

POLICY BRIEF

By: Oluwatosin Deborah Edafe, PhD and Bello Muhammad Abdullahi

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Youth Unemployment and Gender Inequality in Africa



1.0 Introduction

Youth unemployment and gender inequality are some of the key development challenges across Africa today. These issues have profound implications for the continent's social, economic, and political development, and could pose significant barriers to the achievement of the Agenda 2030 sustainable development goals, if not addressed urgently.

Africa's youth population, defined as individuals aged 15-24, is growing rapidly,¹ with approximately 122 million of them set to enter the job market in the next decade. With nearly 60% of its population under the age of 25, Africa is presented with a substantial opportunity for a dynamic and robust workforce,² if properly harnessed.

¹ <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-definition.pdf>

² [https://www.leadersofafrica.org/analysis/youth-unemployment-dilemma-in-africa-recent-data/#:~:text=Apart%20from%20the%20higher%20working,men%20\(16%25\)%20in%202020.](https://www.leadersofafrica.org/analysis/youth-unemployment-dilemma-in-africa-recent-data/#:~:text=Apart%20from%20the%20higher%20working,men%20(16%25)%20in%202020.)

However, this burgeoning youth population also poses a risk: without sufficient job creation, the continent would continue to face the dangers of widespread unemployment and social instability. Africa's population currently stands at around 1.4 billion and is projected to rise to 2.5 billion by 2050, representing a quarter of the world's population.

This projection highlights the potential opportunities and challenges that come with the growing population. If harnessed and utilised properly, this youthful demographic growth can drive innovation, economic growth, and development across the continent. However, this is contingent on job creation and economic opportunities keeping pace with the population growth. Conversely, the consequences could be dire, and could result in increased poverty, social unrest, and political instability.

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), over 72 million young people in Africa are not in education, employment, or training; and young women make up the largest portion of this group.³ This situation has been worsened by widespread underemployment, informal employment, and low job security, making it even harder for young people to find decent work.

Every year about 10 to 12 million young people in Africa transition into the labour market but only 3 million formal jobs are created, leaving the majority hanging in unemployment or low-paid, low-productivity jobs in the informal sector.⁴ This implies that about 8 out of every 10 African youths entering the labour force are likely to face long-term unemployment.

Gender inequality further complicates the employment situation for African youth where women and girls face additional barriers to employment, including lower access to education, discriminatory cultural norms, and limited economic opportunities.⁵ The gender gap in labour force participation remains significant, particularly in the SSA region where the labour force participation rate for women was 46.16 percent in 2021, 46 percent in 2022, and 46.10 percent in 2023 compared to 72.24 percent, 72.80 percent, and 73.84 percent for men respectively.⁶

³ <https://ilostat.ilo.org/blog/african-youth-face-pressing-challenges-in-the-transition-from-school-to-work/>

⁴ https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Images/high_5s/Job_youth_Africa_Job_youth_Africa.pdf

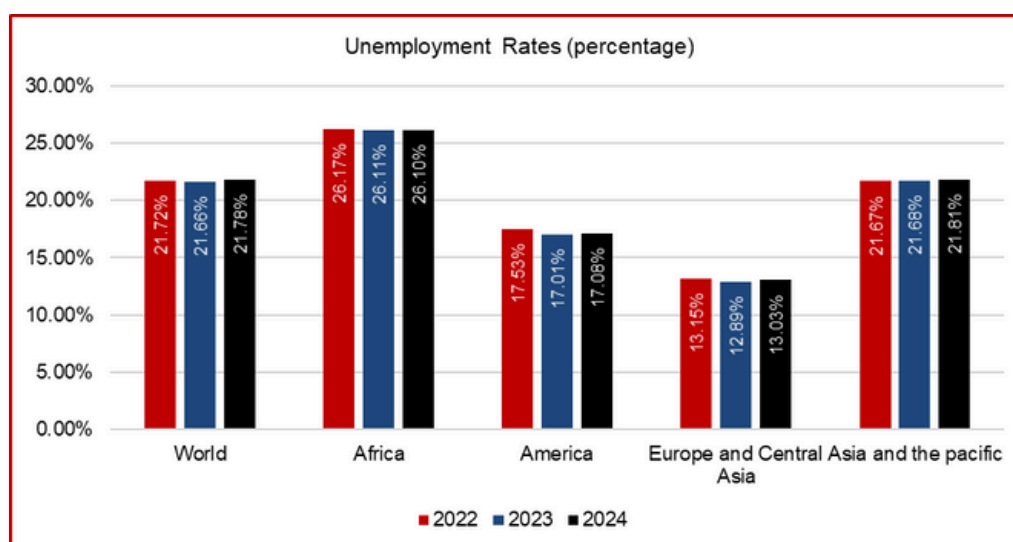
⁵ Bertay, Ata Can, Ljubica Dordevic, and Can Sever. Gender inequality and economic growth: Evidence from industry-level data. International Monetary Fund, 2020. <https://www.imf.org/-/media/Files/Publications/WP/2020/English/wpiea2020119-print-pdf.ashx>

⁶ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.CACT.MA.ZS>

Given that the youths constitute the majority of the African population, the combined impact of youth unemployment and gender inequality is significant. Economically, it leads to productivity losses and slower growth.⁷ Socially, it fosters inequality and unrest, sometimes leading to conflict.⁸ Politically, it weakens governance and reduces trust in institutions, as marginalised groups feel increasingly disenfranchised.⁹ Therefore, addressing youth unemployment and gender inequalities is key to achieving Sustainable Development Goals 5 and 8, which aim for decent work for all by 2030, and gender equality and economic empowerment for women and girls, respectively.

2.0 Current State of Youth Unemployment in Africa

Figure 1: Unemployment rate



Source: ILO (2024)¹⁰

The global unemployment rate has experienced slight fluctuations over the past few years. In 2022, the world average was around 21.7 percent. This figure decreased slightly to 21.65 percent in 2023 before rising again to 21.78 percent in 2024. Notably, Africa bears a disproportionate share of this burden compared to other regions, with an unemployment rate exceeding 26 percent in 2022 and 2023.

⁷ Bertay, Ata Can, Ljubica Dordevic, and Can Sever. Gender inequality and economic growth: Evidence from industry-level data. International Monetary Fund, 2020. <https://www.imf.org/-/media/Files/Publications/WP/2020/English/wp2020119-print-pdf.aspx>

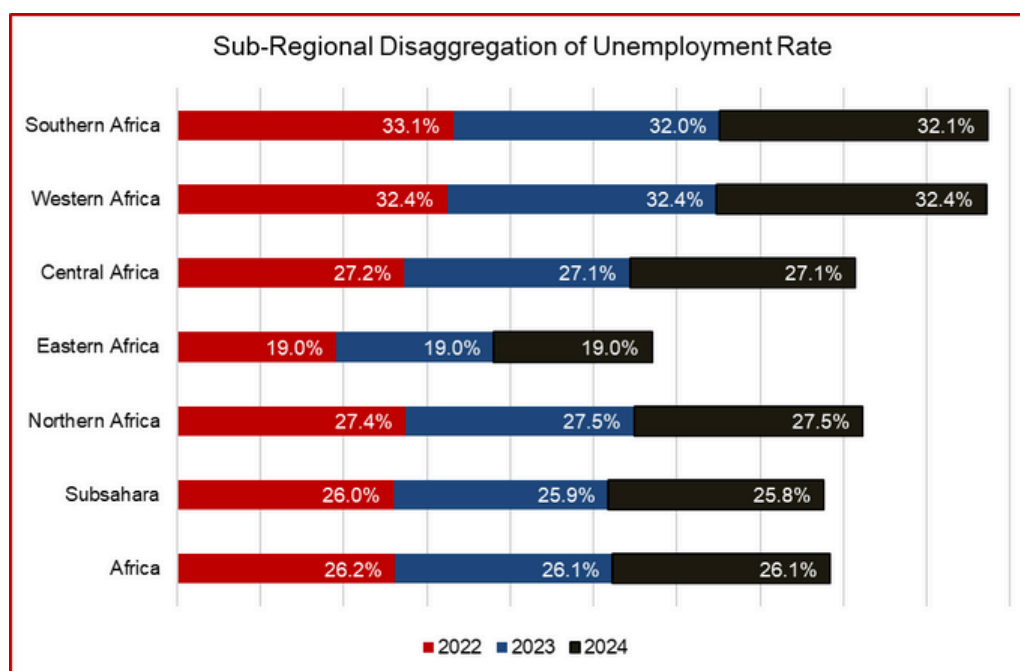
⁸ Bentley Davey, Karen. "Inequalities and the world of work." (2021). <https://www.ilo.org/media/231921/download>

⁹ DESA, UN. "World social report 2020: Inequality in a rapidly changing world." New York, NY: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations (2020). <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2020/02/World-Social-Report2020-FullReport.pdf>

¹⁰ https://rplumber.ilo.org/data/indicator/?id=SDG_0861_SEX_RT_A

2.1 Current State of Youth Unemployment in Africa

Figure 2: Regional Unemployment



Source: ILO (2024)¹¹

There are significant disparities in unemployment rates across the African continent, as evidenced by data from 2022 to 2024 (see Figure 2). In sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), the unemployment rate has remained at around 25.8 percent, reflecting ongoing challenges in creating sufficient job opportunities to absorb the growing labour force. Some of the factors contributing to unemployment in this region include a lack of structural transformation, the persistence of informality, and a mismatch between youths' aspirations and available opportunities in the informal sector.¹² The informal sector, which employs about 85% of the workforce, also lacks stability, social protections, and poor remuneration, thus exacerbating unemployment and underemployment problems.

Northern Africa also faces a similar pattern of high unemployment, with 27.5 percent of the population remaining unemployed. This is largely due to the lingering effects of the 2008 financial crisis, the 2011 uprisings, political instability, and social unrest in countries like Egypt, Sudan, Libya, and Tunisia.¹³ The sub-region's reliance on the oil and gas sector, which is prone to market fluctuations, also plays a role, as many countries suffer from the 'resource curse' problem. In addition, the mismatch between workforce skills and labour market demands continues to hinder employment opportunities and the youth transition into gainful employment.

¹¹ https://rplumber ilo.org/data/indicator/?id=SDG_0861_SEX_RT_A

¹² Fox, Louise, Lemma W. Senbet, and Witness Simbanegavi. "Youth employment in Sub-Saharan Africa: Challenges, constraints and opportunities." *Journal of African Economies* 25, no. suppl_1 (2016): i3-i15. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jae/ejv027>

¹³ <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/youth-employment-in-the-middle-east-and-north-africa-revisiting-and-reframing-the-challenge/>

However, Eastern Africa has the lowest unemployment rate among all the regions, ranging between 18 to 19 percent. This relatively lower rate can be attributed to several factors, including economic diversification, investments in infrastructure, and improvements in educational systems. This positive outlook is reflected in the region's GDP growth rate of 3.5 percent for the year 2023, with a projected increase to 5.1 percent in 2024 and 5.7 percent in 2025.¹⁴ For example, countries like Kenya, Ethiopia, and Uganda have made significant strides in developing their technology and service sectors, creating new job opportunities through increased foreign direct investment (FDI) in recent years.

While the unemployment rate in Central Africa remains moderately high compared to the Eastern region, there seems to be an improvement. However, the prolonged conflicts in countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic have further contributed to the increase in unemployment, as they have disrupted economic activities.

The Western and Southern African regions also exhibit a similar pattern with an unemployment rate of 32 percent over the years. These regions face structural challenges such as high population density, high levels of inequality, increasing poverty, poor infrastructure, and a high debt burden, which limit their ability to provide employment opportunities. For instance, the West African region has seen an increase in the average budget deficit to over 5.6% of GDP.¹⁵

Key Factors Contributing to Youth Unemployment in Africa

i. Lack of Relevant Skills and Education Mismatch

Studies have shown that youth unemployment in Africa is significantly influenced by the gap between the skills acquired through formal education and those demanded by the labour market.¹⁶ Many educational systems focus on theoretical knowledge, leaving graduates unprepared for practical, job-specific tasks. In some instances, graduates struggle to find employment due to a lack of market-relevant skills.¹⁷

Report shows that 17 percent of the total employed youths in Africa were over-skilled and 28.9 percent were under-skilled.¹⁸ This mismatch is further worsened by rapid technological advancements that educational curricula fail to keep pace with, resulting in an underqualified workforce for modern job requirements. The World Economic Forum estimates that by 2025, 85 million jobs will be displaced by automation, while 97 million new roles will emerge, illustrating a shift in the division of labour between humans, machines, and algorithms.¹⁹

¹⁴ <https://www.afdb.org/en/documents/africas-macroeconomic-performance-and-outlook-january-2024>

¹⁵ <https://www.uneca.org/stories/identifying-west-african-countries%E2%80%99-challenges%2C-imperatives%2C-and-financial-opportunities-to>

¹⁶ Leopold, Till Alexander, Vesseline Ratcheva, Saa Zahidi, and R. Samans. "The future of jobs and skills in Africa: Preparing the region for the Fourth Industrial Revolution." In World Economic Forum, pp. 1-19. 2017. https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_EGW_FOJ_Africa.pdf

¹⁷ <https://www.afdb.org/en/documents/creating-decent-jobs-strategies-policies-and-instruments>

¹⁸ https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/documents/publications/wps_no_326_youth_jobs_skill_and_educational_mismatches_in_africa_f1.pdf

¹⁹ Russo, Amanda. "Recession and automation changes our future of work, but there are jobs coming." Report Says (2022).

<https://www.weforum.org/press/2020/10/recession-and-automation-changes-our-future-of-work-but-there-are-jobs-coming-report-says-52c5162fce/>

As technology evolves and industries' needs shift, traditional education systems struggle to adapt, resulting in an oversupply of workers with outdated skills. Furthermore, the importance of soft skills such as effective communication, critical thinking, and creativity is often overlooked in formal education in these regions contributing to the rising unemployment. For instance, in countries like Kenya, Tanzania, and Nigeria, studies show that these skills are lacking among graduates, leading to recommendations for their inclusion in the curricula .^{20 21 22}

ii. Insufficient Job Creation and Slow Economic Growth

The slow growth rate that characterises the African region has failed to keep pace with the increasing number of young job seekers. While some of the African countries are experiencing economic growth, the rate of job creation has been insufficient to match the growing youth population.²³ This is seen in the over-reliance on low-productivity agriculture and informal sectors, which has resulted in a labour market that cannot absorb the large and expanding youth demographic, leading to high unemployment rates.²⁴

iii. Limited Access to Capital and Entrepreneurial Opportunities

Since the formal sector cannot absorb the growing population, many youths have moved into self-employment but they still confront the challenge of access to capital and finance to start their businesses. Many financial institutions often deem young entrepreneurs as high-risk borrowers, resulting in stringent lending conditions that are difficult for them to meet.²⁵ This lack of access to capital limits the young entrepreneurs' ability to actively participate in entrepreneurship endeavours and create jobs for themselves and others. In addition, limited access to business development services, poor infrastructure, risk perception, and lack of proper mentorship hinder the entrepreneurial potential of the African youth, further complicating the unemployment issues.

¹⁹ Russo, Amanda. "Recession and automation changes our future of work, but there are jobs coming." Report Says (2022).

<https://www.weforum.org/press/2020/10/recession-and-automation-changes-our-future-of-work-but-there-are-jobs-coming-report-says-52c5162fce/>

²⁰ <https://www.tifaresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Skills-Mismatch-Survey-Report.pdf>

²¹ <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED530695.pdf>

²² <http://editor.journal7sub.com/id/eprint/1432/1/75906-284327-1-PB.pdf>

²³ Mbaye, Ahmadou Aly, Brahima Sangafowa Coulibaly, and Dhruv Gandhi. "Job creation for youth in Africa: Assessing the potential of industries without smokestacks." (2019). <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/job-creation-for-youth-in-africa-assessing-the-potential-of-industries-without-smokestacks/>

²⁴ Kothari, Siddharth, Yun Liu, Mathilde Perinet, and Sidra Rehman. "The future of work in sub-Saharan Africa./Aidar Abdychyev, Cristian Alonso, Emre Alper, Dominique." orders may be placed online, by fax, or through the mail: <https://www.imf.org/-/media/Files/Publications/DP/2018/48333-dp1818-the-future-of-work-in-ssa.ashx>

²⁵ https://www.gpfi.org/sites/gpfi/files/sites/default/files/unlocking_finance_youth_entre.pdf

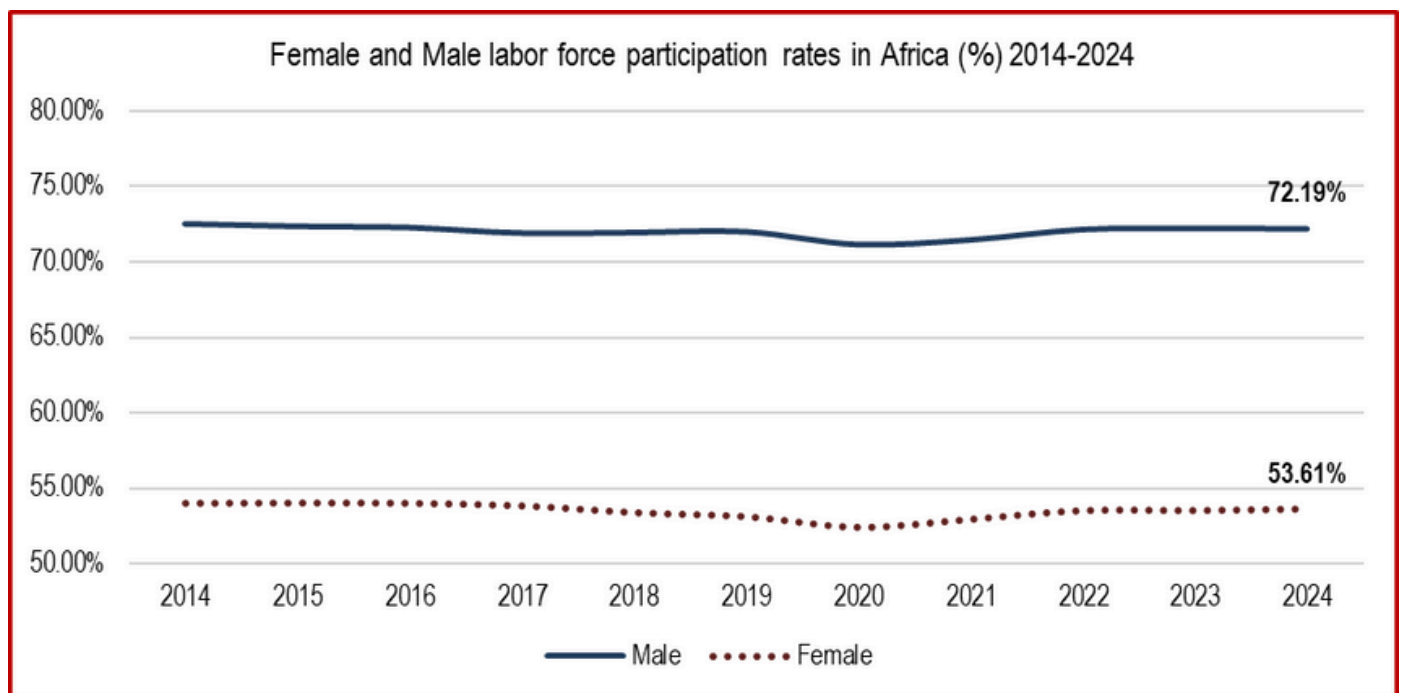
iv. Limited Industrial Development

Unlike other regions that have successfully leveraged industrialisation to create jobs, Africa's industrial sector remains underdeveloped.²⁶ The continent's shift to service-oriented industries has not adequately compensated for the scarcity of industrial jobs. These service industries often fail to provide as many high-quality job opportunities as manufacturing. This is in addition to the global decline in traditional manufacturing which has further constrained the availability of stable and well-paying jobs, increasing youth unemployment in Africa.

3.0 Gender Inequality in Employment -The State of Women

Like in many other continents, Africa's journey to gender equality has been marked by significant disparity and slow progress. One of the most pressing issues is inequality in the labour force, where women face severe barriers to securing employment and achieving job quality. The labour market data (Figure 3) demonstrates a consistently wide disparity between the male and female participation rates in Africa. For instance, since 2014, the female labour participation rate has hovered around 53 percent, while the male participation rate has remained steady at around 72 percent up to 2024, resulting in over 20 percent disparity in the labour force over time. This gap highlights the structural barriers women face when transiting into the labour market.

Figure 3: Female and Male labour force participation rates in Africa (5) 2014 - 2024



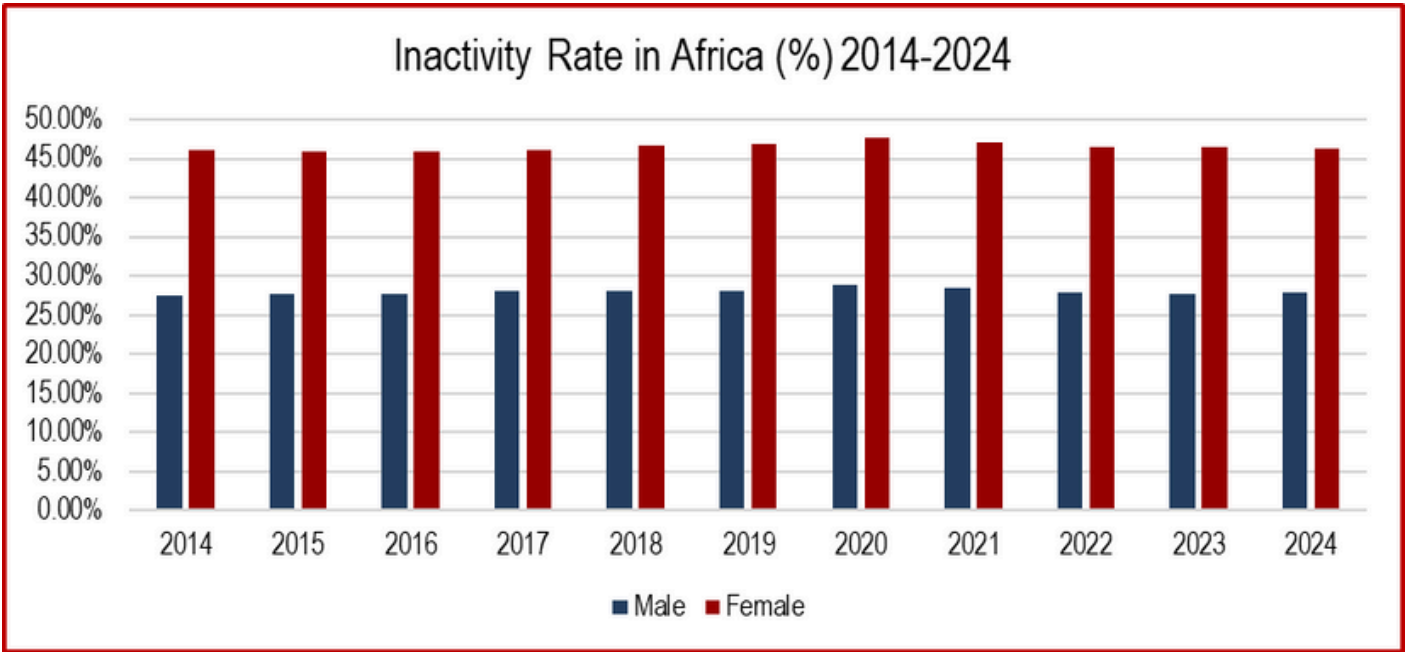
Source: ILO (2024)²⁷

²⁶ https://www.unido.org/sites/default/files/2016-09/G20_new_UNIDO_report_industrialization_in_Africa_and_LDCs_0.pdf

²⁷ https://rshiny.ilo.org/dataexplorer15/?lang=en&segment=indicator&id=EAP_2WAP_SEX_AGE_RT_A

The inactivity rate among women in Africa also tells a profound story about African women who are either unable or discouraged from participating in the labour market. The data shows that women in Africa have an average activity rate of 45 percent, significantly higher than men’s average inactivity of 27 percent (see Figure 4). This wide gap highlights the lost potential in economic contribution, personal empowerment, and efforts to reduce unemployment and poverty in the region.

Figure 4: Inactivity Rate in Africa (%) 2014 - 2024



Source: ILO (2024)²⁸ and our estimations

The Africa Gender Index report emphasises the gender disparity with a 70 percent vulnerable unemployment gender gap, revealing that women are disproportionately represented in precarious, low-paying, and vulnerable unemployment than men.²⁹ Furthermore, the gender gap in business participation stands at 44.3 percent, reflecting the significant challenges and barriers that women experience in entrepreneurship and formal sector employment. In the agricultural sector, women are overrepresented in seasonal, informal, part-time, and low-wage work with limited access to social protection.³⁰ For instance, in sub-Saharan Africa, 66 percent of women work in agrifood systems, compared to 60 percent of men’s employment.³¹ Moreover, African girls and women persistently face disadvantages in education and training where they encounter health-related challenges and are more vulnerable to violence, particularly sexual violence. In some African societies, cultural norms tend to discriminate against training women and girls beyond a certain level of education. These factors reduce their confidence, motivation, and ability to participate fully, equally, and effectively in the labour market.

²⁸ https://rshiny.ilo.org/dataexplorer15/?lang=en&segment=indicator&id=EAP_2WAP_SEX_AGE_RT_A
²⁹ https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/documents/publications/africa_gender_index_report_2019_-_analytical_report.pdf
³⁰ ILO and FAO (2021), Extending social protection to rural populations, ILO and FAO, Geneva. Available at: Extending social protection to rural populations (fao.org)
³¹ https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment/facts-and-figures#_edn6

Contributing Factors to Gender Inequality in Employment

Gender inequality in employment is influenced by various socio-economic and cultural factors. Notable among these are:

I. Child Marriage Prevalence

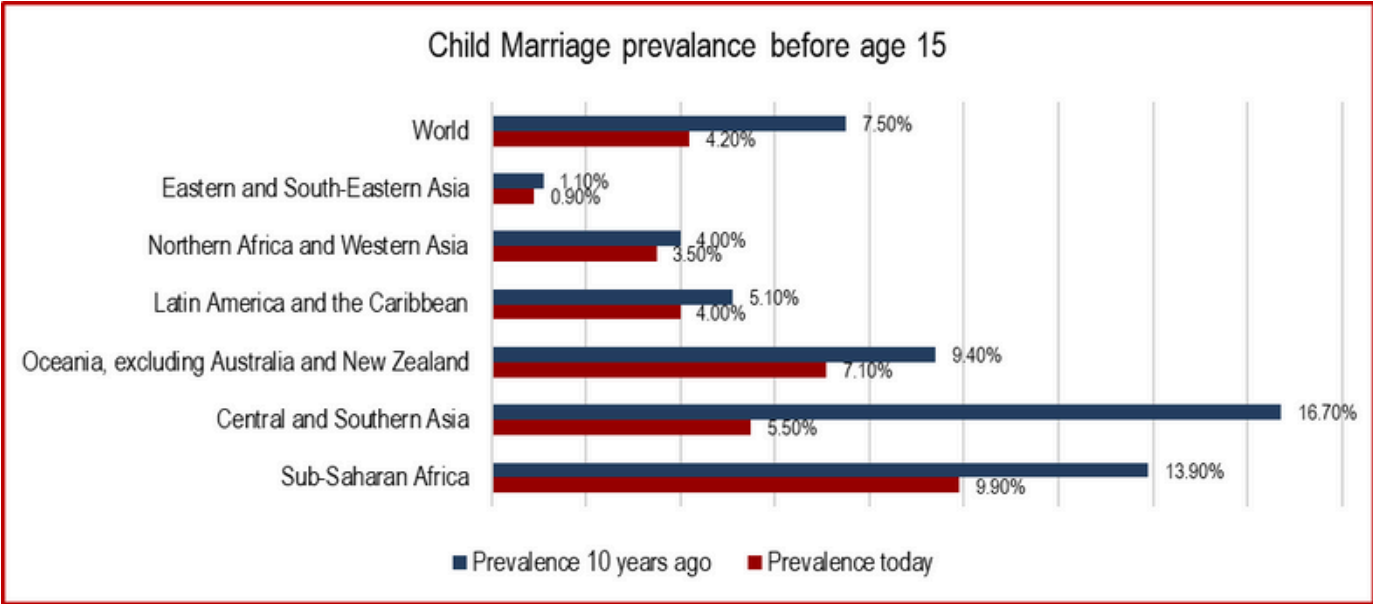
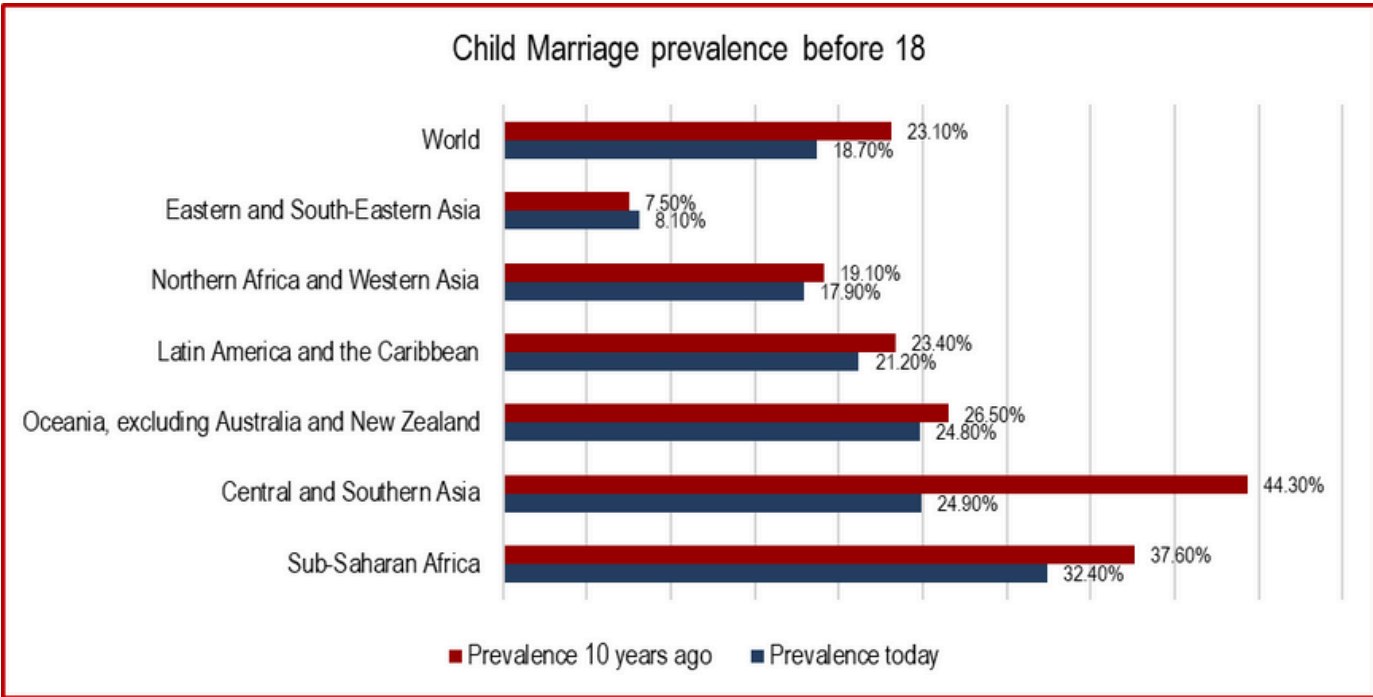


Figure 6: Child Marriage prevalence before age 18



Source: The Child Marriage Data Portal (2024)³²

³² <https://childmarriagedata.org/global-trends/>

The prevalence of child marriage remains a major issue in Africa, with far-reaching consequences for girls' education and their future employment prospects. Figures 5 and 6 show that in Africa, the sub-Saharan Africa region has the highest prevalence, with 32.40 percent of girls marrying before the age of 18 and 9.9 percent before the age of 15. Although there have been improvements from 37.6 percent and 13.9 percent a decade ago, these figures still represent a combined total of 164 million child brides in the region. This figure is significantly higher than the global average of 18.7 percent for marriages before the age of 18 and 4.2 percent for marriages before the age of 15.³³ This early marriage frequently causes girls to drop out of school, reducing their ability to acquire the skills, knowledge, and qualifications necessary for transitioning into the workforce.

II. Barriers to Female Education

Another issue is access to education, particularly in terms of enrolment and graduation rates, which contributes significantly to labour and employment inequality. The female enrolment rates across African regions remain substantially lower compared to their male counterparts. For instance, in 2023, UNESCO highlighted this disparity reporting that “almost 16 million girls between the ages of 6 and 11 will never get the chance to learn to read or write compared to 8 million boys, and in sub-Saharan Africa, 9.5 million girls will never set their foot in a class compared to the 5 million boys”.³⁴ This disparity arises from several factors, including economic challenges related to affordability, as well as cultural attitudes and societal perceptions towards the girl child's education.

For instance, in many African communities, there is this prevailing belief that a girl's ultimate role is to manage household responsibilities in her husband's home, which often takes precedence over education and personal or professional development. As a result, girls are frequently denied the opportunity to pursue education. However, in many cases this formal education serves as a bridge to transition; without it, these women are unlikely to acquire market-relevant skills, limiting their access to gainful employment and their ability to contribute meaningfully to the economy. Furthermore, some girls who marry at an early age but desire to continue their education encounter additional barriers, such as a lack of support for returning to school or as young mothers. This further exacerbates the issue, preventing many of them from advancing their education and improving their employment prospects.

³³ <https://childmarriagedata.org/global-trends/>

³⁴ <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/twice-many-girls-boys-will-never-start-school-says-new-unesco-gender-eatlas>

III. Stigmatisation and Gender Stereotypes

In some African regions, deeply rooted cultural norms and societal attitudes contribute to the gender stereotypes, which frequently determine which jobs are deemed appropriate for women and which are not. This attitude and culture result in limited professional opportunities and advancement for women. For instance, studies have shown that women are often discouraged or outrightly prohibited from pursuing careers in fields like STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics).³⁵ According to a study by UNESCO, women in sub-Saharan Africa make up less than 30 percent of the workforce in scientific research and development, highlighting the significant gender disparity in STEM fields.³⁶ These cultural and societal stigmatisation not only affect their self-esteem and aspirations but also influence employers' perceptions, making it harder for women to enter and thrive in various industries, thereby hampering broader socio-economic development.

IV. Discrimination and Bias

Gender discrimination in hiring, promotions, and compensation remains a pervasive issue. Women are sometimes deemed undeserving of certain positions solely based on their gender, regardless of their qualifications or experience, particularly in male-dominated fields. Many reports have highlighted numerous cases where women are denied employment due to pregnancy or are forced to prevent pregnancy to maintain their jobs. In Nigeria, for example, many private-sector employers require young women to sign contracts agreeing not to become pregnant within the first three years of employment, in order to gain employment.³⁷

This discrimination has further worsened the gender gap, restricting women's choices and participation in the workforce. A Gallup and ILO survey also reveals the bias of men towards women having paid jobs. According to the report, 24 percent of men prefer women in their households to have paid jobs, while 51 percent prefer they stay home.³⁸ These biases and discriminatory practices create significant barriers to achieving gender equality in the labour force and workplace, thus jeopardising the realisation of SDG Goal 5 in Sub-Saharan Africa.

³⁵ <https://cse.afdb.org/en/pages/blog/international-day-women-and-girls-science-calls-africa-address-gender-gap-stem-fields-0>

³⁶ <https://www.unesco.org/en/gender-equality/education/stem>

³⁷ Bouchama, Nejma, Gaëlle Ferrant, Léa Fuiet, Alejandra Meneses, and Annelise Thim. "Gender inequality in West African social institutions." (2018).

³⁸ Gallup, I. L. O. "Towards a better future for women and work: Voices of women and men." Gallup Inc. and the International Labour Organization, Washington (2017).

V. Political and Legal Frameworks

Gender disparities in the labour market and workplace persist due to inadequate legal protections against gender discrimination, combined with insufficient enforcement of existing laws. This systemic issue is compounded by the underrepresentation of women in political and decision-making positions, as well as limited access to platforms where they can advocate for change. This impedes progress towards gender-equitable struggle and reforms, hence widening the gap from all perspectives, including economic, social, legal and political. For instance, as of January 2024, women held only 27.3 percent of parliamentary seats in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), slightly higher than the global average of 26.9 percent.³⁹ This indicates that the challenge of increasing female political participation is not limited to Africa, and this requires concerted efforts to improve women's participation and electability globally.

4.0 Policy Recommendations

i. Strengthen Education Systems to address Skills Mismatch

Youth unemployment in Africa is significantly influenced by the wide gap between the necessary skills acquired through formal education and those demanded by the labour market. It is essential to strengthen the education system through structural reforms that emphasise practical and vocational skills. This will entail the complete overhaul and restructuring of the curriculum to include those skills, updating it regularly to keep pace with technological advancements and evolving industry needs. Governments and educational institutions should collaborate with industries to identify and integrate in-demand skills into the curricula and training programmes.

Additionally, the continent's various skills acquisition centers should be utilised for this purpose, refocusing and harnessing them for further training, to enable the youths keep pace with labour market demands in areas such as ICT, AI, data analytics, and machine learning algorithms. STEM education should also be promoted, and scholarships should be provided for fields with high employment potential. This can better prepare young people for the job market. Life skills and soft skills training, such as communication, critical thinking, and creativity, should also be incorporated into educational programmes to ensure that youth leaving school have the basic necessary skills to transition into the workforce and gain meaningful employment.

³⁹ <https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/reports/2024-03/women-in-parliament-2023>

ii. Enhance Access to Education and Address Barriers

We recommend that the government work with educational institutions to identify key drivers of the wide disparity in both enrolment and completion, such as financial challenges to enrolment and affordability of education. One of the major issues contributing to the gender gap is the lack of support for the girl child particularly in terms of hygiene. Report shows that many girls skip school during their periods due to a lack of access to hygienic sanitary pads. The government should mandate free education for all and provide the necessary support that will encourage girls' education. Studies have shown that when women have equal access to education and employment opportunities, they contribute immensely to economic growth.⁴⁰ For example, Norway's gender equality policies have resulted in women holding approximately 40% of the seats on corporate boards, fostering diverse perspectives in decision-making processes.⁴¹ It is estimated that closing the gender gap could give the global economy a USD 7 trillion boost.⁴² The government should therefore embark on a massive public awareness campaign to challenge cultural attitudes and societal perceptions that prioritise household responsibilities over education for girls. Furthermore, support systems for young mothers who want to continue their education should be provided to ensure that early marriage and motherhood do not hinder educational and professional advancement.

iii. Promote Economic Diversification and Job Creation

The lack of employment opportunities for the growing population has been a key factor contributing to the rising unemployment rate in Africa. While the skill mismatch issue cannot be eliminated, a significant portion of the workforce possess the necessary skills to join the labour market but the opportunities remain limited. This can be reduced by prioritising growth and diversification policies, reducing informality in the sector. This includes providing support through intervention and subsidies programme for low-productivity agriculture, restructuring, and formalisation of the informal sector. Additionally, Africa's growing population presents a large significant market for growing businesses. Improving the business climate and environment will allow these businesses to thrive and expand, absorbing more unemployed youth. Furthermore, low-interest loans and grants should be provided, targeted at SMEs and the youth specifically.

⁴⁰ International Monetary Fund. Strategy, Policy, and Review Department. Pursuing women's economic empowerment. International Monetary Fund, 2018. <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/Policy-Papers/Issues/2018/05/31/pp053118pursuing-womens-economic-empowerment>

⁴¹ <https://www.omfif.org/2023/07/norwegian-bill-paves-way-for-progress-in-gender-parity/>

⁴² Moody's Analytics, Close the Gender Gap to Unlock Productivity Gains, March 2023. Available at: <https://www.moodyanalytics.com/-/media/article/2023/Close-the-Gender-Gap-to-Unlock-Productivity-Gains.pdf>

iv. Strengthen Legal Protections and Enforcement Against Gender Discrimination

Gender discrimination hinders the full participation of women in the labour force due to weak legal protections and failure to enforce already existing laws. To tackle this, governments should enhance and enforce comprehensive legislation and anti-discrimination laws that explicitly prohibit gender discrimination in hiring processes, payment of salaries, promotion to a higher position, and working conditions. Furthermore, women should be equally included in leadership and policy-making positions to enable them champion and advocate for gender-equitable reforms. It is also important to prioritise and promote policies that support women, such as offering flexible shifts. This will help enable their ability to balance family responsibilities with work, ultimately leading to an increase in female participation in the workforce.

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