OIT, 2019a). Therefore protecting of the most vulnerable entails integrating the excluded young people as much as possible, but also to considering, in all crises, the ways of supporting the informal economy, as well as family and rural businesses which employ the most precarious, especially women. What is more, those policies should also encompass social dialogue and the protection of workers in the formal economy.
- Crises contribute to destroying of the structures which are essential to the development and protection of the future of young people. Education and training are therefore key elements to be taken into consideration. Vocational training is one of the most popular strategies used to promote the youth employment. However, considering that the young are often affected by extreme poverty, it is necessary to integrate financial aid, even minimal, into these strategies, particularly in post-conflict context.
- Finally, we recommend to capitalize on projects that were able to adapt in order to mitigate the effects of an economic crisis that has already set in. It is important to better understand how young people face crises on a daily basis, by combining qualitative and quantitative research of the economic sector, and particularly of the informal economy.

Employment at the crossroads of crises: the experience of African youth

The pandemic caused by the Covid 19 epidemic is generating one of the biggest economic recessions of the century, affecting both large and fragile economies. 40 million Africans are at the risk of being pushed into extreme poverty (Toure, 2020). Economic crises exacerbate inequalities, highlighting the vulnerabilities of the most fragile participants of the labour market - the young, informal economy workers, the unskilled and/or women (Cho & Newhouse, 2011). Employment in times of crisis is complex and can take forms that have violent effects on workers and populations. It often involves increased precariousness or a slide into the world of illegality and crime. The concept of decent work developed by the International Labour Organization and registered as a sustainable development objective in 2015 enables to assess these forms of work even in the times of crisis. ILO indicators provide data such as the number of working hours considered decent and differentiate between the forms of work that should be abolished (such as child labour) and ones that should be supported. These indicators thus serve as a target for which the labour market should strive even in times of crises (OIT, 2008).

The aim of this document is to report on the impact of crises on youth¹ employment in Africa, taking into account different types of crises and analysing their structural context. Any crisis can always be perceived from two angles. It affects the whole society structurally, but it is also an individual experience (Martuccelli, 2015). We distinguish two types of crisis. One is resulting from an activation of long-standing, latent tensions. It causes, intertwines with and amplifies the second type of crisis i.e. sudden shocks. In a structurally deficit context (poverty, unemployment, corruption, etc.) shocks aggravate these vulnerabilities and lead to disastrous situations.

While crises affect whole societies, young people are faced with challenges that are specific for their population only. The young are statistically the most fragile participants of the labour market: 94.9% of people aged 15 to 24 work in informal sectors with little protection (BIT, 2019). They may lack savings and/or still be dependent on their elders. Their salaries are low, they have significant training needs. Urban youth is mostly facing the challenge of lack of activities, while young in rural areas struggle more with extreme poverty² (Beegle & Christiaensen, 2019). For the young transitioning between successive life stages a single shock can be enough to downgrade an entire age group and maintain strong impact over long time. The process of gaining independence can only take place gradually, in recurring, progressive and regressive steps (Nicole-Drancourt & Roulleau-Berger, 2006) and sometimes outside the age limits imposed on young people by public policies.

We explore a hypothesis that young people face, adapt to or resist crises that reduce their employment opportunities in order maintain a variety of choices, even at the cost of increasing their vulnerability or exclusion.

Two key questions of our synthesis are:

- To what extent are long-standing crises and sudden shocks intertwining and what are the consequences for the employment of different categories of young people?
- What adaptation policies and strategies increase the resilience of young people in the labour market, help them cope with long-standing tensions and sudden shocks?

1 For the purposes of this document we define young people as any person between 15 and 24 years old. This age group is used for most of the statistical studies we rely on (Nations unies, 2019).

2 Or anyone living on less than \$ 1.90 per day (OIT, 2020b)

To answer these questions we analyse the source material consisting of documents from the academic field (particularly sociology and economics), research carried out by think tanks as well as studies from international institutions such as the World Bank or the International Labour Organization. These documents were selected on the basis of keywords from different platforms such as Cairn, Google Scholars or directly from the sites of international institutions³. To keep the outlook as up to date as possible we complement this collection of secondary data with field research carried out by a young Malian researcher, Mamoutou Fofana, covering issues related to the recent coronavirus pandemic and coup d'état in his country.

The synthesis that we propose provides answers to these questions in three parts. Firstly we analyse crises focusing on their dominant angle. Crises are inherently complex in nature, but we choose to isolate certain characteristics that allow us to specify the effects of long-standing crises and sudden shocks on youth employment. Secondly, we seek to understand what strategies have been introduced in response to these crises and what their effects were, differentiating between the strategies for adapting to long-standing crises and those for resisting sudden shocks. Finally, in the third part, Mamoutou Fofana uses the example of Mali to investigate the agency of young people in times of crisis.

³ Many of the documents, particularly ones related to the topics already investigated by others such as work in times of youth conflict or rural work, are interrelated and together they form an architecture of issues that we have tried to analyze. The full list of documents is available in Annex 4.2.

1. Long-standing crises and sudden shocks⁴

Long-standing crises and lasting tensions are structural crises that continue over a prolonged period of time. Some African countries, for example, have faced episodes of civil war that last several decades. Long-term crises are usually complex and full of interdependencies but we identify four main types: structural poverty, conflicts, civil wars and progressive deterioration of the climate. They all aggravate each other and contribute to a vicious cycle of crises (OIT, 2019b, p. 6).

Sudden shocks can affect a country, a region or a population. The beginning and development of such crises can be clearly linked to an abrupt, unexpected or foreseeable event, however their end is sometimes difficult to specify as the effects of such a crisis can persist over a long time, especially when they coincide with pre-existing vulnerabilities aggravated by long-standing crises. The impact of a sudden shock on young people can sometimes extend over their whole lifetime. They might miss their entry into the labour market and their overall employment and salary prospects might be severely affected (OIT, 2020e). In this synthesis we identify four types of sudden crises which often intertwine with one another: pandemics, natural disasters, political crises and economic shocks.

1.1 Long crises: extreme poverty, climatic disturbances and conflicts

Situation of young people facing the risk of extreme poverty

Poverty reduction is slower in countries affected by conflict situations and in rural areas. Countries affected by conflict and said to be fragile⁵ account for 76.5% of people living in conditions of extreme poverty (OECD, 2020, Samman et al., 2018). While poverty in Africa may have been reduced in terms of percentage of the population affected, the number of poor people has in fact increased. People with disabilities are more likely to be among the poorest 40% and women are the most affected by multidimensional poverty, i.e. multiple deprivations (Beegle & Christiaensen, 2019).

Although overall the amount of workers has increased over the past ten years this rise concerns mainly adults, while the number of workers among young people has in fact decreased over this period (Ilostat, 2019a, p. 5). In general, young people face the same barriers in accessing employment as adults do: lack of infrastructure, corruption, lack of access to vocational training, lack of access to the spaces of political dialogue, difficulties in accessing funding. However, the young struggle with these obstacles even more than the elders. Young people are three times less likely to be employed than adults (Ilostat, 2019c). Even if the youth participate in the labour market it is often not out of their choice. The measured youth unemployment rate is actually low, as unemployment is a 'luxury' that comes with education (Deon & Fox, 2014). Unemployment rate is thus higher in countries with a higher average income, while in countries with low income the rate of precarious and informal workers increases. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, precarious employment⁶ affects 72.2% of workers. In North Africa this rate drops to 30.3%. (OIT, 2018, p. 12). Precarious jobs are more present in the countryside and within family environment as young people tend to work with their relatives at first. Thus intergenerational transmission in Africa is significant.

While there exist some employment opportunities for young people affected by structural poverty, they do not entail real empowerment (Barlet & d'Aiglepierre, 2017). Even if the working poor⁷ have a job their wages tend to be very low, they work irregular hours or live in large families that require high financial support. Africa accounts for 56% of the working poor and only 14% of overall employment (Ilostat, 2019b, p. 6). In 2019 in sub-Saharan Africa 42% of the young people were working poor (OIT, 2020a, p. 47). Countries with high rates of work in the informal economy⁸ as well as countries with the highest poverty rates tend to also have high numbers of working poor. Globally a young person is on average twice more likely to be a working poor than an adult. 39% of young workers are working poor compared to 31% of

4 A set of maps summarizing main aspects of these crises is available in the Annex.

5 The definition of a fragile state is debatable. Different interpretations exist and those provided by the World Bank and the OECD are used most frequently. For the purposes of this document we adopt the definition provided by the OECD (OECD, 2020).

6 In the cited study precarious employment corresponds to the share of self-employed and household workers in relation to the whole labour market.

7 The working poor are those working below extreme poverty - less than \$ 1.90 a day.

8 The informal economy covers activities that do not fall within the scope of the law but also are not necessarily illegal, for example activities not regulated by legislation.

adults. At the same time, 37% of women are working poor compared to 30% of men (Ilostat, 2019b). Women tend to work in agriculture and in the countryside and are often unpaid because they work within family units. In the city they mainly work as sellers in small shops and restaurants or make crafts and therefore 90% of them work in the informal economy (Okojie, 2003). They are also more often victims of discrimination and inequality in the contexts of underemployment and poverty.

Extreme poverty, chronic and structural poverty affect young people more than adults, women more than men and rural youth more than urban youth. In these contexts young people also become poor and precarious workers more often than adults.

Progressive deterioration of the environment and mobility of young people

Both the slow degradation of the environment caused by the global warming and overexploitation have an impact on the employment of young people, especially the rural youth working in agriculture. We want to focus our analysis on increasingly recurring climatic phenomena which have direct impact on the daily lives of local populations. While climate change induces other phenomena such as the gradual disappearance of certain natural resources, they do not impact the daily reality of individuals directly as they are difficult to observe and measure in the short term. Since 1970 rainfall in the Sahel region has decreased on average by 20% and runoff by 40% which affects farming and pastoral work (Pontié et al., 1992, p. 64). Droughts account for less than 20% of all disasters affecting the continent, but at the same time they account also for over 80% of the damages caused to African people by extreme weather events. The frequency of droughts in the region has doubled since 2005 from once every six years to once every three years. They affect key agricultural areas such as South Sudan, north-eastern Eritrea, Somalia (Cheik, 2020b). Next to the human land use (overgrazing, agriculture, etc.) droughts are the main cause of land degradation in Africa. Droughts cause famines and unemployment, they can push households into poverty and keep children out of school. They contribute to reinforcing conflicts between breeders and farmers (Marc et al., 2015). Such conflicts rise around tensions linked to the sharing of land, resources and blocking of pastoral movements. For example in 2015 no pastoral movement was possible around Lake Chad as a result of the activities of Boko Haram (Arnaud et al., 2016, p. 79). Niger is particularly affected by such tensions due to droughts and conflicts in neighbouring countries (Arnaud et al., 2016). Rural youth outnumbers the urban youth in accessing the labour market in Niger (Brooks et al., 2013) and many of these young people resort to seasonal migration to survive despite the environmental challenges. Through preventing seasonal mobility crises contribute to the alienation of the regions. Climate change has strong impact on women who constitute 70% agricultural workforce. Thus land degradation leads to the impoverishment of women. At the same time women also face the challenge of adapting to a gender role within a rapidly changing context (Marc et al., 2015, p. 93).

More than 50% of fishing resources are overexploited in West Africa which is one of the highest rates in the world (Pösel et al., 2018, p. 12). The scarcity of fishing resources impoverishes young people for whom fishing is the last resort. For example in Senegal canoe fishing delivers 85% of the yearly sales of fishing products estimated at 400,000 tonnes and it brought 38% of export earnings in 2001. It is the primary job-creating activity, but also a source of many conflicts emerging between local and external fishermen, but also between the migrants on land and at sea (Roux & Noël, 2007). **Climatic tensions affect the employment of rural youth and women by impacting the activities that provide a safety net for many of them such as fishing and seasonal rural employment.**

Employment and peace in long-lasting conflicts

In this part we analyse the consequences of long-lasting conflicts such as civil wars, underlying conflicts and regular terrorist violence. Long civil wars have followed one another since the birth of independence in Africa, affecting multiple generations of young people. Some African countries have just achieved peace. Sudan has been at war almost incessantly since gaining independence in 1956, while the conflict in Mozambique has lasted 40 years. The forms of conflict have evolved considerably. Post-independence conflicts continued from the 1960s to the 2000s with wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone which claimed nearly 800,000 lives (UNFPA West and Central Africa Regional Office, 2018b). After these conflicts ended African populations enjoyed a period of peace but the number of violent events has been on the rise since 2010 (Beegle & Christiaensen, 2019) as the end of large-scale conflicts was followed by some smaller rebellions led by non-state actors (UNFPA West and Central Africa Regional Office, 2018b). Nowadays political unrest and terrorism have replaced civil wars. 90% of conflicts that took place between 1987 and

1997 were limited to country borders or sometimes even specific areas only (OIT, 2003, p. 13). However, armed groups circulate across regions creating a context of “negative peace” (OIT, 2003). These new forms of violence are linked to drug trafficking, riots following elections, piracy and crime (Gulf of Guinea, coasts of Somalia) and are increasingly tied to terrorism. Terrorist violence is increasing, pressuring young people into recruitment and creating climate of fear in regions occupied by the groups. Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQMI) is organized at a regional and even international level while Boko Haram acts on a regional scale with a strong presence in Nigeria (Marc et al., 2015). Terrorism can take many different forms which are hardly alike but in most conflicts it applies same policy of terror affecting particularly the civilians, as it happens for example in Central Africa (Cilliers, 2004). These conflicts affect young people: in 2016, around 408 million of the young lived in areas disturbed by armed conflict or organized crime meaning that at least one in four young persons was directly confronted with some form of violence. In addition, it is estimated that over 90% of those killed by conflict in 2015 were young men (UNFPA West and Central Africa Regional Office, 2018b). Violence forces populations to move and it is estimated that 57% of refugees in West and Central Africa are under 18 (UNFPA West and Central Africa Regional Office, 2018a, p. 79). Some of the young people have spent their entire childhood or adolescence in war.

Conflicts affect particularly women. In 2013 in South Sudan 53% of the displaced were women and 63 persons among them were below 18 years (Pape & Phipps, 2018). Young women are more likely to face sexual violence during conflict, especially during forced mobility (UNFPA West and Central Africa Regional Office, 2018a, p. 55). A study conducted by the Red Cross in 2003 in a camp in Sierra Leone estimated that 74% of women and adolescent girls experienced sexual violence and 66% of them experienced it during relocating. Young women are also impacted by coping strategies - those of their own and those of their parents, hindering their future prospects and employment opportunities. Many parents thus marry their daughters at very young ages to avoid carrying excessive economic burden in times of war (UNICEF, 2005). Both during and after conflict young girls may be withdrawn from school in order to protect them from risks along the way or forced into risky and socially stigmatized informal activities such as prostitution (OIT, 2003; UNFPA West and Central Africa Regional Office, 2018b). At the same time, the number of single-parent households increases during wars (OIT, 2003) and can foster increase of entrepreneurship among single women, but the most prosperous households are often those which already benefited from a wide range of opportunities before (Pape & Phipps, 2018).

In general conflicts increase chronic poverty and have significant impact on youth employment, in particular on the chances of obtaining decent work. The destruction of public infrastructure, the downturn of economy and the lack of investments all reinforce the uncertainty about the future and limit the possibilities of creating economic projections for the young people forcing them to focus on a day to day “resourcefulness”. Conflict and post-conflict situations are characterized by high levels of unemployment and underemployment, deterioration of working conditions and erosion of income. Wars are followed by massive unemployment and strengthening of crisis economies, black and grey. Exact data on this subject is difficult to obtain (OIT, 2003). Acts of terrorism also hinder growth, for example by preventing tourism, which was a major source of employment for young people (UNDP, 2017). Conflicts obstruct saving (money cannot be stored securely), break intergenerational transmission and hinder, or even completely block, migration. Conflicts impact employment in Africa today, but also in the future. In Niger, Chad, South Sudan and Central African Republic, countries that have been unstable for many years and have significant poverty rates, the illiteracy rate of young people is among the highest in the world, respectively 76%, 69%, 68% (UNICEF, 2018).

Although young people are victims of conflict, they can also be its actors or even catalysts. It turns out that unemployment and lack of opportunities are not the key reasons causing young people to engage in conflicts, while factors such as inequalities, targeted discrimination or lack of participation are of higher significance in this respect (Alcorta et al., 2020; Izzì, 2013, 2020). Most of the leaders and members of the Revolutionary United Front and the Patriotic Front of Liberia were under 35 (Marc et al., 2015). In the midst of conflicts and violence young people may decide to participate in or lead uprisings, participate in rebellions, like for example in Tuareg or in Mali, or even join the extremist groups (Marc et al., 2015). Almost 40,000 young women and men have served as soldiers in Sierra Leone and Liberia. Guinea has provided military training to over 3,000 young people, whom it was then unable to disarm at the end of the conflict. As a consequence, some of them decided to engage in conflicts in Côte d’Ivoire afterwards (Marc et al., 2015, p. 78).

While the involvement of young people in violence and crisis economy is often thought to be the direct consequence of poverty and unemployment these links are not always so obvious. In fact economic hardship combines with other challenges, for example social exclusion, which can downgrade the young into the precarious status (UNFPA West and Central Africa Regional Office, 2018b). Thus, lack of perspectives can push some of the young to resort to violence as offering some form of security, employment, financing and sociability. In addition, the socialization of young people has become complex and multifaceted and thus search for frames of reference that would be different from the usual ones can also lead them to engage in violence (Imrap, Interpeace & Indigo Côte d'Ivoire, 2016). Certain informal but legal jobs can also generate violence for young people, as can precariousness. These elements contribute to blurring of the causal link between unemployment and crisis (Cramer, 2015).

Long-term conflicts are not homogeneous in terms of space and once certain areas subside, fights start in others, as is the case in the DRC. Former soldiers can then become part-time soldiers, complicating any disarmament process. Negative peace is sometimes grey and its timeline is difficult to predict which explains the choices of soldiers who are eager to benefit from the money coming from the disarmament process but without actually enrolling into any of the trainings offered by the disarmament program. In addition, the end of a conflict and the change of context mean a loss of income and status for young soldiers. Thus differences between rural and urban areas may arise. In Liberia, for example, the reintegration of ex-soldiers was more difficult in urban areas than in rural areas where more choices were available (ISS Africa, 2011). There are also special cases of female soldiers and people who become disabled due to violence and are then faced with significant difficulties in economic reintegration and increased poverty (OIT, 2003).

The case of child soldiers in particular becomes an increasingly problematic issue in the context of long term tensions, impacting level of education and, a fortiori, the human capital of the countries or regions concerned. In 2019 the United Nations report evaluated the number of new child soldiers at over 7,000, 90% of whom were recruited by non-state actors, particularly in Central Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan (Secrétariat général des Nations unies, 2020). The question of integration of child soldiers and young people engaged in conflicts is also crucial. Thus a young person in Liberia declares: "I was born in the 1980s. My experience is limited to handling AK-47s" (UNFPA West and Central Africa Regional Office, 2018b). Legal protection can be provided to child soldiers when their status is confirmed, however it can be difficult to establish the status of the young "in-between" conflicts (UNFPA West and Central Africa Regional Office, 2018a, p. 85).

Young people, particularly women and children, are the main victims of long-standing conflicts impacting their health, well-being, education and decent work prospects. Some of the young people become actors of violence and participate in the fights which affect the opportunities for their professional integration at the end of the conflicts.

1.2 Sudden crises and emergencies: pandemics, natural disasters, political and economic crises

Pandemics, epidemics and cascading crises

Pandemics differ from the usual diseases that affect the African continent and which are already costly in human lives⁹. In 2019, WHO estimated that chronic diseases in five countries (South Africa, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of the Congo, United Republic of Tanzania and Democratic Republic of the Congo) accounted for 50% of the total healthy life years in the continent (World Health Organization, 2019) and that those diseases generate the cost of \$ 2.4 trillion per year. Pandemics become particularly dangerous when they encounter structural vulnerabilities, in particular sanitary ones. Meanwhile the health care capacities of the African countries are sometimes very limited. It is estimated that in Africa there are on average only 1.8 hospital beds per 1,000 people and only 34% of Africans have access to water and sanitation facilities enabling washing hands in running water (UNECA, 2020a). In the following analysis we will focus on two cases, that of the Ebola crisis and of Covid 19. In most cases the research on the impact of the Covid 19 crisis is still in progress, but many results allow us to outline main consequences in terms of young people employment already now.

⁹ Definitions of terms pandemy and epidemy are available in annex 4.1

These crises impacted the African economy, education and growth. The lethality of the coronavirus appears to be lower than that of Ebola, but its social and economic consequences are significant. African countries experienced economic recessions resulting in a 5% decline in their combined GDP due to Ebola (Marc et al., 2015). Meanwhile, the coronavirus epidemic caused an over 67% decrease in the price of export raw materials sourced in Africa. At the same time, effects of the epidemic on tourism, especially in island countries, are catastrophic. Also various security measures imposed in African countries have impacted the economy by closing markets, reducing unnecessary purchases, etc. Many sectors, among others catering and hospitality, experienced a decline in their production and productivity.

Moreover, while the Ebola crisis has been contained in Africa, the Covid19 crisis is affecting the whole world and its impact on employment is just beginning. Its consequences for the youth employment manifest in different dimensions: interruption of education, increased difficulties in finding the first job, loss of work and decrease of income (OIT, 2020e). Early estimates indicate that over four in ten young people globally are employed in highly affected sectors (OIT, 2020a). A survey conducted in April 2020 in five Nairobi slums showed that 81% of residents had already suffered a total or partial loss of their jobs and income (ONU Habitat, 2020). The measures taken to contain the spread of Covid 19 are difficult to sustain in overcrowded cities and homes, often devoid of basic services. The closing of borders temporarily blocked migrations, both those undertaken for sustenance and for work. In Senegal 60% of the seasonal workforce is constituted by young people from neighbouring countries (Afrique Renouveau, 2020). Young people often resist the rules in force, for example by continuing to cross borders (Gourlay, 2020).

These measures impact particularly women. Women and girls aged 15 to 49 are over-represented in 80% of the slums in 59 developing countries (ONU Habitat, 2020, p. 19) and had to deal with an increase in violence and their workload. They also face the consequences of pandemics itself more directly. The closure of schools increased the amount of housework and care work which they carry out free of charge in their households (OIT, 2020e). Both Covid 19 and Ebola heavily impacted the female dominated employment sectors such as border trade or agriculture (UNECA, 2015). Faced with the lack of opportunities women often resort to sex work and risky relationships (Bandiera et al., 2019, p. 8). After the announced end of Ebola crisis many young girls never returned to school (Bandiera et al., 2019). Women are also the main victims of pandemics. Women are present at the front line of care and constitute the bulk of community health workers - for example in South Africa ca. 80% (UNECA, 2020b). Their risk of death is also higher than that of men: 75% of fatal Ebola victims in Liberia and 59% in Sierra Leone were women. In total, out of the three countries affected by Ebola during the 2013-2015 pandemic between 55% and 60% of the deceased were women (UNECA, 2015, p. 53).

Pandemics have particularly strong impact on countries already impaired by long-standing tensions, which they intensify leading to mass youth protests, such as in Senegal in the summer of 2020 or in Nigeria in the fall. The coup d'état in Mali can be seen as one of the consequences of the measures taken by the government to contain the explosive socio-political context in which young people stepped to the forefront of mass protests.

Pandemics such as the coronavirus and epidemics such as Ebola hinder economies causing large-scale economic recessions and shocks. Closure of borders, forums for exchange and schools restrain trade. Coronavirus crisis has heavy impact on young people whose work, especially in the informal sector, is not protected and on women who must take on extra care work. This can reinforce a feeling of injustice or even exclusion, undermining social cohesion and peace.

Natural disasters and crises

Globally, the most severe and numerous disasters hit Asia¹⁰. However, when measured through the lens of the impact that natural disasters cause to the populations of given scales it can be said that natural disasters are more violent in Africa. Developing countries account for 23% of fatalities caused by natural disasters between years 2000 to 2019. (UNDRR, 2020). Not all regions are affected equally. Globally the number of disasters has doubled since 1980, but it has tripled for the regions of North Africa and the Middle East. High human population density of metropolises, rapid urbanization and the scarcity of water all aggravate the consequences of these disasters. Meanwhile, floods are become more and more severe as urbanization affects infiltration and saturated drainage systems. Africa is also the continent that is most affected by droughts. 40% of global droughts in the last 20 years took place in Africa. Violent droughts lead to famine, poverty and large population movements. In 2016 and 2017 the El Niño weather phenomenon caused a drought in East Africa that affected 10.2 million people in Ethiopia (UNDRR, 2020).

¹⁰ Such as for example 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami which was one of the biggest disasters in recent years.

Biological disasters are also linked to these phenomena. Currently a desert locust invasion is destroying all crops in the Horn of Africa and spreading across the continent. In 2019 it has already reached Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Uganda, Sudan and Tanzania (Cheik, 2020a).

Disasters usually motivate populations to show solidarity and provide mutual aid (Revet & Langumier, 2013). They also cause temporary blurring of social norms, particularly those of gender: women might carry out jobs usually reserved for men and men might take care of their homes, for example by cooking (Enarson, 2000). Nevertheless, the economic impact of cascading crises is still very heavy.

The United Nations Office for Risk Reduction ((UNDRR, 2020) estimates the cost of disasters that took place after 2000 at \$ 27 trillion, a figure that is particularly significant when compared to the GDP of African countries. Natural disasters impact infrastructure and lives thus reinforcing existing inequalities. The poorest families tend to be the most affected in the long run, as it often happens that years of their development are set back. On the other hand, urban youth is often more severely affected than rural youth in the short term, although poverty increases especially in the countryside (Skoufias, 2012). Cities are particularly vulnerable, but at the same time also more resilient thanks to the density of networks between families and individuals. Droughts impact the agriculture, which is very important, but they also impact small urban activities, among others through power cuts preventing citizens from carrying out their activities. This might also impact activities performed by young people, especially women (preparation of street food, etc.).

Natural disasters violently destroy balances, sometimes setting back achieved development by multiple years. Their impact on the infrastructure (roads, buildings, crops, etc.) and the labour market impairs growth prospects, complicates access to education and to work in the formal economy.

Economic crises and reinforcement of dependency

Africa is also not spared from economic crises, both internal and external. The decades of the 1980s and 1990s brought about an extensive debt and the need for major structural adjustments and cuts in state spending. Later in 2009 the continent was also impacted by the global financial crisis. Many people believed Africa would be more resilient as it was less integrated into the global economy. Nonetheless African countries turned out to be strongly affected across multiple areas, from the banking sector (impact on banks and difficulties in financing loans) to commercial channels (drop in exports). Over six months export experienced a 5% drop in volume. Some markets have performed better than others, such as for example the cocoa sectors in Ghana and Nigeria which have benefited from the political difficulties experienced at that time by the Ivory Coast. The hardest hit countries were the ones highly dependent on mining or natural resources and with highly extroverted economies. The sectors that were most affected in the 2009 crisis were mining, oil, tourism, and construction (Hugon, 2009).

The countries that were most affected by the 2009 crisis, from a financial point of view, were Tunisia and Morocco. The crisis caused a decline in aid, investment, business and bank loans. It also had a strong impact on employment, with notable differences between men and women. As women tend to be precarious and flexible workers more often than men they are thus more prone to lose their jobs as a consequence of an economic shock (Floro et al., 2009). Following structural adjustments and the crises of the 1980s and 1990s, but also the ones that took place after 2009, poverty became increasingly feminized in both rural and urban areas. Women lost access to bank loans and encounter more difficulties in access to education and land (Johnston-Anumonwo & Doane, 2011). In general the 2009 crisis brought about a drop in employment that was brutal for everyone, but especially for young people.

The consequences of a shock tend to be extended over a longer period of time (Ilostat, 2019a). Studies show that the younger generations experience the effects of a crisis for up to five years after it occurred, often with particular difficulties during the second and third year (Tanveer et al., 2012)we mainly focus on the extent and persistence of the impact of (past and last. In the context of economic stagnation and regression young people, and in particular young graduates, remain highly dependent on their relatives. Their adult life is delayed and even if they are able to secure a job it will often be precarious, poorly paid or one for which they are underqualified (Antoine et al., 2001).

The most qualified have thus been among the hardest hit by crisis and, in consequence, the most developed countries experienced the highest unemployment rates. This is partly caused by the fact that young people in less developed countries tend to work in informal sectors or in agriculture more often. At the same time, they are often not accounted for in the statistics (Tanveer et al., 2012).

Another group that was heavily affected by the economic recession of 2009 are informal workers. A study examining the situation of young street workers in South Africa has investigated how the crisis has slowed down country's general consumption by reducing exports and number of stable, formal jobs. Therefore more and more young unemployed people undertook work in the street. Meanwhile the demand fell increasing competition, uncertainties, risks (Cohen, 2010) and profits for all.

Finally, despite the economic growth experienced by some countries, young people, both the highly educated and the unqualified, tend to be marginalized and struggle to benefit from the economic benefits. As economy becomes increasingly monopolized by the elites and does not provide massive job creation young people often end up stuck either in the state of waiting or of exclusion (Antoine et al., 2001; Boeck et al., 2000; Imrap, Interpeace & Indigo Côte d'Ivoire, 2016).

Economic crises, like for example the 2009 crisis, have primarily affected the young people. Young graduates, precarious workers and women were affected particularly hard and these two last groups received the least protection. These crises have delayed entry into the labour market for many young graduates and young workers, significantly complicating their professional integration.

Demonstrations, coups d'état and reorganization of norms

Since Africa gained independence over 200 coups d'état have taken place there, 45% of which brought about significant changes in the executive system (Barka & Ncube, 2012). Military coups, successful or not, occurred mainly in West Africa and, to a lesser extent, in Central and East Africa. The Southern African countries have experienced more political stability and therefore fewer coups d'état. Following the colonization and during the Cold War in the 1970s and 1980s most coups d'état had ideological background, be it socialist or, conversely, capitalist one. Analyses of subsequent coups d'état show a diversification of the justifications for coups d'état, ranging from poor governance, through poor economic performance, to lack of respect for human rights (Barka & Ncube, 2012).

The wave of democratization that came upon in the 1990s seemed to have calmed the political transitions at first, however the unrest increased again due to the economic recessions that affected some of the countries on the African continent (Marc et al., 2015). The sub-Saharan countries where GDP remained low or even negative have recorded more coups than countries where significant GDP growth was registered (Barka & Ncube, 2012). Economic crises tend to question the legitimacy of governments and violently reveal their weaknesses and faults. Equatorial Guinea is an exception, with a GDP growth rate of 12.4% but five coups d'état (of which only one succeeded). In this case other factors must then be taken into account, such as economic dependence and badly organized distribution of countries' natural wealth. Young people experienced a deterioration of their living conditions while the political power was increasingly seized by the elders. This led to large demonstrations, for example in Mali or Senegal, which were however unsuccessful in shifting the power dynamic (Marc et al., 2015). In North Africa the "Arab Spring" abolished some regimes, but also allowed to reform governments in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia according to the new social, economic and political demands. However, even though these countries have been able to achieve and maintain more or less dynamic economic growth, it has not translated into an increase in the employment of young people - graduates or not. In fact, these social revolutions led to a reduction of employment, state and social inclusion programs (Prince et al., 2018).

However, even employment may not always be enough to ensure positive attitudes and recognition among the young people (Imrap, Interpeace & Indigo Côte d'Ivoire, 2016). Crises and political turmoil entail questioning of the existing norms, they can thus also be interpreted as renegotiations between the youth and those in power (Iwilade, 2013). They allow young people, particularly the disadvantaged and the unqualified, to negotiate their place in the social system. For example during the 2002 crisis in Côte d'Ivoire many of the unprivileged young people undertook jobs as motorcycle taxi drivers. Official taxis regained importance thanks to the political support and new legislations and thus competition increased leading to demonstrations of young drivers (Imrap, Interpeace & Indigo Côte d'Ivoire, 2016). Therefore the fall of regimes and the return of stability do not always improve prospects for everyone and always involve their share of "losers" (Prince, 2016).

Political crises derive from various tensions and are often constitute an attempt to challenge the status quo by the young who are denied access to decision-making and discussion circles as well as privileged networks centred around the authorities in power.

2. Addressing youth employment crises: adapting to long crises and resisting shocks

In the face of crises projects and policies can be divided into those that adapt and those that resist. Both of these strategies not only belong to the same continuum, but are even coordinated with each other, especially in the context of so-called fragile countries¹¹. In this part we will investigate cross-cutting strategies for adapting to and overcoming long crises, and then cross-cutting strategies for resisting and withstanding shocks.

2.1 Cross-cutting strategies for adapting to and overcoming long-lasting crises

We intend to review projects and policies designed to improve employment situation during long-lasting crises based on cross-cutting elements existing in this type of crisis: decent employment, social dialogue with young people, integrated strategies and adaptations to climate change.

Young people, employment and peace

While the lack of employment itself is never the sole factor inducing violence, a high rate of employment, particularly decent employment, plays an important role in supporting the peace processes. The International Labour Organization in cooperation with other international organizations has been implementing a strategy linking employment and peace for several years now. Their theory of change highlights the factors which contribute to the rise of conflict and which can be mitigated by improving access to decent work such as lack of economic opportunities, lack of contact between the hostile parties and resentment that can drive exclusion and discrimination of certain populations (OIT, 2019b; OIT, 2020b; OIT, UNP, World Bank, UNDP, 2016). Basing on the work of the ILO and emerging best practices United Nations have published a programming manual specifically dedicated to youth programs identifying five fundamental pillars: participation, protection, prevention, partnership and reintegration. Prioritizing youth employment is therefore essential in building peace because, as young people from Sierra Leone point out, “peace cannot be eaten”. In one survey 83% of young people questioned stated they feel frustrated with the peace process and expressed a need for economic opportunities (Bangura, 2016). Above considerations also apply to child soldiers and veterans. Many projects supporting child soldiers focus on family education and reintegration (Awodola, 2009). However, the economical side is also very important, especially when these children grow up to become adults (Nzekani, 2013). Projects such as the “Decent Jobs for Peace and Resilience” initiative of the ILO in the Central African Republic have thus developed a holistic approach including reconstruction of infrastructure, support of social cohesion and support for small businesses (OIT, 2020b).

Creating employment that can support peace requires recognizing the needs of young people and therefore the importance of decent work, but also of the factors hindering work especially in times of crisis.

Social dialogue and crisis

Social dialogue between companies, institutions and young people can take different forms. In 2002 Dutch government supported the creation of the Ethiopian Association of Horticultural Producers which since then maintains regular dialogue with the Ethiopian public authorities. The jointly established standards are sustainable and have recently been incorporated into legislation (GIZ, 2015). Dialogues are thus known to restore confidence, even if it is sometimes difficult to avoid their co-opting by the elites. In a fragile context working with local public institutions can be more effective than working with institutions at the national level. In this case the national level institutions need to be kept informed of the progress to avoid their undermining (GIZ, 2015).

¹¹ Fragility corresponds to the context of generalized poverty, weak governance and high level of insecurity (Bureau régional de l’OIT pour l’Afrique, 2016).

In urban areas, practices such as persecution of small vendors, mostly young people, are an additional obstacle. It is possible to remove these barriers by applying demarcated sales zones and providing basic urban services (Deon & Fox, 2014). Some street vendors, particularly in Tanzania, Ghana, Kenya and South Africa have formed associations which enabled them to negotiate with the authorities over training, financing and infrastructure needed to support their businesses (Deon & Fox, 2014). In rural areas different forms of associations, particularly cooperatives, are also recognized for supporting the employment of young farmers. By working in a cooperative mode they are able to formalize informal arrangements, share risks and capital (OIT, 2014). A study run by ILO proved that investing in a cooperative allows it to stabilize, greatly promotes dialogue and has important effect on collaboration (OIT, 2017). They also help to strengthen social cohesion through sustaining inter-community contact, for example between refugees and the host community.

In the absence of functional state institutions private companies, or even charities such as churches, have also been able to prove their effectiveness by intervening in specific areas or regions in a targeted manner. While there was still no government counterpart to work with in Somalia the World Bank has supported private partners in the gum Arabic sector directly. The entire sector has benefitted from aid ranging from trainings in harvesting techniques to support of business management. Finally, this first investment attracted others and two years after the launch 1,862 jobs have been created, mainly for young people, a third of which were women (World Bank, 2016). Also the local businesses can protect employees and thus better distribute the risks. A project carried out by the International Red Cross from 2005 to 2007 during the conflict in Uganda demonstrated the importance of risk sharing along the whole production chain. In a similar spirit, Dunavent Uganda Ltd, a company active in the cotton sector, decided to collect cotton directly from the camps themselves instead of forcing farmers to move around in a dangerous environment (Dudwick & Srinivasan, 2013, p. 69). Support for small businesses is an effective investment as they are often very resilient and quickly resume activity, even during conflict times. Some studies have also highlighted the role that a larger-scale industry can play in fostering contacts between groups¹², taking the Rwandan coffee industry as an example (Tobias & Boudreaux, 2012). At the same time, it is also important to support young women in these entrepreneurial processes as they often show high motivation to gain independence after conflict, as shown in a study conducted in South Sudan (Pape & Phipps, 2018).

Supporting youth employment thus requires sustained social dialogue including different stakeholders from the labour market, state and private, from the formal and informal economy.

Integrated approaches targeting the most vulnerable young people

While only 20% of young Africans have paid employment today and it is predicted that over the next ten years this rate will not exceed 25% as much as 60% of those in their thirties find formal employment (Monchuk, 2015). Employment arrangements are often verbal, short-term and unstable. In this context, integrated approaches linking job demand and supply, but also mixing elements such as trainings and financial aid, are the most effective, whether to remedy extreme poverty or promote reintegration after conflicts, for example that of young soldiers. These projects allow young people who can't find a job in the informal sector to expand their portfolios of activities and therefore their possibilities. In fragile contexts such projects also help avoiding a situation where emergency actions are only targeted towards one population and not others which, if poorly articulated, can sometimes reinforce violence (World Bank, 2016). There is also evidence that targeted approaches, especially cash distribution projects, have a compelling effect in the short term, but their effects over time diminish (Blattman et al., 2019). Social security programs are also an integral element in improving the status of different sectors such as health, education, nutrition... Studying a social protection program aimed at reducing the vulnerability of young people in sub-Saharan Africa researchers observed that interventions combining effort such as financial support, social and human capital were more effective than those offering only one of the above aids (van Kesteren et al., 2018). Considering the importance of training and capital it seems decisive to support the latter above all (Blattman & Annan, 2015). One approach that allows avoiding the usual the dilemma of cash transfer programs, that is to "grant" or to "loan" is providing financial support each year, but gradually decreasing its amount. Such transfers worked well in the refugee camps allowing populations to invest, for example in market gardening (OIT, 2003, p. 200).

¹² Depending on the context these contacts can also generate tensions. Therefore policies must always be locally adapted (Izzi, 2020).

The “Training for Rural Economic Empowerment” (TREE) project set up by OIT in Zimbabwe in 2008 combines training determined accordingly with the market needs and an injection of capital. An evaluation run in 2011 showed that the program increased the incomes of men by 46.9% and of women by 81.1% compared to the control group that did not receive any aid (Sibanda, 2019). Projects which were integrating multiple aspects into their operation were the most effective, particularly those taking into account issues related to health, risk at work and social dialogue. Combining rapid interventions with low costs at the start of the project (for example by targeting people who are easy to reach) and then setting up long-term activities later seems to be the most effective strategy (Sibanda, 2019).

Social protection and post-traumatic or psychosocial support also have an important role in complementing the effects of such projects. This has been observed in case of women experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder in northern Uganda (van Kesteren et al., 2018). One example of a meaningful form of psychosocial support is strengthening of the emotional skills (Deon & Fox, 2014). Even if they do not provide employment as such they support different life projects of ex-soldiers. Their impact has been thus noted in a survey. One year after the completion of the support project “at risk” men still know by heart elements of the “life skills” training that they received alongside their technical training (Blattman & Annan, 2015, p. 21).

These projects must fit into the existing context and allow for a dialogue, otherwise they risk failing. A project targeted at supporting ex-soldiers from the Niger Delta in Nigeria thus failed, because the monthly amount allocated to ex-soldiers was much higher than average salaries in the region: 400 dollars against 6 dollars. In addition, the training offer was designed correspondingly to the wishes of ex-soldiers, building skills needed for the best paid jobs that in the region, namely those in the oil sector, but didn't take into account the fact that the availability of such jobs is in fact very low. However, to avoid regress of the ex-soldiers project continued without any real exit strategy despite these difficulties (Ebiede, 2018).

Participation in socially engaged projects and not just economic ones, promotes withdrawal from violence through reconstruction or construction of schools, roads, hospitals, etc. (UNFPA West and Central Africa Regional Office, 2018b). These undertakings create a significant number of jobs and by helping the society as a whole they minimize the divide between “them” (the ex-soldiers) and “us” (the civilians) (ISS Africa, 2011). Initiatives that are aimed at improving the status of not only ex-soldiers but more social groups are preferable even if it is sometimes difficult to differentiate “pure” civilians from “pure” soldiers. Considering the cost of large-scale projects it seems necessary to balance their strategies (OIT, 2003).

Strategies combining support in forms of training and capital or capital and psychosocial support, but also strategies integrated into programs aimed at supporting the demand and supply of employment achieve the best results in fragile contexts. However, these efforts can hardly erase the difficult reality: in very fragile contexts people may never be able to completely abandon jobs in the illegal or even criminal economy. Therefore, the objective is to help them gradually diversify by adding legal forms of employment to their portfolio of activities (Blattman & Annan, 2015).

Long-term adaptations to climate change

The degradation of the environment and detrimental effects of the climate change are challenges that need to be solved on the triple front of adaptation, prevention and innovation. Studies conducted in Kenya (Bryan et al., 2013) and Tanzania (Below et al., 2012) it is currently poorly understood what determines farmers' adaptation and how to measure it. In this study, we develop an activity-based adaptation index (AAI) have shown that farmers' have a well-developed awareness of profound advancing changes. 94% of them noticed an increase in temperatures in Kenya. Adaptations implemented on the level of individual farms (in terms of diversification, irrigation or agroforestry, etc.) depend on the means and knowledge accessible to the farmers. In Kenya farmers listed investment in training, investment in people and irrigation as their top 3 needs. At the same time, more experienced, wealthier farmers, cooperatives and groups were better suited to change their strategies. Therefore, the means and knowledge available are the main obstacles to adaptation encountered by the youngest.

Planting drought tolerant species is a long-standing strategy. These plants, such as for example the *Gliricidia sepium* tree planted in Mali, are particularly interesting as they create a synergy between the diet of humans and animals, prevent erosion and provide vegetables (Knowledge for development, 2020). When it comes to plantations variety seems to takes precedence over monocultures as evidenced by

the controversial results of one of the largest GMO projects in Africa funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (Wise, 2020). What is more studies also show that support for young people faced with difficulties and transformations should go well beyond activities such as working in the fields or fishing. Young people are engaged in multiple aspects of rural economy on top of the production itself (Yeboah et al., 2020) our understanding of how rural young people in Africa take advantage of processes of rural transformation or engage with the rural economy is limited. Drawing on qualitative research conducted with 117 rural young people in three country contexts (Ghana, Zimbabwe and Tanzania).

When it comes to prevention new technologies are proving their worth, especially if they are adapted to the realities of farmers. The Garbal application is a platform developed by the NGO SNV in Mali and Burkina Faso. Basing on satellite images it provides information such as the identification and analysis of pastures, location of pastoral infrastructures (vaccination parks, markets, etc.) useful to breeders, water points, rainfall, drought levels etc. With 65,000 users active by April 2020 application aims to reduce tensions and conflicts as well as to facilitate transhumance and farming (Nabaloum, 2020).

In addition to the degradation of the environment young people face other issues in the area of agriculture such as access to credit which limits innovation and integration. Some countries in sub-Saharan Africa are trying to offer alternative forms of guarantees to young farmers such as the OHADA guarantee which is in force in 17 countries and allows young people to use assets such as their furniture as collateral. This step, although necessary, is also risky as it can contribute to perceiving young people as a dangerous investment (Deon & Fox, 2014).

The steps of adaptation and prevention can also be implemented in the form of trainings and apprenticeships. A project aimed at tackling the effects of global warming in Ethiopia, Tanzania and Kenya showed that work on soil quality, water management, diversification and institutional relations work best as complementary practices. The same project also highlighted the success of the study tours which proved to be particularly effective in supporting farmers in their innovations, strengthening links connections within communities and with institutions (FAO, 2014).

Adapt, plan and innovate are the three steps that can help to deal with environmental degradation. These steps prove to be most effective when they account for diversity, complementarity and possibilities offered by new technologies. At the same time, adapting to climate change cannot happen without massive investment in financial and human capital, particularly in young people.

2.2 Cross-cutting strategies for resisting and withstanding shocks

The main challenges affecting the youth employment under the pressure of sudden shocks are the interruption of employment, precariousness in the formal and informal economy, interruption of education and delay in professional integration. Conventional aid programs as well as programs supporting workers and businesses should be adapted to account for different aspects of care and dialogue. It is exceptionally important to adapt policies to the particular needs of young women in times of crisis. Such approach enables increasing the amount of opportunities for young people in line with their specific needs and helps to reduce the negative impact of their emergency strategies such as withdrawing from school, reducing rations or taking up risky activities such as prostitution by children and young women.

Individual and family social protection programs

There are many forms of social protection programs - safety nets, monetary donations, donations of goods or food, targeted or universal donations, one-time or long-term benefits. These programs are initiated to alleviate the challenges caused by extreme poverty and can be additionally extended or reinforced in the event of shocks. Some of them seem to be more effective than others in coping with large-scale shocks (Sandford et al., 2020).

To battle the consequences of the coronavirus disease Kenya has initiated programs consisting in universal basic income money transfers which have proven to be an inadequate form support for a major health and economic crisis. Open access to universal basic income does little to improve people's well-being as its benefits are limited: risky investments are not possible while people's needs increase greatly. However, these results show the importance of creating more ambitious and better targeted emergency aid programs. (Banerjee et al., 2020).

Meanwhile, in Sierra Leone a system basing on widely understood social care has been implemented to respond to the Ebola crisis and floods (Sandford et al., 2020). In May 2015 the country was hit by the Ebola virus epidemic and then by an economic crisis, in response to which the government deployed its national safety net program “Ep Fet Po”. In 2017 severe floods and landslides hit Freetown and the same protection mechanisms were activated in association with UNICEF and NGOs. These shock response protection systems have been integrated into the existing programs either horizontally by increasing the number of beneficiaries or vertically by increasing the value of money transfers. Other existing programs have been adjusted to the crisis for example by shortening of the transfer times. Different programs basing on food and cash distribution were coordinated with each other. The experience of the government and the organizations in place made it possible to act relatively quickly, among others thanks to the simplified choice of beneficiary households. Households of the young and the vulnerable were targeted and special priority was given to women. As a result, they increased their decision-making power over the allocation of funds and improved their position in the household. Different approaches have been tested and a number of stakeholders have pointed that it is beneficial to replace the phased approach (several sums spread over time) with a lump sum as it reduces bureaucratic work and speeds up the response.

These experiences showcase the importance of being prepared for a disaster thanks to which it is possible to accelerate the distribution of funds offered by the pre-established programs, improve targeting and, most of all, adapt. Finally, in order to meet the needs of the most vulnerable social protection programs should be multi-faceted and integrated into existing systems. A good example is adding food distribution to a traditional safety net programs.

Protection programs for workers and young workers

In this part we will consider protection programs specifically targeting workers. They may consist in training, supporting workers in the formal and informal economy and reach workers in general or more particularly young people.

During economic crises, both those caused by pandemics and financial issues, programs aimed at supporting workers are more likely to reach young people if they target both workers in the informal, as well as in formal economy. Most of the applied measures, such as maintaining the wages of around 800,000 South African workers despite their inactivity (OIT, 2020f), rotation of workers between posts or reduction of working hours mainly support workers in the formal economy. However, only a minority of young people are employed in it.

Social protection of workers in the informal economy is the main goal of different countries in the face of the current economic crisis. Meanwhile, out of 181 countries that introduced social protection programs in May 2020, only 9 African countries specifically targeted informal workers (FAO, 2020). Aid is distributed mainly in cash, but food assistance is also in place. In Sudan and Rwanda basic supplies such as soap are also distributed. Targeting informal workers is challenging given their administrative non-existence. New platforms are being set up, in particular through dedicated websites. However, targeting through such applications excludes all those who don't have smartphones and therefore sometimes it might be more efficient to identify workers with the use of existing administrative databases (FAO, 2020; Özler, 2020). In Rwanda the government uses the “isibo”, the smallest administrative entity covering 15 to 20 households, to identify the most vulnerable (FAO, 2020). They can use a free of charge phone number or contact the person in charge directly to communicate their needs. While targeting those with highest needs is in general more efficient in normal conditions, the severity of the crisis diminishes its effectiveness especially in countries that have not yet implemented any support programs for the working poor (Özler, 2020).

Adapting taxation is also an important component of relieving workers in the informal economy. During the Ebola virus crisis in Sierra Leone state tax revenues collapsed placing the bulk of taxes indirectly on workers in the informal economy and individuals (Gallien & van den Boogaard, 2020; van den Boogaard, 2020) vulnerable workers in the informal sector in the global south have been hit hard. Their health is disproportionately at risk. As, for example, vendors working in close quarters and heavily reliant on face-to-face interactions or as frontline care-workers in households, the nature of their...,”“container-title”：“The International Centre for Tax and Development (ICTD). Especially in times of crisis it is essential to relieve the workers who are the vast majority. This can be done through seemingly simple actions like making free water available in markets (Action Aid, 2018).

One of the most effective forms of support for young workers are active labour market policies which aim to directly support the integration of individuals into the labour market (for example through training) coupled with financial benefits and safety nets (OIT, 2020f, p. 19). Such integrated programs are most effective if they last over 4 months. They make it possible to target specifically young people, in particular the most vulnerable ones. Social safety nets have been associated with intensive employment programs like the ones offering activity opportunities during the crisis in the Philippines or implementing partial unemployment measures in South Africa. These programs have all the more effect when they are substantial and backed with sufficient resources, particularly during economic crises which make them even more challenging for the so-called fragile countries.

A training project for young people called “Youth Employment Support Project” (YESP) run in Sierra Leone during the Ebola virus epidemic and led and financed by the World Bank is a great example of effective form of supporting young workers (Rosas et al., 2017). Project offered technical training and entrepreneurship training, as well as a small stipend to cover transport costs (\$ 0.60 per day, or about \$ 80 for 9 months). Through combining of both training and financial benefits this project has significantly improved the conditions of young people, ultimately increasing women’s wages by almost 64%. In contexts where sources of financing such as micro credit suddenly come to an end financial benefits function as a form of social protection and a source of income. The poorest and most fragile beneficiaries mostly consumed the received financial benefits instead of investing them, showing that the project also needs to be backed up by a broader safety net program to be more effective. Anyway, the combination of training and financial benefits is at the heart of the success of this approach. Financial benefits alone were too low to allow any substantial changes while the training itself could not have enabled the financial improvement of the young people.

Some support programs targeting workers may focus more specifically on certain types of shocks, such as programs related to weather risks or natural disasters such as droughts. Malawi, for example, has set up an innovative pilot program to support local peanut producers during droughts. Farmers who had certified seeds could seek compensation in the form of repayment of their loans directly from the banks in case their crops were affected by a disaster. This project was unprecedented in Africa (Banque Mondiale et al., 2014). Several years after launch of this project we can identify lessons learned. First of all, the subscription rate was quite low. Program competed with other resilience mechanisms, especially family ones. In addition, disaster risks may appear too distant and uncertain for households which already experience difficulties on a daily basis (Carter et al., 2015). What is more, even though such forms of support are important they do not erase strong psychological shocks which result from for example the loss of an entire herd. Finally, such programs must be combined with preventive measures (Relief Web, 2013).

Measures aiming to support workers in times of crisis must be extended to cover the informal economy, structured into multi-faceted and integrated programs, enable continuity, save time and money.

Actions carried out in favour of and by the private sector companies

Businesses can be directly supported in their actions aimed at fostering of the youth employment. At the same time, they can also act as stakeholders of policy creation and including them into the social dialogue can help to mitigate shocks.

Employment subsidies are the most widely implemented measure that helps businesses and therefore also their workers to contain and withstand shocks (OIT, 2020f). Medium-sized and family businesses are the most important in Africa. Studies show that these business have greater resistance to shocks thanks to significant family solidarity both from an economic and emotional point of view (Ndubuisi & Koroku Avenyo, 2020). However, their economic needs may be greater as most of the crisis responses provided by governments target the formal sector such as airlines, trade, insurance, etc. in the forms of various measures such as reducing working hours, lowering taxes, etc. For example in April 2020 in Algeria none of the companies in the informal economy could benefit from the support measures implemented by government (OIT, 2020d). These companies mainly benefit from the social safety nets supporting the individuals.

Integrating businesses from the informal and formal economy requires, above all, social dialogue. The latter can be thus considered a means of resisting crisis caused by economy, politics or natural disasters. In 2002 the Ivory Coast was torn between a politically divided north and south. Ivorian workers' unions liaised with the General Confederation of Businesses of Côte d'Ivoire in order to come up with a plan for a rotation system balancing between layoffs and full employment, ensuring that as few workers as possible are made redundant (OIT, 2020c).

Businesses belonging to the formal economy have shown that they also can participate in emergency actions. Already during the Ebola virus outbreak in Liberia, LWSP, a fair trade clothing manufacturing company owned by Liberian workers offered economic opportunities to more than 300 women, transforming its factory into a distribution center for Ebola prevention kits for West Africa (World Bank et al., 2015). At the same time, employers also undertook different preventive measures targeting the employees and their families which contributed to stopping of the epidemic. What is more, in 2014 multinational companies operating in countries affected by Ebola formed a group called EPSMG which contributed to the fight against the disease through donations. In 2017 the General Confederation of Businesses of Côte d'Ivoire launched a humanitarian platform aiming to bring together the stakeholders from the private and social support sectors. During a crisis businesses are often in the center of attention. The platform was able to act in cooperation with the neighbouring countries during the Ebola crisis (OIT, 2020c). In addition, multinational companies can also provide positive contributions through lobbying and mediation with the support of their embassies. A study of Dutch companies in Africa in contexts of political crisis has proven the potential of the joint capacity of embassies to carry out successful economic projects while taking into account needs of communities (Balt & Davis, 2014).

Above examples illustrate the importance of supporting private companies through direct actions targeting the formal economy sector such as introducing policies reducing taxes, encouraging employment, etc. At the same time, it is important not to forget about the businesses from informal economy. Little research focuses on temporary professional retraining carried out by these small businesses in times of crisis, such as for example manufacturing of masks, undertaken to endure and escape inactivity (Walter, 2020).

Indirect support of employment through inclusion and care

Support of employment in times of the crises also involves indirect policies, the objective of which is first and foremost care and inclusion. In 2014 a project created by the NGO BRAC and intended to support young girls faced the Ebola crisis. This gave the opportunity to observe the differences between the young girls who were part of the project and those who were not. The project has set up "clubs" for young girls offering them training and advice. By the end of the epidemic girls participating in these clubs had on average lower rate of dropping out of school and teenage pregnancies. Based on these results researchers engaged in the program concluded that such actions allow to protect women and young girls in times of crises and underline the importance of providing health care and follow-ups, while being quite inexpensive to implement (Bandiera et al., 2019).

We have also observed that on top of job search, policies should also promote transparency and inclusion and for this reason it is even more important to identify the right beneficiaries. Support for youth associations often reaches only the urban youth affiliated with the ruling party through strongly patronized targeting (Marc et al., 2015; Oosterom & Gukurume, 2019). Young people close to the power circles are thus the most favoured but do not compare to the majority of young people in need. Institutions should also promote a dialogue that goes beyond election time (Handy & Djilo, 2020), for example with the use mediators or providing transparency in the topic of budgets. Disseminating clear and understandable information regarding youth targeting processes and establishing accountability mechanisms can also play a positive role. There are numerous projects aimed at promoting the voices of young people and they have tangible effects on young people's communication and well-being, particularly in case of peer-led projects (Marcus & Cunningham, 2016). Organization called *Africa's voice* also seeks to anchor projects in the daily lives of young people. Their pilot project based on the exchange of text messages between the participants, dedicated platform and direct conversations has shown that it was possible to include young people and thus foster a feeling of their belonging at a relatively low cost (Africa's voice foundation, 2016; World Bank, 2020b).

Above examples highlight the importance of including young people, especially young girls, understanding their needs in times of crisis and listening to their voices. Projects seeking to promote the voice of young people alleviate tensions surging in their population, largely discriminated due to their age, but also their social conditions.

3. Intertwining of shocks and crises: the example of Mali

Mamoutou Fofana, young researcher from the International Joint Laboratory MaCoTer, Mali

In the last part of this document we take a look at strategies for youth employment implemented in Mali, a country constituting a representative example of intertwining of different forms of crises. Fieldwork was carried out by a student of the Master in “Societies, Culture and Development” (SOCDEV) of the International Joint Laboratory - MaCoTer in response to a gap in the literature on the resources available to young faced with intertwining of crises.

3.1 Social skills and experiences of young people in the context of crises in Mali from 2012 to 2020

Over the last decade Mali has experienced unprecedented conditions. The Peace and Reconciliation Agreement was signed in 2015 but country still faces many challenges in terms of governance and security. Conflict has moved from the north to the center and the security level continues to deteriorate due to the activism of armed groups, the resurgence of local and civil conflicts driven by the formation of militias at community bases, as well as rise in transnational organized crime. Attacks targeting towns, security checkpoints, military camps, humans and properties follow one another. Populations become more and more precarious every day and schools are being closed. Since the end of 2012 the daily newspaper in Bamako has been marked by corruption scandals and rumours, growing nepotism, etc., which pushed people into the streets thus legitimizing the military “coup” of August 2020 and resulting in yet another political transition which is still underway.

From this context we would like to better understand the interweaving of crises and their effects on young people and to investigate their experiences and the personal strategies they use outside of the structured projects intended to support them. How does the superimposition of crises and their constraints influence the future prospects of young people in Mali? What are the strategies and resources employed by young people in this context of double social and economic limitation?

In the face of current crises young people are developing more advanced social skills focused on integration. The expression “social skills” comprises the attitudes, behaviours and practices employed in various fields by young people in Mali. Burdened with the heavy social constraints young people can choose to **deal with** these constraints or **transform** them into advantages.

To answer above questions we started by taking a closer look at year 2012 which marks the outburst exposing the crises. We chose to run a qualitative study based on semi-structured interviews. We developed a mixed approach including participants from both urban (Bamako, the capital) and rural (Mansatola, Koulikoro region)¹³ areas. In total we interviewed 15 young people (9 men and 6 women) representing three categories: young employees in the formal economy, young people working in the informal economy and young people without activities¹⁴. We used a flexible definition of the term “young people” depending on their social category and exceeding the age limits set by the United Nations. Therefore, the interviewed “young people” were between 15 and 40 years old.

Situation of young people in urban and rural areas

In Mali, young people aged 15 to 40 represent 38.8% of the population. In 2014 overall activity rate was 66% compared to 6.7% of the unemployed (ONEF, 2015). Among those who work only 1% has a higher education level.

In urban areas all young people, those coming from working-class neighbourhood (Bagadadji) as well as those from the more advantaged neighbourhood (Baco-jicoroni Golf), are in a precarious financial situation due to high levels of illiteracy, job-training mismatch and corruption. However, young people from the Baco-jicoroni Golf neighbourhood experience the effects of crises to a lesser extent thanks to the protection and assistance they receive from their families who are generally better off than the working-class families in Bamako. What is more young people of Bagadadji are socially stigmatized. It is

¹³ Details of the survey profile as well as age, sex and location of participants are available in the annex.

¹⁴ Detailed explanations available in the annex.

not uncommon for them to be called “Bamakɔka denw”¹⁵. The term is associated with idle, violent, drug-addicted behaviour, as well as stealing and armed robbery.

Urban youth moving into rural areas has an advantage over the rural youth who are much less educated and often illiterate. Thus urban youth often manages in that new environment better than the locals. The crises are actually increasing the movements to and from rural areas as young graduates often choose to return to their villages and towns while locals migrate to the city more and more.

Subjective experiences of young people facing the “crisis”

Although the elites speak of a “multidimensional crisis” this labelling is almost absent from the local discourse. To evoke similar meaning some locals, particularly those from urban areas, use the term “Kirisɪ” loaned from the French language. Meanwhile, in rural areas we speak of “gɛ̀ɛya” which is linked to the French word “la galère” meaning “misery” and which is used in Bamanankan to denote “hardening”, “costliness” of living and economic difficulties.

Few young people notice a direct cause and effect relationship between latent crises and their current situation. Nonetheless, all are unanimous in defining their current employment situation as difficult. The phrase “it’s not right” is constantly repeated in the interviews. There are also multiple references to “kɔronfɛ kelɛ” (the war in the north), to the coups d’état of 2012 and 2020. Finally, a minority from Bamako, specifically graduates in the restaurant sector, mentioned the coronavirus epidemic as a factor slowing down their activity.

However, achieving social success through the accumulation of wealth is at the heart of all interviews. In such context there is no good and bad work as long as it makes enough money. In rural areas and in the areas affected by tensions returning young graduates have more opportunities as many NGOs encourage the recruitment of locals. Meanwhile seasonal migration becomes the norm for the illiterate or out-of-school local young residents.

The link between survival strategies and typical profiles of young people

Professional careers of young graduates are challenged by freezing of jobs, trainings that do not focus on technical knowledge and therefore also questionable usefulness of the gained knowledge. The large market is where most economic activity is concentrated and at the same time it’s also the central point of Bamako, the capital and most populous city of Mali. For medersa graduates¹⁶ the market becomes a benchmark illustrating the lack of employment in education. Hammadou is a 28 years old holder of a license in Islamic law obtained in 2015. He is now a manager of a shop. After being unemployed for 2 years he ended up accepting help to enter the market from a “brother”. After a few years of unpaid work his employer finally paid him 150,000 CFA francs.

Those who cannot benefit from the social capital “commute” (“commuters” i.e. migrant workers) between several activities. This is what Diawara refers to when he says that **“commuting prevents the next crisis and increases opportunities by diversifying occupations”** (Diawara 2003: 77). However “commuting” between jobs is limited by crises, but also by forms of external competition. For example, Macina Diallo, 32, worked in the field of production of tinted bazin¹⁷. He was forced to retrain himself to pick up a new job as a motorcycle taxi driver **“There is no more market for the bazin, the Chinese have spoiled everything with their industrially coloured bazin”**. As the industrially tinted bazin, which is more accessible, less expensive and sometimes of higher quality than the original, appeared on the Malian market it generated a great loss of employment among women and young people in the artisanal manufacturing sector.

15 The expression literally means “the children of Bamako”. In common language in Bamako it is used to designate those in the districts of commune I of the district, including Bagadadji.

16 Muslim religious education establishment.

17 An industrial fabric produced mainly from cotton, but sometimes also silk or wool sourced from Germany, the Netherlands and some Asian countries. Its production process involves fabric traders, sellers of synthetic dyes, women who dye the fabric manually and finally rural youth in the cities who shape the fabric with the use of a wooden tools similar to a hammer and an anvil.

Voluntary unemployment is mainly the domain of the most qualified. At Baco-jicoroni golf, we met a young woman, Hamparé, holder of a diploma in international law obtained in Morocco in 2013. She was hired in the position of an assistant in a law firm, but resigned a few weeks later: *"I was receiving a poverty wage, 125,000 francs per month, which is why I left. This salary is less than the amount of money I can get from my mother and my sisters in case of need."*

Attending school is an ambivalent strategy for young people. In Mansatola many believe that school no longer ensures social success. A young rural man recounts to us how he left school after failing the Baccalaureate in the June 2003 session: *"I was right to give up, because out of 48 students in grade 9 only 3 have a job today. Today if you study, you only have two options, either wearing a uniform or teaching. There is nothing else apart from these two choices. And thank goodness I have a shop here and sometimes I also work in a drilling company that calls me when they need additional employees"* (Diarra, 27).

Young graduates of rural origin have initiated a new dynamic, namely returning home to benefit from development projects or humanitarian aid systems as much as possible. In Mansatola, we met four young people (2 young women and 2 young men), all of whom were graduates exemplary of this trend. They all chose a voluntary return. Labé, aged 30, obtained a master's degree in bilingual English in 2012 in Bamako. After the return to his village in 2015 he became president of youth in 2016, president of the Club of the Active Citizen (CLAC-AJCAD), one of the main contact persons of the Malian Red Cross and the main broker of the town hall. *"After three years I spent in Bamako doing nothing, I told myself that I would be more useful here¹⁸ than if I stayed in Bamako, because people like me¹⁹ don't find a job, while here I can help my mother a lot especially that my father had just died"*. Awa, 26, failed the Baccalaureate in the June 2012 session. After working as a community teacher in the "ecomart" school for five years with a salary of 25,000 francs she became the main instructor of the Mansatola kindergarten. On top of working as an instructor and in a small business, she is in great demand by the NGOs. She says *"since I started I don't cook anymore"*. Awa embodies monetarized emancipation of young rural women, capable of redistributing money to elders.

The emergence of new social networks during and because of the crisis

New social and economic networks are constantly being established in Bamako. Motorcycle taxis, casinos, Premier BET²⁰, the PMU live race²¹ or even promotional sales all constitute attractive springboards for the distraught youth. Thanks to these new events the large Bamako market where economic activity is concentrated has also become a favourite place for young people from various backgrounds.

Young people are not overly dependent on "assistentialism" from the state (Niang 2019) because few can have the luxury of waiting (Traoré, 2005, p.6). Youth access to employment is more a matter of vigilance and inventiveness. Occasional spontaneous activities like selling masks with the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic or selling gasoline due to falling prices on the city's main arteries are common. These activities did not see the light of day with the onset of the coronavirus crisis but they gained momentum at the end of 2020.

In other words, in the face of crises young people tend to abandon traditional employment patterns generally offered by the state like civil service examinations or knowledge networks and projects. Following the crises, we are seeing a renewal of forms and types of employment in which increasingly active young people use "social skills" as a way of finding some stability and adjusting to an essentially unstable general context.

18 Mansatola is his native village and a commune in the Kolokani circle.

19 These are students who come from rural areas and who lack significant social capital in public or private administration which could facilitate their integration.

20 Sports betting and Vegas games online.

21 Live betting on the horse races of the French company Pari Mutuel Urbain.

4. Recommendations based on the experiences and challenges related to youth employment in the times of crises²²

Each year the World Bank draws up a list of fragile and conflict-affected countries. In 2020 43 economies with the highest poverty rates in the world were defined as either fragile or conflict countries. Most of them, but not all, are located in sub-Saharan Africa. At the end of 2020 over half of the world's poor population lived in these countries, demonstrating a strong link between poverty, conflict and fragility (World Bank, 2020a). Young people represent the largest and most marginalized population among the world's poorest. During crises, employment, particularly decent employment, is a mitigating factor, even if the lack of employment itself never directly explains conflicts. Supporting youth employment requires addressing both structural issues that affect all populations (the scarcity of employment) and issues affecting specifically young people. This cannot be achieved without taking into account the variety of statuses, needs and resources which differ by country, region, gender and situation. However, there is some common ground.

Thus, the most effective policies and projects are those that complement each other, taking into account the intertwining of crises. Therefore, following approaches are recommended in long-lasting crises:

- Promote decent employment, even during crises. While employment itself does not justify violence it contributes significantly, in its decent forms, to the promotion of peace.
- Implement integrated approaches responding to both employment supply and demand, but also combine approaches such as training, provision of capital and psychosocial support.
- Diversify the portfolios of activities of urban youth, as well as rural youth. Such diversification is necessary to enable the most vulnerable to resist crises by increasing the number of strategies available to them and can comprise activities such as entrepreneurship, precarious paid work and work in the informal economy.
- Enhance the activity of young people by adjusting vocational training to the sectoral needs of companies, by strengthening environment and employment policies favourable to young people at national and local level and by supporting social dialogue, especially with informal workers.
- Set up social safety nets for the most vulnerable, especially for the rural youth. It is also essential to invest in them.
- Support entrepreneurship among women and put them at the heart of social safety net policies.
- In addition, for all projects carried out with participation of women always take into consideration what activities are normally considered as belonging to a male role and how gender roles are constructed.
- Adapt existing policies to increasing environmental degradation. Invest in training and capital to support young farmers by diversifying crops, relying on new technologies and promoting conflict and disaster prevention.

These recommendations can then be extended to the contexts of sudden shocks in a following manner:

- Support existing insurance and social safety nets in order to be able to extend their capacity and number of beneficiaries, for example following a disaster.
- On top of to the usual aids, inject additional capital into small businesses to help them withstand the shock.
- Combine environmental insurance covering cases of disaster with regular social insurance policies to encourage higher number of subscriptions.
- Protect the informal economy sector by adapting taxes and social insurance policies until the shock is absorbed. This step is important to protect the young people employed in the informal sector.
- Ensure communication between companies and workers in the formal economy: reduction of the number of hours, partial unemployment, etc.

²² These recommendations are based on the analysis of the consequences of crises and on the convincing results of projects carried out to support the employment of young people in these contexts. A general presentation of these undertakings is available in the form of a diagram in annex 4.4.

- Engage big companies to increase aid and reach difficult areas. Big companies can contribute to helping in times of crisis and it can be effective to have certain actions promoted by them.
- Prioritize projects with high labour intensity and socially beneficial ones (hospitals, etc.) to be able to enhance the position of young people in the event of conflict. At this step it is also important to better understand the situation of former child soldiers who have now become part of the African youth.

Crises and exclusion shatter the confidence of young people in their institutions, as illustrated by the example of mistrust of young people towards schools in Mali. Young people, particularly young women, can become the main victims of certain crises, such as conflicts or economic shocks. Therefore it is important to prioritize actions targeting specifically this group:

- Maintain maternal and child health systems. In case of disasters provide support to women while keeping in mind the gender sensitivity of crisis responses.
- Maintain a dialogue with young people during various projects and beyond the time of the elections. Offer inclusive exchange platforms to help young people to voice their particular perspective.

Research should enable deepening of knowledge regarding the issues faced by the young people while accounting for different social categories to which they belong:

- Research should avoid predefined narratives and account for mobility, flexibility and reversibility (between sectors, between city and countryside, at regional and international levels).
- Research should never alienate the outlook on young from the context of their family, their economic environment and its development.

Current coronavirus crisis represents an unprecedented phenomenon. It remains difficult to foresight or anticipate its future consequences for the young people, even despite having the data and experience related to the Ebola crisis. As we now reach one year from the outbreak of the epidemic, it is urgent to start capitalizing on the efforts undertaken to adapt the support projects and on the strategies developed to help young people cope with and despite the new difficulties as observed on the example of Mali.

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6.1 Definitions

Decent work: the concept of “**decent work**” is framed by a series of indicators covering different aspirations of people at work, such as workplace safety, social protection, freedom to express one’s demands and equal treatment of women and men (OIT, s. d.). In the definition of the International Labour Organization the term does not encompass the informal forms work, which is sometimes debatable.

Informal economy corresponds to activities that do not fall within the scope of the law, without being necessarily illegal. For example, it can designate activities not covered by legislation (OIT, 2012).

I use the term **crisis economies** to designate lucrative activities that require a context of destabilization and tension in order to thrive. They are part of the informal economy, but mostly encompass criminal activities, generally frowned upon by society, such as human trafficking or predation.

Poverty: Poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon that cannot be reduced to a lack of income (Benicourt, 2001). Financial poverty is linked to other types of deficits such as lack of care or education. For the purposes of this document we use the term structural poverty to denote a context which continuously generates forms of poverty without any significant improvements. The poor are not necessarily the same people from year to year, but the phenomenon of poverty continues to affect large sections of the African population (Mercier, 2005).

Conflicts: We understand conflict as a process of violent confrontation following a rise in power, an escalation of violence potentially followed by external mediations and temporary stabilization, a prelude to exiting the crisis (Calas, 2011). It is a long-term process, the end of which does not necessarily bring stability to an entire country or geographic area. There are multiple types of conflicts which always depend on the context in which they arise and develop. These conflicts can be defined as situation where competing identity hierarchies, legal systems and economic property regimes coexist on the same territory and confront each other through violence (Baczko & Dorronsoro, 2017)2017.

Pandemics and epidemics: For the purposes of this document we define pandemics as new or changed diseases, the spread of which is global (OMS, 2010). An epidemic, and particularly an epidemic outbreak, is a sudden increase in the number of cases of a disease in a given place and season. It can cover a country or a region and last several weeks or several years (OMS, 2005).

Natural disaster: Disasters are caused by the so-called natural incidents which themselves have little impact on populations. There are different types of such incidents: geophysical (earthquakes), hydrological (floods), meteorological (storms), climatic (droughts) or biological (insects). It is their encounter with vulnerabilities and human presence that turns them into disasters. Naturalizing of these disasters reflects the little control we have over them, but also contradicts the synergy they maintain with human actions and fragilities (Cabane & Revet, 2015).

6.2 Detailed review of the sources

Types of documents and their sources			
Type of source	Number of documents	Number of sources per institution	Type of document
NGOs and Foundations	3	Actionaid 1	Actionaid Brief 1
		Africa's voice foundation 1	Africa's voice News and press release 1
		Relief Web 1	Relief Web Report 1
UN and international institutions	69	AFD 1	Blog posts 4
		African development bank 1	Statement 1
		World Bank 14	Meeting minutes 1
		UN Blog 2	Cooperatives and the World of Work Series 1
		International Labour Office 1	Definitions 5
		FAO 2	Discussion paper 1
		GIZ 1	Studies 11
		FAO 2	Evaluation 1
		Ilostat 3	ILO Briefs 2
		UN Blog 3	Impact report 1
		GIZ 1	Joint statement 1
		Mixed 6	Knowledge Brief 1
		UN Habitat 1	Manuals 2
		Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 1	Information note 1
		International Labour Organization 20	Books 5
		World Health Organization 3	Policy brief 1
		United Nations Development Program 1	Policy researches 5
		United Nations General Secretariat 1	Reports 15
		Swedish International Development Agency 1	Statistics 4
			Strategies 2
	Working papers 4		

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Think tanks and research centres	19	<p>The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab 1</p> <hr/> <p>The International Centre for Tax and Development 2</p> <hr/> <p>URD 1</p>	
Academic research	31	<p>African Yearbook of International Law Online 1</p> <hr/> <p>Contemporary Africa 3</p> <hr/> <p>Autrepart Review 1</p> <hr/> <p>Covid Economics, Vetted and Real Time Papers 1</p> <hr/> <p>Political ecology 1</p> <hr/> <p>Rural studies 1</p> <p>Gender & Development 1</p> <hr/> <p>Global Environmental Change 1</p> <hr/> <p>International Development Planning Review 1</p> <hr/> <p>Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography 1</p> <hr/> <p>International Interactions 1</p> <hr/> <p>Journal of Environmental Management 1</p> <hr/> <p>Journal of Peacebuilding & Development 1</p> <hr/> <p>Journal of Rural Studies 1</p>	<p>Articles 28</p> <hr/> <p>Books 3</p>

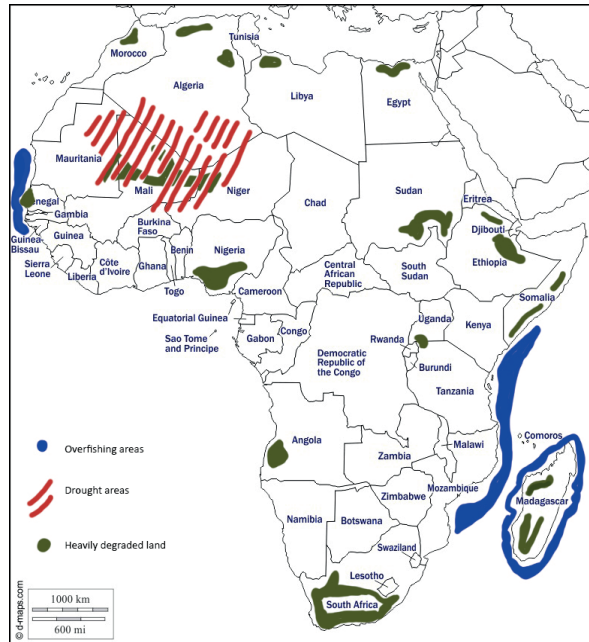
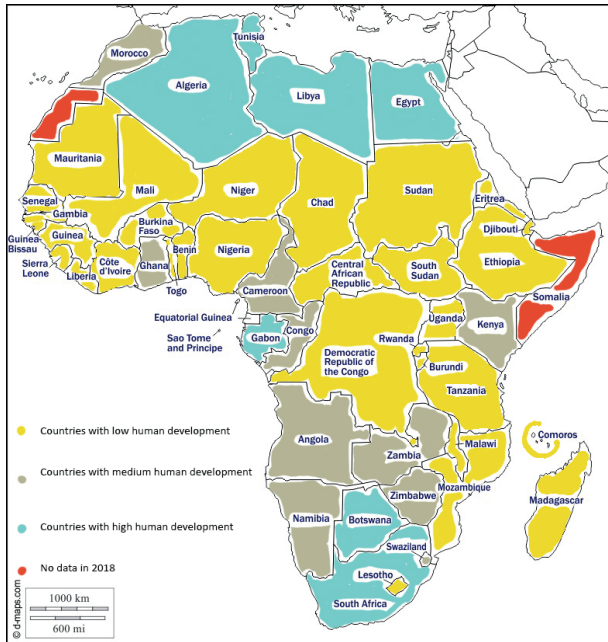
Academic research	31	<table border="1"> <tr><td>Journal of Small Business & Entrepreneurship</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>Journal of Youth Studies</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>Karthala Editions</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>Halle Institute for Economic Research</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>OpenEdition Journal</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>Peace & Conflict Review</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>African politics</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>Politix</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>What do I know</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>Development economics review</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>French journal of political science</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>Social service</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>Sociology</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>University of Kiel</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>University of Perugia</td><td>1</td></tr> </table>	Journal of Small Business & Entrepreneurship	1	Journal of Youth Studies	1	Karthala Editions	1	Halle Institute for Economic Research	1	OpenEdition Journal	1	Peace & Conflict Review	1	African politics	1	Politix	1	What do I know	1	Development economics review	1	French journal of political science	1	Social service	1	Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography	1	Sociology	1	University of Kiel	1	University of Perugia	1	
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Articles from newspapers and other media	5	<table border="1"> <tr><td>The Conversation</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>Le Monde</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>FrontPageAfrica</td><td>1</td></tr> </table>	The Conversation	3	Le Monde	1	FrontPageAfrica	1	Articles available online 5																										
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TOTAL NUMBER OF DOCUMENTS			127																																

Type of data	
Number of documents and researches including primary data (with or without additional secondary data)	34
Number of documents and researches including secondary data (without field research)	93
Total number of documents	127

6.3 Maps

Maps illustrating long-standing crises

These four maps allow us to observe in which countries the crises overlap (mainly sub-Saharan Africa) and where the crises are altered by other elements, as in South Africa where droughts affect countries with higher GDP.

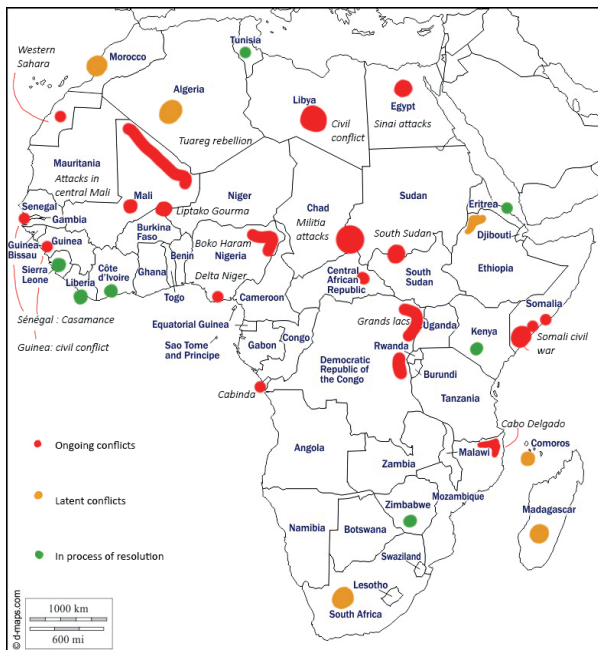


Environmental degradation

Source: Contemporary Africa, the environment in Africa (land and drought), 1992 and FAO data (overfishing), 2019

Structural poverty: HDI map

Source: UNDP data, 2018



Conflicts

Source: OpenEdition Journal, Introduction to the geography of conflicts in Africa, 2011 (updated)

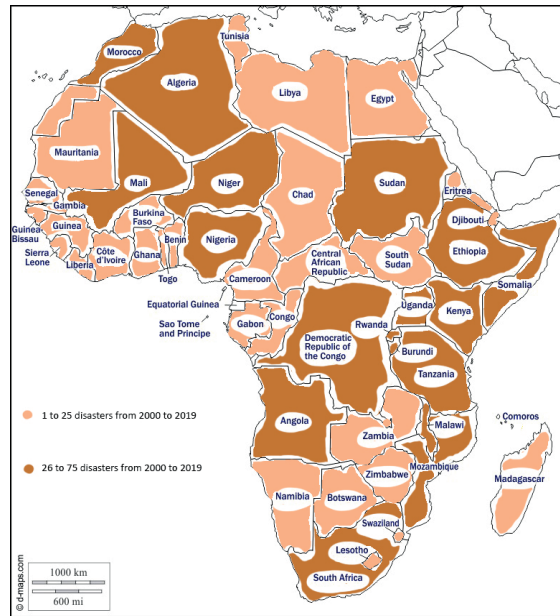
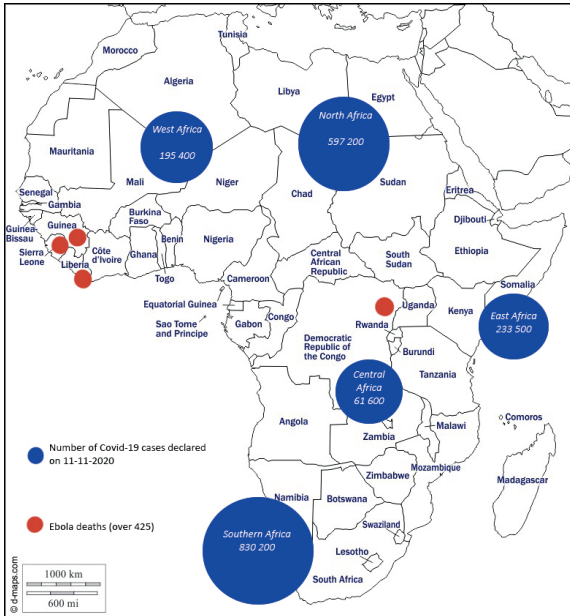


Terrorism and mafia groups

Source: OpenEdition Journals, Introduction to the geography of conflicts in Africa, 2011 (updated)

Maps illustrating shocks and disasters

Shocks and disasters occur frequently in the countries of sub-Saharan Africa, but their distribution is more random than that of long-standing crises and thus their effects must be analysed in relation to the long-term tensions. For example the response in North Africa, although affected by many disasters, is less challenging than that of countries in East Africa.

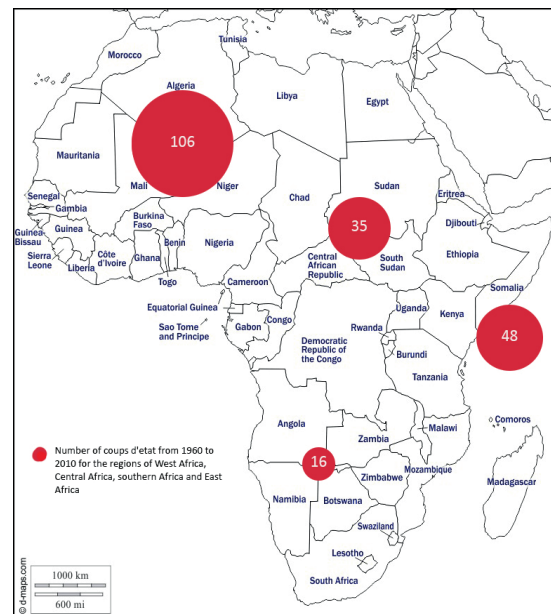
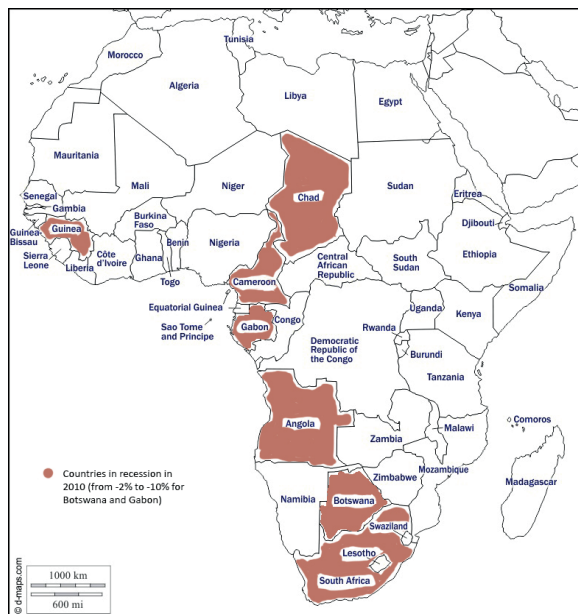


Numbers of Covid-19 cases and numbers of Ebola deaths

Sources: Ebola - Site Centres for disease control and prevention and Covid 19 - Saving lives and the economy p.4

Number of disasters and natural disasters from 2000 to 2019

Source: The human cost of disasters: an overview of the last 20 years (2000-2019)



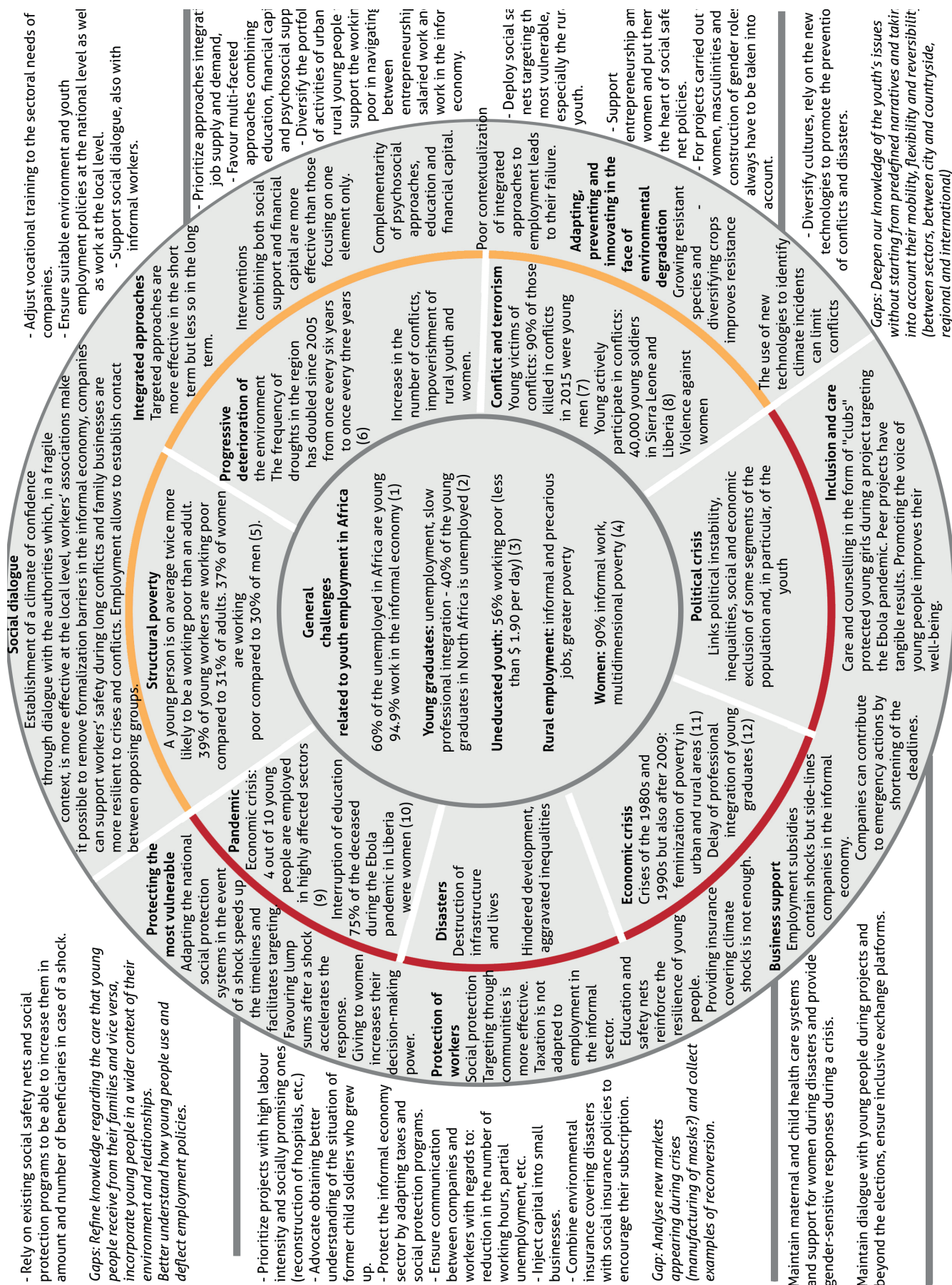
Countries in recession following the 2009 economic crisis

Source: The world factbook site, CIA

Number of coups d'état from 1960 to 2010

Source: The Challenge of Stability and Security in West Africa, p. 118

6.4 Summary diagram



6.5 Bibliography for the summary diagram

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6.6 Mamoutou Fofana's research annexes

Overview of respondents

Location	Number of female respondents	Number of male respondents	Profiles	Age of respondents
Districts of Bamako: Bagadadji (big market) and Baco-jicoroni Golf	4	6	1 voluntarily unemployed 4 occasional workers 4 workers from the informal sector 1 employee	Between 25 and 38 years old
Mansatola (region of Koulikoro)	2	3	1 employee 1 worker from the informal sector 2 occasional workers 1 unemployed	Between 18 and 28 years old

For the purposes of this study we adopted a flexible definition of the term “young”, related more to the local daily reality than any strict age limits.²³ In West Africa the term “youth” covers all the stages of the transition period leading to adulthood (Sissoko 2015). In Mansatola where we have conducted our study the notion of young people is closely linked to hard work and physical strength. Following this logic young person is someone who has not yet been relieved from farm and domestic work. “Sifin”²⁴ or more generally “denmisen” means “a child”. Anyone that loses the status of a young person becomes a “fórotigi”²⁵. A young woman would be called here “Bogotigi”, “Sunguru” or “musodenni”²⁶ to distinguish her from the “old woman” who is called “musokoroba”.

Interviews extracts

Mr. Worèkè (pseudonym): 27 years old; young graduate of the teacher training institute, specializing in Literature, History and Geography. He used to live in an urban area but has now moved back to the rural area of his origin. The interview was carried out in Mansatola on December 8, 2020 by Mamoutou Fofana.

M F: Hello Mr. Worèkè. My name is Mamoutou Fofana and I conduct research on the employment situation of young people during periods of instability in order to learn about their strategies. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. Can you tell me more about yourself?

Worèkè: I am a graduate of the Bamako Masters Training Institute, class of 2016-2017, LHG specialist. I have been unemployed since 2017. From that date on up until now I have been farming, both for the benefit of my family and a little bit for myself on the side. I'm 'bringing down'²⁷ a sesame field for myself which I haven't harvested yet, but it's a hectare anyway. According to my own calculations, instead of staying in Bamako where it's difficult and one really has lots of and expenses, I am better off coming here, where I can help the parents and at the same time do a little for myself as well. Besides cultivating the field I fatten up rams to sell during the Tabaski festivals. Per year I can make 300,000 francs. Of course that doesn't cover all of my expenses, but there are my older brothers who work as well. One of them

²³ As for example in the definition used by United Nations the and covering group between 15 and 24 years old.

²⁴ This word designates anyone who still wears black hair on their head.

²⁵ This term means in Bamanankan 'the owner of the field' who is usually the oldest person in the family because of his status does not participate in field work or in the public interest work.

²⁶ Means in Bamanankan, the “little woman”. The expression includes girls and recently married women.

²⁷ Reference to cultivation of a private field, the “Jon foro” in the Bamanankan language.

works in Timbuktu with Medical International as an accountant. He is the one who often helps me. My father also often helps me financially. He is a farmer and his big sister is in France, so she supports him.

M F: I would like to understand why a graduate decides to come back to the village while those who live here are trying to move to the city at all costs. How do you explain that?

Worèkè : After obtaining my bachelor's degree, I took up a faculty course in private law. After a year of classes I felt I didn't get the training I wanted to receive. That's why I gave up, to avoid unnecessary waste of time. For me the one year I did there was because of the AEM's "mugnukumagnaka"²⁸. In my opinion trainings offered until that point did not improve my capabilities so I thought to myself: if I stayed there any longer would I get a better training? I had the idea to do IFM so I left. Afterwards I wanted to come back and continue the faculty course because I hoped I could do civil service after IFM but finally that was not the case.

M F : After you graduated, you came back here. Tell me what were your motivations? Did you have any assurance that you would get here what you failed to get in Bamako?

Worèkè : A friend told me that there are now a lot of NGOs in the village and their amount is increasing every day because they are fleeing conflicts and come here because of the stability. So I took the opportunity. First of all, I had nothing in Bamako. So I knew all this and I knew expenses will be lower here too. There is a lot that do here, because there are many NGOs with which I work on surveys and at the same time activities with World Vision too, they often ask me to work for them.

Today I cooperate with USAID, World Vision, Red Cross. I often sign contracts with World Vision to do 20-day surveys for them while others are performing daily chores. I did not have any contracts signed with these other NGOs so it is mainly through savings gathered here and there that I manage to meet many of my needs. Between last year and this year there were alerts, because there is a village close to Grédo²⁹, and according to rumours jihadists were seen there. So it seems that "the NGO's foot have cooled down"³⁰ since then because they were afraid. It was even the cause of the departure of our sub-prefect who now lives in Kolokani, so this little alert slowed down many activities. After that I had contracts with World Vision to run a survey between June and July 2020. Now I am making 'orange money', it is a small amount of money that I make within the village itself. I am the manager of the water supply. There is a water tower in the village managed by a water management committee and every weekend I go around the village to collect the money from the water distribution points and at the end of the month they give me 15,000 francs. At the same time I also breed ducks that I often sell to cover my needs. Anyway in the village I don't spend much. Compared to when I lived in town where the expenses were high for what I was making, it's better to be here. If you are in the village you can do things while helping the family at the same time, so that's what convinced me to come.

M F : In fact you're doing not so bad with the occasional part-time jobs with the NGOs. But you'll probably agree with me that they don't offer you a decent enough earning, at least not yet. Having said that, can you tell me about your ambitions and future projects?

Worèkè : Well I continue to try my luck to start my own collectivity but at the same time I approach the NGOs as I would like that they recruit me as a facilitator, I think I have the right profile to do that job. As for the public service, I did it twice, but it didn't work. I prefer to be a teacher, it's more stable than working for NGOs because it's a state job and NGOs are temporary.

M F : Nowadays we are witnessing the emergence of multiple new leading figures and most young people have no shortage of role models, fitting well as a reference for very different life plans. Do you have such a role model? If so, what about this person inspires you? What are you doing here in Mansatola to be more like them?

²⁸ This is a reference to multiple disruptions of classes caused by the strikes of the Association of Pupils and Students of Mali.

²⁹ A village in the municipality of Djidiéni in the Kolokani circle, Koulikoro region.

³⁰ The expression is used to say that there has been a slowdown in NGO activities because of this rumour.

Worèkè : Well I had a chance to talk to Mohamed Salia once, we met at Bamako Youth Crossroads where he was as our guest speaker. He told us about his background. He's the one who inspires me a lot. He inspired me with his work in civil society organizations and in the National Youth Council and other institutions. I am the civil society secretary here in the village for the village civil society committee called the old citizen committee. I am the spokesperson of this committee. The role of the committee is to check if the authorities take into account the needs of the population and therefore at the same time to fight against bad governance. Regarding my committee work I can say that it's fine because we often have activities. These activities are even starting to bear fruit. As for my work in the water supply management we conducted surveys with the Community Health Association. As ASACO did not report back to the public we suggested changing this. And there are also problems related to school management committees and the problem of receiving identity cards by the villagers. So activities in these areas are starting to bear fruit.

If we notice a problem we go over there and tell them that we saw such a problem, ask how it can be solved? After we report back to the village people, we hold rallies. We will inform the population that we went to the town hall, we saw this, we saw that, ask what you expect us to do now. Village people tell us what are their points of view and then we delegate two to three people who will go to the town hall to talk about it. The population wants it to function like that, they want their standards to be respected, so we do these little things. At the same time we create radio announcements to make the population aware of the need to pay taxes. This is the initiative of a COWATER International project, it's not coordinated at the national level, but at the level of certain regions. So even in our region they targeted specific districts and circles.

M F : Conducting such initiatives requires certain knowledge to carry them out properly. Have you taken any training in the areas you mentioned or any other area?

Worèkè : Yes, we received some training, even now they continue to train community leaders, but it's always in that framework, in the framework of good governance. Otherwise, there is a community group here within World Vision called Voix et Action Citoyenne (CVC) and every year we follow a training organized by them. At the same time there is also the Red Cross which has a committee at the level of community here and I am a member of this committee within the framework of the volunteer program.

Many people think that I make money doing these things, which is not true. There are actions at the CVC level that require financial aid and we receive such aid for their realization. For example, I told you about our radio show, so if they see that the activity is interesting it will receive funding through the regional coordinator.

Regarding the aids for myself, I don't receive any. I applied for support from APEJ, but it didn't work out, although others received some help from APEJ. In general, these were dropouts from the 7th year who do market gardening and farming.

M F: What do you think of the current situation in the country in general?

Worèkè : I think it's normal that we are now where we are considering how distressing the situation before was. It's normal that we are where we are. Given the previous situation in politics and other branches, for me it is was sort of I don't know what, it was predictable. The management was bad, it was time for things to change somehow, be it through elections or anything like that. You can feel it quite well here the activities slowed down a bit, also due to the Coronavirus itself. Usually August is our hunger season when food is lacking, but the way people find something to consume this year and in other years has not been the same. This year the price of millet increased up to 25,000 francs per bag so that was a challenge. Before that it could reach up to 20,000 francs but never 25,000 francs. In the surrounding villages there are the grain banks, so those banks, I'm not saying they're bankrupt, but they don't operate at the moment. Also last year they did not operate, I do not know the reasons why, but we alerted our CVC so that they could follow up on this topic. We even sent a letter to the town hall asking them to arrange a meeting with us to discuss the management of these grain banks but so far they did not respond to our letter. These banks are communal, there are branches in bigger villages, they buy during the harvesting season and sell for less during the hunger season. But last year there was no millet which made it difficult. Otherwise the harvest was good, but I would say we face mismanagement anyway. Grain banks were built as a part of a project and according to some sources the organizers of that project funded them. But now,

two years after the start of the project banks are no longer working. Last year some took grains in credit, some credits were reimbursed, but I do not know if everything was reimbursed. I myself met people who were responsible for managing the reimbursements, but as I said I don't know if all the credits have been reimbursed. Some were reimbursed fully, but the overall population could not buy anything anyway.

M F: I see some correlation between the management of the grain banks and the management of the difficulties you have mentioned before?

Worèkè : You know, money is a very important part of family relationships here. Even if nobody tells you this directly you are expected to contribute to the family finances. When you do not contribute anything to the family, you don't have much say in any decisions. Even though I don't have a stable job everyone here thinks I have money, especially because I'm taking part in so many projects, so it's not easy. What I earn with "gèlèya" is no longer enough because I have to contribute when my father asks me for money. And when things get expensive in the big cities you can obviously feel it here too because most of the family's income comes from the outside³¹. My older brother came here to the village because he is currently unemployed. So this is how I end up spending a lot on family matters. If that wasn't for this I would be really fine here. I hope all this will be over soon.

³¹ He referred to his older brother and his father's older sister mentioned above.

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INCLUDE was conceived in 2012 by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs to promote evidence-based policymaking for inclusive development in Africa through research, knowledge sharing and policy dialogue. INCLUDE brings together researchers from African countries and the Netherlands who work with the private sector, non-governmental organizations and governments to exchange knowledge and ideas on how to achieve better research-policy linkages for inclusive development in Africa. Since its establishment, INCLUDE has supported more than 20 international research groups to conduct research on inclusive development and facilitated policy dialogues in Africa and the Netherlands.