

## **Employment Creation for Youth in Africa: The Gender Dimension**

Prepared by

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### **1. Introduction**

In the last two or more decades, Africa has been confronted with a multidimensional crisis with several symptoms including drought and famine, floods, wars, HIV/AIDS and various endemic diseases, and widespread poverty. Underlying all these is the phenomenon of unemployment which to some observers, is at the core of the problems of the African sub-region (Sarr, 2000). The African Common Position on Human and Social Development in Africa, a document prepared for the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development, highlighted some of the human and social issues of concern for the African region. One of the core issues addressed by the Summit and which was emphasized in the African Common Position, was the promotion of productive employment and the reduction of unemployment. Follow-up conferences in Africa recognized various constraints and challenges to the achievement of the Programme of Action adopted at the World Summit. With respect to employment creation, it was recognized that a major challenge is the design of comprehensive, integrated and coherent employment policies to facilitate the attainment of objectives. An integrated employment programme it was stressed should comprise four essential elements (ECA 1999):

- a) A policy component,
- b) A mechanism for operationalising, monitoring, and coordinating the programme,
- c) An integrated and interconnected set of employment-promoting project proposals, and
- d) Proposals for target groups expected to be the beneficiaries of the programme.

A necessary condition for enhancing employment creation is to achieve a high rate of employment-intensive economic growth. That is, an employment-led growth strategy is required to address the problems of widespread poverty and unemployment in Africa. This required that there should be a link between employment policies, development needs, education and human development, and women in development. It was recognized that special activities are needed for the employment of women, and that youth employment should also be integrated into comprehensive national development programmes (ECA 1999). With the rapid population growth in Africa and its implication for the age pyramid, youth unemployment has become a major issue of concern to African governments. At the global level, with an estimated 70 million youth around the world unemployed and many more underemployed, the need for employment creation for youth cannot be denied. Youth unemployment rates are at least double that of adults. The situation is very critical for young women who suffer higher unemployment rates than young men in majority of economies (UN 2002).

While employment creation is part and parcel of macroeconomic policy, the pressure of youth unemployment led several African governments, often with the support of the donor community, to embark on programmes and projects to promote youth employment. Some programmes have also addressed women's concerns. This paper reviews employment of youth and some employment promotion strategies in Africa from a gender perspective. The purpose of the paper is to contribute to the discussion

on policies to create employment for youth worldwide Section two of this paper examines gender and employment patterns in Africa. Section three reviews youth employment and unemployment in Africa. Section four discusses some successful strategies for employment creation for youth in Africa with emphasis on the Nigerian experience. Section five highlights issues to be considered in designing and integrating youth concerns into employment policies in Africa from a gender perspective.

## **II Gender Issues in Employment in Africa**

There are wide variations in female labour force participation between and within countries in Africa. Available statistics show that labour force participation rates are lower for women than for men in every country (see Table 1). For all Africa, female labour force participation rate was 33.8 percent for females as against 49.7 percent for males in the year 2000. However, official labour statistics do not adequately reflect women's activities, especially in rural areas where production systems are still predominantly household or family based. A great deal of women's economic activities, especially for family consumption and unpaid family labour are not reflected in official statistics (ILO 1997).

In the rural areas, women are heavily concentrated in agriculture, and within agriculture, in food production, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. The proportion of women is nearly always higher than the proportion of men (Katepa-Kalala, 1999). For several countries, statistics of formal sector wage employment are often unavailable or not disaggregated by gender. Although an increasing number of women are now employed in the formal sector, formal wage employment, whether in the public or private sector, has offered relatively limited employment to women, it is dominated by men. Women are found mainly at the lower echelons in the formal sector (African Centre for Gender and Development, 2002). The share of women employed in industry is low. Given limited opportunities in the formal sector, majority of women in the urban areas are self-employed in the informal sector. The most common entrepreneurial activity for women is retail trade, including within and cross border trading, others activities include handicrafts, food processing, services and cottage industries, (ILO, 1997; Okojie, 2000). A survey conducted by the World Bank found that over 95 percent of female workers in Ghana and 90 percent in Zambia are employed in the informal sector (Katepa-Kalala, 1999). Furthermore, unemployment of women continues to be higher than that of men.

Women face various structural constraints on their effective participation in economic activities, they include the following (ILO, 1997; Katepa-Kalala, 1999; Okojie, 2000; African Centre for Gender and Development, 2002):

- Customary laws and norms which impede women to a greater extent than men, from obtaining land, credit, productive inputs, education, information, and healthcare.
- The coexistence of multiple laws which create ambivalence (for example, customary and statute laws relating to marriage and inheritance).
- Gender bias in access to basic human resource development services such as education, training and health (see Table 1 for gender gap in adult literacy rates, and Table 2 for youth literacy rates), and

- Time poverty, resulting from women's multiple and competing reproductive and productive responsibilities. These are usually performed without the assistance of labour-saving technology, adequate transportation, etc.

In general, women are at a disadvantage in access to and control over productive resources. Consequently, their economic activities suffer from low productivity and are often poorly remunerated. Women's employment has wide implications for households and the community, as their incomes contribute to family welfare. They should therefore be included as a target for employment policies.

### **III Youth Employment and Unemployment in Africa**

Adequate and reliable unemployment figures for African countries are not available. However, figures show that Africa, compared to other regions of the world, has the largest segment of young people in its population, 36.7 percent in 2000, compared to 27.3 percent for the world (Curtain, 2000). In Africa, it is estimated that young people make up more than 50 percent of the population of most countries. Tables 2 and 3 (see Annexe) show that youth aged 15-24 years make up between 19-23 percent of the populations of majority of African countries, although some estimates show that the proportion of youth aged 15-25 years constitutes about one-third of the population in most African countries (Chigunta, 2002). In absolute terms, it is estimated that there are presently about 122 million youth on the African continent (Chigunta, 2002).

Table 3 shows that the median age of youth in most African countries is between 16-20 years, while Table 2 shows male and female populations aged 15-24 years. In a majority of the countries for which figures are available (24 countries out of 37), the female population aged 15-24 is higher than that of males. Furthermore, most of the youth aged 15-24 live in rural areas. Africa's youth are more educated than their parents as a comparison of Tables 1 and 5 shows. Majority of African youth aged 15-24 are literate, although female youth are less educated than their male counterparts. However, although they are better educated, they possess few employable skills. Projections of population growth into the 21<sup>st</sup> century indicate that the proportion of young persons aged 15-24 years, in relation to the overall population, will continue to grow over the next twenty years (Chigunta, 2002). Their large numbers and their higher education levels make it necessary to ensure that youth employment policies are put in place, and that they also target young women.

Table 3 shows youth labour force participation rates in Africa. In a majority of countries, at least one-quarter of youth 15-24 years are economically active, the figure is as high as 30 percent in several countries. In all countries, labour force participation is higher among male youth, the figures for female labour force participation rates are extremely low in predominantly Muslim countries where age at marriage is still very low and female seclusion practised. In such countries, girls marry early and withdraw from the labour force completely thereby reducing returns to female education. African youth are therefore already contributing to the African economies, and have the potential to contribute more significantly to their economies if their energies are properly harnessed.

Lack of current data makes it difficult to properly assess youth unemployment in Africa. The ILO's Key Indicators for the Labour Market 2001 only has data for about

10 African countries (see ECA Paper, Table 1), while the UN Youth Employment Statistics section has data on youth unemployment for only a few countries (see Table 4 of this paper). Table 4 suggests that youth unemployment in Africa is concentrated among those aged 20-24 years, majority of those 15-19 are still in school, whether formal or vocational education, or engaged in informal sector activities. About one-third of economically active youth are unemployed in Africa, the figure is about half in South Africa. Estimates show that unemployment among youth affects a broad spectrum of socioeconomic groups, including the less and well educated youth, and particularly affects youth from low-income backgrounds and those with limited education (Chigunta, 2002). Table 4 suggests that unemployment is higher among male youth than among females. This may be because most females in Africa get married at this age and may regard themselves as housewives rather than as unemployed. However, youth unemployment is higher among females in Mauritius, Egypt and Morocco.

Majority of youth in Africa are engaged in informal sector activities as shop assistants, farm hands, clerical assistants, typists, stewards and cooks in hotels and restaurants, in street trading, casual labour and illegal activities such as touting, stealing, armed robbery, dealing in prohibited substances such as drugs, and prostitution. Only a small proportion of youth are engaged in the formal sector. Many of them, male and female, are to be found along the streets of major cities, selling apples, oranges, telephone cards, telephone handsets, calculators and other assorted goods.

Most employed young women are in the informal sector, some of them as skilled hairdressers, dressmakers, petty traders, etc. Many young women, for lack of better opportunities, are engaged in prostitution in African towns and cities, while some others migrate or are trafficked abroad to engage in prostitution. A large proportion of youth are thus underemployed, working long hours under poor working conditions, for little remuneration mainly in the informal sector.

Thus, as in other regions, the youth employment problem in Africa encompasses the following dimensions: too many youth without the necessary qualifications and training for good productive jobs, too few jobs, and too many unproductive jobs with poor remuneration. The quality of jobs available to youth is therefore important in Africa. However, ICT has become an employment sector for African youth in recent years. The number of computer shops, Internet service providers and trainers, and phone shops, is on the increase in urban centers in Africa. Most of these are manned by youth, however, these jobs do not reach the unskilled or the poorest youth and women who lack computer education.

### **Causes of Youth Unemployment in Africa**

The causes of youth unemployment in Africa have been identified in the ECA Paper. Both demand and supply factors interact to cause youth unemployment in Africa, they include the following:

- ❑ Generally high levels of unemployment in African countries;
- ❑ Rapid population growth;
- ❑ Small private sectors;
- ❑ Rapid rural-urban migration, and

- Inappropriate school curricula and poor quality education that is largely irrelevant to the needs of the labour market in most African countries.

Youth unemployment is an important dimension of the widespread unemployment which is a major problem facing African countries. With stagnant economies and low economic growth rates in most countries, demand for labour has been low or declining, resulting in high levels of unemployment. Employment prospects for youth are poor when adults cannot find employment.

Africa's population is growing at about 2.7-3.0 percent per annum, the proportion of young people is growing faster than the rate of growth of the total population. The size of the working age population is therefore increasing faster than new jobs can be created in stagnant or declining economies which characterize majority of African countries.

African youth have obtained more formal education over the years. However, educational systems in Africa have witnessed declines in quality and infrastructure at all levels in the last decade. They are geared toward providing basic literacy and numeracy and not industrial skills, and are yet to adjust to the changing demands for knowledge, skills and aptitudes required in the labour market. Youth unemployment in Africa is concentrated among those who have received some education, but who lack the industrial and other skills required in the labour market, making them unattractive to employers of labour who prefer skilled and experienced workers. Furthermore, educated youth prefer wage jobs in the formal sector and would prefer to remain unemployed until they get the type of job they prefer, that is, they have high reservation wages. More and more, the youth see their friends and relations who complete school and stay for long periods at home without gainful or productive employment (Chigunta, 2002). Data from some African countries such as Zambia, Malawi and South Africa, show that many youth survive by relying on the goodwill of parents, relatives and friends, while young women rely on their husbands.

A key factor leading to urban unemployment is the high degree of geographical mobility of youth in the form of rapid rural-urban migration. This has resulted in a concentration of youth in African cities where there are few jobs available in modern sector establishments. For many youth and their parents, employment means a job with a wage or salary, or working for someone else, rather than self-employment. It is estimated that by 2010, over fifty percent of African youth will be living in urban areas (Chigunta, 2002). This poses challenges for employment and development policies in Africa.

Among young women, causes of high levels of unemployment and underemployment include early marriage. This often leads to their withdrawal from the labour force or reduced access to better-paying jobs because of the practice of seclusion or employer discrimination. Many young women drop out of school because of teenage pregnancy and marriage or financial difficulties where parents prefer to educate male children. Furthermore, girls spend more time doing domestic work than boys, leaving them with less time for study, this leads to poorer performance in school and sometimes withdrawal from school on grounds of poor academic performance. Girls therefore end up with less education and fewer skills than boys, this increases discrimination against them in the labour market. In more recent times, in countries with high

incidence of HIV/AIDS, young women and girls are often kept away from school or from more productive employment to care for sick relatives at home.

Cultural and other factors leading to gender bias against women in access to education and training and to employment in the formal sector, also apply to young women in Africa. Young women face even greater discrimination than adult women in the labour market as it is believed that they will soon get married and leave their employment or become less productive. In some “new generation banks” in Nigeria for example, young female graduates on employment are made to sign agreements that they will not get married for a number of years, or that they will not go on maternity leave for an agreed number of years after employment. The jobs are terminated or promotion denied if they do not comply.

### ***Consequences of Youth Unemployment in Africa***

An unwholesome aspect of youth unemployment and underemployment in many cities in Africa is visible ‘idleness’, whereby youth congregate at bars and eating places to drink or converse or smoke marijuana, for substantial parts of the day (Chigunta, 2002). Such places encourage the development of street gangs and criminal activities. In general, large-scale unemployment among youth is encouraging the development of “street youth” in Africa. The street youth in African towns and cities, denied of legitimate means of livelihood, grow up in a culture that encourages criminal behaviour. They survive by engaging in various activities such as petty trading, casual work, borrowing stealing, pick-pocketing, prostitution, touting and other illegal activities. Some have become drunkards, others are on drugs such as marijuana and, mandrax (Chigunta, 2002). Unemployed youth roaming the streets have been given various names in different African cities, such as “Area Boys” in Nigeria, the “Manchicha” in Uganda, etc.

Youth unemployment in Africa has also promoted ‘gangsterism’. Many youth now run criminal enterprises engaged in violence, armed robbery, car snatching, illegal fuel sales, illegal importation of arms, many of which have reached alarming levels in several African cities. Bennell (2000) argued that urban society in Africa is becoming increasingly criminalized, especially with the proliferation of youth gangs. Such youth gangs and their criminal enterprises have developed not only their sub-culture, but also a “career path” with a ladder of promotion, and status attainment where the participants see a horizon of ‘personal development’. The rise of youth gangsterism in urban Africa is posing a threat to urban communities all over Africa (Chigunta, 2002). Several studies have shown that majority of prison inmates in some African countries are youth aged 30 years and below, and that delinquency, crime and drug abuse are on the increase among youth in Africa (Igbinovia, 1988). It has also been observed that the youthfulness of many African countries’ populations makes crime in Africa a problem of youth (see Okojie, 1994).

Another disturbing aspect of youth unemployment in Africa is that the problem of unemployed and disaffected youth appears to play a significant role in African conflict experience (Curtain, 2000; Chigunta, 2002). The prevailing socio-economic environment is enticing youth to turn to war as a means of livelihood. Emerging literature points to the ‘social exclusion’ and ‘marginalisation’ of youth arising from the collapse of social institutions and the failure of the economic system to generate

sufficient means of livelihood opportunities for young people as an explanation for youth's increasing involvement in conflict and war situations all over Africa. Young people in Africa are now at the forefront of all major wars in Africa's current rebel phase (Chigunta, 2002). War appears to be an option that requires few skills and capital investment, it also provides quick returns as they can rely on the gun to bring them money and respect. There is also widespread use of drugs on the warfront. Use of drugs erodes self-control and encourages acts of bravery on the warfront. Most of these youth can hardly read and write, they come largely from disadvantaged communities or marginalized ethnic groups. Street children have provided an important pool for recruitment into rebel armies. The transition from the 'street' to 'child soldiers' bestows a sense of prestige, a sense of belonging and power (through the barrel of the gun), to otherwise alienated individuals. This has contributed to the widespread use of drugs, indiscriminate violence and general indiscipline of fighting forces in war zones in Africa.

Among young women, lack of employment opportunities has contributed to increasing feminization of poverty all over Africa. It has also encouraged prostitution as a means of survival in several African towns and cities. Furthermore, it has encouraged 'trafficking in women and girls' across international borders to engage in prostitution. Women migrants trafficked to Western Europe in Africa come mainly from Ghana, Nigeria and Morocco (Taylor, 2002; Aghatise, 2002). In Ghana, women trafficked come from cities as well as rural areas where many uneducated and semi-educated girls are lured with promises of lucrative job offers abroad. Girls trafficked from Nigeria come mainly from Edo State as well as Delta, Imo and other states in the Southern part of Nigeria. Sometimes, parents or relatives sell these young women to traffickers, they are then trapped within an illegal migration environment where they are exposed to many forms of abuse including bonded labour and forced prostitution. The sex industry is a particular target for traffickers as it offers great profits at the expense of trafficked migrant women. Victims of trafficking are mainly females between the ages of 17-20 years with some as young as 14 years. A profile of Ghanaian prostitutes in Netherlands shows that victims of trafficking are mainly young women, less educated, often semi-literate or illiterate women with little control over their own situations (Taylor, 2002; Aghatise, 2002). Many of them are exposed to HIV/AIDS. Poverty, unemployment and lack of economic prospects, the absence of regular migration opportunities, parental and peer pressures, and misconceptions concerning job prospects in North American and European countries, are among the principal factors giving a push to massive migration of educated as well as educationally and socially disadvantaged groups in Africa, including young women.

Thus youth unemployment poses grave economic and social problems for the African continent. The overall situation of youth in Africa requires urgent attention, youth should be made a priority group for employment and development programmes if their socio-economic situation is to improve.

#### **IV Some Successful Strategies for Employment Creation in Africa**

In Africa, governments have embarked on various programmes and projects to promote youth employment. Some of these programmes have been described elsewhere (Sarr, 2000; ECA, 2002). Discussion in this section will focus mainly on the Nigerian experience. Many of the employment promoting programmes in Nigeria



are government programmes, while some were initiated by NGOs and development partners. Most of them were general or mainstream programmes for all youth, while those targeted at women have been for all women, with a few targeted at young women.

#### a) Government Programmes

##### *National Directorate of Employment (NDE)*

The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) was established on November 22nd 1986, an enabling decree – Decree No. 24 of 1989 - gave it legal backing and made it the national agency for tackling unemployment in the country. Its mandate included the following functions:

- Design and implement programmes to combat mass unemployment.
- Articulate policies aimed at developing work programmes with labour intensive potentials.
- Obtain and maintain a databank on employment and vacancies in the country with a view to acting as a clearing house to link job-seekers with employers of labour.

The NDE has four core programmes, they are:

- Rural Employment Promotion Programme.
- Special Public Works Programme.
- Small Scale Enterprises Programme, and
- Vocational Skills Development Programme.

Each programme had several sub-programmes, and the overriding objectives were to give training opportunities to the unemployed, especially the youth, by providing guidance, finance and other support services, to help them create jobs for themselves and for others. A major problem of the programme has been inadequate funding. Nearly two million people have benefited from the NDE programmes (see Table 6). However, compared with the numbers of unemployed youth in Nigeria, only a small proportion has benefited from NDE programmes.

The nation-wide statistics available at the NDE secretariat are not gender-disaggregated (see Table 6). Gender-disaggregated data on NDE programmes were obtained from the Edo State branch of the NDE (see Table 7). These figures suggest that women have benefited to some extent from NDE programmes especially the National Open Apprenticeship Scheme, they benefited less from the programmes for University graduates. This in itself suggests that women are being pushed into lower-income, low-status occupations. In addition, a programme for women – the Women Employment Programme – was launched in 1991. The objective of the programme was to create and initiate activities that will generate employment among rural and sub-urban women organizations. However, only 550 women (through associations of wives of members of the Armed Forces) had benefited as at the time of the report. Many women are yet to be aware of the existence of this special programme for women. In addition, very limited funds have been provided for this programme as it is considered to be very risky.

### **National Poverty Eradication Programme**

This programme which commenced in 2002, is described mainly because of its potential to mainstream youth employment creation into national policies, in view of the fact that many African countries are currently preparing Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP). There are four major intervention schemes in Nigeria's current poverty eradication programme (a PRSP is under preparation). One of them is targeted at youth – the Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES). There are three programmes under YES, they are:

- Capacity Acquisition Programme (CAP),
- Mandatory Attachment Programme (MAP), and
- Credit Delivery Programme (CDP).

CAP is essentially a skill acquisition programme of about three months duration at the end of which graduates are assisted with credit, in cash or in kind, to set up their own enterprises. MAP is an enterprise internship programme where graduates of tertiary institutions are attached to various establishments and paid a stipend by the government for a period of three-to-six months. The brochure describing the YES programme emphasizes that YES is more than an employment scheme as it is aimed at the provision of training opportunities, skill acquisition, employment opportunities, wealth creation through enhanced income generation, improved social status and rural development. It is primarily aimed at the economic empowerment of youth.

The scope of YES also covered the generation of data on employment opportunities and vacancies, productivity improvement, and the preparation of training programmes for youth, unemployed and retrenched workers. Some of the activities were to be executed with the assistance of the National Directorate of Employment, although NAPEP has worked independently of the NDE so far. The programme is only one year old, and there are plans to phase out the Capacity Building and Vocational Training Aspects (MAP and CAP) as it is felt that they are duplicating NDE activities. If this is done, it may phase out the job promotion aspects of the poverty alleviation programme. Nigeria's Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper makes no reference to unemployment or employment creation, although some mention is made of gender and poverty. (There is no reference made to employment creation in the NEPAD document despite the pervasiveness of unemployment on the African continent).

### **b) Contribution of Development Partners – UNDP**

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is on ground in more than 400 communities in all the 36 States of Nigeria and the Federal Capital Territory. It is assisting to build capacity to manage the economy and to fight poverty. One of the four programmes supported by the UNDP is Job Creation and Sustainable Livelihood. The thrust of the programme is the creation of additional jobs by expanding opportunities for enterprise development by both men and women. The strategy includes the harnessing of local resources, upgrading of technical skills, improving access to inputs such as technology, market information, financial and extension services (UNDP Edo State, 2002).

Two of the modalities for delivery of UNDP assistance relevant to this paper are: Skills Development Centres and Micro Credit. Designated communities are assisted to establish or upgrade Skills Development Centres in at least two communities in

each State. Currently, a total of 110 Centres are benefiting from this assistance, the initiative is to enable unemployed youth to acquire skills that will enable them to become self-employed. Facilities are provided for training in the areas of Hairdressing/Cosmetology; Textile Technology and Weaving; Fashion Design and Dressmaking; Electrical Installation and Electronics; Wood Works and Carpentry; and Welding and Basic Metal Works. There are plans to include computer training in some States (for example, Edo State).

Micro credit delivery aims at increasing access of communities to small loans and other productive inputs to empower them and expand their livelihood opportunities. Under this, UNDP has trained 37 Microfinance Institutions (MFI) in different States to disburse loans to communities being supported by the UNDP. The Lift Above Poverty Organization (LAPO) is the official MFI for Edo State.

### c) NGOs and Employment Promotion

The two NGOs to be described have women as their target group, they are LAPO (Lift Above Poverty Organization ) and Idia Renaissance.

**LAPO** (Lift Above Poverty Organization) was established in 1986 as an informal outfit to provide support for poor women. Through its 18 branches and a Community Bank, it provides savings opportunities and credit facilities to female micro entrepreneurs. In 2001, N86 million was disbursed to women at an average loan size of N12,000, N41 million was disbursed in 2000.. The Micro Investment Unit of LAPO assists poor women, mainly married women, to acquire income-generating assets. As at December 2001, LAPO had reached 15, 820 women with credit. It has received assistance from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and other donors. It could be encouraged and assisted to include young women among its target beneficiaries.

**The Idia Renaissance** is an NGO established by the wife of the present Governor of Edo State in the year 2000. One of its main objectives is social dialogue (seminars) to sensitize young women and their parents and the society at large about the evils of trafficking of women for sexual exploitation. This is because Edo State is the major source of women trafficked to Italy for sexual purposes in Nigeria. To support this initiative, the State Government established the Edo State Skills Acquisition Centre at Evbomodu, Benin City, to assist young women, including those repatriated from abroad, mainly from Italy, to acquire self-sustaining vocational skills. The Centre has several vocational training departments, including fashion designing and computer training. (The NGO has faced a lot of hostility from beneficiaries of the incomes of trafficked women who include parents and husbands)

Most of the initiatives in Nigeria and other African countries, have focused on skills acquisition for self-employment and provision of credit (micro finance) to establish micro enterprises after training. The programmes have generally been mainstream programmes targeted at both sexes. Studies have shown that women tend to benefit less from such programmes as they are crowded out by men. Programmes which have benefited women significantly in Nigeria have been those which were initiated by wives of Heads of State or Governors, for example, the Better Life Programme for Rural Women (initiated by Mrs Mariam Babangida), the Family Support Programme

and Family Economic Advancement Programme (initiated by Mrs Mariam Abacha). In addition, women benefit when women are the administrators of government programmes, for example, the Peoples' Bank of Nigeria where women were the Managing Directors. However, all these programmes which targeted women directly have been phased out (Okojie, 2000).

## **V Issues for Consideration from a Gender Perspective**

The strategies described above (and elsewhere) have focused on skill development and micro credit delivery for self-employment given the importance of the informal sector in most African countries. Less attention has been paid to policies and programmes to enhance the capacity of the private sector to generate more employment opportunities. In fact, most African countries lack a comprehensive national employment policy. It has been noted that governments should consider the development of an employment strategy that includes all stakeholders – governments, employers and employee associations, the private sector, civil society organizations, and the international community (ECA, 1999). A programme in this direction is already in existence on the continent. A few years ago, the ILO/UNDP launched the programme Jobs for Africa – Poverty-Reducing Employment Strategies for sub-Saharan Africa (JFA -PRESSA).

The main objectives of the programme were: to provide an alternative framework for employment-intensive growth and to design a programme of action for job creation with the objective of poverty alleviation. The programme was intended to create and promote the generation of quality and productive employment for the majority of the people who work outside the modern sector and are engaged in low productivity economic activities in subsistence rural agriculture and the urban informal sector. The programme in particular, was to target the unemployed African youth, as well as target women who are over-represented among the unemployed (UNDP/ILO, 1999). It involved the creation of National Network Advocacy Groups (NNAGs) for generating dialogue for promoting and sustaining pro-employment and pro-poor growth strategies within participating countries. It was emphasized that women's employment promotion strategies should be a priority within a broader policy and institutional framework. Vigorous implementation of this programme all over Africa can contribute to job creation for youth in Africa. Nigeria is one of the participating countries, but I doubt whether much progress has been made after the initial IPRE (Investment for Poverty Reducing Employment) studies were concluded as well as a few meetings of the Nigerian NNAG.

In general, there is a need to engender employment promotion programmes. The inclusion of young women and girls as equal partners in youth development and empowerment programmes is very essential in overcoming gender imbalances. The question is how can women, and especially young women who have been marginalized by women's programmes so far, be mainstreamed into employment creation programmes to ensure that they are beneficiaries? Suggestions to be considered include the following:

- Affirmative action approach whereby a specified proportion of beneficiaries of mainstream programmes should be women.

- ❑ Target women as beneficiaries of programmes for vocational skill development.
- ❑ Target self-employment and entrepreneurial development programmes at activities involving women, for example, trading, food production and food processing activities.
- ❑ Develop gender-friendly appropriate technology to reduce the drudgery of women's domestic and economic activity and enhance their productivity and incomes.
- ❑ Provide adult education for women to enhance their access to higher paying occupations.
- ❑ Incorporate a women's unit into all employment creation programmes to cater for the interests of women.
- ❑ Collaborate with NGOs and CBOs working with women, and development partners.
- ❑ Organize sensitization workshops/seminars on the socio-economic impacts of unemployment among youth (male and female) and the need to mainstream youth and gender concerns into all programmes.
- ❑ Train women in business skills and provide access to credit and other financial services.
- ❑ Formulate a national employment Policy responsive to gender and youth concerns.
- ❑ Create jobs for women in dynamic and growing sectors of the economy where opportunities in general or prospects for enhancing women's incomes are bright.
- ❑ Provide child-care centres for young working mothers.

In conclusion, it is important that the gender dimension is incorporated into all job creation programmes and that that employment promotion projects should be those with high potential of job opportunities for women. These points were stressed in the JFA programme. To achieve these, three elements were considered important (UNDP/ILO, 1999). The first is the application of a gender perspective in assessing and reforming macroeconomic policy frameworks in the Africa region. Secondly, there is a need for the development of regional and national capacities to assess, design and advocate investment and employment policies from a gender perspective. Thirdly, all projects should involve strategies which ensure women's equal participation. These three elements should be incorporated into any scheme for job creation for youth in Africa if young women are to benefit equally as male youth from such programmes. In this era of globalization, African women should be empowered to grasp the opportunities and overcome the challenges of globalization so that they can make their contribution to the world economy through enhanced access to more productive jobs.

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## ANNEXE

**Table 1: Adult Male/Female Labour Force Participation Rate, 1980, 2000**  
(Percentage of population of all ages in labour force)

	Adult Female Labour Force Participation Rate		Adult Male Labour Force Participation Rate		Adult Female Literacy Rate	Female Rate as % of Male
	1980	2000	1980	2000	2000	2000
Algeria	11.0	19.3	41.1	49.4	57.1	75
Angola	45.7	41.4	53.3	49.2	-	-
Benin	44.5	42.9	51.5	47.5	23.6	45
Botswana	41.8	39.1	45.5	48.5	79.8	107
Burkina Faso	51.5	45.3	55.9	50.0	14.1	41
Burundi	53.2	50.4	56.9	54.9	40.4	72
Cameroon	30.5	31.0	53.7	51.2	69.5	84
Cape Verde	20.4	30.3	46.7	52.3	65.7	78
Central African Republic	48.7	42.8	56.6	51.8	34.9	58
Chad	41.1	40.7	55.2	51.1	34.0	66
Comoros	39.5	40.6	50.9	53.1	48.7	77
Congo	34.8	34.7	49.8	47.2	74.4	85
Cote d'Ivoire	26.6	27.4	54.0	53.5	38.6	71
Democratic Republic of the Congo	38.8	34.9	50.4	46.4	50.2	69
Djibouti	-	-	-	-	54.4	72
Egypt	18.9	23.6	50.7	52.0	43.8	66
Equatorial Guinea	30.7	28.9	58.3	53.8	74.4	80
Eritrea	-	46.9	-	52.8	44.5	66
Ethiopia	41.6	36.7	57.5	51.7	30.9	66
Gabon	46.3	39.8	58.8	50.6	-	-
Gambia	45.6	45.7	57.6	57.1	29.4	67
Ghana	47.2	49.4	46.1	49.1	62.9	78
Guinea	48.8	47.1	54.8	52.1	-	-
Guinea-Bissau	38.1	36.7	59.5	55.2	23.3	43
Kenya	43.5	47.8	50.9	55.4	76.0	86
Lesotho	31.1	30.8	54.5	54.4	93.6	129
Liberia	32.6	32.0	51.5	48.3	-	-
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	12.2	16.4	47.7	50.2	68.2	75
Madagascar	44.2	42.4	55.2	53.2	59.7	81



Malawi	49.3	46.4	51.4	49.9	46.5	62
Mali	47.0	44.3	56.2	53.7	34.4	70
Mauritania	42.8	38.4	53.5	50.3	30.1	59
Mauritius	18.0	28.5	53.5	59.1	81.3	93
Morocco	24.1	27.4	47.7	51.4	36.1	58
Mozambique	52.7	50.1	56.6	54.8	28.7	48
Namibia	33.1	32.4	50.1	46.9	81.2	98
Niger	42.2	40.3	54.0	52.0	8.4	35
Nigeria	29.3	28.4	53.1	50.7	55.7	77
Rwanda	49.6	52.2	52.6	56.5	60.2	82
Sao Tome and Principe	-	-	-	-	-	-
Senegal	38.7	37.7	53.1	50.7	27.6	58
Seychelles	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sierra Leone	26.9	26.7	50.8	47.7	-	-
Somalia	39.8	36.8	51.8	48.8		
South Africa	25.8	31.4	48.0	52.1	84.6	98
Sudan	20.0	23.3	54.0	55.0	46.3	67
Swaziland	23.5	35.8	48.0	48.5	78.6	97
Togo	33.2	33.5	52.6	51.2	42.5	59
Tunisia	20.1	26.1	48.0	54.5	60.6	74
Uganda	48.9	46.1	54.5	52.7	56.8	73
United Republic of Tanzania	50.2	50.2	52.2	52.8	66.5	79
Zambia	37.7	36.4	48.6	47.9	71.5	84
Zimbabwe	39.1	39.1	49.8	50.1	84.7	91
Africa	34.1	33.8	51.7	49.7	-	-

**Source:** 1). ADB, 2002, African Development Report 2002  
2).UNDP, 2002, Human Development Report 2002.

**Table 2: Youth Population in Africa - 2000**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Male Population (15-24) 1995</b>	<b>Female Population (15-24) 1995</b>	<b>Urban Population (15-24) 1995</b>	<b>Rural Population (15-24) 1995</b>
Algeria	3,045,000	2,913,000	n/a	n/a
Angola	n/a	N/a	n/a	n/a
Benin	470,000	496,000	348 371	468 478
Botswana	127,373	142,035	143 027	126 381
Burkina Faso	787,770	707,179	276 349	1 218 600
Burundi	447,635	479,984	n/a	n/a
Cameroon	934,282	928,688	667 326	1 195 644
Cape Verde	33,121	33,655	30 515	36 261
Central African Republic	230,477	247,890	198 671	279 696
Chad	497,073	567,489	367 000	743 000
Comoros	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Congo	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Cote D' Ivoire	987,418	1,057,912	942 015	1 103 315
Democratic Republic of the Congo	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Djibouti	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Egypt	5,859,000	5,531,000	4 637 000	5 937 000
Equatorial Guinea	33,210	33,800	n/a	n/a
Eritrea	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ethiopia	5,913,900	5,470,600	1 785 800	9 598 700
Gabon	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Gambia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ghana	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Guinea	592,321 (1993)	531,760 (1993)	447 831 (1993)	676 251 (1993)
Guinea-Bissau	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Kenya	2,067,577	2,214,052	n/a	n/a
Lesotho	141 290	148 084	n/a	n/a

Liberia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	422,099	407,198	n/a	n/a
Madagascar	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Malawi	786,400	803,200	178 841	1 262 754
Mali	606,897	693,179	335 147	964 929
Mauritania	203,024	197,208	n/a	n/a
Mauritius	103,685	100,128	71 191	128 675
Morocco	2,918,000	2,881,000	3 208 000	2 591 000
Mozambique	1,638,181	1,735,458	n/a	n/a
Namibia	144,857	151,433	89 196	207 074
Niger	547,020	690,680	206 500	1 031 200
Nigeria	10,000,757	9,993,259	6 236 134	13 757 882
Rwanda	631,010	665,110	n/a	n/a
Sao Tome and Principe	11,428	11,206	n/a	n/a
Senegal	593,534	676,671	552 888	717 317
Seychelles	6,978	7,036	n/a	n/a
Sierra Leone	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Somalia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
South Africa	3,082,059	3,043,686	3 444 888	2 680 857
Sudan	2,405,000	2,297,000	n/a	n/a
Swaziland	106,268 (1996: 15-29yrs.)	132,483 (1996: 15-29yrs.)	48 876	114 769
Togo	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Tunisia	891,081	866,703	1 044 209	713 575
Uganda	1,575,993	1,752,107	472 719	2 844 381
United Republic of Tanzania	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Zambia	784,270	865,886	699 952	950 204
Zimbabwe	1,187,986	1,241,627	786 182	1 451 953

**Source:** UN, Youth at the United Nations, Comparison of Country Profiles - Africa

**Table 3: Youth Population and Labour Force Participation Rates, Africa**

	% of Total Population	Median Age - Yrs	Labour Force Participation Rate, Youth 15-24 Yrs.		
			All	Male (1985)	Female (1985)
	<b>2000</b>				
Algeria	21.2	21.1	34.0	32.0	2.0
Angola	19.0	16.2	30.0	26.0	4.0
Benin	20.2	16.5	29.0	17.0	12.0
Botswana	21.5	18.5	28.0	15.0	13.0
Burkina Faso	19.8	16.4	25.2	14.0	11.2 (1991)
Burundi	19.7	17.3	29.0	16.0	13.0
Cameroon	19.9	18.0	26.0	15.0	11.0
Cape Verde	21.2	19.8	28.0	25.0	3.0
Central African Republic	19.7	19.0	29.0	15.0	14.0
Chad	19.1	18.4	27.0	21.0	6.0
Comoros	20.6	17.2	26.0	16.0	10.0
Congo	19.4	17.1	22.0	14.0	8.0
Cote d'Ivoire	21.1	18.0	29.0	16.0	13.0
Democratic Republic of the Congo	18.9	15.9	29.0	20.0	9.0
Djibouti	19.3	19.8	Over 30.0	-	-
Egypt	20.2	22.2	21.0	14.6	6.4 (1994)
Equatorial Guinea	18.5	18.4	26.0	25.0	1.0
Eritrea	19.0	18.1	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ethiopia	18.3	16.5	29.8	17.1	12.7 (1995)
Gabon	17.1	20.7	20.0	13.0	7.0
Gambia	17.7	19.5	27.0	14.0	13.0
Ghana	19.7	18.0	29.0	17.0	12.0
Guinea	19.1	16.4	28.0	17.0	11.0
Guinea-Bissau	18.7	19.1	26.0	25.0	1.0
Kenya	22.5	17.7	29.0	20.0	9.0
Lesotho	20.1	19.1	23.0	14.0	9.0
Liberia	19.9	17.9	25.0	17.0	8.0
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	19.4	17.5	26.0	24.0	2.0
Madagascar	19.8	16.9	29.0	16.0	13.0

Malawi	20.0	16.6	28.0	18.0	10.0
Mali	19.0	16.3	30.0	16.0	14.0
Mauritania	20.6	18.8	29.0	28.0	1.0
Mauritius	18.0	18.8	23.2	14.6	8.6
Morocco	20.8	22.8	31.0	25.0	6.0
Mozambique	19.1	17.5	28.0	21.0	7.0
Namibia	19.8	19.0	Over 25.0	-	-
Niger	18.9	15.7	31.0	28.0	3.0
Nigeria	19.2	17.4	26.0	16.0	10.0
Rwanda	21.5	17.3	31.0	16.0	15.0
Sao Tome and Principe	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Senegal	20.0	18.0	28.0	17.0	11.0
Seychelles	n/a	n/a	Over 28.0	n/a	n/a
Sierra Leone	19.0	17.9	26.0	17.0	9.0
Somalia	18.9	16.0	30.0	22.0	8.0
South Africa	19.3	22.0	30.0	17.0	13.0
Sudan	21.6	19.9	31.0	27.0	4.0
Swaziland	20.9	18.8	25.0	14.0	11.0
Togo	19.5	17.1	28.0	17.0	11.0
Tunisia	20.2	23.8	32.0	27.0	5.0
Uganda	20.0	15.4	Over 25.0	n/a	n/a
United Republic of Tanzania	20.1	17.2	29.0	19.0	10.0
Zambia	22.3	16.5	Over 25.0	n/a	n/a
Zimbabwe	20.6	17.8	32.3	17.8	14.5 (1992)

Source: UN, Youth at the United Nations, Comparison of Country Profiles - Africa

**Table 4: Youth Unemployment Rates in Africa**

Country	Year	All Youth 15-24 Years	Youth 15-19 Years		Youth 20-24 Years	
			Male	Female	Male	Female
Algeria	1992	23.8	25.8	2.0	33.1	4.9
Burkina Faso*	1992	n/a	2.6	0.7	24.3	4.5
Central African Republic*	1994	n/a	3.8	0.3	21.0	1.7
Ethiopia*	1993	n/a	14.4	6.8	34.9	16.1
Lesotho	1985	23.0	Over 30.0		Over 30.0	
Mauritius	1995	23.8	21.6	22.4	21.6	22.4
Niger	1991	0.5	0.8 (all)	0.1 (0-17 yrs)	22.5	1.7 (18-25)
Seychelles	1985	22.5	61.0	61.0	61.0	61.0
Tunisia	1984	16.4	Over 40.0	Over 40.0	Over 40.0	Over 40.0
Egypt	1995	34.4	24.5 (all)	59.0 (all)		
Morocco	1998	35.0	34.7 (all)	35.9 (all)		
South Africa	2000	55.8	57.9 (all)	53.3 (all)		
Algeria	1990	38.7	46.2 (all)	14.4 (all)		

**Source:** 1) UN, Youth at the United Nations, Comparison of Country Profiles - Africa.  
2). ECA, 2002, Youth and Employment in the ECA Region.

**Note:**

\* Applicants only

**Table 5: Youth Literacy Rates Africa**

	<b>All Youth 1985</b>	<b>All Youth 2000</b>	<b>Female Literacy Rate 2000</b>	<b>Female Rate as % of Male 2000</b>
Algeria	69.5	89.0	84.2	90
Angola			-	-
Benin	33.9	53.1	36.0	51
Botswana	78.2	88.3	92.1	109
Burkina Faso	20.9	34.6	23.3	51
Burundi	45.5	63.9	62.0	94
Cameroon	81.7	93.7	93.0	99
Cape Verde	77.0	88.1	85.0	93
Central African Republic	45.1	67.2	58.8	77
Chad	39.0	66.6	59.9	82
Comoros	55.8	58.7	51.8	79
Congo	87.6	97.4	96.8	99
Cote d'Ivoire	42.9	65.0	59.7	85
Democratic Republic of the Congo	61.4	81.7	74.9	85
Djibouti	66.6	84.0	79.4	90
Egypt	57.0	69.8	62.7	82
Equatorial Guinea	89.1	96.9	95.4	97
Eritrea	55.9	70.2	60.4	75
Ethiopia	37.5	54.8	48.8	79
Gabon	-	-	-	-
Gambia	35.2	57.1	48.8	74
Ghana	74.8	91.0	88.3	94
Guinea	-	-	-	-
Guinea-Bissau	38.0	58.2	43.4	59
Kenya	85.0	95.1	94.2	98
Lesotho	85.1	90.5	98.5	119
Liberia	-	-	-	-
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	86.7	96.5	93.1	93
Madagascar	67.7	80.1	76.6	92
Malawi	59.3	71.1	61.0	75
Mali	34.9	66.3	60.2	83
Mauritania	37.9	48.9	40.6	71
Mauritius	89.3	93.4	94.4	101
Morocco	48.3	67.4	58.3	77

Mozambique	43.2	60.6	46.2	61
Namibia	84.7	91.6	93.3	104
Niger	-	-	13.7	42
Nigeria	64.7	86.8	83.8	93
Rwanda	65.9	83.3	81.4	95
Sao Tome and Principe	-	-	-	-
Senegal	34.9	50.7	41.7	70
Seychelles	-	-	-	-
Sierra Leone	-	-	-	-
Somalia	-	-	-	-
South Africa	86.8	91.3	91.3	100
Sudan	57.7	77.2	71.5	86
Swaziland	81.5	90.4	91.2	102
Togo	56.9	75.4	63.7	73
Tunisia	78.3	93.4	89.2	92
Uganda	65.3	78.8	72.1	84
United Republic of Tanzania	77.4	90.6	87.9	94
Zambia	77.2	88.2	85.5	94
Zimbabwe	90.2	97.2	95.7	97
Sub-Saharan Africa	61.7	77.7	-	-

Source: 1) ECA, 2002, Youth and Employment in the ECA Region  
2) UNDP, 2002, Human Development Report 2002.



**Table 6: Distribution of NDE Programme Beneficiaries (1987-1996)**

S/N	Programme/Scheme	Year Launched	No. Of Beneficiaries
	<b>Vocational Skills Development Programme</b>		
1	National Open Apprenticeship Scheme	1987	555,575
2	School on Wheels Programme	1990	19,672
3	Waste-to-Wealth Programme	1987	8,047
4	Resettlement Scheme	1991	6,024
	<b>Small Scale Enterprises Programme</b>		
5	Entrepreneurship Development Programme	1987	574,000
6	Graduate Job Creation Scheme	1987	2,508
7	Mature People Scheme	1987	133
8	Motor Cycle Transportation Scheme	1994	450
	<b>Rural Employment Promotion Programme</b>		
9	Graduate Farmers' Scheme	1987	11,335
10	School Leavers' Farming Scheme	1989	13,220
11	Crop Processing Scheme	1996	611
12	Dry Season Irrigation Farming Scheme	1995/96	930
	<b>Special Public Works Programme</b>		
13	Graduates and School Leavers	1987	149,081
14	National Sanitation Employment Scheme	1994	478
	<b>Special Programmes</b>		
15	One Million Jobs Creation Programme	1992	547,374
16	Mass Agricultural Programme	1993	8,000
17	Job Placement and Vocational Guidance		1,200
	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1,898,638</b>

**Source:** NDE, *Statistics of Employment Generation, 1987-1996*. Summary Table.

**Table 7 : Women Beneficiaries of NDE Programmes, Edo State : 1987 –1999**

	School on Wheels Programme		Entrepreneurship Development Programme		National Open Apprenticeship	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1987	-	-	815	331	340	134
1988	-	-	913	374	1138	695
1989	-	-	628	430	845	386
1990	-	-	690	361	430	115
1991	51	22	960	550	-	-
1992	92	29	586	205	2,987	1,437
1993	101	51	311	213	1,900	1,100
1994	209	102	650	199	-	-
1995	-	-	215	85	512	318
1996	206	92	1,271	950	510	320
1997	218	82	300	150	-	-
1998	-	-	62	38	417	480
1999	-	-	250	144	13	64
2000	87	33	1,300	700	556	523
2001	-	120	150	65	745	668
2002	71	29	195	105	365	315
Total	1,035	623	9,296	4,900	10,758	6,555
%	62.42	37.58	65.48	34.52	62.14	37.86

**Source:** Compiled from data available at NDE Office, Benin City