CONCEPT NOTE FOR PHASE III (2023-2026)

INCLUDE

CONCEPT NOTE FOR PHASE III (2023-2026)

NICHOLAS AWORTWI AND NICKY POUW

TOWARDS JUST ECONOMIES AND POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT IN AFRICA

INCLUDE

KNOWLEDGE PLATFORM ON INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Table of Contents

Introduction: A Decade of Knowledge Platform on Inclusive Development Policies

The Knowledge Platform on Inclusive Development Policies (INCLUDE) was conceived in 2012 by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs to promote evidence-based policymaking for inclusive development in Africa. It was initiated as a response to the failure of two decades of high economic growth in Africa to address poverty and inequality among large sections of the population. INCLUDE members consist of 24 African and Dutch researchers, academics, policymakers, diplomats and representatives of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the private sector. The Secretariat of INCLUDE is coordinated by the African Studies Centre at Leiden University and runs together with the African Economic Research Consortium in Nairobi and The Broker in The Hague.

This concept note is the third in a series of concept notes that INCLUDE has developed to define its scope of work since it was established in 2012. In 2013, INCLUDE produced its first concept note *"Strategic Actors for the Implementation of Inclusive Development Policies"* (ECDPM, 2013) to anchor its work. That concept note coincided with the publication of the policy note of the Dutch Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, Lilianne Ploumen, *A World to Gain: A New Agenda for Aid, Trade and Investment* (Ploumen, 2013). The concept note defined inclusive development as a development agenda that is broader than economic and income growth and includes other dimensions of wellbeing, such as healthcare and education, and recognizes the importance of including issues of inequality. It recognized the distinction between inclusive development as an *outcome*, where the performance of countries is assessed based on indicators such as levels of poverty, employment, and inequality, and as *a process,* assessed according to citizens' participation in the design and implementation of policies, the quality of democratic governance, the existence of a public sphere for citizens' voices and accountability, and respect for the political, social and economic rights of citizens. In summary, inclusive development occurs when average achievements on income and non-income dimensions of well-being improve, and inequalities fall.

The 2013 concept note identified six interrelated policy themes that make inclusive development happen: economic growth with structural transformation; productive employment; social protection; basic services provision; territorial development and spatial equity; and quality of governance. These themes were considered drivers of inclusive development in Africa, because of how policies in this area are conceived and implemented. Using the concept note as the basis of its first five-year work plan (2013–2018), INCLUDE reasoned that inclusive development requires policies for economic transformation, productive employment and social protection to ensure that vulnerable groups, especially young people and women, benefit from economic growth. However, such inclusive policies could only be realised if they were supported by coalitions of strategic actors across state and society that could overcome resistance to change among ruling political and commercial elites.

Using that concept note, INCLUDE supported 17 multi-country research projects on inclusive development[1], produced evidence-based knowledge, and shared this knowledge with Dutch and African policymakers and practitioners, while engaging them in policy dialogues. INCLUDE also encouraged its platform members to initiate concrete action at the country level to promote inclusive development. Towards that, INCLUDE supported seven African Policy Dialogues in Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, Rwanda, Ghana and Mozambique.

---

[1] Under the NWO-WOTRO funded Research on Inclusive Development in Sub-Saharan Africa (RIDSSA).

At the end of that phase (2013-2018) and based on the review of the programme, INCLUDE concluded that its conceptual focus and knowledge agenda on employment, social protection and strategic actors remained relevant for Phase II, but needed revisions. Furthermore, in 2018, the new Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Co-operation, Sigrid Kaag, had formulated a policy paper, *Investing in Global Prospects: For the World, For the Netherlands* (Kaag, 2018), which contained major changes from the earlier policy note of Ploumen. In addition, rapid changes had taken place in Africa and the world, including the launch of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), an increase in migration to Europe, the shrinking space for civil society organisations (CSOs) and the emergence of 'post truth' politics[2], among other things. These occurrences led to the development of INCLUDE's second concept note.

The second concept note (2019 to 2022) took a cue from the 2018 policy note of the Dutch Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Co-operation, *Investing in Global Prospects* (Kaag, 2018). That note called for interventions to reduce poverty and social inequality, which were considered the root causes of armed conflict, instability and irregular migration. That policy note implied that INCLUDE put new emphasis on education and work for youth (especially girls) and women, expanded the list of countries to cover the Sahel, West Africa, the Greater Horn, North Africa, and adopted a broader (and changed) regional approach, in which issues of inclusive development, climate change, food and business, and security needed to be considered together, with more collaboration between INCLUDE and the knowledge platforms on Food and Business and Security and the Rule of Law.

Consequently, the second concept note reorganised the six themes identified in the first concept note to form four themes and four analytical approaches:
Themes:
1. Economic growth with structural transformation
2. Decent work and income for women, youth and other marginalised people
3. Digitisation of access to and use of public services
4. Political empowerment

Analytical and policy engagement interests/approaches:
1. Social equity
2. Spatial equity
3. Inclusive governance
4. Political economy

From 2019 to 2022, INCLUDE used the concept note to conduct studies, developed over 183 blogs and 176 news items and 731 publications (289 policy highlights, 71 policy briefs, 155 reports, 84 2-pagers and 53 presentations). All these are available on the INCLUDE website[2]. Furthermore, INCLUDE organised over 93 events (conferences, stakeholders engagement forums, seminars, workshops and webinars) to discuss policy relevant evidence for uptake by policy actors. External reviewers in their report highly commended INCLUDE for successful implementation of its programmes (Dijkhorst, et al, 2022).

In March 2023, platform members met in Kigali, Rwanda to reflect on lessons learnt, outcomes, and insights from INCLUDE's work across the four thematic areas over the past four years. There was a consensus among Platform Members that the four-by-four themes and approaches that had constituted INCLUDE's work was relevant and should be maintained but there was also the need to tweak some of the themes taking into consideration emerging opportunities and challenges such as economic justice, climate change, green economy, economic and social adaptation, technological innovation, post-Covid economic recovery and mounting public debt in Africa.

As the platform was considering its thematic research and policy engagement, in June 2023, the

---

[2] (https://includeplatform.net/

Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs published its first continent-wide strategy on Africa "*The Africa Strategy of Netherlands: 2023-2032*" with an integrated vision of political and economic cooperation based on shared goals and mutual interest around four levers: economic development; security and stability; migration, reception and return; poverty reduction, food security and climate resilience. In developing the strategy, the Ministry considered the fundamental shifts in global geopolitical relations and suggested an urgent need for more cooperation with Africa so as to foster a stable, peaceful and secure neighbouring continent (Ministry of Foreign Affair, 2023:7). The policy also laid out four key principles to guide the cooperation. This includes the principle of shared Dutch and African interests; collaboration on an equal basis; working on the basis of the EU/AU Joint Vision; and policy coherence and commitments. Across the four levers, the strategy highlights among others:

- Promoting secure and inclusive digitalisation that will contribute to economic opportunities and employment, and improved access to social and health services;
- Supporting civil society organisations to foster inclusive societies;
- Encouraging the creation of green jobs on the way to a circular, green economy with more opportunities for women and young people;
- Reduction of extreme poverty and promotion of just climate transition;
- Dealing with the consequences of global challenges such as climate change;
- Promoting gender equality, women's rights and the rights of marginalised people;
- Working to improve implementation of international agreements on debt sustainability such as the Common Framework for Debt Treatments.

The strategy emphasises the whole of Africa and abandons the artificial split in policy between North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa, and recognizes that apart from internal African factors, international circumstances such as the financial crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and the Russian invasion of Ukraine have had cumulative and knock-on effects on Africa's prospects for increasing the living standards of the people. The strategy mentions for instance, the increasing public debt and resulting effect on unfunded public services such as education and healthcare. Last but not least, the strategy emphasises the importance of collaboration based on equal relationships with due attention to equalising trade and financial relations in a way that benefits Africa's competitive advantage and self-efficacy.

So clearly there were many convergences of ideas in the *Africa Strategy of Netherlands* and the thoughts of platform members that converged in the Kigali meeting. Taken into consideration both processes, and the outcome of INCLUDE's activities completed in phase II including the results of the African Policy Dialogues, and a review of existing literature; we present the third concept note 'Towards Just Economies and Political Empowerment in Africa' to define the scope and focus of INCLUDE for the next four years (2023-2026).

Towards Just Economies and Political Empowerment in Africa

Promoting inclusive development policies and programmes is an important operational concept for achieving the global development agenda of 'leaving none one behind'. It suggests fairness in international development cooperation on the basis of economic, political, social and climate justice. Nowhere in the world does the call for 'Just economies and political empowerment' reverberate louder than in Africa where extreme poverty and inequality are increasing amid changing geopolitical context, the emergence of new actors in development cooperation, jobless growth, the challenges of economic structural transformation, increasing public debt, climate change, digitalization of governance and development processes, and all that have become of inclusive development. Inclusive development does *not* mean to include everyone - inclusion always implies some form of exclusion. Social protection, for example, is intended to have an equalising effect on society and enable people to cushion the negative impacts of downturns and crises. This could justify the better-off and affluent to contribute more tax or pay higher fees for social services compared to the poor.

Inclusive development, in the literature, is postulated as a "countervailing idea" (Gupta et al. 2015: p. 544) to pre-empt *trade-offs* in favour of the economy at the cost of society and nature. It has overlap with sustainable development, but is focused on the realities of the most marginalised. It also bears elements of 'green economy' and 'inclusive growth' but takes a broader perspective on the economy, by seeing the trade-offs with social and environmental sustainability.
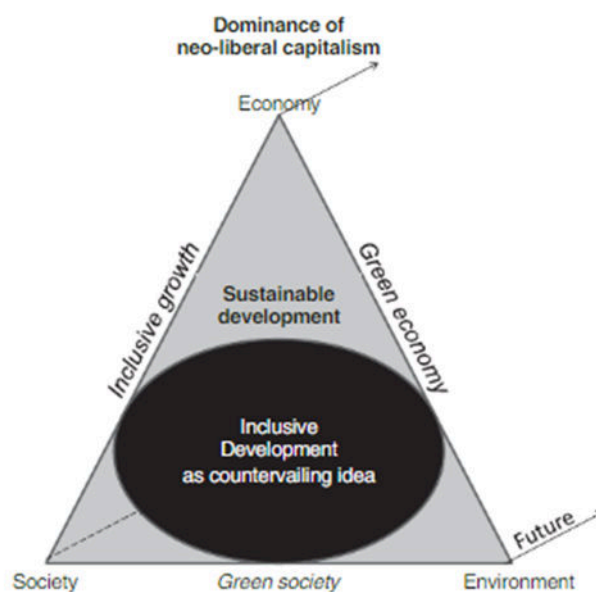

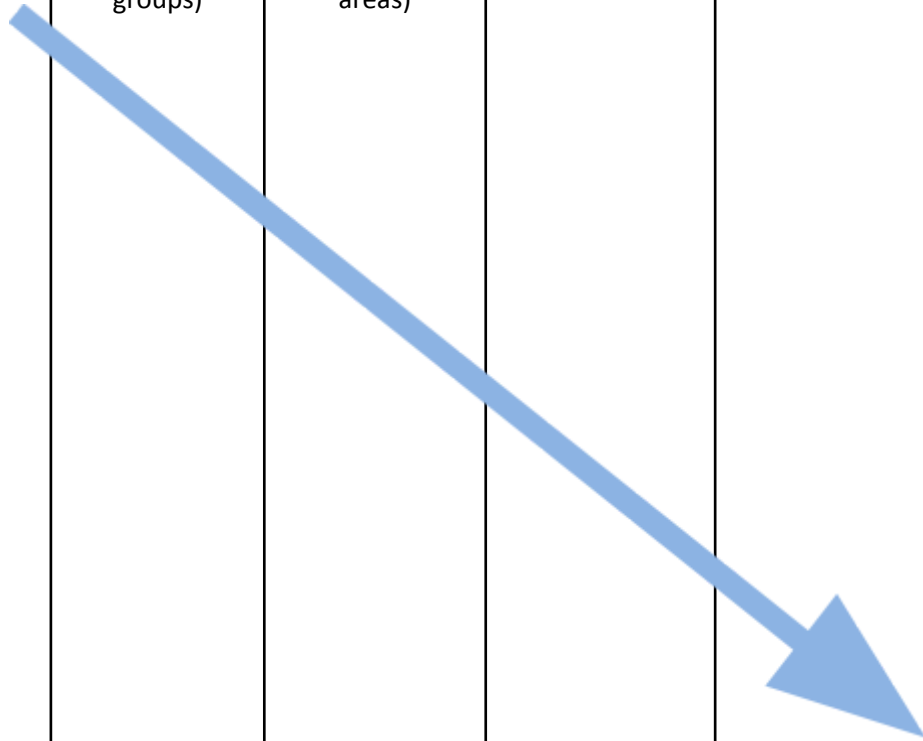**Figure 1:** Inclusive development and sustainable development.

As such, inclusive development policy aims to compensate for the inherent and politicised biases and tendencies of development policies benefiting (i) the economy, over society and nature; (ii) the better-off (countries and people), over the marginalised; and (iii) the short-term, over the long-term. Inclusive development aims to counter social, economic and environmental injustice. But much ambiguity prevails about what is 'inclusive' and for whom/what, whose rights prevail and who should take responsibility? Therefore, inclusive development needs elaboration with a perspective on human rights and justice (Gupta and Vegelin 2023). In a global context of rapidly changing technologies (i.e. through digitalisation and artificial intelligence (AI)) and a growing world population, low skilled labour gets squeezed and earth system boundaries are transgressed. The most vulnerable people, sectors and countries bear the brunt of that, thus deepening pre-existing inequalities and leading to environmental degradation and biodiversity loss. Adding a justice perspective to inclusive development implies the *ex-ante* recognition of multiple forms of 'injustice' (economic, social, environmental/climate) that undermine equal opportunities and equity in development. An application of this vision to the context of development policies in Africa means to critically question how national and international development policies, including Dutch-African trade and financial relations, really enhance basic safety and the provision of primary needs, productive employment, access to social and economic services, voice and empowerment, sustainable use of natural resources and climate justice, of those people, sectors and countries that are most marginalised. What works to secure basic safety and fulfilment of primary needs for people/countries below the safety threshold; What are the pre-conditions of 'decent work' or a 'green economy'? What criteria, boundaries and spaces can be defined to counter the unsustainable use and extraction of natural resources? What patterns of social, economic and environmental/climate injustice prevail, and how can these be countered by inclusive development policy and action?

Operationalizing an inclusive development *plus* justice lens in research implies defining clear criteria and setting minimum and maximum boundaries/spaces from the perspective of the most marginalised. These measures will shift over time with technological and societal progress. But they are important to feed the interaction with development policy and practice on goals, principles and responsibilities. Ultimately, they need to be translated into concrete policy measures and instruments through equitable policy dialogue and co-design. Moreover, this integrated approach seeks to mitigate trade-offs between social, economic and environmental/climate justice and enhance synergies instead. According to Africa's development ambitions[3] to build self-reliance, take ownership over its own wealth, and progress from a Pan-African perspective on solidarity that is grounded in a joint cultural identity and heritage, attention to the structural transformation of economies remains of primary importance. But growth should not go at the cost of people and the environment. The challenge now is to build economies that are fairer and greener, and embedded within a social architecture that is supported by democratic institutions and inclusive leadership. The latter implies to invest in more inclusive institutions and the political empowerment of Africa's (young) populations too.

Against the background of an integrated approach that elaborates inclusive development with a justice perspective, we refine the four themes and four analytical approaches that have guided INCLUDE's research and policy engagement since 2019 as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. INCLUDE's renewed focus: four themes and four approaches

Theme/approaches	Target groups/areas		Principles of inclusive development	
	Social equity (vulnerable groups)	Spatial equity (marginal areas)	Inclusive governance	Political economy

---

[3] AU Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want

Theme 1. Economic justice with structural transformation	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4
Theme 2. Decent work and income for women, youth and marginalized groups	2.1	Evidence-based policy engagement & APDs	2.3	2.4
Theme 3. Digitalisation of access to and use of infrastructure and services provision	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4
Theme 4. Political empowerment for democratic resilience	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4

Note: 1.1-4.4 refer to the forthcoming sections in this document.

On the diagonal of the matrix is the main carrier by which INCLUDE delivers its objectives, namely synthesising knowledge grounded in solid policy relevant research and organising the African Policy Dialogues (APDs) as a proven instrument to create political space and co-design feasible solutions for policy and programme change.

Theme 1. Economic justice with structural transformation

For INCLUDE, economic justice is the idea that economies thrive when they are fairer. Everybody should have the opportunity to benefit and utilise their capacities and resources to the full potential. In previous research INCLUDE established how difficult it is in practice to reach the most marginalised (i.e. through social protection, or pro-poor policies). Economic growth doesn't 'trickle down' automatically to the poor, nor does it prevent biodiversity loss. More purposeful policies to ensure a more equal distribution of life opportunities and benefits demand a justice perspective on the economy. While in phase I and II, INCLUDE focused on 'economic growth', phase III sees economic growth as a means to an end. This end centres around human wellbeing, and a balanced and sustainable relationship between the economy, society (human development) and nature. The theory of economic justice implies that (i) people have equal rights and liberties regardless of nationality, gender, race, age, ethnicity, religion or disability (ii) equality of opportunity for all, and (iii) an arrangement of resources and policy instruments focused on benefit maximisation for those who are least advantaged. Such an approach requires a fundamental recognition of the politics of development (Hickey et al. 2014), flawed institutions, as well as people's heterogeneous backgrounds and vantage points in life (Dekker and Pouw 2022; Pouw and Gupta 2017). Economic justice can only be achieved in a political environment where people are politically empowered and free, and where there is space for strategic governance that prioritises equality of opportunity and social and spatial equity (de Bruijne and Pouw 2015). In this vision of the economy, growth is a *means to an end* i.e. economic justice - but not an end goal in itself (Sen 2001; Raworth 2017; Pouw 2020). Home-grown African development policies, an integrated approach to social and economic policies, and more effective

domestic resource mobilisation that is governed within a democratic and transparent accountability framework and through inclusive leadership, are the driving forces behind a broad-based economic justice agenda. Economic justice should move hand in hand with social justice and environmental/climate justice. This requires learning how to analyse complex trade-offs between these domains and developing policies and strategies that foster synergies instead. The dominant narrative of economic growth first, and then social and environmental investments is out of date. Social and environmental concerns should be taken on board à priori, together with economic goals.

Despite the pre-Covid decades of relatively high economic growth in Africa (EIbadawi et al. 2017), growth has not translated into structural transformation or shared increases in wellbeing for the majority of the African population. Regionally and nationally, many rural areas remain underserviced, whereas rapidly growing cities are struggling to provide adequate public infrastructure and services, jobs and resources for all. Structural transformation of economies is sluggish, with macroeconomic debt figures, trade-imbalances and global financial dependencies remaining high or increasing. While developed countries could borrow at less than 1 percent interest, private lenders have charged countries in Africa between 7 to 10 percent[4], thereby creating high risks for African governments to default on payment. Public debt as a share of GDP reached an average of 56% in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) in 2022, the highest level since the early 2000s. SSA countries spend about 17% of government revenue to service external debt. That leaves less for public services and supporting private sector development. In 2010 the average SSA country spent 70% more on health per person (US$38) than on external debt (US$22). By 2020, SSA countries spent about 30% more on debt service per capita than on health service per capita (UNDP, 2022).

Rapid expansion in Chinese lending[5] to African states means that China has become an essential player in debt restructuring in Africa. China's preference for bilateral relations to multilateral appears to be changing, gleaning from its cautious support to the Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) in 2020 and the Common Framework in 2021. The increased ratio of public debt to GDP points to a new period of austerity in Africa with consequences on efforts towards African Union ambitions, SDG targets and domestic politics. Though most African countries face a debt crisis, the magnitude of the distress may differ among countries because of several factors, not least, the share of Chinese debt, domestic debt, and different economic capacities and financial system mechanisms. However, it is dissected, there is no doubt that the current debt crisis requires some 'debt cancellation', 'debt suspension' and 'lower interest rates' in order to promote economic justice for all. INCLUDE is looking ahead to analysis on the on-going debt restructuring and negotiations between China, Western creditors and G-20, and multilateral financial institutions and the effect on social protection policy, education and health and their impact on varied vulnerable groups/countries. INCLUDE will be interested in analysis on how the burden of debt sharing is to be implemented between different types of partner/lending institutions including domestic lenders and how any agreement would likely impact the poor in Africa. How is the dialogue on debt servicing being conducted and how are varied African voices on debt restructuring being taken into consideration in any package? How will debt relief and management differ from the structural adjustment reforms in Africa in the 1980s and 1990s? INCLUDE is also interested in analysis on the currency of the loans and how that is linked to the global financial system to cause perpetual indebtedness to Africa.

In the post-Covid years, economic growth has slowed down to 4.1% across the continent (World Bank, 2023) due to restrained investment, falling exports, high inflation, climate change, and high

---

[4]

https://www.ifw-kiel.de/publications/media-information/2023/sovereign-debt-in-africa-large-interest-rate-differences-across-creditors/

[5] China became the largest financier of about $160bn to African governments from 2000 to 2020.

food and energy costs. Since this affects the safety and basic needs of low-income groups the most, (extreme) poverty is still high with an estimated 490 million living below the $1,90/day poverty line in 2021. A recent Oxfam report describes how inequality in Africa is rising. "The richest 0.0001% own 40% of the wealth of the entire continent. Africa's three richest billionaire men have more wealth than the bottom 50% of the population of Africa, approximately 650 million people" (Oxfam 2019, p. 3). If current population inequality trends continue, by 2030 an estimated 87% of the world's extreme poor will live in Africa (World Bank, 2023).

Structural transformation entails lifting the economy to higher-productivity skill and technology intensive activities. It is part of Africa's ambition to do so in a sustainable and inclusive manner. Stronger regional cooperation, such as by means of the *African Continental Free Trade Agreement* (AU 2023) could generate technology exchange and economies of scale. The African Union *Continental Green Action Recovery Plan* (AU 2021) aims to: (i) improve climate finance (ii) support the just transition to renewable energy (iii) invest in nature-based solutions and a focus on biodiversity (iv) build resilient agriculture, and (v) green and resilient cities. These are great ambitions that INCLUDE wants to support by fostering good evidence-based research on related themes and cross-country learning on policy change in these directions.

In recent times Kenya[6], Ethiopia[7], Ghana[8], Côte d'Ivoire[9], Uganda[10], Nigeria[11], Gabon and Senegal and other African countries have developed new industrial policies, including regional sector-level collaborations (e.g. cocoa in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire), building of agro-industrial parks and light manufacturing industrial parks (e.g. Ethiopia), diversification of exports (all), and indigenization policies (e.g. Nigeria), such as a new Africa's minerals governance framework (AU 2016). Both regional and national policies need to be geared towards creating more added-value activities *within* African countries themselves, instead of exporting added-value massively leading to jobless growth and loss of tax income and/or rent seeking. Job creation and enhancing capacity utilisation is of vital importance to the young and growing population of all African countries (Mutenyo, 2022). This requires investing in human and physical capital (education and health; digital skills), infrastructure and ICT, and developing an inclusive African governance framework, whilst preserving and regenerating natural resources for future generations.

The African Development Bank, the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation traditionally are the largest investors in Africa of major infrastructure and productive sector development projects. But new development finance - particularly from China and Russia - funds infrastructure and productive sector development at greater scale, with less conditionalities attached but coming with a different governance model (e.g. see Brookings 2021). This creates new macroeconomic opportunities, including improving monetary stability and climate finance, but also new challenges and risks for debt service payments and transparent governance. But how can these policies become sustainable and inclusive - building the resilience of people and nature? What are the political economy factors that determine successful transformation, including international cooperation and contributions to climate adaptation and mitigation in Africa. For answering those questions, the binding constraints within and across sectors and their root causes need to be diagnosed to revise the economic and social policy framework. It is INCLUDE's vision that economic justice and structural transformation in Africa could make headway through developing sustainable and inclusive economic and social policies, home-grown development, and stronger regional cooperation, thus strengthening its competitive advantage internationally.

---

[6] See the National Industrialization Policy Framework for Kenya 2012–2030.

[7] See Ethiopia's Industrial Development Strategy 2015-2023: Ethiopian Industrial Development Strategic Plan (2013-2025).pdf (eebcouncil.org) and the recent call to revise this strategy: PowerPoint Presentation (unctad.org)

[8] See Ghana's one district and one factory policy, which started in 2016/2017.

9 See Côte d'Ivoire's Industrial Diagnostic Study 2020: https://www.unido.org/sites/default/files/files/2022-02/PCP_diagnostics_Ivory_Coast_English.pdf

10 See Uganda's National Industrial Policy 2020: NIP Report (mtic.go.ug)

11 See Nigeria Industrial Revolution Plan 2020: Nigeria-Industrial-Revolution-Plan.pdf (nationalplanning.gov.ng)

1.1 Economic Justice, Structural Transformation and Social Equity

1.1.1 Differentiated policy for equal opportunities

Economic justice responds to the inclusiveness and sustainability agenda of the African Union (2021), as well as many of the concerns raised by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework that promotes an integrated approach towards economic, social and environmental concerns and aims to leave no one behind (UN 2015). Social equity means that, in some circumstances and in view of people's social-economic and/or health conditions, the law needs to treat people differently in order to create equal opportunity in life. Social inequality in Africa is high. Six of the ten most unequal societies in the world, according to the World Bank Gini Index (World Bank, 2023), are in Africa: South Africa, Namibia, Zambia, Central Africa Republic, Mozambique and Botswana.

Looking more deeply into social inequity data reveals that stark differences prevail in educational and health outcomes. Over one-fifth of all children in Africa between 6-11 years are not in school, followed by one-third of all youth between 12-14 years. According to UNESCO 2023 data almost 60% of all youth between 15-17 years are not in school. Given the youth bulge in the African population pyramid this is a large majority (UNESCO, 2023). In terms of health, life expectancy varies across and within countries according to security, exposure to climate risks and weather shocks, level of conflict and violence, and gender. In North Africa, average life expectancy is highest; 75 (females) and 71 (males). The other regions score much worse. In Middle Africa average life expectancy is 62 (females) and 52 (males), in Eastern Africa 66 (females) and 61 (males), and in Southern Africa 64 (females) and 59 (males). Approximately half of Africa's population has access to the healthcare they need (52% in 2021). The quality of health services is generally poor and family planning needs of half of the continent's women and girls are unmet. Each year, 15 million people are pushed into poverty and destitution due to insurmountable out-of-pocket health costs (Health Policy Watch 2021). Previous research by INCLUDE on social protection (Dekker and Pouw 2022) has shown that universal access enhances social and economic stability and resilience and cushions the detrimental effects of crises.

1.1.2 Gender disparities and social policy

Globally, women have fewer opportunities for economic participation than men, less access to basic and higher education, greater health and safety risks, and less political representation. However, INCLUDE recognizes that gender disparities can work both ways. Depending on context, boys and men may fall behind girls and women in certain life performance indicators, and INCLUDE does not want to turn a blind eye to this phenomenon. Although, women and girls on average score worse than men in terms of social and political power, economic resources (access and control) and educational and productive opportunities, this doesn't mean boys and men should be excluded from development policy interventions. Furthermore, ethnicity, class, age, sexual orientation and disability intersect with gender and are also important dividers themselves, which need to be mapped and better understood across context. In short, the way 'gender' intersects with other social categorisations constitutes a major knowledge gap in African societies. Inclusive social policies that strive for enhancing social equity need to be informed by a context-specific understanding of these complex intersections; there is no 'one size fits all' social policy. Therefore, INCLUDE subscribes to the need to do more research in this area to inform the development and implementation of more effective social policies that address different, multi-facetted social inequalities (Gumede 2018).

1.1.3 Domestic resource mobilisation

Social policies that will drive the necessary education and health reforms in Africa need political will and a structural domestic resource base (as explained in Section 1), given the growing population and increasing pressure on resources and services. Domestic resources can be mobilised through (i) widening the tax net (ii) more productive employment, and (iii) increasing the local added-value of economic production. Yet, the tax net in many African countries remains low. On average, the tax to GDP ratio amounts to 16% in 2022. This compares to 19.1% in

Asia-Pacific, 21.9% in Latin America, and 33.5% in OECD countries. Notable exceptions to the African average are, on the low end Nigeria (5.5%) and Congo DRC (7.2%), and on the high end South Africa (22.5%), Morocco (28.3%), Seychelles (32%) and Tunisia (32.5%) (African Union & OECD 2022). By widening the tax net, African nation states could build-in more permanent and universal redistributive measures including social protection (e.g. social health insurance, unemployment benefits, pension scheme) that are preconditional for a thriving and just economy. Where previous pro-poor instruments, such as cash-transfers mainly had a 'poverty coping' effect, universal measures are known to have a promotive and transformative effect because of their stronger and lasting impact on intergenerational poverty reduction and inclusion (Ulriksen et al., 2015; Molyneux et al, 2016). This strengthens economies, rather than weakens them. The old narrative that social policies come at the cost of economic growth doesn't hold. A recent empirical study by Mulugeta Woldegiorgis (2022) has shown that for 34 African countries, "income inequality is a negative driver of inclusive development whereas, social redistribution policies are positive drivers of inclusive development in the long run" (p. 265). The outcomes of the INCLUDE commissioned RIDSSA study programme on social protection has furthermore shown that high transaction costs (overt and hidden) limit poor and marginalised people's access to markets, social services, infrastructure and institutions (Dekker and Pouw 2022, p. 2155). These transaction costs can cover financial and social costs. How such costs play out differently for different sub-groups of poor and marginalised people, in terms of protection of rights, (in)equality of opportunity, and making the last count first, requires further research. The same study also observed a relative neglect of social policy development across African countries that has undermined economic resilience – which became apparent during COVID. Leading African scholars have pointed out the importance of home-grown African social policy for thriving economies (Gumede, 2018). Productive employment has been a challenge for a long time across the continent. All sectors in Africa, whether it's services, agriculture, resources, or manufacturing, have either the lowest productivity or the second-lowest productivity of any region in the world (McKinsey 2023). As a result incomes remain low, on average, thus minimising the tax base. At the same time, the rich manage to avoid taxes on a large scale. Critical research should map these prevailing patterns and investigate links with poverty and inequality trends across different countries and tax systems. The problem of continued low added-value creation in African production chains and how this erodes the tax base has been long known. However, gaps in knowledge prevail on the impact of successful value chain development in particular African countries/sectors and how this contributes to domestic resource mobilisation. More African-led-research on home-grown pathways towards self-efficacy through domestic resource mobilisation is therefore recommended.

1.2 Economic Justice, Structural Transformation and Spatial Equity

1.2.1 Conglomeration of economic hubs

Globalisation is sometimes perceived to have 'deterritorialized' human relations and economic processes. However, recent debates on what is called the 'new political geography' and 'global history' strongly contest this perception (Engel 2010). It is probably better to perceive a shift from states to 'economic hubs' around metropolises (or 'world cities') and the conglomeration of business interests in those economic hubs (UN Habitat & IHS-Erasmus University Rotterdam 2018; Netherlands African Business Council 2019). Colin Flint and Peter Taylor show the importance of this shift in their study *Political Geography: World-Economy, Nation-State, and Locality* (Flint & Taylor, 2007). For Africa, it means a double shift away from thinking in terms of states and governments: with, first, more emphasis on larger regional entities and their institutions, like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) (Lange et al. 2016) and the emerging 'single market policy' of the African Union, and, second, on the rising importance of (big) cities, municipal governments, and the businesses located in these cities. African cities provide hope for many young people, who migrate there in search of better economic and social opportunities. On the downside of rapid urbanisation are the 238 million people living in Africa's city slums (UN Habitat 2023), facing underserviced infrastructure, housing, social services, and security needs.

Map 1 shows that Northern Africa has a considerable number of these hub cities, and for Western Africa the Abuja-Lagos-Accra-Abidjan axis is a major one. In the Greater Horn of Africa, the leading role of Nairobi is obvious, but there are various smaller hubs as well. However, with the exception of Dakar, the Sahel has none, which is a reason to avoid taking the Sahel as a focus region on its own: it should always be considered in its relationship with Western Africa as a whole and with Northern Africa.

Map 1. Africa's economic hubs

Source: Map by Levering and Wall, in UN Habitat & IHS-Erasmus University Rotterdam (2018).

1.2.2 Countering spatial inequalities

A recent worldwide study has shown that spatial inequality within countries significantly distorts economic activity at national level (Achte and Lessmann 2020). Countering spatial inequalities between and within African countries (e.g. between urban and rural areas) implies differentiated spatial development policies and infrastructure investments. For the coming ten years, the African Development Bank, aims to "accelerate Africa's inclusive, green and resilient growth and development" (AFDB 2023) of which improving (equalising) nation-wide service infrastructures forms an integral part. A positive impact on growth and wellbeing can be achieved through investments in adequate and equalising public and private service infrastructure: water, (green) energy, transport, housing, finance, and access to markets, in addition to basic social services like education/training and health care for all. However, from the perspective of the marginalised, private and public services need to be accessible and affordable (see Theme 3).

1.2.3 Complex trade-offs

In the past, the Netherlands had supported many regional development programmes focused on marginal areas in Africa. Lessons learnt are that regional development projects have improved local conditions and created better access to services and institutions, but have not necessarily connected these marginal areas to labour and produce markets in a sustainable and inclusive manner - leading to adverse inclusion (like unwanted cultural change, unaffordable service provisioning, land and resource grabs, or local elite capture). This has created opportunities for local politicians and warlords to recruit disgruntled youth into violent militias and criminal gangs, with or without reference to 'jihad' or other forms of identity-based contestation. Therefore, INCLUDE promotes research that generates solid knowledge on prevailing spatial patterns and trends, and develops spatial equity policies at local, sub-national, national and regional level. Complex trade-offs between spatial equity goals and ecological sustainability need to be better understood and measured for identifying inclusive and sustainable spatial development policies and allocating responsibilities for mitigating trade-offs.

1.3 Economic Justice, Structural Transformation and Inclusive Governance

1.3.1 Participation for a better human and social environment

How does the inclusiveness of processes such as participation, voice and empowerment, and democracy lead to economic justice and transformation? In a social and political context where the most marginalised are hard to reach, and representation is often failing, what form of participation will promote their inclusion either in the economy or governance? "Good and inclusive governance is imperative for Africa's future" according to (Mbaku, 2020). The African Development Bank outlines three foundations of such a "good and inclusive governance agenda": (I) effective states, (ii) mobilised civil societies, and (iii) an efficient private sector, whereby the key factors steering then are accountability, transparency, combating corruption, citizen participation, and an enabling legal/judicial framework. The history of developed and transition countries shows varied political paths to broad-based economic justice and transformation that have benefited the poor (Pouw & Baud 2013). But in Africa's quest for economic transformation, what kind of politics, political organisations and processes, and what degree of citizens' participation is needed to create a better human and social environment?

1.3.2 Openness and accountability

Effective states manage societies and resources more efficiently and equitable if appropriate and transparent institutions can be devised. Mkandawire, 2010 pleads for more "openness, a deliberative political culture, creativity and originality" for African states to find their own way towards democracy. The challenge of mobilising civil society is one of social and political freedom; in environments where people are not free to speak their beliefs or ideas, fear will rule out civic organisation and action.

1.3.3 The role of the private sector

Private sector organisations could play a fostering role in demanding inclusive governance. They create employment, are important for knowledge transfer, and involve informal entrepreneurs and local businesses in their value chain. They thrive in a transparent, fair and well-organised legal context. They also have a legal obligation to pay taxes to the government and, increasingly so, a duty to exercise corporate social responsibility (CSR) to the communities that they work in/with. But literature on how businesses and corporations have responded to their legal requirements and CSR suggest that without free and active citizen demands for accountability, these obligations are not fulfilled and attempts at reducing poverty and inequalities are often reactive, short term and cosmetic. There are huge differences in the ways businesses and corporations deal with being or becoming 'SDG-conscious' and 'socially and ecologically responsible'. Over the past four years, INCLUDE has documented several successful self-initiatives by young individual entrepreneurs in the domain of 'green economy'. These are potential role models to new generations of 'social entrepreneurs' in Africa. INCLUDE thus recognizes the need to determine which forms of social and political action by states, citizens, and private sector have been successful in promoting the effectiveness and accountability of inclusive governance in the quest for economic justice and structural transformation.

1.4 Political Economy Analysis in the Pursuit of Economic Justice and Structural Transformation

1.4.1 Voice and empowerment

An economic justice approach also implies the need to take a political economy angle to reveal unequal voice and empowerment of vulnerable groups. Resource-poor and marginalised groups rely on others to represent them, which varies greatly across different African societies. Political spaces to express diverging views and interests and negotiate more inclusive policies need to be widened. This raises questions about where, how and for whom political space for voice and

empowerment can be created and how this then allows to make headway towards more social equity across different sub-groups in the population? Building on existing literature on the politics of economic transformation in Africa (Kelsall 2013; Ansu 2013), INCLUDE should endeavour to better understand the underlying power structures and incentive systems that facilitate or hinder the design and implementation of agricultural and industrial policies for economic justice and structural transformation in Africa. What conditions compel ruling elites to support agriculture, industrial and trade policies that are key to inclusive and sustainable development? Political economy and political settlement analyses may help explain why 'good' industrial and inclusive policies often fail to achieve their intended outcomes, why ineffective policies (or exclusive policies) can persist, and why potentially effective inclusive policies are not adopted or, when adopted, not fully or effectively implemented (World Bank 2017). Issues like deeper understanding of the political economy and political settlements of a country, particularly insights into the nature of the state bureaucratic agencies and their relationship with political and economic organisations and other interest groups, the distribution of power, the strength of the ruling coalition relative to internal and external oppositional factions, and the composition of elite groups at national and sub-national levels and other influential groups including street-level bureaucrats, will be key to designing effective inclusive policies and policy engagements (Hollander et al. 2018).

1.4.2 Inequality and elite rule

Across Africa, roughly four types of political settlements can be distinguished: developmental, competitive clientelism, dominant party, and autocratic, although some states have transitioned from one political settlement to another (Khan, 2010). How has the nature of political settlements informed the design and implementation of agricultural and industrial policies or other reforms for economic inclusiveness (Mustapha, Meagher and Awortwi, 2023; Atela & Mustapha, 2023)? The *Tracking Development* studies (Van Donge & Henley 2012; Vlasblom, 2013; see also Berendsen et al. 2013) suggest that policy commitment, coordination, and cooperation are essential institutional functions for an effective economic transformation and development. These studies point out that Asian countries became committed to structural transformation under conditions of existential threat. In what ways are widening inequalities recognized by ruling elites as an existential threat that could trigger consensus on policies for social and spatial equity? How can advocacy for industrial and trade policies be designed to ensure that strategic actors, especially ruling elites and multinational corporations, find it in their economic interest to pursue economic justice, inclusiveness and sustainability?

Theme 2. Decent work and income for women and youth and other marginalised people

During its first phase, INCLUDE researchers, partners and platform members did a lot of work to better understand approaches to increase and improve work and income for youth and women (Dekker et al., 2018; Fox et al. 2016). Nearly 83% of the population in Africa, many of whom are youth, are employed in the informal sector where standards for decent work and income are low. Subsistence farming engages more than 60% of the population and 83% of the countries in Africa rely on commodities (UNCTAD 2022). As of 2022, 40% of the population in Africa is younger than 15 years. Every year about 12 million youth join the labour force. Where will Africa find work for its youth population? We know from the INCLUDE synthesis report on productive employment (Dekker et al., 2018) that, in the short term, most jobs in low and middle-income Africa will be created in the informal sector, both in agriculture (including the off-farm food system) and household enterprises. Continued public and private investment in formal wage job creation in industry, energy, infrastructure, and high-value services and high-value agriculture is needed for Africa's structural economic transformation, but this will only yield wage employment effects in the long term. Currently three in five of Africa's unemployed are youth. Many youths are also underemployed or employed in jobs beneath their qualification level. The political and social consequences of large numbers of frustrated unemployed and underemployed young men and women can be devastating for stability and undermine state legitimacy. In countries emerging

from conflict, access to work and income for youth are key elements of the transition process. Creating enabling environments for the growth of decent work and income for women and youth and other marginalised groups has become one of the leading policy goals of recent development policies, both in Africa (African Development Bank 2023) and among development agencies. This is also true in relation to the Netherlands' external development policies. Such policies are aligned with SDG 8 'Decent work and economic growth'. The academic and policy issues related to work and income generation in general, women and youth and marginalised groups in particular, and the 'decency' of this work, have become major concerns in inclusive development.

A recent INCLUDE report on the future of work for Africa's youth by Fox and Signé (2021) argues how the post-Covid-19 ambition to 'build back better' includes increasing decent employment opportunities for all Africans, many of whom work informally (Ndung'u and Signé 2020) but also to leap-frog towards creating green jobs, e.g. in the energy sector and ICT. If innovation and technological change accelerate on the African continent, this could transform economies and potentially create more formal sector jobs that provide security. The new digital technologies are part of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and are expected to change the nature of work, consumption and production processes, and capital flows. Educational and professional training programmes need to be redesigned to match this new demand for digital knowledge and skills in the labour market. Currently, there is a digital divide in Africa's population (as well as globally). Especially women, vulnerable youth, and other marginalised groups (e.g. low-income, rural labourers, early-school dropouts, migrants) lack access to adequate internet and reliable devices and have not acquired the necessary knowledge and digital skills to find decent employment (see also Theme 3). The recent INCLUDE synthesis study on income and work for young men and women in Africa (Mutenyo 2022) identified sectors in Senegal, Kenya and Uganda with potential for youth employment due to their potential multiplier effects. However, in order for these effects to play out, adequate investments in connecting industries (e.g. agro-processing connected to agriculture; green energy connected to infrastructure) need to be made.

2.1 Decent Work and Income and Social Equity

2.1.1 Job creation and closing the distance with formal labour

Generating decent work and income for youth and women and other marginalised groups in such a way that it enhances social equity, poses challenges for which governments and private sector stakeholders in Africa have to find solutions. Although structural transformation is on the agenda of many leading agencies, from the 'High 5' approach of the African Development Bank, to Agenda 2063 of the African Union, the debate on the future of work is yet to catch-up on issues like the clean energy transition, digitalisation, artificial intelligence, and the information revolution (e.g. digital design, 3D printing). Given the large informal and agricultural economies in Africa, the majority of the population functions 'at distance' from the formal labour market. To informal sector workers, subsistence farmers and self-employed, stability of income and job security, social insurance, access to learning and training, and career prospects, are largely out of reach. A more dynamic approach to employment creation, especially for youth, should be taken. The traditional distinction between formal versus informal sector work is not always helpful. Many youth in Africa navigate a working life on the edge of formality and informality and often outside traditional wage jobs (INCLUDE 2023). Successful youth manage to operate as innovative self-entrepreneurs who benefit from digitisation and manage to create synergies between a viable business and green/sustainable products and services, and ICT-technology. They innovate with sustainable solutions to product design and development, and manage at the same time to be a 'social entrepreneur' and promoters of 'decent employment' Through a partnership with ILO and IDRC, INCLUDE has undertaken research on boosting decent employment for Africa's youth (INCLUDE 2023) finding that the nexus between gender justice, climate responsiveness, change readiness and infrastructural development needs to be addressed, and local solutions are more likely to contribute to sustainable jobs and climate justice. The three years study by INCLUDE, with ILO and IDRC, (2023) recommends extension of social protection to the informal sector and

investment in public works programmes with further training on transferable and digital skills. What are the potentials of these programmes and initiatives to become socially inclusive of women, youth and other marginalised groups (e.g. migrants, disabled) and provide security of work, and create synergies with sustainable product development and service provision? How can sustainable jobs that benefit from digitisation and also contribute to climate justice be upscaled throughout sectors?

A number of reports on productive employment (Dekker et al. 2018; Fox and Signé 2021) and the African Policy Dialogues have underscored the mismatch between the knowledge and skills of the working population and the knowledge and skills demanded by the formal sector labour market. The involvement of the private sector is important to resolve this mismatch. More context-specific understanding is needed on what knowledge and skills are required to close the distance to the (formal) labour market, especially of women, youth and other marginalised groups. How can these groups adequately reap the benefits of economic transformation? What works, for whom, and why in scaling up job opportunities? And what does it mean for the links between education, training and the job market?[12] In the absence of good prospects for manufacturing jobs, work opportunities in tourism, ICT-based services, and high-value agricultural exports and horticulture are promising, because they share similar characteristics with manufacturing. The potential for these sectors to promote jobs in Ghana, Kenya, Ethiopia, South Africa, and Senegal are substantial and they could become the source of structural transformation in Africa (Page 2019). However, there are concerns about the 'decency' of some of these jobs, workers' rights, job precariousness, and sustainable production. It is, therefore, important for INCLUDE to connect to policy research environments working with rights-based approaches and care for the environment.

2.1.2 Skills and training

What types of skills are needed to support the transition of young women and men to the current and future demands of the labour market? These questions have important gender, spatial and age dimensions. It is wise to include attention for strategic actors in the formation of these new skills and go beyond formal training institutions in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and tertiary education. There are think tanks, management consultancy firms and skill development programmes, such as those organised by DOT, MasterCard Foundation, TECHNOSERVE, and McKinsey, as well as management and auditing firms, that provide work-related skills, which also need to be included (Brookings Institution 2019). From a social equity perspective, policies to foster decent work and income should extend beyond the formal sector. Supporting and training people reliant on economic activities in the informal sector could enable them to move closer to the formal labour market. Relevant questions for INCLUDE are then: How to make informal sector work more decent? How to support people in the informal sector to develop their knowledge and skills in order to create value addition, build capacities, and connect to markets (e.g. value chains) and institutions better? For INCLUDE it is also important to find out what are ways to bridge the digital divide? And more broadly, how to resolve the mismatch between educational and professional training programmes and the demand of the labour market? How can leaders in sustainable innovation also become leaders in social inclusion? Last but not least, what role do role models in social and sustainable entrepreneurship play in promoting gender equality and minority rights in labour markets and professions?

2.2 Decent Work and Income and Spatial Equity

2.2.1 Geographic disparities

There is a major debate going on about the consequences of the geographical disparities between regions and rural and urban locations in access to decent work and income. Spatial inequalities of population concentrations and economic activities are underlying such disparities. There is an

---

[12] These questions are addressed in the INCLUDE/IDRC/ILO research initiative on Boosting Youth Employment in Africa.

increasing body of literature (especially on cities in South Africa) that points out spatial inequalities within urban centres, where proximity to work and income opportunities greatly influence where people want to live. In expanding cities, rising costs of housing, commuting and doing business may constitute real barriers to people accessing income and job opportunities (Kerr 2017; Lall et al. 2017; Turok et al. 2020). The prior INCLUDE synthesis report on productive employment (Dekker et al. 2018) emphasises the importance of differentiating between different types of youth and women, depending on where they live and work. The report distinguishes four groups of African youth: rural youth from modest farming families working on the family farm; low-skilled, self-employed youth in urban and rural survival enterprises; young apprentices in rural and urban individual enterprises or in search of wage employment; and young urban graduates seeking formal wage employment.

2.2.2 The future of work

The recent INCLUDE synthesis report by Fox and Signé (2021) on the future of work, also reiterates the challenge of all youth finding its way into decent work and income opportunities. We need more context-specific knowledge about the size, proportion, and employment aspirations of different groups of youth and women in different regions and countries. However, for the years ahead, INCLUDE doesn't want to restrict this line of research to women and youth only. Attention also needs to be given to other marginalised groups, such as migrant workers, people with a disability, or low-educated population sub-groups. Most new opportunities can be expected in the urban hubs and one can, therefore, expect further migration out of rural areas into major cities, particularly by the youth of Africa (both boys and girls), although often with different job orientations. In a recent analysis of country-to-country migration data, intra African migration gets a lot of attention. Map 2 shows the areas of expulsion and attraction (Dietz et al. 2017).
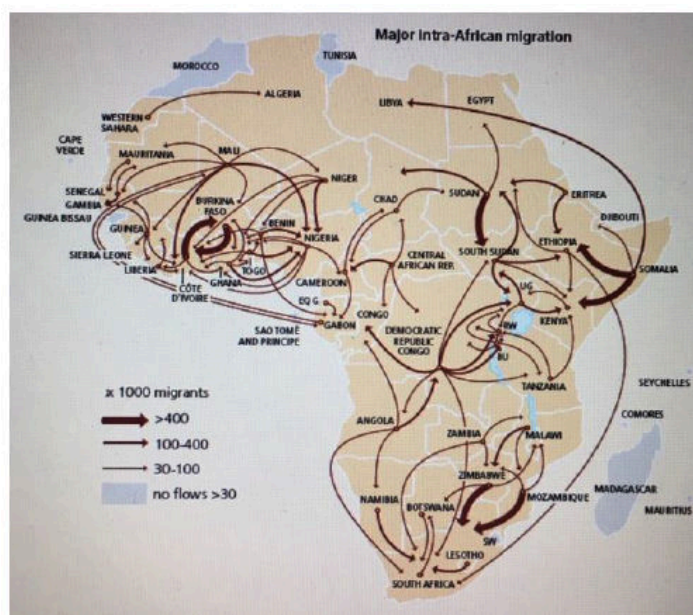
Map 2. Major intra-African migration flows (until 2015)
Source: Dietz, Kaag & De Vink (2017)

2.2.3 Decent work and income for migrants

INCLUDE is interested in analysis on how rural sectors can be transformed to promote reverse migration (i.e. urban to rural). For instance, in Kenya, to some degree, devolution has led to people moving back to their urban counties from bigger urban areas of Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu, Nakuru and Eldoret. But what needs to be advocated is rural transformation that can encourage the semi-urbanization of rural areas through rural cottage industries and increased off-farm activities. Research indicates that smallholder farming households with off-farm

activities tend to invest in agricultural innovation and engage in conservation and water harvesting, and this has increased incomes for such households. We need a much better understanding of recent internal migration patterns in Africa, both rural-urban, but also reverse and rural-rural migration and the connections to the labour market.

2.2.4 Regional collaboration

For many African governments and societies migration to far away destinations have become an important source of remittances, knowledge and new networks, and the areas with higher HDI scores and families with more capabilities tend to 'send' higher proportions of their youth to Europe and other far-away destinations – and this trend seems to be increasing (Dietz et al. 2017; European Parliament 2020). In addition, the ongoing population growth in Africa is resulting in higher intra-African and external migration (Dietz and Akinyoade 2018). A big issue is the need to facilitate decent work and income for migrant workers. In addition, big migration inflows often have a considerable impact on the local ecology and existing infrastructures and services. Cultural and language differences and legal status requirements often hamper the employment of migrant workers in formal sector jobs. African Policy Debates should include a regional perspective on migration and decent work and income. Knowledge exchange and shared learning could foster regional collaboration on creating decent work and income opportunities for vulnerable migrant populations. Moreover, from an inclusive development perspective, migration should best not only be studied from a security perspective, but also from an inclusive development and justice perspective.

2.3 Inclusive Governance of Decent Work and Income

2.3.1 Towards better working conditions for all

It is globally known that the most vulnerable and marginalised groups tend to earn a living in the informal economy due to lack of alternatives (UNDP 2022). The struggle for work and income also means that little attention is paid to the quality of jobs, social protection, safety, and gender disparities in wages. A study on inclusive growth in Nigeria's agro processing sectors showed that women were paid in broken rice while men received cash wages (Ayinde et al. 2023). Gender disparities in wages and other forms of ethnic or socio-economic inequality are widespread in the informal economy and may worsen in newly-industrial sectors or export enclaves if not well-governed. Past policy narratives focussed on eliminating informality, but more recently attention is paid to questions on how to support and invest in the informal economy in such a way that it boosts value addition and smooth out inclusive structural economic transformation? INCLUDE needs to look into where and how policy reforms contribute to better working conditions of women, youth and marginalised groups doing mostly underpaid and unprotected work? Given that the informal economy consists of a heterogeneous set of activities, workers, and interactions with the formal sector, INCLUDE needs to recognize the need for strategically targeted policies and interventions to pursue the decent work and income agenda.

2.3.2 Inclusive labour market institutions

An inclusive governance approach furthermore entails fostering inclusive labour market institutions that engage with wage and employment determination. Such institutions range from labour unions, collective organisations, legislation on minimum wages and employment protection, unemployment insurance and active labour market policies. Empowering women, youth and marginalised groups to participate in labour market institutions, and have their voices heard and represented, would be part and parcel of an inclusive governance agenda. At the sectoral level, inclusive governance implies looking into policy reforms that contribute to enhancing workers' rights and respecting diversity. At the level of businesses and organisations, what are ways to foster inclusive vocational training and decent internships? INCLUDE needs to develop empirical insights into how work-based learning and training on-the-job can be better connected to innovations, and how can lessons learnt be shared across sectors and businesses/organisations?

2.4 The Political Economy of Decent Work and Income

2.4.1 Reflections of unequal power

Differences in access and control over decent work and income often reflect unequal power relations that may or may not tie in with differences in educational level; across gender, age, ethnicity, class, religious, and other social categories in the population. In Africa, access and control over formal jobs in the private and public sector are (sometimes heavily) biased towards elite groups. This undermines the overall performance of economies, since it is not the best people that do the job. Breaking these longstanding cycles of favouritism constitutes a first step towards a labour market functioning around merits. For INCLUDE it may not be easy to engage with such a politically sensitive topic. Therefore, INCLUDE should find ways to constructively collaborate with local sectoral and business policy and advocacy organisations to formalise democratic principles in labour market recruitment and appointment procedures and practices.

2.4.2 Regulatory institutions and informal labour

Applying a political economy lens to the vast informal sector in African economies, also helps to reveal malpractices and abuse of power in the workplace. Why have regulatory institutions failed to reform the informal sector in many countries? And, if informalisation is the new norm, does this really matter to the ruling elite, beyond recognition in policy statements? These are the questions that require political economy analysis, but have not been adequately addressed since ILO coined the term 'informal economy' in 1973. African ruling elites have made a ´fetish´ of the informal sector, as if it cannot be reformed or regulated by any means. Some countries in the region have managed to reduce the pervasiveness of informality in their economy, and it is important for INCLUDE to know where and how that happened and share this knowledge regionally. Recent studies by the International Monetary Fund have found significant heterogeneity, with informality ranging from a low of 20–25% in Mauritius, South Africa and Namibia to a high of 50–65% in Benin, Tanzania and Nigeria (Leandro et al. 2017). There appears to be a reverse correlation between the size of the informal economy and the quality of governance. Could one further assume that the larger the size of the informal economy, the higher the precariousness of work and income conditions for youth, women and marginalised groups? A better understanding of the actors, institutions and incentive structures that have enabled the informal sector to resist reforms and regulations in some contexts, but not others, would be helpful in transforming labour market policies in Africa.

Theme 3. Digitalisation of Access to and Use of Infrastructure and Services Provision

During Phase I (2013-2018) and Phase II (2019-2022), INCLUDE focused its Theme 3 on "access to and use of basic services, especially education and social protection, particularly cash transfers". In phase III, we have modified the theme by putting digitalisation as the driver of improvement in access to and use of infrastructure and services provision, and expanded the focus beyond basic services to include all services and infrastructure, public and private. We have done so because of the remarkable innovations that Information, communication and digitisation Technology (ICT) penetration has had on service provision alongside apprehensions that citizens have about the introduction of artificial intelligence (AI) and algorithms in services provision.

ICT has the potential to drive innovations in citizens' access to and use of services. Africa governments and the private sector have invested in ICT with an expectation that it would lead to efficient, cost effective and inclusive services delivery in Africa (McKinsey, 2020). Application of ICT and other electronic platforms also have the power to promote transparency and accountability in institutions, advance civic education, and deepen political and social services and change; improve trade (UNCTAD 2022); facilitate cheaper and easy access of marginalised groups to basic services (George Kibala Bauer 2020) and ultimately, leapfrog economic transformation and development (Lemma et al, 2022; Botha, 2019.)

In 2021, INCLUDE commissioned studies on digitalization of basic services in Africa with in-depth studies in Benin, Ghana, Mauritius, Rwanda, and Uganda. The case studies examined these countries' national contexts on digitalisation, digitalised services (education, social protection, healthcare, and civil registration, digital administration) and assessed how inclusive these interventions have been to varied groups including marginalised people. The studies conclude that improving digital inclusion calls for deliberate infrastructure development targeted at facilitating wider digital access, availability and affordability as well as creating relevant content, and supporting greater and beneficial engagement. Digital divide in many of the countries studied closely mirrors their socio-economic divide, hence if the factors that underlie their divide are not addressed, it is unlikely that there would be meaningful digital inclusion. With the exception of Mauritius, digital skills remain in short supply, particularly among the poor, women, less educated and persons with disabilities. Consequently, continued digital skilling for all is a necessity and must be prioritised (Kalemera et al. 2023).

The studies recommended among others; more research on the human rights implications of digitalisation of public services; putting ordinary citizens at the centre of digital development to foster deeper societal changes that tackle inequalities, alleviate poverty and boost socio-economic development; Implementation of policy, legislative and administrative measures to improve access and affordability of e-government services; expansion of digital literacy programmes; and availability of e-government services in local languages and accessible formats. For more on the findings and recommendations provided in the studies to inform policy discussions, see Kalemera et al. 2023.

In Phase III (2023 to 2027) INCLUDE wants to continue research on digitalisation by focusing studies, co-creation of knowledge, and policy dialogue on access to and use of services and infrastructure provision through the lens of social equity, spatial equity, inclusive governance and political economy.

3.1   Digitalisation of Access to and Use of Services and Social Equity

Under digitalisation and social equity in the matrix, INCLUDE will support among others, studies and policy engagement on (i) digital financial inclusion for women, youth, people with disability and other marginalised groups; and (ii) digitisation and political empowerment and representation of women, youth and marginalised people.

3.1.1 Digital financial inclusion services for women, youth and marginalised people

Financial inclusion is a means to an end. As a means, it facilitates access to cash, credit, funds, savings, and as an end, it improves consumption of the poor, helps to improve sustainable livelihoods, provides confidence and self-respect to beneficiaries, and improves financial security. Since 2000, there has been a great deal of information on why many people have no access to financial services and the need for government and the private sector to develop affordable products and services that meet the needs of the poor around transactions, payments, savings, credit, and insurance (Mastercard Foundation and IFC 2018). Digital financial services in the form of mobile money and banking are offering affordable, instant, and reliable transactions, savings, credit, and even insurance opportunities for people and places that traditional banking would not provide. Yet in 2019, it was estimated that 400 million people in Africa, most of them women, do not have access to digital financial services and are "stuck in the era of the moneylender and the forced chicken sale" (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation 2019). In recent times, many governments have moved from just acknowledging the problems of financial exclusion to providing financial inclusion. With increasing levels of inequality and poverty there is a need for African governments to do more, better and faster, to improve access to financial services to the informal sector where the majority of the people make a living (Assih 2022). INCLUDE is interested in studies to document country experiences of government's tangible efforts and private sector initiatives to promote digital financial inclusion to vulnerable people in Africa, especially those that make a

living in the informal sector. It is also interested in country policy discussions that promote uptake on digital financial inclusion services.

3.1.2 Digitisation and political empowerment of women and youth

While political governance remains a largely male dominated field, there is growing evidence of the power of digitisation to facilitate women's political empowerment. Digitization has enabled significant parts of the political conversation, campaigns and other forms of electoral process to move online. Digital technologies and communication devices such as telephone, SMS, email, websites and social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and TikTok have offered public spaces for exchanges, gradually replacing face-to-face communication and political mobilisation of citizens for elections. Such ICT enabled digital platforms have the potential to help women overcome barriers to political mobilisation such as women's limited time, mobility restrictions and lack of self-confidence to express political views (Salzinger et al. 2022). Hence INCLUDE is interested in analysis on how women in Africa are using ICT in their quest for political leadership and women-led movements. What is the evidence that digitization is empowering women politically? How are women using the digital space to amplify marginalised issues and perspectives that are dear to them? How are women, women groups and networks employing digitisation in politics and to what end has it served to reduce social and political equity?

3.2 Digitisation and spatial equity

Digital divide manifests in unequal access to digital technology between people and societies based on income differences so that many poor people cannot afford the cost of smartphones and internet data. There is also spatial inequality arising from geographical location (rural-urban divide) where access to electricity in rural Africa is a major cause of spatial inequality in access to information, technology, services and other resources. While ICT penetration is improving in Africa, by 2022 only 17 countries had more than 50% of the population having access to the internet (Morocco 84.1%, Egypt 71.9%, South Africa 68.2%, Mauritius 64.9%, Ghana 53% and Nigeria 51%). A study commissioned by INCLUDE shows that even with recent expansion in ICT usage, digital exclusion persists in many countries in Africa because of low digital literacy skills and shortage of content in accessible formats, among other factors. Poor women, rural populations, refugees and persons with disabilities face particularly acute digital exclusion (Kalemera et al. 2023). Under this matrix, studies on policies and programmes to bridge the digital divide in access to and use of services and infrastructure between people and groups based on spatial location would be of interest to INCLUDE.

3.2.1 Digitisation of municipal services to the urban poor

Many countries in Africa are urbanising very fast though structural transformation of the cities has been limited [13]. There is widespread urban sprawl as 63% of the urban population lives in settlements that are not properly planned, hence provision of basic municipal services like water, electricity, sanitation and solid waste collection, security, land are still beyond the reach of informal urban dwellers. However, dynamic municipal governments working with utility companies and private enterprises are developing innovative mobile-enabled digital solutions to expand basic service delivery at affordable prices and convenient methods of payment to the urban poor [4]. For instance, the pay-as-you-go (PAYG) solar system in Nigeria has enabled thousands of urban poor to have electricity in their homes; in Tanzania, Pay-As-You-Cook gas service is allowing users that cannot afford to purchase a gas cylinder and the gas itself to track their consumption and make mobile payments in small instalments through their mobile money accounts. The PAYG is making clean cooking via LPG attainable for Dar es Salaam's urban poor; In Kenya, a mobile app allows metres to be photographed and customer accounts to be digitally updated, helping to address disputes and verify metre readers' activities in real time. In response to the challenge of delivering sanitation services to Kampala's urban poor, the city council launched a GIS-based mobile app that links sanitation services to clients' demand and helps to

---

[13] The stylized urbanisation is supposed to promote manufacturing job opportunities in the cities.

20

ensure safe faecal sludge disposal for a cleaner and healthier city. The platform enables Kampala City Council (KCC) to map sanitation activities across the city, which allows them to monitor and regulate service delivery and identify locations in need of more treatment capacity. In Abidjan Private companies such as Coliba are facilitating recycling by leveraging mobile technology with a web that allows customers to connect with the waste pickers to schedule the collection of plastic, and accumulate points for MTN data and other supported products. In this way, private companies offer incentives to individuals to recycle and solve the plastic waste challenge thereby promoting sustainable development and creating jobs in the process.

INCLUDE is interested in research and policy engagements that will make the cities work for the urban poor and marginalised groups, and ensure that rapid urbanisation is matched by corresponding expansion and efficient delivery of municipal services using ICT. Hence it will support case studies on ICT led innovative approaches that are expanding the delivery of municipal services such as utilities, sanitation and solid waste management, water delivery, social protection (cash transfers), land transfers, municipal property tax collection, land use planning and spatial (smart cities), security, street lights, etc. to the urban poor.

3.3   Digitisation and Inclusive Governance

Innovations in ICT have improved the nature of state-citizen interaction, promoting citizens' participation in governance (Bahago et al. 2023) of their affairs. Citizens, especially the youth demand for inclusiveness and respect for democratic principles and decision-making have also fostered institutional frameworks that rely on digitisation. In the context of digitisation and inclusive governance, INCLUDE is interested in analysis on how digitization is promoting democratic participation of the citizens and accountability of government to the citizens.

3.3.1 Digitisation in the provision of electoral democracy for citizens at national and subnational level

Globally electoral democracy has generally been recognised and accepted as the primary, and preferred way of attaining political power and leadership in a country. Although transition to democracy started late in Africa because of prolonged periods of colonisation and frequent disruption of democratic experiments by military regimes, by the mid 1990s many African countries had become democratic.   In attempts to deepen electoral democracy and promote transparent, fair, inclusive and credible electoral process, digital technologies have been deployed in the organisation of elections. Digital voter registration, voter verification, identification of polling location, and results transmission had been implemented to reduce electoral manipulation and rigging of elections thereby promoting peaceful transition of power. Studies show that 27 electoral management boards in Africa now rely on biometric technology to verify voter identities on election day (Mosero 2022). In Ethiopia, Kenya, Ghana and many African countries, the National Election Boards have communicated election results using non-traditional platforms that have enabled citizens to get results quicker. Advocates of digitalization are pushing for more on-line electoral processes to promote credible elections and peaceful transition of power (Ilo and Osori 2021; K'onyango 2022).

While there is no doubt that digitisation of electoral democracy has the potential to reduce electoral fraud and turn out credible elections that all players can feel confident about, to what extent has it drastically changed the organisation of election and promoted high quality electoral democracy in Africa? How has digitisation of electoral democracy helped to reduce voter manipulation, smear campaigns and political influencing? How does the deployment of digital electoral processes relate to the nature of political parties in and outside government, the independence of the electoral commission and generally the quality of democracy? What role are CSOs playing in the digitization of electoral democracy? How has digitization also enabled CSOs to monitor elections in Africa? Does digitisation promote higher citizens participation in electoral democracy? Generally, what are the impacts of the application of digital technology on electoral democracy, electoral processes and interaction between citizens/voters and politicians in Africa? Given the many shades of democratic practices in Africa, are there patterns emerging on the

application of digitalisation of electoral practices and quality of governance? INCLUDE is interested in both country and sub-national level analysis on the above questions, knowing that digitisation of the electoral processes varies greatly across countries and between electoral cycles even within the same country in view of differences in internet penetration in African countries. A set of focus countries for study could be selected, in order to draw out lessons for other African countries.

3.3.2   Digitalisation and Government Accountability
ICT innovations are making it possible for citizens and their government to interact in ways that have never happened before. It has made it possible for political exchange and democratic processes to move from physical interaction to online. Outside government sources of information, citizens are able to seek alternative sources of information to inform their political choices, and hold the government accountable. Digitalization has the potential to promote citizens' participation and demand for transparency and accountability of government. But the government can also use digitization to stifle democratic practices, including mass surveillance, control of civic space, and internet shutdowns. Domingo and Shiferaw (2022) report that in 2021, governments of 12 African countries shut down the internet at least 19 times; while in 2020 this happened in 9 countries. INCLUDE wants to understand how digitisation is facilitating demand and supply of government accountability in different African countries?

3.3.3   Regulation of the Digitalisation Space
From facilitating entrepreneurship and businesses, to enabling socio-political mobilisation and action, digital technologies are changing social interactions and economic organising in Africa. Africa's digital economy is projected to reach US$180 billion by 2030 (Buckholtz and Oloo, 2020). and even higher with the integration of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Nevertheless, adequate and effective regulation and protection against internet fraud, organised disinformation campaigns and cyber-attacks by state and non-state actors is a challenge. Currently African countries are at varying levels of developing policies and regulations that govern digital technologies and their applications. INCLUDE is interested in finding answers to questions around protection, use and sharing of citizens' data, the use of surveillance technologies, regulation of artificial intelligence, and their major implications for a country's economy and society. With relations to AfCTA, how does regulation affect digital trade and payments across countries?

3.4   Political Economy Analysis of Digitalisation of Services and Infrastructure
 Digitalization is changing resource allocation and control, incentive structure and power dynamics among actors that play varied roles in public services provision and delivery. Though digitising public services helps to reduce human-to-human interactions, influence and corruption, reduces cost and improves efficiency, digitalization and datafication, they cannot be all benign to all. With increasing digitisation of public services like healthcare, education, social protection, and other human services, technology companies, private service providers, manufacturers, and research organisations have all become key players in public policy domain and control not only the nature of service delivery but also human behaviour without public accountability requirements (Prainsack 2020). Digitisation has brought new constellations of actors and power dynamics in some public (human) services that were considered to be relatively insulated from capitalism. There is digital exploitation by private interests, and there is enough incentive for them to further exploit by predicting and controlling human behaviors, production, consumption, and distribution processes (Kuch et al. 2020). In a special issue of *Policy Studies* Prainsack argues that the "benefit of data use must accrue for society at large, and in particular for the marginalised and vulnerable; and where the datafication of the bodies, lives, and practices of people who have no realistic chance to opt out is recognised and condemned for what it is: robotic brutality" (2020:439). INCLUDE will be interested in political economy analysis of digitisation and datafication of public services delivery in across countries.

3.4.1.   Political Economy Analysis of Digitisation of Revenue Collection

ICT and electronic payment platforms are said to have enabled the government to collect taxes and other forms of revenue mobilisation much easier and faster (Okunogbe and Santoro 2023). INCLUDE will be interested in political economy analysis on digitisation of government revenue mobilisation. How have different institutions and actors, interest groups, benefited or lost from digitisation of revenue collection? How have different power dynamics, spatial, class and other intersectional factors influenced actors/institutions decision-making processes and behaviours? What instruments and platforms have been used and how have negotiations among actors played out in terms of choices embedded in the different forms of tax collection (algorithms)? Such analysis at the national, sectoral and local government level will be interesting for policy discussions in INCLUDE member countries.

3.4.2 Political economy of regulating the Digital Space

There is also the need to understand the political economy of the quest by international players to regulate or enable Africa's digital space beyond trade and aid. The United States, China, Russia, France, the United Kingdom, and Israel are exporters of artificial intelligence technology, including mass surveillance and facial recognition equipment to Africa. These countries have been competing for dominance in foreign security markets and policies, and in doing so have influenced digital space in Africa. China has invested substantially in Africa's digital infrastructure. Recent studies show that organisations associated with China have built 14 government intranets and gifted computers to 34 African governments (Harsono 2020; Jili 2020). By 2020 Chinese surveillance technologies had been deployed in 13 African states including Egypt, Ghana and South Africa (Teevan and Shiferaw 2022).

Teevan and Shiferaw (2022) argue that there is a risk that Africa may focus on the developmental benefits of digitisation and forget to prepare very well against the geopolitics of it. In recent times, international organisations and bodies such as the UN, ITU, and the AU have also joined in the regulation of Africa's cyber space. INCLUDE is interested in the political economy analysis (power, interest, motivation and capacity) of the collaboration between African governments and others (state, private and international organisations) to regulate the digital space to protect its own security, sovereignty and the right of its citizens from predatory big firms and foreign governments, and to secure the benefits of digital revolution. What are the positions of various government regulatory agencies on digital governance and how do they facilitate Africa's quest to leapfrog with technology?

Theme 4. Political Empowerment

Although we take 'inclusive governance' as an approach in our four-by-four matrix, the theme of 'political empowerment' is also considered a goal or end in itself, rather than only a process to achieve inclusive development. Promoting political empowerment includes, for example: support for achieving higher participation by women, youth, minority ethnic groups and other marginalised people in politics and business in a country; promoting voter turnout as a way of deepening democracy; and promoting representation, voice, accountability and leadership. Emphasis on research and policy engagement on this theme aims at providing the poor, the powerless and marginalised people with greater control over their own development; transforming the relationships between marginalised people and those who hold power; supporting the emergence, growth and development of inclusive political institutions through which the interests of the poor, women, and other marginalised groups can be effectively represented; building the capacity of institutions, actors and citizens themselves to demand accountability from power holders and service providers; promoting state-society dialogue (and dissent); facilitating access to information; and the political decentralisation (devolution) of state-subnational relations.

The Netherlands has a long history of supporting NGOs that promote political empowerment in developing countries. Intermediary organisations like Oxfam-NOVIB, Hivos, Cordaid (the Catholic

Organization for Relief and Development Aid), Inter-church Organization for Development Cooperation (ICCO) and a host of smaller development agencies share experiences that are worth studying. In 2016, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs funded political empowerment programmes like 'Dialogue and Dissent, Strategic Partnerships for Lobby and Advocacy' (Government of the Netherlands 2019) and 'Voice'. Also, in Africa itself, there are numerous initiatives that advocate for greater representation and involvement of women, youth, people with disabilities, and informal sector workers in decision making. Many of these initiatives are bottom up and small scale.

4.1   Political Empowerment & Social Equity

There are two groups of people who form the overwhelming majority of the population in Africa but are the least empowered - women and youth. We link political empowerment and social equity to analysis and efforts towards promoting the political participation of these two groups in decision making in democratic governance. At the intersection of political empowerment and social equity, INCLUDE will be interested in analysis on women political representation and decision making, and youth empowerment in civic actions.

4.1.1   Women Political Empowerment and Representation

Women's representation in politics in Africa has improved significantly in the last two decades. The proportion of women parliamentarians have almost doubled and women's representation in cabinet increased substantially between 1980 to 2015 (Corydon et al, 2016). Rwanda, South Africa, Mozambique, Angola, Tanzania, Uganda and Burundi attained the goal of having at least 30% of the seats in national parliaments filled by women in 2008, in line with the UN target for women in decision-making bodies (Gaynor, 2022). African countries with a high proportion of women in Parliament include Rwanda (61%), Namibia (44%), South Africa (47%) and Senegal (44%), Mozambique (42%) against the global average of 26% in Europe and Central Asia of 31% (IPU 2022). Women's political representation in the executive branch of government has also increased (Musau, 2019). According to UN's Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Map of Women in politics (IPU, 2019) African countries with a high percentage of women in ministerial positions include Rwanda (51.9%), South Africa (48.6%), Ethiopia (47.6%), Seychelles (45.5%), Uganda (36.7%) and Mali (34.4%). The usual practice to appoint women to what Musau calls "soft issue" portfolios, such as social affairs, children and family has also changed. There are 30% more women ministers of defence, 52.9% more women ministers of finance, and 13.6% more women ministers of foreign affairs than in 2017. African women are also making inroads in local politics (local councillors) though not as remarkable as the national level. Women local councillors are 29% in sub-Saharan Africa compared to 18% in Western Asia and the global average of 36% (IDEA, 2021).

INCLUDE believes that inclusive decisions are more likely to occur when women are effectively represented in politics and leadership, and in Africa that can help to change the notion that leadership is about men. It will help the SDG target 5 "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls". Yet critics say that when women overcome hurdles and gain political seats, they exercise little influence and decision-making powers. "Unfortunately, the numbers do not necessarily imply influence …... that women's political representation in Africa is more descriptive than substantive" (Konte and Kwadwo 2019:3). INCLUDE wants to support analysis that goes beyond numbers to ascertain the level of influence that female leaders have in their political parties, when in government as executives and legislation as members of parliament, and generally when in positions of decision-making.

Aside from politics, and in the productive sectors, how have women confronted or faced up to the challenges emanating from social institutions to transform a particular sector traditionally led by men? For instance, in construction, industry and ICT? What evidence is available on effective transformational women leaders in Africa? As affirmative action seems to have contributed towards the countries that have achieved 30% threshold in women representation, INCLUDE will

support research and policy actions that strive to embed gender parity in constitutions and legal frameworks and to implement SDG 5, "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls,"

4.1.2   *Youth Empowerment and civic actions*

Africa is the youngest continent with over 75% of the population below 35 years. That means three out of every four people are young; a large demographic group that is critical for sustainable change and development, if empowered to assert themselves in politics, economics, governance, and social development on the continent. The African Union Agenda 2063 envisages a people driven development, which is dependent on unleashing the enormous potential of the continent's youth as pivotal drivers of change. However, the youth in Africa faces socio-cultural, economic and political institutions and processes that constrain their participation and make them vulnerable. Youth vulnerability intersects with inadequate government investment in social services, thus limiting their capacity to assert themselves, their voice, and navigate successful adulthood (Okwany and Ebrahim 2016). In the economic space, youth face the highest levels of unemployment and underemployment as the majority engage in precarious livelihoods in the informal sector. In the political space, youth are visible as voters but are conspicuously absent in leadership. In addition, youth suffer the highest social and economic effects of environmental degradation yet their voice, engagement and local knowledge in conservation and climate justice remains marginalised. Across the continent, young people are not passive objects of interventions. As indicated earlier the youth are the greatest defenders of democratic principles in Africa, are at the forefront of technological innovations, are actively engaged in initiatives within communities, and fighting the problematic social structures that exclude them from leadership.

INCLUDE has done a lot of studies on youth employment (Vale et al. 2022; Quak and Flynn 2019; van der Hoeven 2022; Lijfering and Lacey 2022) and is interested in analysis on youth political empowerment and civic leadership. INCLUDE believes that addressing youth economic insecurity requires a focus also on their positions at the political table. INCLUDE is interested in research on youth friendly programmes that substantially promote inclusion of their political voices, perspectives, skills and competencies in civic action, and engagement as dynamic policy actors and agents of change. Young people live in a digitally networked world where they are connected to each other and to their world through digital devices and social media platforms. INCLUDE will be interested in analysis on youth civic leadership programmes that are facilitated by digital technology.

4.2 Political empowerment and spatial equity

Political empowerment and spatial equity look at the policies and programmes that empower sub-national governments to promote territorial development and reduce inequalities between urban and rural areas. Many governments have frequently adopted decentralisation and democracy as processes to improve governance, public service, and the quality of life of the citizens. While democracy determines the relationship between the citizens and their political leadership, decentralisation defines the relationship between the central government (CG) and local governance institutions. In most democratic settings, political parties compete for power and the winner(s) form a government. This approach for choosing political leadership invariably finds expression also at the local level in the form of democratic decentralisation (DD) that creates sub-national governments with elected councils and mayors to manage local affairs. Under political empowerment and spatial equity, INCLUDE is interested in analysis on different dynamics and dimensions of political empowerment of LGs and sub-national human development index, local governance and territorial public safety and security

4.2.1   *Local Governance Political empowerment and sub-national human development*

 A major justification for pursuing decentralisation and creation of local government territories in Africa is to bring government and services closer to where people live. It is argued that the creation of local governments would provide ample opportunities for and frequency of citizen participation in their political affairs. But there are different forms and dimensions of

decentralisation that ultimately define the balance of power and the relationship between the centre and sub-national governments.

While decentralisation has often been prescribed as a means to increase well-being of people at the local level, quite often there has been a mismatch between the powers and responsibilities transferred to subnational governments and the resources allocated to them. How have LGs responded to unfunded mandates? INCLUDE will be interested in analyses of different dimensions of political decentralisation and dynamics of empowerment of sub-national governments in Africa. It is also interested in answers to the question on whether political decentralisation promotes subnational human development index. The Subnational Human Development Index (SHDI) is a measure of the average subnational values for three dimensions of subnational human development: education, health, and standard of living for the period 1995-2019. It was constructed by the Global Data Lab (GDL) at the Institute for Management Research at Radboud University (RU).

4.2.2   Inclusive Governance outside the state?

Furthermore, there are many states in Africa (peaceful, fragile, conflict and post-conflict) where, beyond the national and regional capitals, the state's presence and capacity to provide physical security and access to public infrastructure and services, as well as to guarantee private property, labour and business rights, is limited. The state's absence or incapacity means that many people are trapped in unregulated relationships with non-state actors that foster insecurity and vulnerability. But there are also many places where local self-governance by non-state actors has empowered local processes of inclusive development. In a varied country context (peaceful, fragile, conflict and post conflict states), how does limited state presence influence local self-governance and spatial equity in services and livelihoods?

4.2.3   Women Political empowerment & local democracy

A high level of women's political empowerment is key to a functioning democracy and inclusive governance, and nowhere more so than at the local level where decisions affecting people's daily lives such as potable water, early childhood education, basic health care, sanitation and solid waste management, etc. are made. Empowering *young women to participate in local government politics will be a good start to consolidate increases in women's political participation and representation at the national level and will be in line with SDG 5 (Gender equality).* INCLUDE will be interested in studies that analyse the transition of women politicians from sub-national (Councillors) to the national level (Members of Parliament) and the lessons that can be learned on the factors that facilitate that transition. INCLUDE is also interested in analysis on the role of capacity building for women leaders and networks for women's political empowerment.

Asking women leaders to reflect on their personal journeys and documenting them may provide on-line resources for young women politicians. At the local government (LG) level, what are the successful strategies that have enabled more women to be elected to political positions? What are the sustainable ways to support women in leadership and ensure that male counterparts work with women leaders? Given the pervasive socio-cultural institutions in rural areas that inhibit women's advancement compared to the cosmopolitan nature of urban settlements, it could be hypothesised that more women are likely to be elected to political positions in the cities than in rural areas. What evidence is there on this hypothesis and what does that mean to capacity and policy steps to promote gender equality in politics especially in the context of urbanisation in Africa?

4.2.4 Democratic governance in the context of increasing public debt and looming austerity measures

The principle of democracy is generally recognised by African citizens and societies as most African countries are led by democratically elected leaders. Over three decades, the military has generally been kept in the barracks, and attempts to undermine democratic gains have been met with resistance from the citizens that are determined to see their rights respected. The level of

confidence in democracy has given hope to ECOWAS and the AU to adopt norms that prohibit military coups. However, sustainability of democratic governance in Africa is struggling and may well be reaching the "tipping point" as post-Covid-19 economic crisis, mounting public debt and ramifications of the Russia and Ukraine war loom large on democratic practices in the region. A reflection of the African past shows that democracy suffered in the 1980s from measures imposed by international financial institutions and there are genuine concerns that the current debt crisis and the looming austerity measures following negotiations for debt relief would be a test case for democracy.

Is democracy in crisis in Africa? The democratic dividend of peace, prosperity, equity, freedom, and human rights seem to be running short as Africa continues to be the region with the largest number of people living in extreme poverty (below $1.90 a day) after three decades of democratic governance. The current public debt is hypothesised to be a threat not only to attempts to end poverty in all its manifestations by 2030 but also to the sustainability of democracy. Recent data from V-DEM[14]Freedom House, Mo Ibrahim Index, and Afrobarometer shows that many countries are backsliding in democratic principles. In 2020, a military coup took place in Mali; in 2021, four African countries (Chad, Mali, Guinea, and Sudan) experienced military takeovers, in 2022, two coups occurred in Burkina Faso and an attempted one in Guinea Bissau. The Freedom House report of 2020 indicates that five of the world's democratic declines happened in West Africa. In 2021, the Mo Ibrahim Foundation's Index of African Governance reported the first-ever decline in African democratic governance since 2007 (Aidi, 2022). In Togo, Côte d'Ivoire, and Guinea, presidents have stayed on for third terms in violation of constitutional limits.

Against insidious erosion of democracy, Afrobarometer data continue to show that Africans want to keep democratic practices. Even in countries that experienced military takeovers, there is strong support for democracy - 62% of Burkinabe and 75% of Malians reject military rule, while 57% of Guineans still favour democracy. Even during the height of Covid-19 pandemic, African countries such as Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Benin, Burundi, and Malawi organised elections, with fairly high voter turnouts (Ghana 78.9%) (Burundi (87.7%), Malawi (64.8%) and Guinea (58.04%) (Matlosa, 2021). However, using Mali as a case study, analysts argue that people's support for military takeover (60% in favour) is linked to poor economic performance and highlights how the poor feel unserved by democratic governments, leaning towards a military takeover (Aidi, 2022:2). INCLUDE will be interested in studies that analyse whether democracy and democratic principles are under threat by the current debt crises and looming austerity measures.

4.3 Political empowerment and Inclusive Governance

4.3.1 Demand and Supply of accountability
Promoting political empowerment and inclusive governance and development involves initiatives to advance the demand and supply sides of accountability[15]. The demand side includes citizens' social and political action for transparency, accountability and good governance. Such demand-side actions are facilitated by information disclosure, awareness creation, conscientisation and cultural manifestations. Often there is a lack of clear citizens' action to promote accountability (Awortwi & Nuvunga, 2019). How do information, technology and social media help to promote new forms of citizen action for transparency and accountability? Are there signs that small, localised social and political action by citizens results in effective pleas for inclusive governance and the promotion of infrastructure services at the national level? On the supply side, what forms of political institutions and leadership provide space for citizens and their organisations to hold governments and private corporations accountable? The usual argument is that Africa lacks strong and effective institutions. But constitutions, such as those in Kenya, Ghana and South Africa, provide space for citizen participation, accountability and good

---

[14] V-Dem is a research institute that monitors democratic retrenchment

[15] Such as 'Supporting new roles of civil society organisations for inclusive development: Dialogue and Dissent' (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2014).

governance. Mechanisms for accountability abound in laws, policies and regulations, but enforceability has been a major challenge. What are some of the innovative mechanisms for promoting state-led vertical and horizontal accountability? How successful have these mechanisms been in promoting citizens empowerment? Finally, on political empowerment, emphasis is given to the role of institutions in promoting inclusive governance and less on individual political leadership. INCLUDE will support studies and policy engagement that looks at how and why political leaders promote change and the empowerment of citizens and pro accountability institutions to demand accountability.

4.3.2   *Political empowerment of the youth and sustainability of democracy*

To continue to sustain democracy in Africa, an electoral mandate alone is not enough. There must be genuine institutional checks and balances, an independent judiciary, viable political parties, a free press and effective CSOs. In a continent with an increasing youth population (60% of the population are estimated to be under the age of 25) compared with the average age of 32 in Asia and South America, and about 40 in Europe and North America,[16] youth political empowerment can help to sustain democracy. Polls and youth movements on the continent show that African youth believe in democracy and are prepared to fight for its sustainability using their internet activism. According to Aidi, the belief that African youth can sustain democracy on the continent is based on their successful bringing down of authoritarian leaders in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Malawi, Zimbabwe, and Sudan (Aidi 2022). The youth continue to weaponize digital platforms against anti-democratic praxis by governments. Other believers cite youth activists from Senegal Y'En A Marre and the No-Sars Campaign in Nigeria as examples of youth empowerment movements that can sustain Africa's democracy. INCLUDE be interested in studies on youth empowerment, movements and political inclusiveness, the conditions of democratic governance that facilitate youth empowerment and youth political activism?

4.4   Political empowerment and Political Economy

Grassroots citizen action needs to exert influence at the national level. While membership-based organisations formed by women, youth, marginalised groups and the poor can be effective in providing immediate basic needs and, to some extent, demanding entitlements from the state, these grassroots organisations are often unable to connect to national-level political and economic organisations, because of limited resources and space for inclusion. How have grassroots political organisations that represent women, youth, and other marginalised groups connected with each other across communities and formed associations and networks large enough to be recognized at the national level and to gain collective bargaining power and influence in decision making?

A better connection also needs to be made between economic and social exclusion approaches and issues of political participation. Particularly relevant is the way in which elites deal with the poor in their country, and are willing to work towards inclusion and a social contract that enables the (ultra-) poor and other marginal groups to have more influence on policy decisions and policy implementation. An important field of attention is also the way inclusion of the formerly excluded in itself can breed selective inclusion and leadership capture of the new benefits of inclusion (and how to avoid that)[17]. Furthermore, the politics of 'including the poor' is also about the rich and powerful and their reasons for fostering (or not) a more inclusive social contract. There is not enough attention paid to enabling the (ultra-)poor and excluded to organise themselves and increase their social organisation abilities and political voice. This tension between 'paternalistic' (or 'maternalistic') care and 'speaking for them' versus empowerment and allowing voices and rights demands more attention from INCLUDE researchers and policymakers[18]. It would be good

---

[16] Africa's population will double by 2050,"TheEconomist (March 26 2020)https://www.economist.com/special-report/2020/03/26/africas-population-will-double-by-2050
[17] For an insightful analysis of this phenomenon in North Africa and the Middle East see: Sapsford, et al. (2017).
[18] In the INCLUDE RIDSSA research projects, the case of the Batwa clearly demonstrates this point.

to compare experiences (current and historical) from Africa with those from Europe, the Americas and Asia.

5.   Supporting Research and Evidence- based Policy Dialogue

5.1   Supporting Research on Inclusive Development

In sections two to four of this concept note, INCLUDE has identified research areas that it is interested in supporting platform members and other researchers to undertake studies. We have presented the study areas in the four-by-four matrix (Table 1) to make a combination of at least 16 researchable issues. In these 16 areas, their narratives also highlight non-exhaustive research questions that interested members and other researchers can follow up. INCLUDE will support empirical studies and/or synthesis of existing evidence on these 16 issues from a variety of sources (academic papers and journal articles, policy briefs, research reports and grey literature).

Modalities for supporting research
- The modality for facilitating studies will include collaborating with international organisations such as IDRC and ILO to commission a large study across multiple regions and countries, 'commissioned papers', 'calls for research proposal' and short purposive research as part of APDs. Commissioning new research and calls for proposals are initiated by the Platform Secretariat and enables central allocation of funds to generate relevant knowledge that feeds into policy discussions across countries. This strengthens INCLUDE's convening power and knowledge brokering activities. However, it is unrealistic to expect INCLUDE to implement all the issues articulated in this concept note in four years.

- APDs will focus more on action research to provide immediate feedback on micro-level policies or pockets of effective programmes and actions at the county level. The process of identifying research that is of interest to local policy making, involving varied policy actors in defining policy problems, asking the right policy questions, and 'nudging' negotiated social and political action among actors will become routine procedures for conceptualising inclusive development policy research. The systematic development of policy and practice briefs at the participating country level based on research findings would continue.

- Research in Africa increasingly shows 'what doesn't work and why' and INCLUDE has added to that wealth of information (Reinders et al. 2019, Dekker et al. 2018; Van Kesteren et al. 2018; Hollander et al. 2018). However, since 2019 INCLUDE research strives for a balance, (that is intersection or systematic reviews with contextual experience/knowledge) of what works or does not work in specific policy contexts, and the conditions for replication with the necessary adjustment in other sectors and contexts.

- The concepts of political economy, political settlements, collective action, empowerment and accountability will continue to provide the analytical lens through which any of our thematic research areas will be studied. These concepts enable us to identify key strategic actors and institutions whose power, interest, capacity and motivation need to be understood and negotiated in specific context in order to promote inclusive development. We emphasise human wellbeing, social and ecological sustainability and voice and empowerment as key to inclusive development. Given that political economy analysis (PEA) lies at the heart of research and policy engagement of INCLUDE, it is expected that researchers and APDs will use PEA lenses to provide contextual information about their study area. Where necessary INCLUDE Secretariat will commission a broader PEA of the 4 themes or sub-themes.

5.2   Evidence-based Policy Engagement

Evidence-based policy engagement is a gamut of activities that INCLUDE members and the Secretariat pursue with key policy partners in Africa and the Netherlands, bilateral relations in Europe, and also through a network of research organisations like IDRC and development

agencies (like ILO, World Bank and African Union) to promote the principles of inclusive development. It involves conceptualisation and setting of the research agenda with varied policy actors that would eventually use the evidence arising from INCLUDE's studies, packaging of research evidence into easily readable format for use by policy actors, convening of platforms to disseminate research evidence, and dialoguing to influence the use of research evidence in policy and programme design to bring positive change.

In all this, there is an underlying assumption. INCLUDE's aim at achieving co-creation of knowledge on better and more evidence-based inclusive development policies and practices in Africa and the Netherlands is based on the assumptions that there is insufficient access to and use of knowledge in making development processes and outcomes more inclusive. Hence, the raison d'etre of INCLUDE is to bridge the gap between knowledge creation and inclusive policy development and it does that through three interrelated policy engagement strategies, namely *research, knowledge sharing and policy dialogue*.

The preceding sections have identified thematic areas and analytical lenses through which INCLUDE will support new *research* and synthesis of available research evidence. Our *knowledge sharing* strategies include convening of international forums, seminars and side events in Africa and in the Netherlands in partnership with organisations that share common ideology with INCLUDE, publication of policy briefs, interviews, infographics, evidence blogs, research reports, etc. on INCLUDE's website. For more information on our dissemination strategies see our website ………

5.2.1   African Policy Dialogues

The African Policy Dialogues (APDs) are important vehicles or platforms through which evidence-based policy engagements are implemented at the country level by INCLUDE members. APDs are convened by organisations in Africa and implemented in collaboration with stakeholders and a network of researchers, policymakers, practitioners and other actors from the government, civil society, think tanks and academia to inform and shape policies and programmes. The establishment of APDs involves the identification of a priority policy theme for which evidence is required, generating evidence and using diverse strategies to enhance its uptake. The activities of APDs, therefore, encompass research, development of knowledge products, and research uptake through dialogues and engagement with policy actors and practitioners.

Since 2015 INCLUDES has supported 14 of such evidence-based policy dialogues in 8 countries. Table 2 below shows the themes that these APDs have covered, the convening organisations and countries where these dialogues have been implemented.

Table 2. African Policy Dialogues that have been implemented since 2015

Country	Title	Year	Convening organsation/s
Rwanda	Entrepreneurship development	2015	Africa 2.0 and Entreprenarium Kigali
Ghana	Youth employment	2015	African Centre for Economic Transformation (ACET)
Ghana	Democratic developmental local governance and economic transformation	2019	Institute of Local Government Studies (ILGS)
Ghana	Youth employment interventions	2019	Netherlands-African Business

			Council (NABC) and National University of Ghana
Kenya	Utafiti Sera on employment creation	2015	Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR)
Kenya	Utafiti Sera on social protection	2015	Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR)
Kenya	Education reforms	2019	People's Action for Learning Network (PAL Network)
Mali	Increasing women entrepreneurship	2020	Netherlands-African Business Council (NABC) and L'Agence pour la Promotion des Investissements au Mali (API-MALI)
Mozambique	Youth employment in Mozambique's extractive industry	2015	Centre for Public Integrity (CIP)
Mozambique	Inclusive governance for economic structural transformation	2020	Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD)
Niger	Inclusive national youth policy	2020	Oxfam in Niger and Oxfam Novib
Nigeria	Utafiti Sera on wage employment creation	2015	Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR) and National Institute for Legislative Studies (NILS)
Uganda	Women's entrepreneurship and social protection	2015	Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC)
Uganda	Productive and decent work for youth and women	2019	Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC)

This new concept note provides yet another opportunity for INCLUDE members to establish and implement country specific research to policy dialogues.

All APDs must identify specific intersection(s) in our matrix and reflect on how they resonate with their country context and organise evidence-based policy engagement along the outlines that INCLUDE secretariat will provide. Whilst INCLUDE concedes that context matters hence does not prescribe a single method for all APDs (in fact it encourages innovative processes for policy engagement), it is important that APDs convenors involve policymakers right at the beginning in the research agenda setting and implementation as opposed to considering policy actors as recipients of research results. It is also important to obtain feedback from policy partners on the changes that new knowledge is making.

In phase III INCLUDE will:

▪ Encourage platform members to identify policy and programme issues that are relevant to both Africa and the Netherlands. We expect APDs to connect with Dutch embassies in their countries. Dutch embassies in INCLUDE partner countries have developed country policy strategies. The thematic focus/programme that an APD selects to pursue in a specific country need not be the same as those of the Dutch Embassy in the country of the APD but it will be

helpful if there is an alignment or the embassy is kept informed.

▪ Require the convening organisation of the APD to apply to the INCLUDE Secretariat for funding to undertake research, dissemination and policy dialogue in their specific countries.

▪ Support APDs to develop communities of practice that translate knowledge into usable products that target varied policy actors (state and non-state) and audiences. We broaden our policy partners to include policy actors beyond senior politicians and bureaucrats to include staff of NGOs, CSOs and the private sector.

▪ Require APDs to undertake political economy analysis of their chosen country initiatives to determine who has the interest, capacity, power and motivation to influence change towards more and better inclusiveness. That means development of a theory of change for the APD work is prerequisite for receiving support from INCLUDE

▪ Support cross-country sharing of experiences and knowledge in policy dialogues thereby strengthening peer learning between APDs (considering existing APDs and new APDs), bilateral relations in Europe, and other international organisations (for instance with IDRC & ILO).

5.2.2 Research and Policy Engagement in the Netherlands

In the Netherlands, the INCLUDE Secretariat will facilitate all platform members to connect more with the Dutch Foreign Ministry, Dutch-African academic community, cross-knowledge platform collaboration in research and knowledge generation and dissemination, policy dialogue and engagement. This will help inform policy discussions in the Netherlands and further feedback to *The Africa Strategy of Netherlands: 2023-2032"* document. The Introduction of Webinar series to be facilitated by INCLUDE Secretariat will enable platform members to disseminate the intermediate outcomes of their African research to policy engagement activities in the Netherlands. It also provides opportunities for joint research between different knowledge platforms in the Netherlands. For instance, INCLUDE's studies on political participation and state citizens' relationship can be connected with the Knowledge Platform on Security and Rule of Law (KPSRL) where there has been quite extensive studies on social contracts. The INCLUDE Secretariat will facilitate such collaborations across platforms in the Netherlands.

5.2.3 Tracking Outcome of INCLUDE interventions

The INCLUDE Secretariat, first and foremost, performs the task to synthesise knowledge from research and subsequently broker the knowledge between relevant stakeholders. Knowledge brokering means bridging between different knowledge realms (science, policy, practice) in order to find innovative solutions to development problems. Knowledge brokering covers a range of skills and activities, including knowledge translation and communication, facilitating knowledge exchange, knowledge valorisation and co-design and co-creation of research and policy.

INCLUDE recognizes that policy impact takes a long time to manifest so it encourages the APDs to track intermediate outcomes and processes of change that is not limited to policy makers but societal groups who also have the power to influence change. Intermediate outcomes include the importance of cultural change for instance acceptance to use new evidence, forming platforms and networks, co-funding, acknowledgement of government resistance, being mindful of unintended consequences of policies, and future partnerships and approaches as indicated by platform members in Kigali.

To improve the *monitoring, evaluation and learning* (MEL) function of the INCLUDE Secretariat, as recommended by the External Evaluation of the INCLUDE Knowledge Platform in 2022 (MDF 2022), APDs would strive to move beyond counting outputs to systematically track and document

intermediary outcomes in policy and programme changes, facilitating learning and organising exchange across APDs.

6. Conclusions and the Way Forward

In this concept note INCLUDE has articulated some of its initial ideas for research and evidence-based policy engagement for the years 2023 to 2026. We have maintained the four research themes (with minor variations) and four analytical lenses that have defined our areas of focus for the past 10 years. Given the current context of inclusive development in Africa, we have chosen an overarching theme "Economic Justice and Political Empowerment" and provided descriptive narratives on the four-by-four matrices under the rubrics of economic justice and structural transformation; decent work and income; digitalisation of access to and use of services and infrastructure; and political empowerment. We believe these themes are critical for providing insights into the nature of economic, technological, climate, social and spatial (in)justices that need to be addressed through evidence-based policies and programmes. The lens through which INCLUDE measures inclusiveness are social equity (effect on vulnerable people such as women, children, the youth, persons with disability, aged, etc.) and spatial equity in terms of rural areas, sub-national government, deprived urban settlements, regional, etc.

These thematic issues that came from the thoughts of platform members and subsequently informed by literature scan, also resonate with the ideas espoused in the *Africa Strategy of Netherlands* (2023-2032). It must however be emphasised that this concept note is not the research agenda of INCLUDE but the first step towards developing that agenda in collaboration with the Steering Groups and Platform members. Based on the issues articulated in the concept note and our experience over the last 10 years, the following will be considered as constituting INCLUDE's principles in supporting research for policy engagement on inclusive development in Africa for the next 4 years:

- INCLUDE will continue to focus on research and policy engagement in Africa and draw inspiration from the list of countries that the Netherlands government has Development Cooperation[19], although the degree of concentration of research and policy work in a country will vary, depending on the availability of a platform member from these countries, the interest shown by platform members, and the research topics for which evidence is needed to inform policy discussions in the region.

- INCLUDE acknowledges high quality policy relevant research that is methodologically sound and analytically rigorous.

- INCLUDE Secretariat, platform members and the Steering Group will select a combination of themes and analytical lens to commission further studies (synthesis of existing literature or empirical research) to provide evidence that can be used for policy engagement. For each of the studies that INCLUDE decides to pursue, the Secretariat will develop a separate concept note that will define the scope, the analytical lens, country(ies) of focus and policy engagement strategies.

- The INCLUDE Steering Group makes decisions on grants and allocation of budget across themes. Such decisions are made in line with the thinking about the strategic future of the platform, as well as the subsidy framework of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

---

[19] Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Ethiopia, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda, Chad, Egypt, Kenya, Somalia and Tunisia. Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa.

- At the country level, platform members will *prioritise* policy relevant research areas identified in this concept note according to how they resonate in their country. We acknowledge that there are overlaps and linkages across themes and approaches/modalities for conducting research. Hence, platform members will be able to make their own combinations of thematic areas of focus according to their interest, provided that these links can be demonstrated.

- INCLUDE encourages further operationalization of the overarching outcome of an integrated inclusive development with justice perspective in all research that will be done. This should include, as a first step, mapping out the problem with support of empirical data, so that when implementing the APDs in a later stage, the policy and practice engagement process can be informed by meaningful data and an INCLUDE database can be built.

- Given this integrated approach, where economic, social and environmental/climate justice need to be on the radar of policymakers à priori, it is important for policymakers to learn to work with integrated frameworks in which multi-dimensional trade-offs can be measured and made transparent and possibilities for synergies can be identified. This also implies closer knowledge exchange and co-creation between economic, social and environmental policy domains and with relevant stakeholders from practice.

- The outcomes of APDs will be communicated more broadly within and outside the INCLUDE Platform, e.g. to other knowledge platforms as well as to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and embassies on the work being done, the challenges and successes, and to seek alignment with Dutch foreign policies more broadly.

References

Achten, S., & Lessmann, C. (2020). Spatial inequality, geography and economic activity. *World Development*, *136*, 105114.
https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2020.105114

African Development Bank (2018). *Jobs for youth in Africa*. Abidjan: AfDB.

African development Bank (2023). The African development Bank Group's new Ten Year Strategy. Last accessed on 15 June 2023: Survey announcement: Formulation of the African Development Bank Group's new Ten-Year Strategy | African Development Bank - Building today, a better Africa tomorrow (afdb.org)

African Development Bank (n.d.). AfDB's High 5s: A game changer in Africa's development discourse. [online] https://www.afdb.org/en/the-high-5/

African Union (2015). *Agenda 2063: The Africa we want.* Addis Ababa: African Union
https://au.int/Agenda2063/popular_version

African Union (2023). *The African Continental Free Trade Agreement. Legal Texts*. 23 May 2023:The AfCFTA Legal Texts - AfCFTA (au-afcfta.org)

African Union & OECD (2022) Revenue Statistics in Africa.
https://www.oecd.org/tax/tax-policy/brochure-revenue-statistics-africa.pdf
Accessed on 23/6/23

Akinyoade, A. (2018). New African migration body is win-win for Morocco. *The Globe Post,* 8 August 2018. https://theglobepost.com/2018/08/08/migration-oamd-morocco/

Ansu, Y. (2013). Industrial policy and economic transformation in Africa: strategies for development and a research agenda. In *The Industrial Policy Revolution II*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 492–528.

Anthonio, F., Skok, A., & Hernández, M. D. (2021). Voices from Tigray: Ongoing internet shutdown tearing families, communities, businesses apart. *Access Now*, 4244–4263.

Assih, Mazamesso (2022) Why Africa needs to make financial inclusion its 2022 priorityRetrieved June 23 from https://africanarguments.org/2022/01/why-africa-needs-to-make-financial-inclusion-its-2022-priority/

Atela, M., & Mustapha, A.R. (Eds.). (2022). Political Settlements and Agricultural Transformation in Africa: Evidence for Inclusive Growth (1st ed.). Routledge.
https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003147947

AU (2016). The African Mining Vision. The African Union Minerals Framework. Accessed on 13 June 2023: African Minerals Development Centre | African Union (au.int)

AU (2021). The African Union Green Recovery Action Plan 2021-2027. Accessed on 13 June 2023: African Union Green Recovery Action Plan 2021-2027 | African Union (au.int)

AU (2023). The African Continental Free Trade Agreement. Accessed on 2nd June 2023: The African Continental Free Trade Area | African Union (au.int)

Awortwi, N. & Nuvunga, A. (2019). *Beyond information disclosure to achieve accountability in the extractive sector.* IDS Policy Brief, Issue 163.

Ayinde, A.F, Kwaghe, P.V, Jijji, S. Agbiboa, D.E (2023). 'Political Settlements and the Rice and Cotton Industries in Nigeria' in: in Mustapha and Atela: *Political Settlements and Agricultural Transformation in Africa*. London: Routledge (chapter 4)

Bahago, K. Adeniran, A. and Efobi, U (2023 'The role of digitilisation in inclusive governance: A case study of sub-Saharan Africa' *Southern Voice Occasional Paper Series No. 79*
https://southernvoice.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Digitalisation-sub-Saharan-Africa-Bahago-Adeniran-Efobi-2023.pdf

Bauer, George Kibala (2020) Digital solutions to improve basic service provision

to the urban poor. Field Actions Science Report Special Issue No. 22
Water, Waste & Energy: Prospects for essential services in Africa

Berendsen, B., Dietz, T., Schulte Nordholt, H. & Van Der Veen, R. (2013). *Asian tigers, African lions*. Leiden: Brill (African Dynamics).

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (2019) Women's Digital Financial Inclusion in Africa. Report prepared at the request of the G7 French Presidency. https://docs.gatesfoundation.org/Documents/WomensDigitalFinancialInclusioninAfrica_English.pdfAidi, Hisham (2022) 'African Democracy in Crisis?' Policy Brief PB 64/22 https://www.policycenter.ma/sites/default/files/2022-11/PB_64_22_Hicham%20AIDI.pdf

Botha, F. (2019) Why Africa Has The Ability To Leapfrog The Rest Of The World With Innovation. https://www.forbes.com/sites/francoisbotha/2019/04/02/why-africa-has-the-ability-to-leapfrog-the-rest-of-the-world-with-innovation/?sh=3a35a6ba5ece

Brookings (2021). Industrial Policy Makes a Come-back in Africa. 1st June 2023: Industrial policy makes a comeback in Africa (brookings.edu)

Brookings Institution (2019). *Foresight Africa*: *top priorities for the continent in 2019*. Washington, DC: Brookings. https://www.brookings.edu/multi-chapter-report/foresight-africa-top-priorities-for-the-continent-in-2019/

Buckholtz, A., & Oloo, K. (2020). Tapping Africa's 180 Billion Opportunity.". IFC Insights.

Corydon, Bjarne; Vidhya Ganesan, and Martin Lundqvist (2016) 'Transforming government through digitization' McKinsey and Co. https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-sector/our-insights/transforming-government-through-digitization

Dekker, M. (2013). *The richer harvest: economic development in Africa and Southeast Asia compared: the 'Tracking Development' study 2006–2011*. Leiden: African Studies Centre.

Dekker, M., & Pouw, N. (2022). Introduction to the Special Issue: Policies for Inclusive Development in Africa. The European Journal of Development Research, 34(5), 2137–2155. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41287-022-00561-x

Dekker, M., Simbanegavi, W., Hollander, S., & Miroro, O. (2018). *Boosting youth employment in Africa: what works and why?*. INCLUDE Synthesis Report Series, https://includeplatform.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/PE_synthesis.pdf

Dietz, A.J. & Akinyoade, A. (2018). *Africa in the 21st Century*. ASCL Infosheet 33. Leiden: African Studies Centre.

Dietz, A.J., Kaag, M.M.A. & De Vink, N. (2017). *Africa: international migration, emigration 2015.* Leiden: African Studies Centre Leiden.

Dijkhorst, H.V, Bergmann, N. and Nkrumah, M.D (2022) External Evaluation INCLUDE Platform. MDF Training and Consultancy

Domingo, E., & Shiferaw, L. T. (2022). Digitalisation and Democracy: Is the African Governance Charter fit for the digital era. https://ecdpm.org/work/digitalisation-and-democracy-africas-governance-charter-fit-digital-era

ECDPM (2013). *Strategic actors for the implementation of inclusive development policies*. Draft concept note for discussion during the Platform Meeting Accra (3 and 4 April 2013), INCLUDE. https://includeplatform.net/publications/concept-note-on-strategic-actors-for-inclusive-development/

Elbadawi, I. A., Ndulu, B. J., & Ndung'u, N. S. (2017). Macroeconomic performance in Sub-Saharan Africa in a comparative setting. In *Comparative Development Experiences of Sub-Saharan Africa and East Asia* (pp. 73-112). Routledge

Engel, U. & Olsen, G.R. (2010). *Authority, sovereignty and Africa's changing regimes of territorialisation*. Working Paper of the Graduate Centre Humanities and Social

Sciences of the Research Academy Leipzig, No. 7, Leipzig.

European Parliament (2020). *Intra-African Migration: structures and infrastructures for continent circulation*. Accessed on 12 June 2023: <u>Intra-African Migration: structures and infrastructures for continued circulation (europa.eu)</u>

Flint, C., & Taylor, P. J. (2007)*. Political geography: world-economy, nation-state, and locality*. Pearson Education.

Fox, L., & Signé, L. (2021). The fourth industrial revolution (4IR) and the future of work: could this bring good jobs to Africa. *Evid. Synth. Pap. Ser*, *51*.

Fox, L., Senbet, L.W., & Simbanegavi, W. (2016). Youth employment in Sub-Saharan Africa: challenges, constraints and opportunities*. Journal of African Economies, 25* (1), i3–i15.

Gaynor, N. (2022). Engendering democracy in Africa: Women, politics and democracy. London: Routledge

Goris, Y. & Vrancken, J. (2018). *Report of the INCLUDE meeting 20 November 2018 workshop: key learnings inclusive development*. INCLUDE report. <u>https://includeplatform.net/downloads/report-of-the-include meeting-20-november-2018-workshop-key-learnings-inclusive-development/</u>

Gumede, V. (2018). Social policy for inclusive development in Africa. Third World Quarterly, 39(1), 122–139. <u>https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2017.137</u>

Harsono, H. 2020. China's Surveillance Technology Is Keeping Tabs on Populations Around the World. The Diplomat. 18 June 2020

Health Policy Watch 92021). Universal Health Coverage, Last accessed 16 June 2023: <u>Universal Health Coverage: Only Half Of Africans Have Access To Health Care - Health Policy Watch (healthpolicy-watch.news)</u>

Hickey, S., Bukenya, B., & Sen, K. (2014). The politics of inclusive development: Interrogating the evidence. Oxford University Press. <u>https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198722564.001.0001</u>

Hollander, S., Dekker, M., Miroro, O., Kesteren, F.V., Bossuyt, J., & Tollenaere, M. (2018). *Strategic actors for inclusive development in Africa*. INCLUDE Synthesis Report Series, . <u>https://ecdpm.org/publications/improving-the-perspective-for-regional-trade-and-i nvestment-in west-africa/</u> https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WP/Issues/2017/07/10/The-Informal-Economy-in-Sub-Saharan Africa-Size-and-Determinants-45017

IDEA (2021) Women's Political Prticipation: Africa's Barometer, 2021). <u>https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/womens-political-participa tion-africa-barometer-2021.pdf</u>

INCLUDE (2023) The Partnership Synthesis Paper: Three years of evidence for boosting decent youth employment in Africa. 13 February 2023. <u>https://includeplatform.net/publications/the-partnership-synthesis-paper-thre years-of-evidence-for-boosting-decent-youth-employment-in-africa/</u>

Ilo, U.J. and Osori, A. 2021. Covid-19 Disruptions and use of Technology in Elections: Lessons for Africa. Open Society Initiative for West Africa Retrieved June 23 from <u>https://www.osiwa.org/newsroom/covid-19-disruptions-and-use-of-technology-i n-elections-lessons-for-west-africa/</u>

IPU (2019) Women in Politics. <u>https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/infographics/2019-03/women-in-p olitics-2019 Accessed on 23/6/23</u>

IPU. 2022. *Global and regional averages of women in national parliaments. May 2022.*

Jili, B. 2020. The Spread of Surveillance Technology in Africa Stirs Security Concerns. Africa Center for Strategic Studies. 11 December 2020

K'onyango, O. (2022). Use of technology improved Kenya electoral transparency: Carter Centre. The East African. 9 September 2022.

Kaag, S. (2018). *Investing in global prospects – For the World, For the Netherlands.* Policy Note, 18 May 2018. The Hague: Ministry Foreign Affairs. https://www.government.nl/documents/policy-notes/2018/05/18/investing-in-global-pros

pects;

Kalemera, Ashnah, Victor Kapiyo and Wairagala Wakabi (2023). Digital Divides or Dividends? Synthesis Report on Digitalisation of Basic Services in Benin, Ghana, Mauritius, Rwanda, and Uganda

Kelsall, T. (2013). *Business, politics, and the state in Africa: challenging the orthodoxies on growth and transformation*. London: Zed Books.

Kerr, A. (2017). Tax (i) ing the poor? Commuting costs in South African cities. *South African Journal of Economics*, *85*(3), 321-340.

Khabele Matlosa , "Elections in Africa During Covid-19: The Tenuous Balance Between Democracy and Human Security," South African Journal of Political Studies (April 2021) https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02589346.2021.1913798

Khan, M.H. (2010). *Political settlements and the governance of growth-enhancing institutions*. London: Economics Department, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. Koenders, B. (2008). *Een Zaak van Iedereen*. The Hague: Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Konte, M. and Kwadwo, V.O (2019) Political empowerment of women in Africa: Influence or number? https://includeplatform.net/blog/political-empowerment-women-africa-influence-number/

Kuch, Declan, Kalervo Gulson, and Matthew Kearnes. 2020. "The Promise of Precision: Datafication in Medicine, Agriculture and Education." *Policy Studies* 41 (5): 527–546

Lall, S.V., Henderson, J.V., & Venable, A.J. (2017). *African cities: opening doors to the world*. Washington, DC: World Bank & UK Aid.

Lange, P., Dietz, T., & Rau, M.-L. (2016). *Improving the perspective for regional trade and investment in West Africa: the key to food security, economic development and stability in the region*. Scoping report commissioned by the Food & Business Knowledge Platform for African Studies Centre Leiden, Agro Economic Research Institute, Wageningen University and Research, and European Centre for Development Policy Management. Leiden: Africa Studies Centre.

Leandro, M., Jonelis, A.W., & Cangul, M. (2017). *The informal economy in SSA: size and determinants*. International Monetary Fund (IMF) Working Paper.

Lemma, A., Mendez-Parra, M., Naliaka, L. 2022. *AfCFTA: unlocking the potential of the digital economy in Africa*, ODI. 13 July 2022.

Lijfering, s., & Lacey, n. (n.d.). Green Jobs for Youth in Africa. https://includeplatform.net/publications/green-jobs-for-youth-in-africa/

Mastercard Foundation and IFC (2018). Digital Access: the future of financial inclusion in Africa. https://www.rfilc.org/library/digital-access-the-future-of-financial-inclusion-in-africa/

Matlosa, Khabele (2021) "Elections in Africa During Covid-19: The Tenuous Balance Between Democracy and Human Security," South African Journal of Political Studies (April 2021) https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02589346.2021.1913798

Mbaku, J. M. (2020). Good and inclusive governance is imperative for Africa's future. Retrieved June 23 from https://www.brookings.edu/research/good-and-inclusive-governance-is-imperative-for-africas-future/

McKinsey & Company. (2020). Digital Public Services: How to achieve fast transformation at scale https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-sector/our-insights/digital-public-services-how-to-achieve-fast-transformation-at-scale

McKinsey & Company. (2023). The Path to Greater Productivity and Prosperity in Africa https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-sector/our-insights/the-path-to-greater-productivity-and-prosperity-in-africa

Mkandawire, T. (2010). From maladjusted states to democratic developmental states in Africa. Constructing a Democratic Developmental State in South Africa: Potentials and Challenges, 59–81.

Molyneux, M., Jones, W. N., & Samuels, F. (2016). Can Cash Transfer Programmes Have 'Transformative' Effects? The Journal of Development Studies, 52(8), 1087–1098.

Mosero, R. (2022). In Kenya's 2022 Elections, Technology and Data Protection Must Go Hand-in-Hand.

Mulugeta Woldegiorgis, M. (2022). Inequality, social protection policy, and inclusion: pertinent theories and empirical evidence. *Journal of Social and Economic Development*, *24*(2), 241-265.

Musau, Zipporah (2019) African women in politics: Miles to go before parity is achieved'Africa Renewal' 33(1):4-9

Mustapha, A.R., Meagher, K and Awortwi, N (2023) 'Introduction and Overview' in Mustapha and Atela: Political Settlements and Agricultural Transformation in Africa. London: Routledge, Pp 5-36 (Chapter 1)

Mutenyo, J., Buyinza, F., Ssenono, V. F., & Asiimwe, W. (2022). Work and Income for Young Men and Women in Africa: The Case of Uganda. http://publication.aercafricalibrary.org/handle/123456789/3432

Ndung'u, N., & Signé, L. (2020). The Fourth Industrial Revolution and digitization will transform Africa into a global powerhouse. *Foresight Africa Report*, *5*(1), 1-177.

Netherlands African Business Council (2019). *'Africa Works' conference: future African cities.* https://www.africaworks.nl/

Okunogbe, O., & Santoro, F. (2023). Increasing Tax Collection in African Countries: The Role of Information Technology. Journal of African Economies, 32(Supplement_1), i57–i83.

Okwany, A. and Ebrahim, H.B (2016) Rethinking epistemology and methodology in early childhood research in Africa. https://methods.sagepub.com/book/the-sage-handbook-of-early-childhood-research/n26.xml

Oxfam 2022 'Africa's three richest men have more wealth than the poorest 650 million people across the continent' https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/africas-three-richest-men-have-more-wealth-poorest-650-million-people-across

Page, J. (2019). How industries without smokestacks can address Africa's youth unemployment crisis. In: Brookings Institution (2019). *Foresight Africa: top priorities for the continent in 2019*. Washington, DC: Brookings.

Ploumen, L. (2013). A world to gain: A new agenda for aid, trade and investment. The Hague, the Netherlands: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.

Pouw, N. & Baud, I.S.A. (eds). (2013). *Local governance and poverty in developing nations*. London & New York: Routledge.

Pouw, N. R., & De Bruijne, A. (2015). Strategic governance for inclusive development. *The European Journal of Development Research*, *27*, 481-487.

Pouw, N., & Gupta, J. (2017). Inclusive development: a multi-disciplinary approach. *Current opinion in environmental sustainability*, *24*, 104-108.

Prainsack, B. (2020). 'The political economy of digital data: Introduction to the special issue.' Policy Studies 41(5):439-466

Quak, E., & Flynn, J. (2019). Private sector development interventions and better-quality job creation for youth in Africa.

Raworth, K. (2017). *Doughnut economics: seven ways to think like a 21st-century economist*. Chelsea Green Publishing. https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=7A4lDgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA1&dq=raworth,+2017&ots=wyIn9pMuq6&sig=gKhDsdLmS5D3lIlxrRvJsGiB_jw#v=onepage&q=raw

orth%2C%202017&f=false

Reinders, S., Dekker, M. & Kesteren, F. van (2019). Synthesis report Inclusive Development in Africa. INCLUDE synthesis report series. https://includeplatform.net/downloads/synthesis-report-inclusive development-in-africa/

Salzinger, Maelle, Ledet Tadesse and Martin Ronceray (2022). From hastaqs to the streets: Digital technology for women's political activism. Examples from Africa. ECDPM Discussion Paper 326

Sen, A. 2001. Development as Freedom. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Teevan, C. and Tadesse Shiferaw, L. 2022. Digital geopolitics in Africa: Moving from strategy to action. ECDPM briefing note 150. 10 October 2022

Turok, I., Scheba, A., & Visagie, J. (2020). Social housing and spatial inequality in South African cities.

Ulriksen, M. S., Plagerson, S., & Hochfeld, T. (2015). Social protection and justice: Poverty, redistribution, dignity. In *Distributive justice debates in political and social thought* (pp. 191-211). Routledge.

UN Habitat (2013). *State of the world's cities 2012/2013 – prosperity of cities.* London & New York: Routledge.

UN Habitat & HIS-Erasmus University Rotterdam (2018). *The state of African cities*. *The geography of African investment*. United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN Habitat). https://unhabitat.org/books/the-state-of-african-cities-2018-the-geography-of-african-investment/

UN. (2015). The Millennium Development Goals Report. https://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2015_MDG_Report/pdf/MDG%202015%20rev%20(July%201).pdf

UNCTAD (2022). *Economic Development in Africa Report 2022.* Accessed on 14 June 2023: Economic Development in Africa Report 2022 | UNCTAD

UNDP (2022). UN Development Programme call for debt relief. Accessed online 16 June 2023: UN Development Programme calls for debt relief now for 54 countries | UN News

UNESCO (2023). Education in Africa. Last accessed 1st June 2023: Education in Africa | UNESCO UIS

Vale, B. Finestone, E. Magadla, S. Strugnell, D. (2022). 'Boosting decent employment for African youth'. Evidence synthesis paper. https://includeplatform.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/12_12_Boosting-3.pdf

van der Hoeven, A., Everts, R., Mulder, M., Berkers, P., Hitters, E., & Rutten, P. (2022). Valuing value in urban live music ecologies: negotiating the impact of live music in the Netherlands. Journal of Cultural Economy, 15(2), 216–231. https://doi.org/10.1080/17530350.2021.2002175

Van Donge, J.K. & Henley, D. (2012). Tracking development in South-East Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. *Development Policy Review, 30* (s1), s5–s24

Van Kesteren, F., Dekker, M.,·Miroro, O., Gassmann, F., &·Timár, E. (2018). *The 'business case' for social protection in Sub-Saharan Africa*. INCLUDE Synthesis Report Series. https://includeplatform.net/wp content/uploads/2018/11/Synthesis-SP_final_15NOV-2.pdf

World Bank (2015). *The state of social safety net report 2015*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

World Bank (2017). *World development report 2017: Governance and the Law*. Washington, DC: World Bank World Bank (2018).

World Bank (2023). World Bank Gini Index. Last accessed 1 June 2023: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI

INCLUDE Knowledge Platform

INCLUDE is an independent knowledge platform initiated by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2012, to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and effective policies. The platform is made up of researchers, development practitioners and policymakers, promoting evidence-based policymaking on inclusive development, with a focus on Africa. While most African countries have registered high economic growth, many people remain excluded from the benefits of this progress. INCLUDE is laser-focused on advancing inclusive development that is context-specific, locally driven and reflects the voices of marginalized groups such as women and young people. Through Research, Knowledge Exchange and Policy Dialogues, INCLUDE works in close collaboration with African networks to develop a locally relevant knowledge agenda, share evidence through accessible knowledge products and shape the local policy discourse.

INCLUDE Secretariat
Wassenaarseweg 52, 2333 AK, Leiden, The Netherlands
+31(0)71 527 6602
info@includeplatform.net
includeplatform.net

KNOWLEDGE PLATFORM ON INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT POLICIES