

Youth and Employment in the ECA Region *

Introduction

Africa's population is very young. Young people make up more than 50 per cent of the population of most member states of the ECA. These young people are a potential resource for growth and social development if gainfully and productively engaged. But they could also be a source of devastating social tension and conflict if not. In many countries, the degree to which youth can contribute to the possibilities of their countries in particular and the continent in general is constrained by circumscribed life chances, with the lack of job opportunities being one of the major circumscriptions. The countless number of young people loitering around and peopling the streets of major African cities bears ample witness to the limited job opportunities that the youth of the continent have. Yet the development of the continent rests squarely on them; it is through them and by their agency that the vision and noble intentions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NePAD) can be developed. And it is through them that Africa can make progress towards the realization of the Millennium Development Goals, especially the goal of halving extreme poverty by 2015.

The problem of youth¹ unemployment is not peculiar to ECA member states. A search on the web reveals several references to the problem in Europe and North America. However, the factors explaining the phenomenon of youth unemployment differ. In Europe and North America, increasing capital intensity of production, unions, labour market regulations, and generous welfare benefits are among the important factors. In Africa, they are not. The main factors driving youth unemployment in ECA member states are (i) the generalized lack of employment opportunities due to the underdevelopment of the economies. Put differently, the employment prospects of Africa's youth are diminished by the already high rate of unemployment and underemployment; (ii) High rates of population growth; (iii) Sluggish or stagnant economies; (iv) Small private sector; (v) Low literacy and numeracy rates; (vi) Poor quality education and an education sector that equips young people with limited industrial skills. Attempts to address the problem of youth unemployment in Africa must of necessity examine how these factors are implicated in the phenomenon.

This brief paper is an attempt to explore the problem of youth unemployment.² Its purpose is to contribute to the ongoing debate on interventions to combat youth unemployment in Africa. The paper consists of three sections. Section 1 discusses the current youth unemployment situation in Africa. It also discusses the consequences of inaction and the challenges that governments face as they attempt to deal with the problem of providing meaningful jobs for their young. Section 2 examines some good practices. Its purpose is to highlight innovative approaches in Africa to the problem of youth unemployment worthy of emulation by ECA member states. Clusters of issues that are important for designing policies to tackle the problem of youth unemployment are discussed in Sections 3. Section 4 concludes.

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¹ There is no generalized definition of the term “youth”. In Mozambique for example, youth is defined as the 14-35 age group; in Uganda, it is the 13-35 age group and in Nigeria, youth are defined as the 6-30 age group and in Australia, it is the 12-25 age group. The United Nations defines youth as the 15-24 age group. This paper uses the UN definition of youth.

² The International Labour Organization has done a considerable amount of work on this problem. This paper draws substantially from that body of work.

I. Current Situation

In this section, we discuss, albeit briefly, the unemployment situation in Africa. But we begin with a caveat. Data on unemployment in general in Africa are lacking. The ILO's "Key Indicators of the Labour Market 2001 - 2002" has data for only about 10 countries; and even then, not the most recent data. But one really does not need to have data to recognize that youth employment is and should be a priority in Africa. Population data show the proportion of the population under 18 to be as high as 55 per cent in countries as diverse as Benin, Niger and Zambia. On average, each year in Africa, there would be 8.7 million new entrants into the labour markets for whom jobs would have to be found (UNICEF, 2000). The tightness of the labour market owes in part to the fact that the development of productive employment has not kept pace with increased labour supply. A few examples will illustrate the point: The overall unemployment rate in Lesotho in 1999 is estimated to have been 40.5 per cent, in South Africa 25.3 per cent and in Botswana 21.5 per cent.

Young people accounted for a significant proportion of the unemployed. The very limited ILO data paint (See Table 1 in the appendix) a depressing picture: It shows a youth unemployment rate of 23.8 per cent in 1995 for Mauritius with the share of youth unemployed to the youth population at 12 per cent (13.9 per cent for males and 9.9 per cent for females). In 2000, 55.8 per cent (57.9 per cent for men and 53.3 per cent for women) of South Africa's youth were unemployed. Youth unemployment is no less of a problem in the wealthier countries of North Africa. In 1990, youth unemployment rate was 38.7 per cent in 1990 for Algeria; 34.4 per cent in 1995 for Egypt and 35 per cent in 1998 for Morocco. In light of the slow rate of economic growth and high rates of population growth, it is unlikely that the situation in these countries has improved significantly. Yet, the economically active population of the continent is projected to increase at 2.94 per cent annually between 1997 and 2010, and would be growing more rapidly than the population at large, and faster than in other regions, presenting great dangers and possibilities.

How can high youth unemployment rates in Africa be explained? One reason is without doubt the generally poor health of African economies. The demand for labour is derived from the demand for final products. When economy is not growing, output demand falls and with it, the demand for labour. The employment prospects of young people are often diminished when an economy is contracting. Young people often have no job histories, no job-specific skills, and very low employment-related social capital to enhance their attractiveness to employers. And at the same time, many of them have high reservation wages (higher than child workers) and are also more ready to quit their jobs voluntarily.

Population growth is another factor contributing to youth unemployment. The average annual growth rate of the African population is about 3 per cent (UNDP, 2002). The proportion of young people has been growing at a rate faster than the rate of population growth, resulting in an increase in the size of the working age population. As a consequence, the number of new entrants into the labour market has also been increasing. But this increase is accompanied by declining economic activity of young people resulting from increased participation in school, the discouraging effect of depressed economies, distorted view of the future because of HIV/AIDS, and difficulties young people have finding a job.

Education may also be contributing to the rising youth unemployment in the ECA region. The average level of literacy of the new labour market entrant in most African countries has been rising since independence (See Table 2 in the appendix). This is positive. But it is among this segment of the population that youth unemployment is most concentrated. In many cases, youth are neither equipped with the skills nor mentally prepared for the labour market. Many consider available jobs as beneath them. Furthermore, given the sometimes low wages paid, one of the reasons for the higher youth unemployment rates may be that young people tend to spend more time looking for a job, and have a high reservation wage. Subjected to paternalism, many young job seekers with high education levels and high

job expectations may be more likely to "shop around" for a suitable job rather than settle on the available job.

(a) Challenges

It is not easy to deal with the problem of youth unemployment as evidence from around the world shows. In Africa, efforts to meaningfully address the growing epidemic of youth unemployment must address four main challenges: the challenge of HIV/AIDS, the challenge of reforming the education sector, the challenge of promoting economic growth, and the challenge of promoting female employment.

The Challenge of HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS is a major challenge facing Africa's youth. It is affecting their decisions with respect to acquiring human capital. The segment of the population most vulnerable to HIV/AIDS is the most productive segment of the population. HIV/AIDS is depleting Africa's very low level of the stock of human capital. Lacking resources, it will be difficult for many countries to replace the many educated youth who have been lost to HIV/AIDS, leaving millions of uneducated and difficult-to-educate young people on the streets. Meager resources that would otherwise have been invested in schools, job creation and expanding the opportunities for youth have been expended on treatment and care for the victims. The disease has impoverished many households. In many countries, this has resulted in an astronomical increase in the number of orphans, street children, and child-headed households who are marginalized from many productive opportunities.

The Challenge of Education Reform

In many African countries, the education system has been blamed for the rising rate of youth unemployment. But production technologies and consumer products that are knowledge-intensive increasingly characterize the modern economy. Africa's education sector is increasingly being called upon to produce the skilled manpower, generate the new ideas, and incubate the new technologies this new economy requires. It is widely recognized that the ability of these institutions to respond to the needs of this increasingly knowledge-based economy is limited. There is a mismatch between the skills produced by the education sector and the skills needed by the labour market. Reforming the education sector to make it more responsive to the changing skills need of the labour market is therefore of compelling importance.

The Challenge of Promoting Economic Growth

Eliminating poverty is the moral debt that African governments owe to their people. The introduction of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) offers a significant opportunity to deepen the focus on broad-based participatory growth strategies for poverty reduction in Africa. One of the strategies for poverty reduction is, without doubt, employment. However, very few African countries have explicitly included employment-promoting growth strategies as a quick look at a number of poverty reduction strategy papers prepared by a number of African countries shows. Indeed, no attention is paid to the problem of job creation in general and youth employment in particular. This needs to be addressed. The challenge therefore lies in designing mechanisms for promoting sustained economic growth through employment-promoting strategies.

The Challenge of Promoting Female Employment

Young women bear a disproportionate burden of unemployment as the data presented in Table 1 show. Unemployment rates in most countries among females are higher than male rates, like other young

women in developing countries. And young African women in many cases tend to have lower labour force participation rates. Many young women facing dismal employment prospects fall disproportionately into the urban informal sector and subsistence-oriented agricultural activities. Factors such as the cultural and other biases against the training of girls, labour market discrimination etc may account for the high rate of female unemployment. African countries therefore face the challenge of improving the employment prospects of young women.

The Challenge of Rural Youth Unemployment and Underemployment

According to some estimates, over seventy per cent of Africans live in rural areas. This implies that the majority of Africa's young live in rural areas and depends on rain-fed agriculture in the main for their livelihood. Many are unemployed and unemployed for most parts of the year. A large number migrate to the cities in search of jobs, thus swelling the number of unemployed youths in urban areas. African countries therefore need to design and devise innovative policies to keep the young on the land in rural areas as part of a comprehensive strategy to combat youth unemployment.

(b) Socio-economic and Political Context

The context for action on youth unemployment in Africa has changed. The new context is characterized by the resumption of growth in many African countries, the cessation of conflict in much of the region, regional integration, globalization, and democratization. Economic growth has resumed in many African countries. According to the ECA (2002) the African economy grew at more than 4 per cent in 2001 in spite of the global slowdown resulting from the events of September 11, 2001. But the impact of economic growth is unlikely to be much because the employment elasticity of economic growth is low.

Africa's many conflicts in a rather strange way provided "employment" for millions of young people. As soldiers in various armies, they received food or pay in exchange for their labour. However, the cessation of conflict in countries such as South Africa, Sierra Leone, Mozambique, Angola, and Rwanda has released into the labour market millions of young job seekers many of who lack the skills or attitude required for employment. This is putting pressure on labour markets in countries the continent and compelling governments to design innovative strategies to reintegrate these youths into orderly society.

The context of action on youth unemployment in Africa is also affected by the efforts of African countries to integrate their economies. The birth of the African Union, which seeks to create a common African economic and political space, provides a new prism for looking at the problem and a new framework for considering solutions. An Africa where free movement of goods, services and labour are the norm will result in common policies, the integration of labour markets, and the expansion of employment-generating intra-African trade. Finally, globalization, the increasing integration and interdependence of the world's economies, has a significant impact on youth employment policies.

(c) Effects and Consequences in the Absence of Major Initiatives

The previous section has discussed the complex economic, social and moral policy issues that the problem of youth unemployment and under-employment poses. The consequences of this problem, if no major initiatives are taken to address it could be disastrous for countries. The link has now been established between youth joblessness and social problems like drug abuse, petty crime and single parent families. Poverty is the fertile ground for the recruitment of child soldiers. Health care is an early casualty. Unemployed youth are much more likely to engage in risky behaviour which could increase their vulnerability to contracting HIV/AIDS. Youth unemployment wastes valuable human capital, and causes serious social distress. Jobless youth are often marginalized and excluded from the larger society.

The social exclusion can lead to alienation from society and democratic political processes, and subscription to radical and even terrorist ideologies.

One very visible consequence of youth unemployment in Africa is the rising rate of crime. The conditions under which people in a society relate to each other is an often neglected but equally important measure of social progress. In Africa, high crime rates have come to characterize many countries. South Africa, for example, is reputed to have one of the highest rates of victimization in the world. Crime has increased in various parts of Africa at an alarming rate. For instance, in the 1990's, Africa had the second highest homicide rate - second to Latin America (UNDP, 1998). The high crime rate is a symptom as well as evidence of the breakdown of social conditions. It increases the cost of doing business. It is ironical that this development, which severely limits the freedoms of citizens, has occurred at a time when democratic rights have been expanded in many countries.

Crime may be a consequence of unemployment, but it is also an additional factor causing youth unemployment through its effects on the economy. Crime affects the economy through a number of channels. First, it increases the cost of doing business for the private sector and of providing public services. Resources that would otherwise have been invested in increasing output and funding education and health are diverted to crime prevention. Second, it reduces the planning horizon for firms and households; firms are discouraged from making long-term investment while the rate of saving by households falls, resulting in a decrease in the supply of loanable funds. Finally, because crime increases the cost of doing business, the high rates of crime reported across the continent may reduce the attractiveness of Africa as a destination of foreign investment.

II. Good practices: What works

The urgency and seriousness of the problem of youth unemployment in Africa have induced a number of innovative programs across the length and breadth of the continent. The International Labour Organization has documented some of these programs or good practices. The ECA itself has an innovative programme in partnership with CISCO to address the problem of unemployment among young female adults. A number of these programmes are discussed in this section.

(a) Cisco Internet Networking Technology Training for African Women

Education and training are a major activity of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). The Commission, in partnership with infoDev of the World Bank and Cisco Systems Inc., has launched a Cisco Internet Networking Technology Training Course for African Women at its Information Technology Centre for Africa (ITCA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The training course follows the established curriculum of the Cisco Networking Academy Program. The training course involves a fully sponsored six-month residential course. It provides young women cutting-edge knowledge and skills, empowering young women in an area that is quickly gaining importance in our society.

In this project, 20 to 25 African women are trained each year over a two-year period in innovative technology of Internet networking design, maintenance and use. In the first training course completed 2002, 28 per cent of women were under 25. The course encourages all age groups but with a special focus on young women, high school, college, university graduates or those whose education has been cut short, thus, these young women benefit from this specialized training where there is current market demand in their specific countries. At the same time they undertake courses in gender and business management. The course gives them skills which they can develop in setting up businesses or working in a competitive environment.

The program addresses major issues such as:

- The digital divide, to put some African women in the forefront equipped with the skills that are needed in the network society and to serve as role models for other African girls and women to enter this new area;
- Shortage of African skilled in the new technologies, not only by the education of the students but also through a multiplier effect by training trainers for others;
- Countering the brain drain, maintaining continuous communication and follow up on their activities at the country level. Where possible the program introduce them to potential employers and build a strong network with national mechanisms working on Information Communication Technologies

The program has shown high success, expressed by the desire from all participants to shift from their jobs due to both prospects and learning opportunities. This is demonstrated by the fact that majority of the participants of the first course are currently employed in ICT-related jobs, such as computer teacher, internet service provision, development networks, and so on. The impact and relevance of the training is diverse though. The young women are willing to learn and get on-job training since for many it is their first jobs or second. Thus, they need to build experience and gain the necessary skills.

Young women are reported to get opportunities faster due to their flexibility, compared to the others who have families and changing jobs is difficult as there is no guarantee. They are enthusiastic in getting jobs that directly relate to the course work to be able to put into practice what they learnt. They all visualize great employment opportunities as well as increasing their knowledge in the field of ICT. In addition, information disseminated about these young women and their experience will lead other young women in Africa to enter high technology training and businesses.

- (b) Harnessing the innovative spirit of disadvantaged, young Ghanaian women: Citi Savings and Loans ltd.

Ninety-two per cent of Ghanaian women work in the informal sector, where they face traditional gender-biases that direct credit and hence entrepreneurial opportunities to men. When structural adjustment started in the country in the 1980s the situation worsened for women as more men entered the informal sector due to lay offs in the public services and in the hitherto protected industries. Thus, the government of Ghana undertook several initiatives including the PAMSCAD (Programme Action for the Mitigation of the Social Consequences of Structural Adjustment) to help vulnerable groups. The coverage of these programmes was limited by lack of donor support; training programmes failed to take the trained out of unemployment because skills learnt were not needed; or in many cases post-training support was not available to establish beneficiaries in employment.

In 1992 Citi Savings and Loans LTD was incorporated in Ghana and licensed by the Bank of Ghana to operate as a non-bank financial institution with the objectives of mobilizing deposits, granting loans and providing financial services to informal sector micro and small businesses which hitherto had no access to the facilities of traditional banking institutions.

Citi began by setting up branches in peri-urban centers of the capital city and evolving an innovative approach of interfacing the non-formal market place with the formal whereby canvassers at the grassroots market services among women groups and individual sellers; help in group formation, conduct credit education; and work closely with the "susu" operators. Two specific financial products were designed, namely, "Adom Bosea" (for mostly foodstuff retailers and the kayayoo- teenage girl porters in the local markets) and "Mmoa Bosea" (mostly for chopbar or food caterers, and dressmakers).

By 1997 Citi had a patronage of about 10,000, with 2000 of them being men! Citi adopted "a group concept", where savings and loans were mobilized and delivered on the basis of group involvement in identifying needy customers, thereby lowering cost of lending, and enhancing repayment. The good news is that many kayayoo, girls offering portage services at the local markets and living on the streets at the mercy of unscrupulous gang boys, have been able to move into better occupations such as hairdressing and are off the street.

The principal sources of the success have been: providing vocational training out of its profits for the poor illiterate youth; organizing them into small groups; targeting assistance in the form of credit and enterprise formation to groups demonstrating the potential for enterprise development; and providing basic management training. In addition, Citi gives moral support to these women under its Career Mentoring and Entrepreneurial Development Resources (CMEDR) programme.

(c) Good Practice in Training: Youth Enterprise Society (YES), South Africa

A good example of a best practice in the area of youth training for employment is the Youth Enterprise Society (YES) in South Africa. The YES program was initiated by Ohio State University in 1989 at the instance of South Africa's youth and their teachers. It is an extra-mural activity that runs throughout the year. Students in grades 7 and above are enrolled. The mission of YES is 'to empower young people, through enterprise, to become masters of their own destinies. Or, put another way, to help more and more young people to become business creators rather than simply job seekers'. It thus seeks to help alleviate unemployment by encouraging young people to consider entrepreneurship as a career option. Participants develop business competencies through a range of activities. Schools provide their premises, teachers serve as advisors/facilitators, and young men and women, along with community leaders, educationists, business leaders together contribute to "create awareness and interest in free-market entrepreneurship as a career option amongst young people", demonstrating the high potential of partnerships between the public education sector and multiple stakeholders for achieving effective education and training.

Good Practices that Work: National Open Apprenticeship Scheme in Nigeria

Nigeria has had a history of innovative youth employment programmes. In the 1980s, the government of one of the States, Rivers State, launched an agricultural employment programme directed at youth. The most innovative of the programmes is the National Open Apprenticeship Scheme (NOAS) introduced by the Federal Government in 1987. The NOAS is an attempt to link education and training and the workplace. Overseen and managed by the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in the Ministry of Labour and Productivity, the NOAS provides vocational education and training to unemployed youth in over 100 occupations. It utilizes production facilities such as workshops and technical instructors of private industries, government institutions and, by way of a sub-contracting arrangement, way-side craftsmen and tradesmen (informal sector operators). Unemployed youth and school-leavers are trained for a period of 6 months to 3 years under reputable Master Craftsmen. They are also taught management, business and administrative skills to reinforce their understanding of the trade in which they are involved and to complement the practical training received. Since its inception, over 600,000 unemployed youth have been trained in over 80 different trades. More than 400,000 of these started their own micro-enterprises. Nearly 50,000 unemployed youth are currently undergoing training.

An offshoot of NOAS is the School-On-Wheels (SOW) programme, which is essentially a mobile training scheme designed to provide vocational training to school-leavers and other unskilled persons in rural areas. The programme is of a three-month duration, after which the graduates are absorbed into NOAS. Over 21,000 youth have benefited from the programme since its launch in 1990. Another related scheme is the Waste-To-Wealth (WTW) Scheme under which youth are trained in the techniques of converting waste material into useful objects such as snail shells, bamboos and horns into decorative, valuable household goods. At least, 8,000 people have been trained under this scheme since its inception in 1990.

In order to prevent NOAS graduates from falling back into unemployment, NDE launched a resettlement programme in 1991. Under the project, NOAS graduates are provided with equipment to start their own businesses. Close to 6,000 graduates of NOAS benefited from this scheme.

III. Critical areas for discussion: Best opportunities for promoting youth employment in Africa

There are many critical areas for discussion but I shall limit myself to a few, as I am sure other colleagues also have suggestions to make in this area. The areas I have decided to focus on - education and training, youth entrepreneurship programs, Public Works Programme, and Sound Macroeconomic Management - are of critical importance to ECA member states.

(a) Education Reforms and Training

It has been noted elsewhere in this paper that the mismatch between the skills produced by Africans educational institutions and the skills required by the labour market is a contributory factor to the growing youth unemployment rate. Attempts to modernize and refocus the educational system in the 1980s and 1990s were stymied by cuts in education expenditure recommended as part of the package of reforms under the structural adjustment programmes of that period. But African education needs to be reformed to make it responsive to changing labour markets. This reform must of necessity include the introduction of more vocational schools and vocational counseling. Equally important is the need to improve labour market information provided by schools, and strengthening the involvement of other stakeholders, especially the role of employers in defining the content of vocational education. Job search techniques must be part of the curriculum as the paternalistic nature of African societies encourages many youth to still depend on parents and relatives to find them a job. Training in skills will need to include changing the attitude of youth towards employment: promoting preference of work over unemployment, especially concerning the first job; promoting preference of salary over gifts, and preference of training over unemployment.

Courses taught in schools must be relevant. School-to-work transition is an important criterion according to which the relevance of the education system to labor market needs can be measured. It is important that the period between when a student graduates from an education institution and first destination employment be shortened. To do so, African education institutions will have to make themselves more responsive to the labour market. To shorten the transition, the training programs must not be exclusively devoted to the skills needs of the formal sector. They should also address the skills needs of the informal sector as this sector is an important employer of youths in many African countries.

(b) Promoting Entrepreneurship among youth

How can the youth be organized/motivated to become entrepreneurs and move into self-employment, to become 'job creators instead of job seekers? One way to do this is to promote entrepreneurship. This approach is based on the notion that the promotion of entrepreneurship among young people is a means of youth development, economic empowerment and employment creation. Entrepreneurship enables youth to develop skills and acquire life-skills that may be of value in other endeavors. It also enhances their sense of self-worth. A whole subset of issues is involved here. Among these are: (i) Promotion of business role models and mentoring programs, (ii) Business competitions for youth, (iii) Growing the family-owned business and dealing with cultural problems - developing an enterprise culture; (iv) Credit and subsidies. Can Governments offer credit to youth on concessionary terms to enable them start their own businesses?, If not, can governments limitedly subsidize business

started by youth, (v) Creation of "business parks" in secondary schools and universities to serve as incubators of business ideas and projects generated by young people.

The organized private sector can be an active partner in the promotion of youth entrepreneurship. It can provide internship and apprenticeship programs. But governments must put in place policies conducive to the elicitation of private sector interest. They could, for example, give wage subsidies to firms that grant internship and apprenticeship programs. They can also give incentives in terms of tax holidays, concessions, or deductions for the private sector to enhance youth employment?

(c) Public Works Programme

African governments can promote youth employment in a number of ways. They can set up employment services whose main tasks will be placement, vocational information and guidance, and provision of labour market information to reduce informational asymmetries between employers and job seekers. Unfortunately, not many countries have agencies providing these services.

Governments can also directly create employment for youth through employment generation programs. In practically all ECA member states, this has been a natural reaction of governments to increasing youth unemployment. Politically, it shows concern of the government for the plight of youth. Two types of public works programme can be distinguished. The first type consists of public works programme that provide for food, pay or a combination thereof in exchange for the work. The second is set of direct employment programmes that focus on youths using labour-intensive technologies.

Labour-intensive public works have been the tools of choice to deal with economy-wide shocks. Financed by the central government and executed either by central organs or by local organizations, including NGOs, they are designed to a) reduce long-term unemployment through the creation of short-term jobs, b) provide workers with job-specific skills through on-the-job-training, c) involve the private in the creation and maintenance of jobs. There is a wide range of public works programmes in place in ECA member states. In Ghana, youth are employed in afforestation and urban sanitation programs. In Nigeria, youth have been employed from time to time in government plantations and through the National Directorate for Employment youth have been given concessionary credit to enable them start their own businesses.

(d) Sound Macroeconomic Management

Sound macroeconomic policies have a potential role to play in efforts to deal with youth unemployment. One of the problem facing Africa's labour markets is the low rate of aggregate (economic) growth. In general, it cannot be argued that wages have become a problem. If aggregate growth rates can be accelerated then employment growth will occur and unemployment, including youth unemployment will fall. The problem, however, is devising and designing economic policies that would result in sustained economic growth (and by implication, employment growth).

The experiences of other countries suggest a range of policies that African countries can put in place. First, they need to liberalize their trading regimes as economic growth is clearly linked to exports, as is the case, for example, for Mauritius. African countries possess substantial agricultural and natural resource goods which can be exported. In thinking about trade liberalization, it is important to note that policies on exchange rate, interest rate, tariffs, export free zones, capital controls, credit allocation, agricultural taxation, inflation, also matter for growth. However, their impact on employment in general and on youth unemployment in particular will operate primarily through the type of export growth that they promote.

IV. Conclusion

This paper has briefly discussed the problem of youth unemployment in ECA member countries. The discussion has not been exhaustive. The paper has drawn attention to a number of issues. The first is the need for data on youth unemployment in Africa. The lack of data - reliable, consistent, and timely - is a hindrance to informed decision-making in Africa. As mentioned elsewhere in this paper, of 53 ECA member states, the ILO has youth unemployment data for just six countries. Even for those countries, the data are dated and discontinuous. The lack of data is therefore an important area for discussion for evidence-based policy-making on youth unemployment. Countries need to improve their overall data collection capabilities. They also need to focus more on collecting youth data. This requires increased allocation of resources, and capacity development and the construction of a database on youth unemployment. The paper has also highlighted a few innovative youth employment practices in the region worthy of emulation and scaling up. Obviously these are not perfect programmes. They can be improved. And finally, the paper has suggested a few areas for policy dialogue.

Appendix

Table 1. Youth Unemployment in Africa

<i>Country</i>	<i>Latest Year Data</i>	<i>Youth unemployment rate (%)</i>			<i>Share of youth unemployment to youth population (%)</i>		
		<i>MF</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>MF</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>
Ethiopia	1992	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.3
Mauritius	1995	23.8	21.4	28.1	12.0	13.9	9.9
CAR	1990	0.6	1.0	0.1	0.4	0.7	0.1
South Africa	2000	55.8	57.9	53.3	19.8	21.8	17.6
Burkina Faso	1991	1.8	2.7	0.7	1.4	2.3	0.5
Niger	1990	0.5	0.8	0.1	0.4	0.7	0.1
Algeria	1990	38.7	46.2	14.4	14.9	26.6	2.7
Egypt	1995	34.4	24.5	59.0	11.6	11.4	11.7
Morocco	1998	35.0	34.7	35.9	12.9	18.5	7.5

Source: Key Indicators of the Labour Market 2000-2001 (ILO)

Table 2. Youth literacy rate and HDI rank

<i>Country</i>	<i>HDI Rank</i>	<i>Youth literacy rate (percent age 15-24)</i>	
		<i>1985</i>	<i>2000</i>
Seychelles	47		
Libya Arab Jamahiriya	64	86.7	96.5
Mauritius	67	89.3	93.9
Tunisia	97	78.3	93.4
Cape Verde	100	77.0	88.1
Algeria	106	69.5	89.0
South Africa	107	86.8	91.3
Equatorial Guinea	111	89.1	96.9
Egypt	115	57.0	69.8
Gabon	117		
Sao Tome & Principe	119		
Namibia	122	84.7	91.6
Morocco	123	48.3	67.4
Swaziland	125	81.5	90.4
Botswana	126	78.2	88.3
Zimbabwe	128	90.2	97.2
Ghana	129	74.8	91.0
Lesotho	132	85.1	90.5
Kenya	134	85.0	95.1
Cameroon	135	81.7	93.7
Congo	136	87.6	97.4
Comoros	137	55.8	58.7
Sudan	139	57.7	77.2
Togo	141	56.9	75.4
Madagascar	147	67.7	80.1
Nigeria	148	64.7	86.8
Djibouti	149	66.6	84.0
Uganda	150	65.3	78.8
Tanzania	151	77.4	90.6
Mauritania	152	37.9	48.9
Zambia	153	77.2	88.2
Senegal	154	34.9	50.7
Congo, Dem.Rep.	155	61.4	81.7
Cote d'Ivoire	156	42.9	65.0
Eritrea	157	55.9	70.2
Benin	158	33.9	53.1
Guinea	159		
Gambia	160	35.2	57.1
Angola	161		
Rwanda	162	65.9	83.3
Malawi	163	59.3	71.1
Mali	164	34.9	66.3
Central African rep.	165	45.1	67.2
Chad	166	39.0	66.6
Guinea –Bissau	167	38.0	58.2
Ethiopia	168	37.5	54.8
Burkina Faso	169	20.9	34.6
Mozambique	170	43.2	60.6
Burundi	171	45.5	63.9
Niger	172		
Sierra Leone	173		
Developing countries		78.4	84.6
Least developed countries		52.3	66.0
Arab States		63.1	79.1
Sub-Saharan Africa		61.7	77.7
South Asia		57.4	69.8

Source: Human Development Report 2002

Table 3: HIV Prevalence rate (%) in young People (15-24)

	<i>Female</i>		<i>Male</i>	
	<i>Low Estimate</i>	<i>High Estimate</i>	<i>Low Estimate</i>	<i>High Estimate</i>
Average for Sub-saharan Africa	9.07943	14.6363	3.82829	6.204
Angola	4.14	7.33	1.61	2.85
Benin	2.97	4.46	0.94	1.41
Botswana	29.99	44.98	12.86	19.29
Burkina Faso	7.78	11.67	3.18	4.77
Burudi	7.98	14.11	3.58	6.33
Cameroon	10.09	15.25	4.33	6.55
Central African Republic	10.83	16.25	4.66	6.99
Chad	2.79	5.77	1.55	3.2
Comoros	....	....	....	...
Congo	5.08	10.52	2.13	4.42
Cote D'Ivoire	6.67	9.95	2.34	3.49
Democratic Rep.	4.27	7.55	2.11	3.74
Djibouti	....	....	....	...
Equatorial Guinea	1.8	3.74	0.91	1.88
Eriterea	3.1	5.49	2.01	3.55
Ethiopia	5.65	9.99	3.17	5.62
Gabon	....	....	....	...
Gambia	0.88	1.82	0.34	0.71
Ghana	2.08	3.86	0.95	1.76
Guinea	....	....	....	...
Guineau-bissau	1.94	4.02	0.69	1.43
Kenya	12.45	18.67	4.8	7.21
Lesotho	24.75	51.4	11.31	23.49
Liberia	....	....	....	...
Madagascar	0.19	0.28	0.05	0.08
Malawi	11.91	17.87	5.08	7.62
Mali	1.35	2.81	0.89	1.84
Mauritania	....	....	....	...
Mozambique	10.56	18.78	4.41	7.84
Namibia	19.43	29.15	8.88	13.32
Niger	....	....	....	...
Nigeria	4.66	6.99	2.39	3.59
Rwanda	8.96	13.44	3.93	5.9
Sao Tome and Principe				
Senegal	0.43	0.65	0.15	0.22
Sierra leone	4.88	10.19	1.61	3.36
Somalia	....	....	....	...
South Africa	20.51	30.76	8.53	12.79
Swaziland	31.59	47.38	12.18	18.27
Togo	4.75	7.12	1.64	2.46
Uganda	3.7	5.56	1.59	2.38
United Rep. Of Tanzania	6.44	9.67	2.84	4.25
Zambia	16.78	25.18	6.45	9.68
Zimbabwe	26.4	39.61	9.9	14.85

Source: UNAIDS Report on the Global HIV/AIDS 2002

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