



Wilton Park
Youth Dialogues

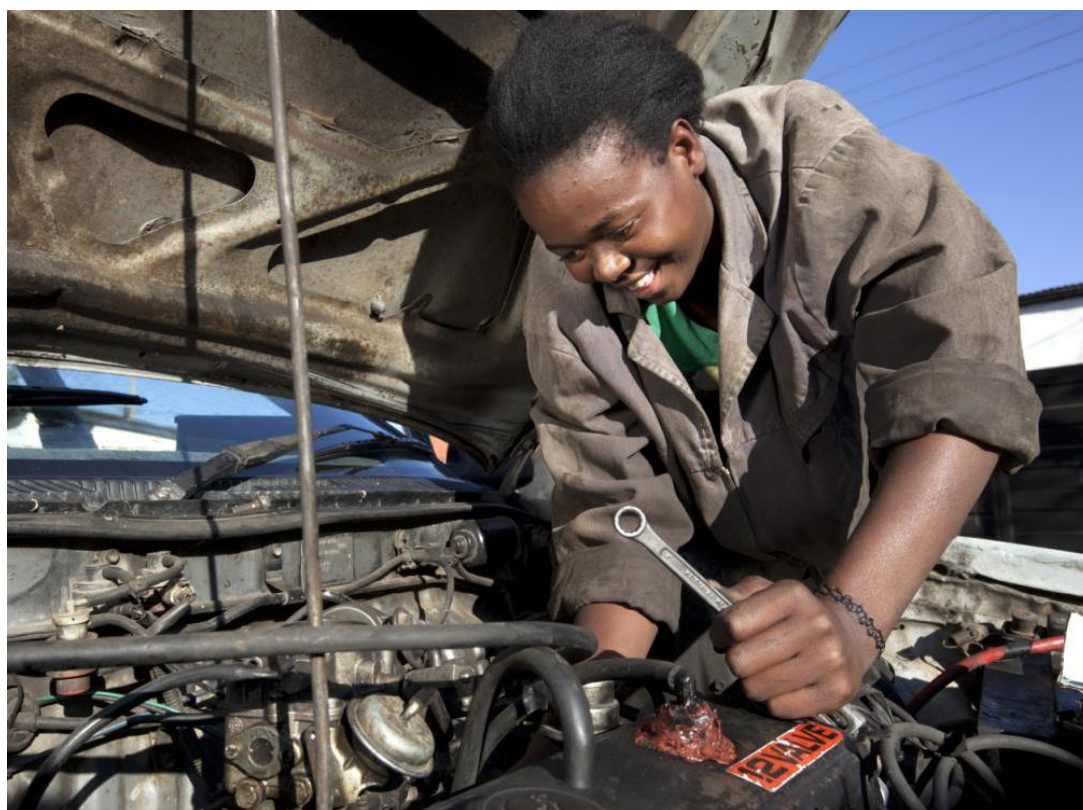


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Report

Turbocharging youth employment in sub-Saharan Africa: a new approach

Sunday 20 – Wednesday 23 January 2019 | WP1658

In association with:



**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF DENMARK**



Department
for International
Development

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“Be daring; be transformational; be youth led and youth centric; build new solutions on existing platforms.”

The figures speak for themselves: Most of the world's projected youth population growth will take place in sub-Saharan Africa, and this trend could have important implications for growth and job creation. Approximately 70% of the population here is under 30, and an estimated 18 million new jobs will be needed each year until 2035 to absorb the growing labour force in the region. However, the problem is not only unemployment, but underemployment and a lack of secure and decent work. Special policies need to be developed. And yet, there seems little consensus on how that will happen, even though governments have signed up to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with the goal of full employment for all young women and men by 2030. How to boost employment has been a central focus of the Wilton Park Youth Dialogues: powering the future, a series of dialogues held over the past two years exploring how best to harness the energy and imagination of young people, while ensuring that they are equipped with the education, skills and tools that will allow them to become resilient and thriving citizens in a challenging world.

“African governments are not listening to the evidence of what works to create more jobs- what's needed to make them act?”

No single actor can solve the youth employment crisis. Working together to address this issue has never been more critical, both as a challenge and as an opportunity to harness the potential of the current youth demographic to deliver lasting positive change. The United Kingdom's Prime Minister recently announced that job creation will be at the 'very heart' of the UK's relationship with Africa, putting into sharp focus the question of where responsibility lies to ensure the future of work provides a decent living, is productive enough to contribute to sustainable growth and is environmentally friendly.

The Wilton Park Youth Dialogue 'Turbocharging youth employment in sub-Saharan Africa: a new approach' took place at Wiston House from 20- 23 January 2019. The Dialogue was the fourth core event in The Wilton Park 'Youth Dialogues' series. It was held in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark and the UK's Department for International Development. An expert group of 58 participants from 16 countries with representation from government, the Commonwealth, international civil society organisations, academia, young entrepreneurs and the private sector met to discuss new and innovative strategies to tackling youth un- and under-employment in sub-Saharan Africa. Delegates discussed a range of issues:

- How to move forward from existing evidence to new approaches to tackling un- and under-employment;
- Existing strategies by governments, multilateral donor organisations and financial institutions such as the World Bank and International Labour Organisation (ILO);
- New trends in the digital economy;
- The scope for decent work in the digital economy;
- Improving interactions and knowledge sharing between different actors in the ecosystem for youth employment.
- Taking concrete steps to develop tangible commitments to working together.

This report summarizes the debates held at the conference and elaborates the key take-away points:

- As the idea of the systems approach is gaining traction, donors and implementing agencies are taking steps to go beyond youth programmes that focus on 'skills for employability' and are starting to address different aspects of the system in order to enhance youth employment.
- Addressing the demand-side of labour is essential, but requires solid knowledge of which sectors will grow and how; which sectors generate entry-level jobs; what the multiplier effects are of supporting certain industries and (parts of) value chains; how labour markets develop.
- Country-specific approaches are essential and donors need a menu of interventions to be able to respond to the realities of middle-income, lower-income, and fragile settings. It is recognised that programming is difficult in fragile settings, but this create the risk that these countries are left behind when donors focus on countries with relatively functioning institutions.
- It is critical to assess at country-level what different players are already doing and identify a need and niche, in order to avoid duplication and identify opportunities for collaboration and complementarity.
- Young employers and entrepreneurs and youth organisations continue to be concerned about whether youth voices and substantive youth participation in programme and policy design is taken serious and call upon donors and inter-governmental organisations to think this through for each step in the programme cycle.
- The creation of not just more but also decent jobs that are properly paid, secure, and in a safe environment requires policies that safeguard employment conditions and labour rights, but also support young people to learn to negotiate and report abuse.
- To achieve equal opportunities and employment for people with disabilities campaigns are needed that challenge stereotypes and show everyone has skills to work. Companies also need support to think through how they can make the work floor more inclusive.

- Organisations like the World Bank, ILO, the Commonwealth, the African Union and African Development Bank commit to prioritising youth employment and support the evidence base and knowledge sharing.

“Youth Employment is the number one challenge in youth development: 60 percent of the people of the Commonwealth are under 30. They are our real wealth- IF- they can be skilled and get or create jobs. The London CHOGM mandated us to invest in a Systems Approach and we shall. It starts with a needs assessment or gap analysis- a prosper audit of what is being done and what is successful. From this, we must create a transformational road map that draws on the expertise of all of us. And we must learn by doing several country demonstration projects to create a proof of concept that we can take to the Kigali CHOGM in June 2020 and roll out around the world. We have 18 months: so get to it!” Commonwealth Secretary General,

“You can have the best training, but if there are no jobs it won’t solve the problem.”

“Growth needs to translate into jobs”

“When countries have a large youth population, focusing on youth unemployment becomes a non-negotiable. Growth has to work for youth.”

Creating an ecosystem for youth employment

1. The importance of thinking in terms of a youth ecosystem has emerged in all of the Wilton Park Youth Dialogues. This approach recognizes that the responsibility to resolve issues youth face does not rest on the shoulders of young people alone, as their issues result from broader systems, structures and processes in society, including forms of exclusion, which require concerted effort by a range of actors. At the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting (CHOGM) in London in April 2018, Heads stressed the importance of creating meaningful employment opportunities for the Commonwealth's growing youth populations. They agreed on the need to invest in a systems approach to support young people, including through skills building, entrepreneurship, apprenticeships and the need for better data to target interventions effectively. This Youth Dialogue unpacked further what working using a systems approach entails.
 - Country specific needs assessment, trade analysis and labour market analysis. Governments need to increase their understanding of trends, but often need financial and technical support to do these analysis and design policies that respond to trends.
 - Implementing actors need to conduct an audit of what government and other actors are already doing and then do a gap analysis to decide on their intervention strategy.
 - At national level there is the question of infrastructure, including for modern communication and cross-country mobility.
 - At sub-national level there is a need to understand which sectors have growth potential, whether and how technological advancement could facilitate this, and how to attract investors.
 - Small firms and medium firms face different challenge to grow, and they require different strategies of support. The vast majority of firms in Africa are small and employ few people, while youth face challenges to enter the large firms. Which distinct support do they need to grow? What is the best division of labour for donors and NGOs, based on their strengths: should donors focus on large firms and NGOs work with small firms?
 - The private sector needs to be brought on board in various ways: to help analysis, shape the curriculum for TVET, offer access to capital and innovation and commit to offering internships.
 - At sub-national level there is an inefficiency in markets in matching youth to jobs. Innovative approaches to matching youth and employers were shared. While

online platforms may be expensive to build, they have applications through which youth can show and 'credentialise' informal skills, experience gained through volunteering, and personal attitudes can be tested through games. These can be rolled out at country level.

- Certain elements of the ecosystem are currently disconnected. These include, for instance, the role of the informal sector and the large numbers of youth that work in farming and other rural livelihoods. Jobs can be created through agricultural transformation, the expansion of the productive capacity of value chains and better production linkages.
- The legal and institutional context is still a challenge in many countries, and young entrepreneurs encounter a lot of 'red tape'. Actors involved in policy spaces need to listen to young entrepreneurs and help them channel their concerns into policy making.
- A systems approach is about turning policy to implementation strategies that are holistic, and multi-agency.
- A challenge is that real changes and progressive policies require a proactive head of state, who have competing priorities. On the African continent, some are in the Commonwealth, others in the League of Francophone countries, others in the Arab League, and then there is the African Union. African leaders are thus pulled in various directions, and many do not think beyond election cycles. They need to be persuaded to act on the same page on youth employment
- Youth unemployment cannot be separated from inequalities in society and the nature of the state in a given country. When elites control power and a rent-seeking economy exists, and when women face gender inequality, then this hampers youth employment.

2. Various organisations that work in multiple African countries shared their strategies for working in a more holistic way and addressed multiple elements of the ecosystem:

- I. The **Commonwealth Secretariat** has developed model policies and implementation toolkits.
 - The Commonwealth helps countries with trade analysis and, especially in countries with large youth populations, it is a non-negotiable that growth needs to be tied to youth employment.
 - Of the Commonwealth countries, 19 are in Africa. None of these are ranked at the lower end of the Mo Ibrahim Good Governance index, which means the institutional environment is not averse to attracting investors and companies, and promoting job creation.
 - In preparation for CHOGM in Rwanda in 2020, the Secretariat is continuing engagement at country-level.
- II. **Solutions for Youth Employment (S4YE)** is a multi-stakeholder coalition housed at the World Bank, bringing together the public sector, private sector, civil society actors, government officials, foundations, think tanks, and youth organisations.
 - The S4YE Learning Lab brings together projects to work as community of practice and improve knowledge sharing within the system.
 - To promote youth voice and participation, S4YE launched a youth advisory group.

- S4YE is trying to address the demand side of labour by addressing links between the supply side and demand side in an integrated way, for instance for different value chains. When a value chain has potential, an analysis should focus on how it can be improved and productivity increased. The next step is to develop training that focuses on a specific node of the chain, and then link up with the supply side and necessary skills. S4YE is looking to pilot this integrated approach in 8 to 10 countries, through country-based coalitions that also bring in youth voices.
- III. Also the **Mastercard Foundation** attempts to work at the larger system level. The Young Africa Works strategy (2018-2030) aims to enable 30 million young Africans, particularly young women, to have dignified work. The strategy will be rolled out in multiple countries over the next few years. At country-level the Foundation consults government, the private sector and young people, and identifies key sectors and industries that can unlock global competitiveness.
- Mastercard Foundation prioritizes approaches that can create jobs at a large scale, which requires new and better policies. Anything below 40,000 jobs for youth can no longer be considered going to scale.
 - In the past, the Foundation worked on the demand side through financial inclusion. This has partly shifted to working with investors and the private sector, for instance by asking them how they can give capital at different stages of a business.
 - A focus area is how technology can help leverage job creation at scale.
 - To incorporate youth voice it has funded the Youth Think Tank, which involves youth researchers studying and articulating youth issues.
- IV. The **International Labour Organisation** (ILO) emphasizes the quality as well as the quantity of jobs. The ILO strategy involves sharing and applying knowledge, strategic alliances, scaling up action and impact and the mobilisation of resources. Partners include the private sector and youth organisations, the media, governments and parliamentarians.
- ILO takes action across eight priority areas, for each asking what the latest evidence and innovations show before planning new strategies and actions.
 - To promote good quality jobs the ILO calls upon private companies to respect HR policies, and to employ more young people that can be represented through unions or in other ways. ILO also launched a tool to measure qualitative jobs.
- V. One approach currently being tested to help coordinate, and identify synergies between, the different elements in the system at country-level is the **Coalition for Youth Employment**, co-chaired by the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank and IMF and the Commonwealth. After an initial bench-marking exercise and gap analysis, each coalition member comes up with their own National Action Plan to fill the gaps in provision. The government consolidates these into a strategic policy on which the parliament can legislate. Work is underway in Trinidad & Tobago and Kosovo with the goal of providing evidence of “What Works” to the 2020 CHOGM in Kigali.
- VI. A question voiced by all organisations that aim to create jobs at scale is how to take the diversity of young people into account, and how to address gendered barriers to accessing decent work.

“The demand side is the hardest nut to crack”

Building the evidence base for next steps

3. There is widespread agreement that interventions and policies need to be based on knowledge and evidence on what does and does not work. While there are many studies, they are scattered, and some themes are understudied. This session concentrated on mapping existing gaps in the evidence. From the discussion it was clear that assessing the demand side of labour markets, and finding out what kind of growth promotes job generation and in which sectors, is a hugely complicated task. Yet it was felt this is where debates and the generation of evidence need to focus on. There is also still insufficient knowledge on how to work with the informal economy and facilitate transitions to the formal economy.
 - Interventions focusing on the demand-side are often designed to achieve higher profitability, not job creation. It is a real challenge to calculate social externalities and the rate of return for society, if job generation is not promoted.
 - There is over ten years of evidence for skill-building programmes, while evidence for ‘what works’ to stimulate the demand side of labour markets is very limited. It is believed that tax incentives and wage subsidies do not work, but this is based on only a few studies.
 - Labour market studies are a relatively new area of research for the African continent. These are complicated and are likely to need external funding, but are essential for understanding which skills will be needed.
 - Since many industries are not expanding enough to create jobs at scale, the alternative of promoting youth entrepreneurship was quickly embraced. However, this is not the only solution. Structural transformation is needed, but there is not enough knowledge and evidence on how to do this.
 - Country-level knowledge on how economies change and what this will mean for youth employment, skills and education needs to be gathered.
 - The analysis of the African Development Bank is that the sectors that have the biggest potential to create jobs at scale, in particular through improving and building technology within these sectors, are agriculture, manufacturing, mining and services.
 - The World Bank developed a toolkit for value chain mapping to see which sectors create many entry-level jobs. Agriculture indeed stands out, but it is a complex matter.
 - To map whether and how an industry creates new jobs is highly complex, because it is not just the number of jobs created by a large firm itself. Multiplier effects occur through the number of e.g. restaurants and transport services that will appear in the area. The geography of jobs is complex to measure.
 - Many aspects of the informal economy remain poorly understood. How can youth working in the informal economy progress to having a portfolio of work, to transitioning to formal jobs? How can the informal economy generate tax for governments?
 - Knowledge and evidence is needed to develop Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), to ensure they become employers. One barrier is that there is funding for new enterprises, but existing SMEs find it hard to access capital to grow. Regulations and bureaucracy form another barrier and there is a need to move from enforcement to support and compliance, facilitating SMEs to grow.
 - More knowledge is needed on ‘segmentation’: which interventions work for which kind of young people?
 - Another evidence gap is the nature of gender discrimination in hiring markets, for gender and age but also other vulnerable groups like people with disabilities,

migrants and refugees. Correspondent studies can elicit such patterns but seem not to exist for Africa.

- Good strategies for research, evidence, M&E and learning incorporate beneficiaries: the youth themselves. This includes opening up to their views on what constitutes impact.
- At the same time, a nuanced perspective on when it is appropriate to ask youth to participate was shared. For instance, is a value chain mapping best done by young people who interact with only a small part of the chain? It requires technical expertise to map an entire chain.

“Managers hire for technical and fire for soft [skills].”

Job readiness seen through a systems lens

4. While it was repeatedly acknowledged that skill-building programmes are not sufficient to tackle youth un- and under-employment in contexts of limited job creation, there is still a need for adequate education and skills and other mechanisms that help youth prepare for the job market. Importantly, interventions focusing on youth and skills need to prepare them for the jobs of the future, while many educational systems are geared towards jobs of the past. In this session, participants shared insights on key ingredients for better skill building programmes, and for improved education systems and TVET.
 - Which jobs are valued? It was noted that this conference focused on jobs generated through the liberal market, whereas many young people aspire to work in the civil service, as teachers and nurses, and in the arts. These kind of jobs constitute a different part of the system and require different strategies in order to a) create them and b) develop the right skill set.
 - Performance-based mechanisms for contracting training providers seem to deliver better results.
 - Coaching and mentoring of youth is critical. This has come up in all Youth Dialogues and in the stories of the majority of successful youth entrepreneurs. One form of this is to use alumni of an intervention as role models as many youth prefer to learn from peers. How to scale up mentoring is currently a knowledge gap for when improving supply side interventions.
 - In South Africa, youth working in a franchise had the opportunity to learn essential business skills on the job while having the backing of the franchise. This offered them a foundation for starting a business of their own, and success rates are higher for youth who start a business with the franchise experience.
 - Many youth lack formal qualifications but have accumulated a wealth of experience and skills by doing apprenticeships and working in the informal economy. Mastercard Foundation is looking into how it can lend credentials to skills that are informally learnt. Some online platforms offer ways to showcase informal skills. Some large firms have started acknowledging informal qualifications.
 - Certification of informal skills is a challenge. Innovative tools to measure, assess and present skills as well as work attitudes that were learnt informally are now being trialled. South Africa's YES programme has developed an online app that is based on a work readiness framework. Youth test informal skills and attitudes through playing a game, and do a personality assessment. They can build their skills through prompts from the app and with advice from an individual supervisor. The app builds a detailed profile of a person and can generate a reference letter, thus accrediting their skills.
 - Also in South Africa, there is a database on which young people show what volunteering activities they have done and they get online tokens for that.

- For jobs in the formal sector, pre-employment experience and preparation is key. The AfDB has noted some successful models for working with the private sector on placement, selection and retention. One lesson is that private firms want to be part of the selection process.

Youth-centred approaches and building voice

5. This session opened the floor to youth representatives in order to present their views on solutions for youth employment, since youth delegates at the various Youth Dialogues have repeatedly emphasised that appropriate channels for youth to influence policies and programmes are missing from the ecosystem. They spoke about barriers to developing a business or find decent employment from a youth perspective; and challenges to youth organisations in relating to other actors in the system.

“If you are to paint unemployment, what would it look like? I see the gun violence in Tanzania, and people being robbed for a cell phone to eat. Silent prostitution with college students, youth out of school in order to do things just to eat. The new HIV infections. Political instability during elections. Growth of corruption, and sex corruption. It’s apathy, it’s drug abuse,...frustration and depression within them. It is the female head of a household who cannot own land, so they will be married to be someone’s wife to have food; it is the pressure on mothers to marry off their girls to get cows.”

“Worker’s rights are human rights.”

Youth voice and rights

6. Youth voice is central to advancing employment that is also safe, secure and decent. The ILO report launched in January 2019 for its 50th anniversary speaks to occupational health and safety. So many young people die or get permanently injured due to work-related injuries. In part this needs to be addressed through policies, yet an important part of the solution is equipping young people with the civic and political skills to negotiate working conditions and pay with employers, to unionise, and interact with relevant government bodies about employment conditions.
7. For young females, an important dimension of safety and security at the workplace is to be protected against gender discrimination, sexual harassment and exploitation. Again, safeguarding policies and building the voice of young female employees to speak out against abuse will help mitigate the challenges.
8. Young delegates emphasised the need to be exposed to learning leadership skills and life skills, not just technical skills and knowledge of business development.
9. In order to promote youth involvement in policy processes, well-connected adults can work as ‘announcers’ for youth to introduce them in policy spaces and big meetings. In addition to mentoring this would help prepare youth for participation.
10. Donors need to realise that ‘listening to youth’ is not a priority for many governments. Donors can help facilitate platforms for youth to dialogue with governments. ‘Edutainment’ through digital platforms, media and the arts is a promising way to help youth prepare for this dialogue.
11. Youth have created their own digital platforms to discuss challenges to youth employment and entrepreneurship, and directly confront their governments. Still, there is a disconnect between voice and responsive governments.
12. The negative narrative about youth as troublemakers needs to be changed and all actors need to contribute to produce a paradigm shift: from fearing youth and seeing them as a problem to seeing youth as source of hope and co-creators of a more peaceful and prosperous world.

“Gerontocracy is real! We have to be genuine about intergenerational policy spaces, and make youth part of policy processes beyond the summits and forums.”

“It comes down to a basic thing: fair deals for young people.”

“Can we as donors rely on economic growth programmes to deliver jobs for youth, or should we target certain sectors and promote jobs for young people within

13. An important lesson from the YES programme in South Africa was that to ensure safety and protection of youth at the local level, an in-house lawyer was needed who accompanied individuals needing support. To do this properly at regional level, YES contracted a larger umbrella NGO to manage this. Especially young women in their first placement or job need support, for instance when they encounter intimidation. Other facilities can be phone help lines to report problems.
14. It was also noted that achieving for instance fair wages needs to be approached by analysing a complex value chain at the macro level to understand how wages come about, and not just confronting individual firms that risk becoming less competitive when increasing wages.

Youth organisations and their relationships to donors and governments

15. The delegates heard several successful and impressive stories from young people who had developed their business to scale. Across their stories the issue of mentorship was highlighted; as well as the opportunity to access finance and networks as a moment of growth; and financial support that allowed someone to experiment and test various models (including the possibility that an attempt would fail). Many emphasised it was necessary to be bold and test new models of interventions.
16. An honest conversation about the relationship between youth/youth organisations and donors and governments ensued. Young delegates stressed the stringent donor requirements that leave little room for experiment and learning from failure, cumbersome reporting requirements, and the short timeframe of project support.
17. One organisation had once been accused of corruption and was reported to other donors as a ‘fraudulent organisation’. However this seemed a disproportionate measure for what had occurred, and largely the effect of reporting requirements and staff anxious to fulfil them.
18. A further constraint on youth organisations is that donors downstream risk, and funding models do not allow youth organisations to hire staff on permanent or long-term contracts, thus reproducing a transactional way of working that sustains insecure work. In addition, they may ‘poach’ young talent, and want to influence the ways of working of youth organisations, which can limit creativity.
19. Donors and governments need to be open to youth organisations telling them how the development sector work, and ensuring that everyone is paid a liveable wage.
20. Youth delegates stressed there is still a great deal of tokenistic youth participation. Donors and governments invite a young person to a meeting or summit but there is no sustained engagement beyond that. Youth delegates called for more institutional engagement: to work with youth and their institutions throughout a policy process, including when evaluating policies and programmes.
21. While institutionalised youth engagement is key, measures need to be in place that prevent this engagement being limited to a small elite. National Youth Councils are often captured by the incumbent party: institutionalisation can slide to paralysis and exclude important sections of inspirational young people.

Barriers and opportunities highlighted by youth delegates

22. Youth face specific financial barriers. Many youth have no access to bank loans because they lack the collateral. Women often lack property ownership and rights, while banks want secure lending. What are alternative credit solutions? Which international actors can sit down with banks to look at lending criteria?
23. There is a need for a ‘youth lens’ for investment strategies, which could for instance be encouraged through quota for investments directed at youth enterprises.

them. What should this targeting look like?”

“I have to write monthly reports for donors about my youth programmes. I end up working for you and not my youth organisation!”

“For some development partners it is ‘cute’ to work with youth. Then when our businesses grow we stop being cute and lose support. This shouldn’t be. It is necessary to partner with youth because we are half of the population! Allow us to grow, and we may outgrow you.”

24. When investors see an interesting youth idea or enterprise they may buy out the young person. While some may need more knowledge on investment and financial strategies, other may deliberately sell their idea in order to start the next initiative as ‘grantpreneurs’.
25. Different incentives exist to companies and governments to promote youth employment. In South Africa, a law is in place that rewards firms for employing youth through a score card mechanism. In Kenya, 30% of government tenders need to be assigned to youth.
26. Issues like taxes, social security and pensions are scary to youth. They need tailored information and advice to think through their options, risks and opportunities through. This could facilitate a transition to the formal economy for self-employed youth and informal businesses.
27. Youth do not always understand written contracts. The YES programme in South Africa designed contracts with pictograms that made clauses understandable for both youth and employers. Scaling this innovation can bring transaction costs down.
28. Even when employed, many youth remain disaffected within the job because they are on low-paid, short-term contracts. They need to apply to new jobs constantly while employed. Apprenticeships and internships are poorly paid. This is considered counter-productive.
29. Regarding important policies, the implications for youth need to be communicated through youth platforms. For instance, what will be the implications of the Africa free trade arrangements for mobility and trade?

Leaving no one behind

30. The conference discussed specific issues related to gender, disability and refugee status – key aspects that drive vulnerability in the labour market and on the work floor. People with disabilities are among the poorest in African populations. They are excluded from many opportunities, including employment. Gender discrimination limits women’s opportunities to find work, and females living with disabilities face double discrimination. Gender violence and sexual harassment on the work floor is widespread, while exact data is piecemeal, and this is a reason for women to leave work or work in harmful conditions. Refugees often face legal restrictions to accessing employment and often work illegally, and in informal work.
 - A major question, yet unresolved, is whether vulnerable groups require targeted interventions or whether a focus on these groups can be integrated or mainstreamed within broad interventions.
 - A representative from an organisation for people with disabilities (PWD) called for overcoming the blind spot in most firms for hiring PWD and lack of understanding of how firms can be more inclusive of PWD in their personnel.
 - Campaigns are needed to persuade companies that everyone has skills and experience, thus everyone can work. The ILO shared a lesson about working with employers to change their attitude towards PWD, as well as working with parents.
 - An example of programmes with refugees in Uganda was shared. The Uganda refugee policy allows refugees free movement and access to employment, and offers them a small plot of land to cultivate. Refugee settlements resemble small towns. Since these may be long term settlements, NGOs need to assess the skills of host communities and refugee populations to see what kind of jobs and programmes will fit in the future.
31. A different programme in the displacement affected region uses a market facilitation approach, looking at market incentives and how private actors could serve

marginalised populations. In one intensive private sector partnership, the NGO worked through a company to train 1000 farmers it buys from. Farmers were more receptive to the training when approached through the firm.

“There is a systematic problem with the structure of digital work. There are half a dozen countries in the world where you can live as developer. If youth don't live in these selected countries, they can't survive on tech skills.”

The digital economy

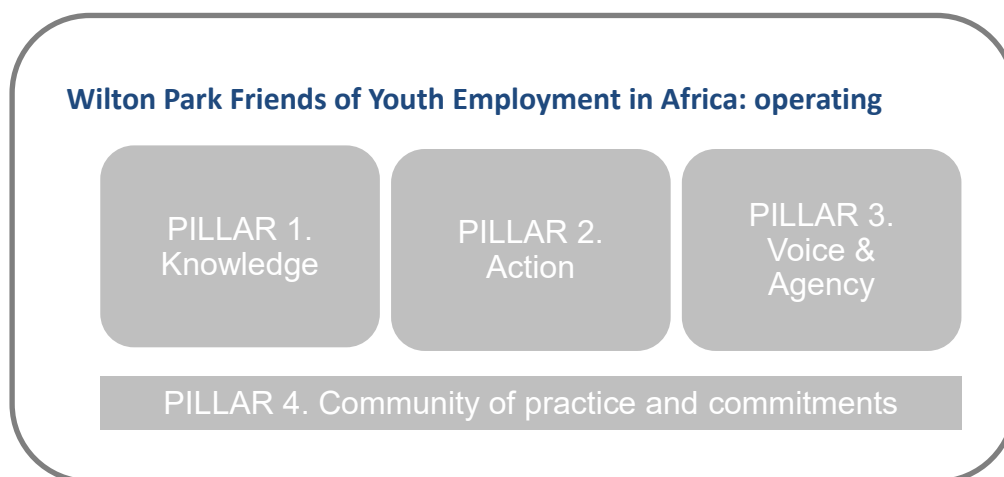
32. The session on work and the digital economy elicited the different forms of work in or related to the digital economy, and the different degrees of informality of this work.

- There is a difference between ‘digital jobs’ and ‘the nature of work in the digital age’. ‘Digital jobs’ refer to the jobs, usually formal, for the group of people that develop technology, apps, and who programme. The nature of work in the current world means that many people will be users of technology in some way, will look for work using various digital platforms, or offer services on such platforms. Here you can think of a pyramid: there are formal jobs on formal platforms; a bigger group finds informal work through a formal platform; and the largest group are those who find informal work through informal platforms.
- Just like the existing debate on skills vs. the demand side of labour, it is no use training youth on programming and app development if there are few tech jobs and when there is no demand for labour in this field.
- Informality can occur in various ways. For instance, behind the profile picture of a white American a group of ten Africans is doing the actual work of editing papers. Whatsapp is being used to offer and find work. The ‘hustle’ on the street is now also taking place online.
- The high degree of informality creates challenges in the relationship between service provided and customer, and for the platforms themselves. How to make platforms fair? How to do the ratings?
- Youth offering services on a platform need ‘digital literacy’: how to build a profile, how to respond to queries from customers, how to promote a service and how to do ‘credentialing’ of skills.
- One digital platform in Kenya vets every provider in person before they can show their profile on the platform. Their profile builds with the number of jobs done, with ratings for the quality of the job or service as well as for the quality and punctuality of communication. This lends credibility to the service provider. Over time this platform learnt to more actively structure the interaction between service provider and customer, for instance in the ways quotes are presented.
- An organisation in Tanzania trains young women on coding. The training model is currently being used as ‘prototype’ and will be scaled up, for instance by running coding camps. The government of Tanzania has created an ICT policy and wants ICT modules in public schools. Instead of spending much time talking about how to do this, the model of coding camp could be scaled up.
- If the digital economy is important for economic growth, governments need to play a role in rural areas where infrastructure for internet and ICT training is lacking. Further, there is a need to support STEM training at schools.
- The Government of Rwanda is considering establishing a coding school. The AfDB is hopes to create a link to Microsoft, thus seeking connections between government and large private sector firms for tech development.
- A question is whether the digital platform could be a vehicle for formalizing informal work. Governments may want to address the issue of taxation. While the company that owns the platform will pay tax, the service providers and customers of informal services usually do not. Another possibility is whether digital platforms could be linked to insurance and pension schemes for informal workers.

- A further issue that platforms may actively address is the safety and security of the service providers, in particular because young females who work as hair dressers, nannies and cleaners will work alone in people's homes. What information can a platform provide about safety at work, prevent abuse, and report misbehaviour of customers?

Way forward and commitments

33. The session on way forward and commitments was prompted by a summary of four areas of intervention based on the discussions during the conference: knowledge sharing, action through new interventions, youth voice and agency, and a community of practice referred to as 'Friends of Youth Employment'. More and better coordination at all levels is essential.
34. The key areas for action now being worked on are:
 - A Digital Compendium of best/promising practice and innovation in terms of solutions for youth employment that have the potential for scale and are relevant to Africa's needs and economies.
 - Designing and scaling up systemic investments in 2-3 countries and working together in these countries on joint collaborative action at country level.
 - A 2-page brief that standardises youth employment messaging for all audiences
 - A short policy brief as a call to action to AU and Commonwealth Heads of States and Governments
 - A youth led and youth designed event leading the next meeting of 'Wilton Park Friends of Youth Employment in Africa.
35. Please see separate annexe for details and commitments made by delegates to work together to turbo charge youth employment.



Marjoke Oosterom

Wilton Park | March 2019

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