




From 'Waithood to Hustling': Africa's youth quest for dignified and fulfilling work

A Synthesis Report



This synthesis report has been produced by the Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR)

Authors:

Daniel Doh, PhD
Martin Atela, PhD
Mary Thamari, PhD
Joel Otieno
Jim Kaketch
Racheal Makokha
Carol Yogo

This project was implemented through a partnership between PASGR and the Mastercard Foundation. The opinions expressed are strictly those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of PASGR and the Mastercard Foundation.

Published in Nairobi, Kenya
September 2023

© Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR)

Photo Credits: Shutterstock

Partnership for African Social and Governance Research
6th Floor, I & M Building
2nd Ngong Avenue, Upper Hill
P.O Box 76418-00508 Nairobi, Kenya
Email: info@pasgr.org
Tel: +254 (0)20 2985000; +254 (0)729 111031; +254 (0)731 000065

Acknowledgements

The report was prepared by the Africa Youth Aspiration and Resilience Research and Uptake (AYAR) team at the Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR), comprising Martin Atela (former Head of Research and Policy at PASGR); Daniel Doh (Western Sydney University, Australia), Mary Thamari (Gender Consultant); Joel Otieno, Programme Officer, Research & Policy; Jim Kaketch, Programme Officer, Research & Policy; Racheal Makokha, Research Associate; and Carol Yogo, Project Statistician. The report benefited from initial contributions from Njoki Wamai, Elizabeth Onyango, Victoria Onyango, Victoria Namuggala, Monica Mutyaba, Sally Nagawa, Thomas Yeboah, Jemima Diakpeng and Thomas Apai, Ibrahima Niang, Mohamed Fall and Martine Awa who drafted the country-specific reports for Kenya, Uganda, Ghana and Senegal from which this synthesis report was developed. It has further benefited from expert reviews from Remi Aiyede.

PASGR is also grateful to the Mastercard Foundation team who reviewed and provided feedback on the initial drafts of this report.

PASGR is grateful to Farmerline and AFRIK POLL, and Hepta Analytics which collected the data analysed for this report. PASGR would wish to extend a special appreciation to the over three thousand young women and men spread across the four countries, who voluntarily participated by responding to the survey and through interviews. This report could not have been possible without your invaluable insights

Finally, PASGR is grateful to the Mastercard Foundation for its partnership that enabled this study.

Suggested citation:

Doh D., Atela M., Thamari M., Makokha R., Otieno J., and Kaketch J. (2022). From 'Waithood to Hustling': Africa's youth quest for dignified and fulfilling work. A synthesis report. Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR)

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	i
Acronyms	iii
Executive summary	iv
Results	iv
Introduction	1
1.1 Conceptualising youth	3
1.2 The context of youth employment in the study countries	4
1.3 Challenges facing African youth	8
1.4 Youth aspirations in Africa – A literature review	12
Methodology	14
2.1 Research question	15
2.2 Approach	16
Findings	17
3.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents	18
3.2 Young women and men’s aspirations	19
3.3 Dignified and fulfilling work	25
3.4 Resilience and coping strategies	28
4.1 Access to information	34
4.2 Corruption and nepotism	36
4.3 Access to financial capital	38
4.4 Perspectives and attitudes on technology and youth futures	39
Recommendations	41
References	43

Acronyms

AU	African Union
AfDB	African Development Bank
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
ETR	Electronic Tax Register
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
JfYA	Jobs for Youth in Africa Strategy
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ILO	International Labour Organisation
KII	Key Informant Interviews
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
NEET	Not in Employment, Education, or Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PASGR	Partnership for African Social and Governance Research
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
YTA	Youth Transforming Africa

Executive summary

Africa's young women and men aged 15 to 35 face numerous challenges in their quest for dignified and fulfilling work in the labour market. Youth unemployment and underemployment in Africa are high. Policymakers, development practitioners, and researchers increasingly recognise that the transition to adulthood and the pursuit of dignified and fulfilling work can be better facilitated if their efforts are based on the perspectives of the youth. However, there is little understanding of Africa's youth perspectives on dignified and fulfilling work through youth voices. A clear understanding of youth's aspiration and resilience and how these inform youth perspectives of work is also important. A deeper, unbiased understanding of Africa's youth perspectives and using these perspectives to inform policy and programmes will help address the challenges of unemployment and underemployment on the continent. This synthesis report addresses these important gaps.

The report incorporates qualitative and quantitative data from a nationally representative study conducted in four African countries: Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, and Senegal. The study was commissioned by the Mastercard Foundation in 2019, before the start of Covid-19. It included a quantitative sample survey and a series of qualitative approaches (focus group discussion and interviews) led by Farmerline and AFRIK-POLL, independent research organisations. Hepta Analytics did the initial quantitative analyses. The work reported here builds on those initial reports based on in-depth analyses of the qualitative data and triangulated with the quantitative data. The qualitative data derived from 65 KIIs and 67 focused group discussion. The surveys included 3286 youth aged 15 to 35, 1,898 from rural and 1,388 from urban areas, representing 58 per cent and 42 per cent respectively.

Results

Youth aspirations, work expectations and motivations.

African youth have a diverse range of aspirations, including the desire to have a good education (48%), to have dignified work (48%), to be rich (46%), to start a business (23%), to start a family (19%). Approximately 7% of survey participants have migration aspirations and wish to travel (primarily internally from rural to urban areas, but also externally, to a different country/region) within the next three years from the day of the interview. Similarly, the qualitative data confirm the mul-

tidimensional nature of youth aspiration, which includes economic aspiration (i.e., work and money), socio-cultural aspiration (i.e., family and community support), educational and training aspiration, and civic aspiration (i.e., responsibility and support to government). Work expectations include self-employment or entrepreneurship, farm-based and non-farm-based, to securing jobs in the public sector or working with international organisations.



Source : Shutterstock

Gender analysis of the quantitative data show that females aspire to higher education (20%) compared to males (18%). Male youth (48%) were more likely to aspire to get rich or make more money than females (46%). Both males and females share a common desire for gainful employment (48%). However, from the qualitative analysis young women's aspirations are being curtailed in numerous ways. For example, young women are expected to abandon their career ambitions to focus on marriage and support for their husbands. This expectation provides insight into the aspirations of young women for marriage. The preference of marriage by young women demonstrates a desire to anchor their aspirations on social capital that they believe will give them the life they desire. A previous study has shown that women use survivalist strategies such as seeking marriage or marriage-like unions as an economic goal during periods of insecurity, such as high unemployment or other social

disorders. Interestingly, this study also find that young men define their ambitions in terms of what they believe is best for their future wives.

How youth define dignified and fulfilling work

Young women and men identify four primary markers or indicators of dignified and fulfilling work, namely: work that is reputable and valued by society; work that provides a sense of satisfaction, purpose, and accomplishment; work that provides a reliable and sufficient source of income¹; and work that makes a young person feel respected. Two secondary markers, namely workplace safety and workplace freedom and respect, are also identified.

¹ For instance, quantitative data suggest that majority of youth mentioned earning at least USD 500 per month from agriculture for it to qualify in this category.

Challenges faced by youth.

Youth face mutually reinforcing challenges in pursuing their aspirations. These challenges include resource (58%) and information constraints (77%). For example, even though some young people had ICT skills to fuel their aspirations, they faced barriers of limited internet access. In addition, corruption and a lack of access to financial capital for business start-ups are perceived as the main challenges that African youth contend with in the labour market. In all four countries, the lack of awareness regarding youth programmes is notable, with stark gendered differences - more men (29%) than women (21%) being aware of youth programmes. We aim to investigate further and disaggregate these variations in the Post-Covid-era study by programme type, funder, geography, and age. As evidenced by the qualitative data, this lack of awareness of youth programmes precludes many young people from accessing services such as funding and raises concerns about the reach of youth programmes in the countries studied.

The qualitative data suggest instances of perceived corruption and nepotism in employment and access to opportunities that are frequently not based on merit but on social networks. There is also anecdotal evidence describing systemic barriers, police brutality, political repression, and sexual harassment of young women and men. Such practices demoralise young people and discourage them from pursuing their aspirations.

Resilience: actions youth undertake to advance career goals

Despite numerous obstacles in the countries, young women and men have demonstrated remarkable resilience. Most youth interviewees rely on small savings to further their aspirations. They solicited financial assistance from family and friends to help them achieve their goals wherever possible. Others complete *additional education* or *professional* or personal training. Several *sought mentorship* and developed *strong peer networks* (i.e., membership in self-help groups). Others engage in transient economic activities (dubbed “hustling”) in the informal sector in search of quick money. There is no discernible difference in the actions taken to advance aspirations between young women and men.

From ‘waithood’ to hustling: the quest for dignified and fulfilling work against all odds

A new concept known as ‘hustling’ has emerged, shifting from what is ordinarily defined as ‘waithood’ – a period of transition from school-to-work characterized by anticipation of the future and kind of a ‘waiting moment’ before the big break or getting the job. Due to the increase in unemployment, a majority of youth are forced to rely on the limited opportunities available both in the formal and the informal sector, where they engage in ‘hustles’ – doing any- or every-thing possible to survive and meet their needs. Rather than view youth as being in constant wait, hustling regards them as active agents of change, and recognizes their efforts in building their vision and achieving their desired future.

Introduction



Source : Shutterstock

Young women and men in Africa face numerous challenges when participating in the labour market and accessing dignified and fulfilling work. While the rate of youth unemployment in Africa remains low, at 12.9% against a global average of 15.2% in 2021, only a small proportion – about 5.1% of the working youth population – can be said to have access to dignified and fulfilling work with a sheer majority classified as either working poor or as completely having no job (ILO, 2022; ILO, 2020). Thus, the relatively low rate of unemployment is brought about by the fact that a majority of young women and men across the continent cannot afford to remain jobless and therefore are constantly engaged in the informal sector, doing low productive jobs and often difficult working conditions, in order to survive (Yeboah, 2017; Roopnarine, 2013). Unfortunately, Africa's rapid growth and technological advancements over the last two decades have not created enough jobs to absorb Africa's fast-growing youth population (Akindès and Yao, 2019).

Regardless of the African context, policymakers, practitioners, and researchers appreciate that understanding young people's aspirations and resilience can facilitate the effort to smoothen their transition to adulthood and the pursuit of dignified and fulfilling work opportunities. It is critical, therefore, to carefully examine young people's aspirations and resilience concerning future employment. This report describes African youth's aspirations and perceptions of dignified and fulfilling work and their challenges and opportunities in seeking employment. The report also outlines and discusses the research questions, the methodology adopted for the study, the results, and the conclusion. It provides recommendations for future research and policy actions.

1.1 Conceptualising youth

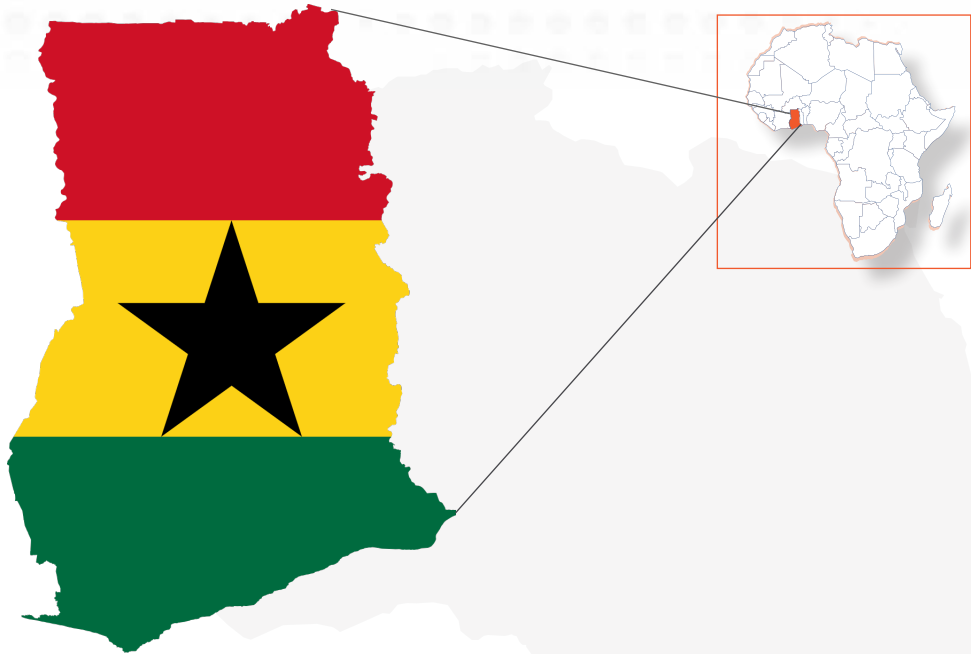
Youth' is defined in various ways worldwide, informed by parameters such as age, socio-cultural contexts, programmatic purpose and development policy demands. The most widely used definition tends to define youth as people aged between 15 and 24 (United Nations 2018). However, other definitions such as that by the Africa Union considers the 15-35 years age brackets. The Mastercard Foundation refers to 'youth' as those between the ages of 12 and 35 years, but it recognises that young people are not homogeneous (Mastercard Foundation 2018). By age, these definitions tend to designate youth-hood as period of transition between childhood to adulthood.

However, a comprehensive understanding of the concept of youth must go beyond the age categorization to look at the socialization of the term 'youth' or 'young people' in different contexts. In most African societies, the concept of 'youth' is socialized to denote a period in a person's life when they are potent and full of energy and physical abilities. It is also marked by important cultural practices including rites of passage such as initiation and marriage. For instance, among the Luhya communities in western Kenya, a person may still be considered youth despite her age as long as she remains unmarried

In this report, youth is defined along the idea of waithood and what it means for a constantly dynamic demographic. For a long time, and mostly in western cultures the youth have been described as a 'waithood generation' – synonymous to carelessness, idleness and lack of agency (Peatrik, 2020). As a result, young people have been classified as a group of people without prospects of work and predisposed to criminal behaviour, revolt and manipulation by those with 'power' through political or religious mobilisation. Abebe challenges the notion of waithood as passive waiting. Instead, he contends that waithood is an anxious period where youth "actively anticipate and engage with the future" (Abebe 2020: 588). Abebe further observes that 'waithood signifies young people's embodiment of uncertainty as they navigate the tensions between constraints and possibilities, the past and the present, the immediate and the imagined, and the material and the intangible' (ibid.). Therefore, this study adopts a definition of youth that shifts from the idea of waithood to embrace a salient understanding of youth as active individuals taking responsibility of their current lives and intentionally pursuing their aspirations for futures.

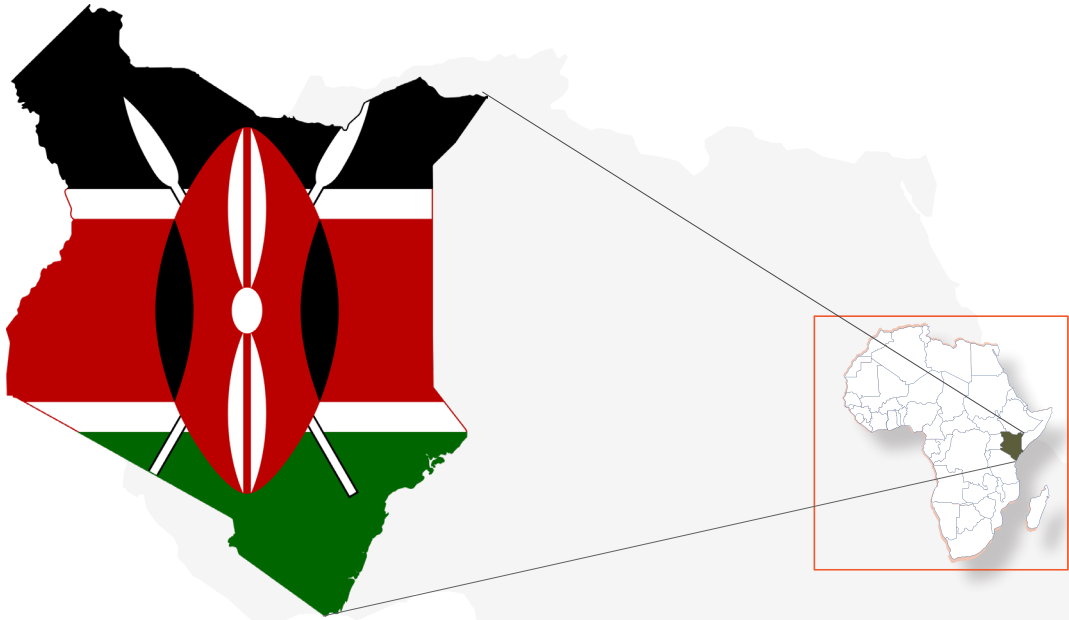
The needs of the youth vary by gender, age, education levels, where they live, and socio-economic circumstances such as poverty status and family social status. Some youth segments, mainly rural youth, youth with disabilities, girls and young men, face unique challenges (ibid.). These diverse views of youth are significant in understanding their aspirations and resilience as they navigate various challenges and opportunities.

1.2 The context of youth employment in the study countries



Ghana

Ghana's population is estimated to be 31 million, with the youth population in the 15-35 age bracket being 39% (World Population Review 2021). According to Ghana's 2021 Statistical census report, the rate of unemployment of those between 15-35 years is 19.7% with more women (22.3%) than men (17.4%) being jobless (Ghana Statistical Service 2022). Despite a flurry of youth empowerment and development programmes implemented by successive governments since the 1990s, half of the proportion of youth in employment remain underemployed (Ile and Boadu 2018). The main sectors of employment include skilled agriculture, forestry and fishery (32%) services and sales (26.5%) and in craft and related trades (16.1%), with a higher representation of women (81.3%) than males (68.9%) (Ghana Statistical Service, 2022). Those employed in professional practices such as industrial technicians, clerical officers, teachers, and other office-based work only constitute about 10% of the overall employed population with three out of five



Kenya

Kenya's current population is estimated to be 53 million. Regarded as a youthful country, about 80% of Kenya's population are aged 35 and below, with those aged between 18 and 35 years making up to 25% of the total population (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 2020). The youth unemployment rate is 18.9%, with more young men (20.7%) than young women (17.1%) being jobless (ibid). While only a small proportion can be classified as 'future starters'¹, a sheer majority of the unemployed youth remain so due to lack of opportunities (Sambo 2016, Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 2020). The realities of unemployment and underemployment, especially among youth is responsible for the growing informality where over 60% of young women and men rely on the informal sector for survival and pursuit of their aspirations and dreams.

The main sectors of employment for young people include agriculture, service industry, trading, tourism and hospitality, transportation and storage as well as construction and real estate among others.

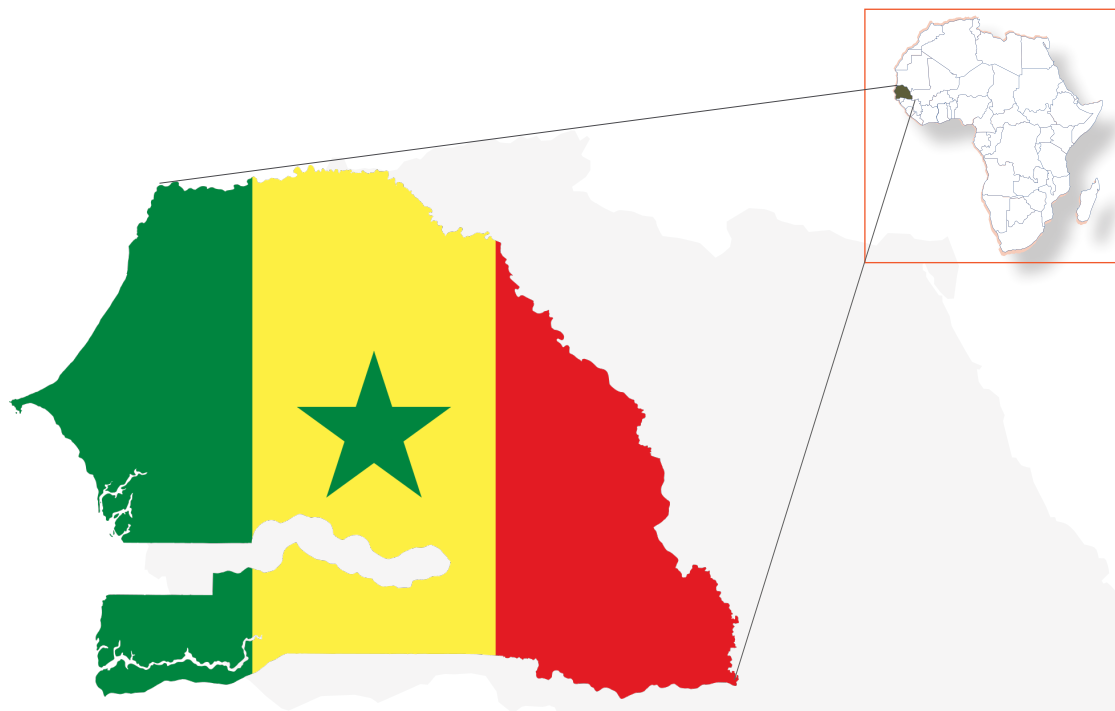
¹ 'Future starters' as used here refers to those who are have not yet joined the labour market but with prospects of joining in future. Often these are youth within the employment age but who are yet to participate in the labour market due to ongoing education or training.



Uganda

Uganda's population is estimated to be around 48 million, with youth between 18 to 35 years comprising 22% of the total population and mostly live in areas classified as rural. In 2021, the national rate of youth unemployment stood at 17%, with more women (20%) than men (14%) being unemployed. Comparatively, the rates of unemployment are higher (19%) in urban areas than in rural areas (15%) (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2022). Out of the number of youths in employment, significant majority survive on the informal sector with evidence of growing mismatch of skills and competencies to available opportunities and employment sectors. This results both in under- and over- utilization of labour.

Sectors such as agriculture, forestry and fishing; manufacturing, and the public and private service sector are considered to attract a majority of young people across Uganda.



Senegal

Senegal has an estimated population of 16.2 million people, with over 60% of the population under 25 years. About 58.9% of the youth live in rural areas. The unemployment rate among Senegalese youth is estimated to be 3.4%, with slightly more women (3.7%) than men (3.3%) being unemployed (ILO 2023). Despite relatively low rates of unemployment compared to Ghana, Uganda, and Kenya, young women and men in Senegal face a retinue of challenges including low educational attainment resulting in critical skills gaps for employment; limited resources for business and social economic and political exclusion. These challenges have further been worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic, with widespread job losses, pay reductions, and hindering work conditions.

Senegal has a large informal labour market resulting in underemployment and labour underutilization. An even pervasive form of informality is experienced by young people, 9 out of 10, and significantly more women workers, aged 15-29 surviving in the informal economy (ILO, 2023b). The main sectors where youth are employed include agriculture, fisheries, textiles, information and communications technology, and tourism.

1.3 Challenges facing African youth



Source : Shutterstock

Africa's young women and men should be the engine driving the continent's socio-economic transformation – if the conditions are conducive for them. However, African youth are inundated with challenges that impinge on their capacity to contribute to national economies. From a gender perspective, African youth challenges extend from relationships involving sexuality and reproductive health to education, employment, empowerment, attitudes and values, inequalities, and the politics and economics of societies (Kabiru, Izugbara et al. 2013, Barnes 2021). The challenges are attributable to marginalisation from the limited social and economic opportunities (Roopnarine 2013; Yeboah 2017). This is despite the growth surge and technology drive in the past 20 years (Akindès and Yao 2019; Page 2012). Below, we briefly explore these challenges to ground the analysis presented in the rest of the report.

Unemployment, underemployment and informality

In 2022, the youth unemployment rates in Africa stood at 12.7% with slightly higher rate among women than men, at 13.3% and 12.7%, respectively (ILO, 2023a). These rates were higher at 12.9% in 2021 during the peak of Covid-19 and the socio-economic shocks that resulted in massive layoffs and decline in opportunities due to lockdowns and economic shutdowns. Evidence suggests that an estimated 20 million jobs in Africa's formal and informal sectors may have been lost because of COVID-19, with a particularly strong economic impact in South Africa, Angola and Nigeria (Yeboah, Crossouard, & Flynn, 2021; Zeufack et al., 2020)

Moreover, concerns about underemployment in Sub-Saharan Africa persist, with young people reporting being employed in occupations that do not match their education and abilities. For example, 40% of Ghana's and 25% of Kenya's workers reported that their education exceeded the level required for their current employment (Fox and Gandhi 2021). This discrepancy shows that measuring unemployment in highly informal economies may yield inaccurate results about the state of the labour market. Therefore, contextualised ways of measuring and understanding unemployment should be sought.

Closely linked to unemployment and underemployment is the challenge of high informality and the problem of gambling among young people, mostly young men. About 83% of total employment in Africa is informal², absorbing mostly young people. Studies show that the low investment in the formal sector and the size of the informal sector contribute to higher unemployment rate with the unemployment rate rising with the size of the informal sector (Fox and Gandhi 2021). Evidently, the aspirations of young women and men are trumped by the transient economic benefits gained from working in the informal economy, such as 'hustling' and through gambling (Fox, Senbet et al. 2016).

Gambling, in particular, as practiced in the form of online betting has gained prevalence among young women and men, with countries such as Kenya and Ghana being on constant spotlight. Over 72% of youth have participated in gambling at least once in their life (GeoPoll, 2022). Despite marginal positive impacts, gambling has been associated with negative outcomes at the individual, family, and societal levels, with significant ramifications on the social wellbeing and aspirations of young people (Ssewanyana & Bitanihirwe, 2018)

² Understandingly, the precise nature of the informal employment will differ from country to country. However, according to the International Labor Organization, informal employment refers to all employment arrangements that do not provide individuals with legal or social protection through their work, thereby leaving them more exposed to economic risk. As such informal employment includes: (a) paid employees in "informal jobs", i.e. jobs without a social security entitlement, paid annual leave or paid sick leave; (b) paid employees in an unregistered enterprise with fewer than five employees; (c) own-account workers in an unregistered enterprise with fewer than five employees; (d) employers in an unregistered enterprise with fewer than five employees; and (e) contributing family workers. This definition includes both workers employed in the informal sector and workers in informal employment outside the informal sector (See, ILO, 2013:17)

			2012	2018	2019	2020	2021
NEET rate	World	Total	21.6	21.9	22.2	22.3	22.5
	Africa	Total	20.4	20.5	20.7	20.7	20.8
		Male	14.6	15.5	15.7	15.7	15.8
		Female	26.3	25.6	25.7	25.8	25.9
Youth unemployment rate	World	Total	13.4	13.5	13.6	13.7	13.8
	Africa	Total	11.7	10.9	10.8	10.7	10.6
		Male	11.6	10.6	10.5	10.4	10.4
		Female	11.8	11.3	11.1	11	11
Labour utilisation rate (LU3)	World	Total	19.6	20.1	20.2	20.4	20.5
	Africa	Total	20.4	19.4	19.3	19.1	19.1
		Male	18.4	17.7	17.6	17.5	17.4
		Female	22.7	21.3	21.2	21	21

Table: 1 Youth NEET in Africa: Source: ILO (2020)

Limited education and training opportunities

A second challenge that young people in Africa have to contend with is limited educational and training opportunities, a situation which denies them the chance to gain relevant and matching education and skills, thus predisposing them to temporary and precarious livelihood options. The ILO uses the youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET) indicator to show the share of young people who are not in employment, education or training as a percentage of the total number of young people in the corresponding age group by gender. In 2019, one in five youth in Africa was not in employment, education, or training, translating to an Africa-wide average youth NEET of 20.7% against the global average of 22.5% (ILO 2020) (See Table 1 above for more information).

Young women are more prone to NEET status due to gender inequities that prevent them from attaining their potential (ILO 2020). Despite this gender gap, the NEET rate for young men has been increasing since 2012, while that of young women declined between 2012 and 2018 (ILO 2020). Therefore, it is plausible that the lower rates in Sub-Saharan Africa are not necessarily based on the reality where most youth employment options exist in unrecorded informal spaces. Inadequate education and lower literacy levels compared to other areas of the world, early entry into informal employment, and child labour linked to lack of educational opportunities are concerns that impact young people more than any other age group in Africa (Garcia and Fares 2008, UNESCO 2010).



Source : Shutterstock

Health challenges

The third challenge to young people in Africa is health-related. Health issues such as sexual and reproductive health are significant challenges for many African youths. For example, HIV and AIDS remain primary drivers of disease burden in Sub-Saharan Africa, disproportionately affecting the youth, with 63 per cent of new HIV infections occurring among women and girls (UNAIDS 2023). The high prevalence of new HIV infections among African youth is linked to a lack of proper sexual health education, lower testing levels, stigmatisation, and poor or lack of access to quality reproductive and sexual health services (Hellandendu 2012, UNAIDS 2012, Kabiru, Izugbara et al. 2013).

Apart from sexual and reproductive health issues, there is a growing concern about the mental health of young people in Africa, which has been worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic (Semo & Frissa, 2020). Between 12% and 30% of children and young people aged 5 to 24 years in West and Central Africa were estimated to have mental health problems, with depressive disorders being the most frequently reported (Wekesah et al. 2020).

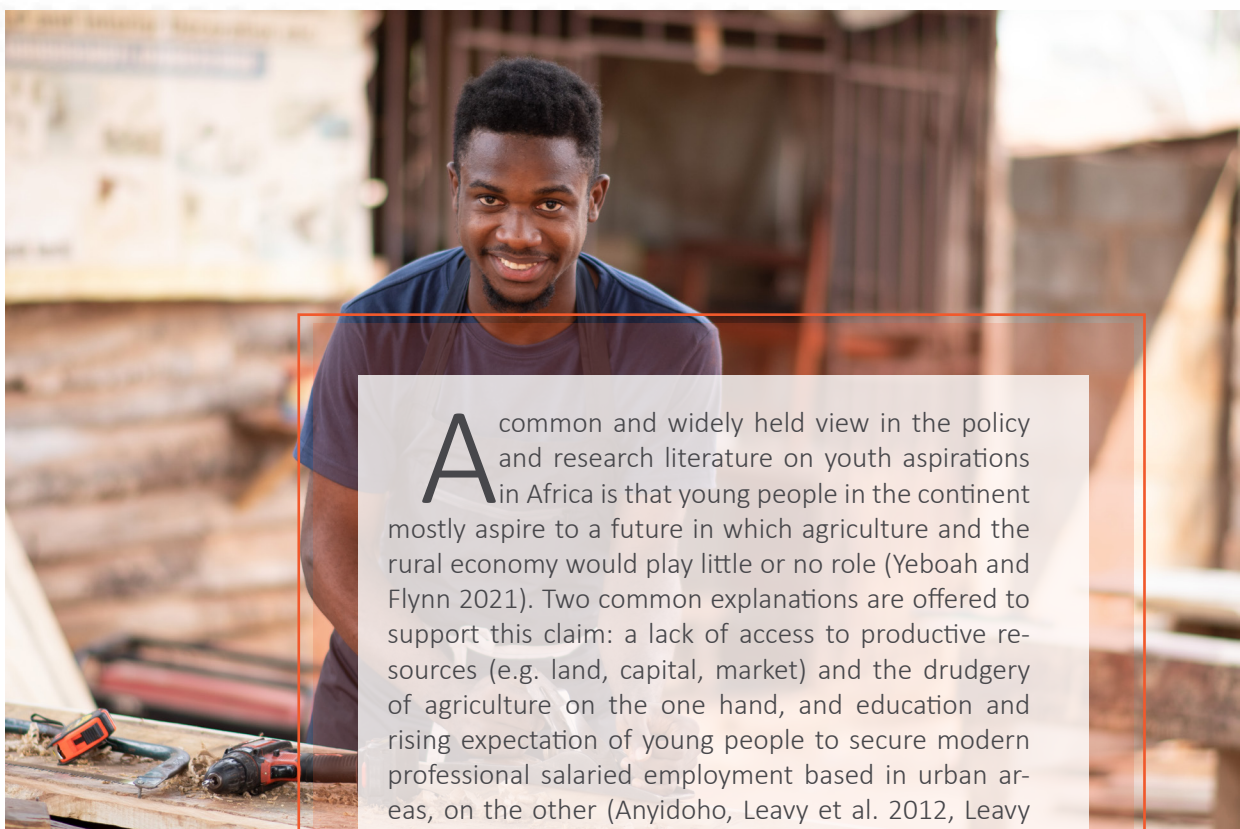
Gambling

Gambling in the form of online mobile betting has become a common practice among the youth in Africa. A multi-country study in five African countries revealed that about 72% of young women and men have practiced gambling with varying degrees of frequency (GeoPoll 2021). While Kenya has the highest prevalence of gambling with 83.9% reported to have practiced betting at least once, higher rates of gambling are also witnessed in Ghana and Uganda with 70.7% and 59.6% having gambling. Previous studies on Kenya have found betting and gambling to be more prevalent among young men than women. A survey released in 2019 found that about 69% of males and 44% of females practice betting (GeoPoll, 2019). Characteristically, gambling has become a social and economic menace being linked to increased negative behaviour, psychological stress and depression, suicide and poverty among young people from rural and poor urban households.



Source : Shutterstock

1.4 Youth aspirations in Africa – A literature review



Source : Shutterstock

A common and widely held view in the policy and research literature on youth aspirations in Africa is that young people in the continent mostly aspire to a future in which agriculture and the rural economy would play little or no role (Yeboah and Flynn 2021). Two common explanations are offered to support this claim: a lack of access to productive resources (e.g. land, capital, market) and the drudgery of agriculture on the one hand, and education and rising expectation of young people to secure modern professional salaried employment based in urban areas, on the other (Anyidoho, Leavy et al. 2012, Leavy and Hossain 2014, Sumberg, Yeboah et al. 2017). For example, a study in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Zambia found that land fragmentation and challenges in accessing productive resources, including capital and inputs, prevented young people from aspiring to engage in agriculture and rural life (Leavy and Hossain 2014). These challenges could explain other finding that young people preferred to work in the non-farm economic sectors (Mussa 2020).

A second theme emerging from the literature is migration, mostly internal (rural to urban) but also external (moving to a different country) in search of socio-economic opportunities. While migration is a global phenomenon, it is emerging as a priority among African youth.

One driver of migration is young people's educational and occupational aspirations which are reported to have implications on migration decisions for at least four to five years (Mussa 2020). Youth who aspire to secure modern or highly skilled jobs are more inclined to migrate to cities. In contrast, those who aspired to attain more years of education were unlikely to out-migrate, perhaps hoping to skill up before migrating to urban areas. Migration can be an enabler for the aspiration among young Africans for a future where they can expand and/or diversify their current economic activities (Yeboah, Crossouard and Flynn 2021).

A third theme in the literature on aspirations among African youth is the desire for additional schooling to skill up and become competitive. This aspiration seems particularly important among women, individuals with relatively more education, and younger people. Young peoples' aspirations to further education are linked to desires to secure professional salaried employment in the future. Dialoguing with young people who had migrated from rural areas to cities in Ghana, Yeboah (2020) finds that the aspirations of young people are rooted in desires to establish their small-scale businesses or further their education and gain professional salaried jobs.

A fourth and significant theme dwells on the concept of 'waithood' showing— how long young people wait before transitioning into adulthood. Waithood refers to a stage of prolonged waiting to become adults socially despite reaching adulthood chronologically due to a lack of employment and livelihoods (Honwana 2012, Di Nunzio 2015). The applicability of the waithood is well covered for the youth in the Middle East and North Africa (Singerman 2007, Dhillon and Yousef 2009). Regarding sub-Saharan Africa, the concept has been challenged mainly for prioritising work

as the only pathway to respectable adulthood. This overly simplifies and prioritises youth employment or job creation, neglecting other critical dimensions, such as youth participation in decision-making and other important aspects of young people's aspirations, such as acquiring technical skills and qualifications (Oosterom and Sumberg 2021).

Another perspective about being a youth is not based on chronological measurement or the biological maturation process but rather on social expectations in contexts and cultural systems (Honwana 2012). Age categories are not natural; they constitute cultural systems with meanings and values, including personal relationships, institutional structures, social practices, politics, laws, and public policies (Honwana 2012).

Recent empirical studies support these arguments. A large-scale nationally representative survey in seven African countries³ and qualitative research in 16 sites across Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Uganda found that young people engaged in various paid and unpaid livelihood activities (Oosterom and Sumberg 2021). This led the authors to conclude that many young people in Africa are too busy to wait and that the notion of waithood is misplaced (Oosterom and Sumberg 2021). Thus, though waithood is viewed as challenging, it is also a creative stage where youth agencies are manifested. We refer to this as 'agency in tight corners,' borrowing from John Lonsdale's paper celebrating Terrence Rangers' work in African studies (Lonsdale 2000).

3 Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Niger, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda

Methodology



Source : Shutterstock

2.1 Research question



Source : Shutterstock

This study is an in-depth analysis of qualitative data (interview and focus group transcripts) and survey data from 3286 young women and men to deepen understanding of African youth aspirations and perceptions of work. Through the research, we aimed to understand youth attitudes and perceptions about dignified and fulfilling work and to document the challenges and opportunities they contend with when seeking employment. The following were the specific questions that the study addressed.

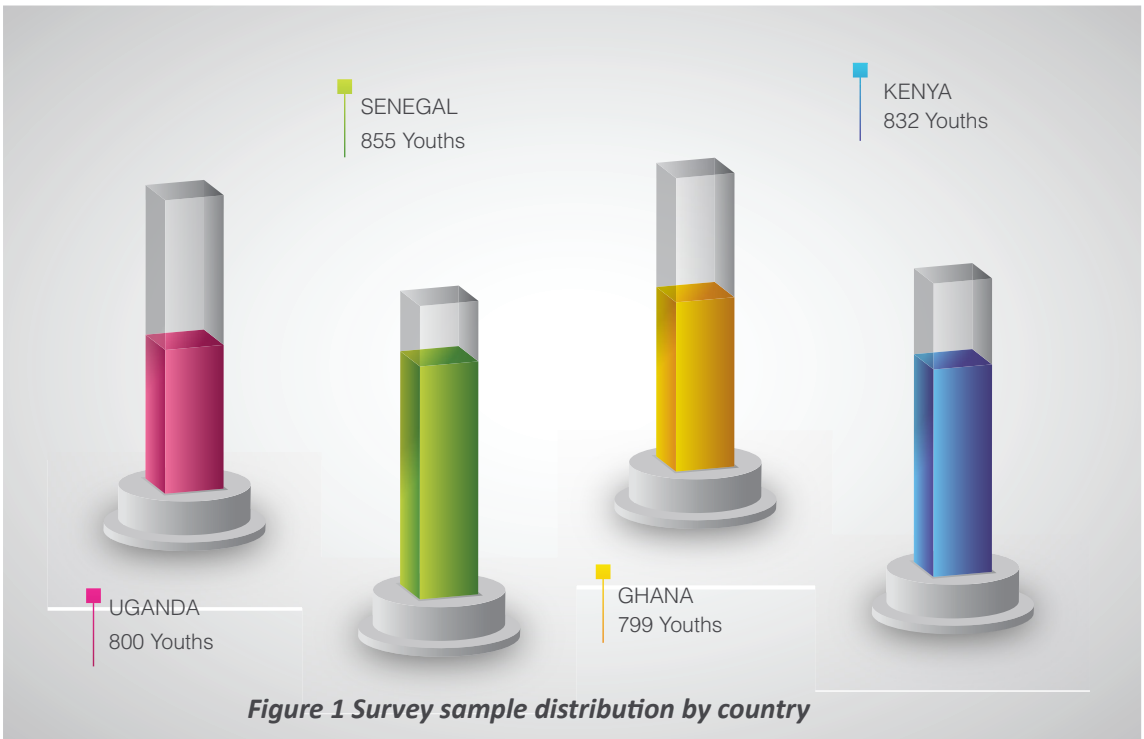
1. What are youth's employment and career aspirations?
2. How do youths define 'dignified and fulfilling work'?
3. How do youths advance their career goals (youth resilience)?
4. What challenges do young men and men face with regards to accessing dignified and fulfilling work.
5. What are youths' perception and attitudes towards change, technology, and work?

2.2 Approach

This report is a synthesis incorporating qualitative and quantitative data from a nationally representative studies conducted in four African countries: Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, and Senegal. The studies were commissioned by the Mastercard Foundation in 2019, before the start of Covid-19. They included a quantitative sample survey and two qualitative approaches (focus group discussions and interviews) led by Farmerline and AFRIK-POLL, independent research organisations. Hepta Analytics did initial quantitative analyses. The work reported here builds on those initial pieces through further in-depth analyses of the qualitative data and triangulation with the quantitative data. The survey included 3286 youth aged 15 to 35 from rural, peri-urban, and urban areas, while for qualitative study a total of 65 interviews and 66 focus group discussions were conducted across the four countries. Figure 1 shows the distribution of the survey sample by the research countries.

Hepta Analytic analysed the quantitative data by combining descriptive and inferential statistics (chi-square analysis). The Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR) analysed the qualitative data through a thematic analysis process that included inductive and deductive coding.

The qualitative aspect of the design aimed to assess aspects of youth aspiration that the quantitative research could not address. The analysis in this synthesis report followed the triangulation principles of the mixed methods research design to achieve a robust understanding of youth aspiration and resilience and how these inform their idea of dignified and fulfilling work (Turner, Cardinal et al. 2017, Gibson 2017, Turner, Cardinal et al. 2017).



Findings



Source : Shutterstock

3.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable		Gender		Total
		Female	Male	
Age (years)	15-19	32.5%	28.6%	30.4%
	20-24	24.2%	25.8%	25.0%
	25-29	20.3%	23.4%	21.9%
	30-35	23.1%	22.3%	22.6%
Residence	Rural			57.8%
	Urban			42.2%
Education	Never went to school	15.0%	20.4%	17.8%
	Primary school and below	43.8	46.6	45.3%
	Secondary school	31.1%	26.0%	28.4%
	Tertiary	8.8%	6.1%	7.4%
	Post-graduate	1.3%	0.9%	1.1%
Employment	Currently working	23.2%	27.3%	25.4%
	Not working	76.8%	72.7%	74.6%

Table 2. Characteristics of respondents; Source: Research data

Table 2 shows the characteristics of the respondents involved in the survey. There were more female participants (52.74%) than male. The majority (57.76%) lived in rural settings. More than half of the respondents (55.45%) were under 25. The level of education was generally low, 63.11% had attended primary school or never attended school. There were more females (21%) than males (15%) among those who never attended school. There were country-level variations in educational attainment, with Senegal having the highest concentration of participants who had never been to school (46%) compared to Ghana (10%), Kenya (8%) and Uganda (7%). Only 38% of the youths surveyed were working, indicating a potentially high unemployment rate (about 63%).

3.2 Young women and men’s aspirations

Youth have many aspirations for the future, what they consider success in life. As illustrated in Figure 2, the primary aspirations of youth are to have a good job (48%); be rich (46%); provide support to family (44%) and start a business (23%); and have a good education (19%). Migration aspiration accounts for about 5 per cent of the sample. The data buttressed the view of previous studies that youth aspiration is multidimensional, comprising economic (i.e., work and money), socio-cultural (i.e., family and community support), education and training and civic aspiration (Afroze, 2022).

Dignified work and entrepreneurship

The two concepts of dignified and fulfilling work were important aspects of youth aspiration among the population under study. They associated dignified work closely with societal reputation, while fulfilling work was used to indicate a strong sense of ‘fulfilment, purpose, and accomplishment’. We revisit these concepts later in section 4.3. The most profound aspiration of the youth from the qualitative analysis was their economic aspiration which related to how they might secure dignified work. This finding aligned with the quantitative data, which showed that nearly half (48%) of the sample aspired to dignified work opportunities.

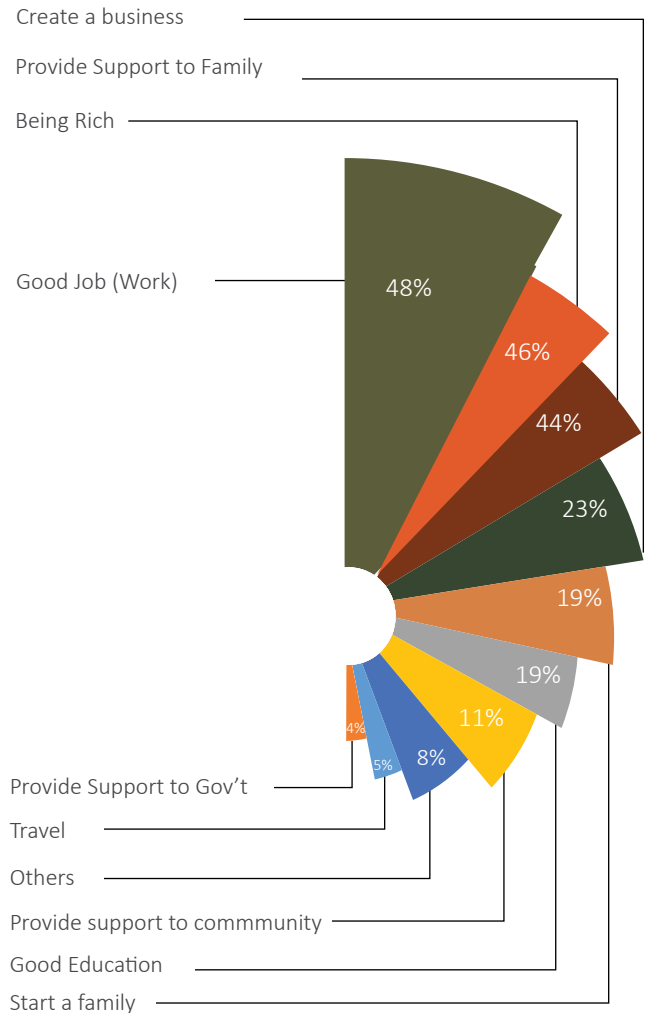


Figure 1: PASGR (2022) Youth Aspirations

Closely linked to aspirations towards dignified work in both the qualitative and quantitative data was the aspiration of the youth to create their own business (entrepreneurship). These findings confirm a growing body of evidence that young African men and women aspire to get good work, that is, one with dignity that is respectable and enables them to support themselves and their families (Sumberg et al., 2017; Yeboah, 2020),

The quantitative and qualitative data show different facets of employment ranging from self-employment or entrepreneurship, farm-based and non-farm-based, to securing jobs in the public sector or working with international organisations.

Interestingly, when asked about their interest in agriculture, varying aspirations were expressed across the countries. Youth in Uganda appear to be more enthusiastic about agriculture both on a small scale and a large scale. Although not as enthusiastic as those from Uganda, a majority of youth are beginning to go for opportunities in the agriculture, especially, small holder farming. About 23% expressed interest in farming in future. In Ghana, the increased interest in agriculture is attributable to the increased awareness creation efforts by the Ghanaian government about the opportunities in the agricultural sector. As a result, many youths now consider agriculture as a strategy for building their livelihoods and promoting their career. However, this is not the case for young men and women in Kenya, who preferred more formal and white-collar jobs. Other than small-holder farming which a majority consider as being for subsistence, agriculture was less preferred in Kenya as it requires sometimes large tracks land and significant capital outlays to start and manage.

In Senegal, most young people's aspirations in relation to owning a business were inspired by the drive to own their businesses. Interestingly, for young women, a dignified job does not necessarily translate to higher financial gains rather it is the subjective values such as sense of ownership and the importance one attaches to the job that matters most. A young and employed married Senegalese woman said:

“Well, I think any occupation one has and cares about with seriousness is a decent job: even if that consists of packaging peanuts in small nylon bags to sell because that job is yours. So, if you do it, God will help you succeed since when you believe in yourself, God can help you, and you will be able to help your family and loved ones” (Young woman, Senegal).





Source : Shutterstock

Being rich and quick money

In the quantitative analysis, 46% of young people aspired to become rich and financially independent. The aspiration to be rich was also shared by participants in the qualitative study, albeit with respondents showing a stronger propensity towards making quick money. The evidence showed that in Uganda, Kenya and Ghana, youth saw the decency of a job in its ability to generate quick money. This could be through business, digital gambling, or other illicit activities. For example, a Kenya participant justifying the desire for quick money noted:

“Youths want quick money, we want to invest where money is coming in fast, with the government you have to wait end month, so they opt for self-employment” (Mixed Rural FGD Kenya).



The expression of the desire for quick money from the above statement shows young people want quick returns on their investments, including from their self-employed activities. Another participant in Ghana appraised the financial gain derived from gambling but wished to become an electrical engineer:

“Me I write lotto, the last time someone made GHC1,200 [aprx \$200], it is not small money, I wish that would work, but I want to be an electrical engineer” (Urban poor FGD male, Ghana)



The expression above, “it is not small money”, demonstrates a strong attraction toward making quick money through the lottery. However, this respondent was also mindful of the more significant aspiration of becoming an electrical engineer. Thus, for some young people, the desire for quick money is transient.

Socio-cultural and gendered aspiration

The socio-cultural component of youth aspiration from the qualitative data related to starting a family and supporting other family members. This corroborates the evidence from the quantitative analysis (support to family members (44%) and starting a family (19%)). Across all the countries, youth aspirations reflected close involvement in family life both at the individual and societal level, within many reporting ambitions to start families, care for their families and active contribution to social development of their communities. This could be attributed to young people's conceptualisation of 'success', such as carrying one's family along by educating them or building them a house. These findings resonate with Appadurai's (2004) suggestion that aspirations are never simply individual (as the language of wants and choices); instead, (youth) aspirations establish the connection between culture and aspiration that "form parts of wider ethical and metaphysical ideas which derive from larger cultural norms". Young people want a comfortable home, but this is not the end: they want to help family and society. A good job brings a good salary and respect from society and allows one to improve oneself and grow one's career.

The excerpts below show how aspirations are weaved out of the social-cultural needs;

“Reason is because I have a big family to take care of, our family house is all broken down, you just look at it, we need to renovate, a lot of money.” (Rural FGD, Ghana)



“My dream in the future if it's possible I want to have my farm so that I can get money to cater for my family, children, pay school fees...” (young female Uganda, Rural FGD)



“So, I say when I get a job which doesn't put me under pressure and I get money to care for me and my family, when I have money, I have dignity”. (Urban FGD, Uganda)



There is a gendered dimension to aspiration shown in both the qualitative and quantitative analysis. The quantitative analysis showed females in the study aspire more for education (20%) than males (18%), although this difference is marginal. Males have slightly higher aspirations for riches (48%) than females (46%). Both females and males have similar aspirations towards good employment (48%). However, in Senegal, qualitative evidence suggests that young women's aspirations were truncated by cultural norms and expectations and possibly by the burdens of low family income. For example, Senegal had more women housewives and unemployed young women than any other country case. Factors that contributed to high unemployment rates among women included: early/forced marriages, which compelled many young girls to drop out of school; high illiteracy level due to lack of formal education; lack of funds to start any professional activity; poverty which meant parents could not take care of their children, opting to give away their daughters to early marriages to relieve themselves of the financial burden of educating them; patriarchal cultural norms in Senegal that discourage women from looking for a job because it is the husband's duty to support the wife. Fear of unwanted pregnancies out of wedlock compels parents to marry their daughters off to avoid 'shame'. One respondent shared:

“

“Parents want to get rid of their daughters quickly to earn money, so they give them away very early in marriage. All this is due to poverty. There is also the phenomenon of early pregnancies (unwanted), which pushes parents to give their daughters in marriage” (Young female, Kolda Senegal)



Many young men interviewed reiterated the expectation of women's unpaid labour to support them. In contrast, women were expected to forfeit their career aspirations to make marriage and supporting their husbands their primary aspirations. A young man was asked if his future wife would be prevented from working outside the home, and he said,

“Yes, of course, I will be the first to prevent my wife from working. If I get married one day, I will never allow my wife to work. If I have 1 billion in my account, she will stay in my office to be my source of motivation. Normally that should be a woman's job”. (Young male, Dakar, Senegal)



Thus, married life can positively and negatively influence the career aspirations of women and men. In most cases, it may mean that a woman abandons her career aspirations to support her family as dictated by cultural norms:

“

“Men have their share of responsibilities because, for them, a woman should be at home, that's why you often see men who do not want to get married to great businesswomen or medical doctors devoted to their work because they think these women won't have the time to take care of their children. That's why a married woman stops doing what she was doing to stay at home”. (Young male, Dakar, Senegal)





Source : Shutterstock

Migration aspirations

Another aspect of young people’s aspirations was their migration intention, either internal or external. When asked about their plan for the next three years, at least 8% of survey respondents indicated their intention to travel, and 5% indicated that travel is a measure of their success. Most of the Youth have travelled somewhere, though Kenyan and Senegalese youth are somewhat more mobile, particularly in larger towns and cities. Some young respondents intend to migrate- primarily from rural to urban areas in search of better opportunities. Regarding international travel, almost a fifth of the youths (18%) see their future outside their countries. Destinations seen as attractive include Europe (14%) and America (13%). For example, in one of the focus group discussions in Ghana, one participant spoke about the experience of another young footballer with travel intentions in these words: “He is a footballer, so he has to do registration to enable him to travel to America” (FGD Urban poor, male Ghana).

“So, I say when I get a job which doesn’t put me under pressure and I get money to care for me and my family, when I have money, I have dignity”.
(Urban FGD, Uganda)



Overall, Ugandan Youth did not aspire to migrate abroad for greener pastures. They were mindful of the suffering of friends abroad in Western countries and reaffirmed their aspiration to succeed at home instead of doing undignified jobs abroad. This is interesting given the popular media narrative of many young people leaving the continent for Europe or North America in search of employment opportunities. Notwithstanding, migration has historically been, and is, an important livelihood strategy and aspiration for most young people across the continent, and this is worth exploring in subsequent studies.

3.3 Dignified and fulfilling work

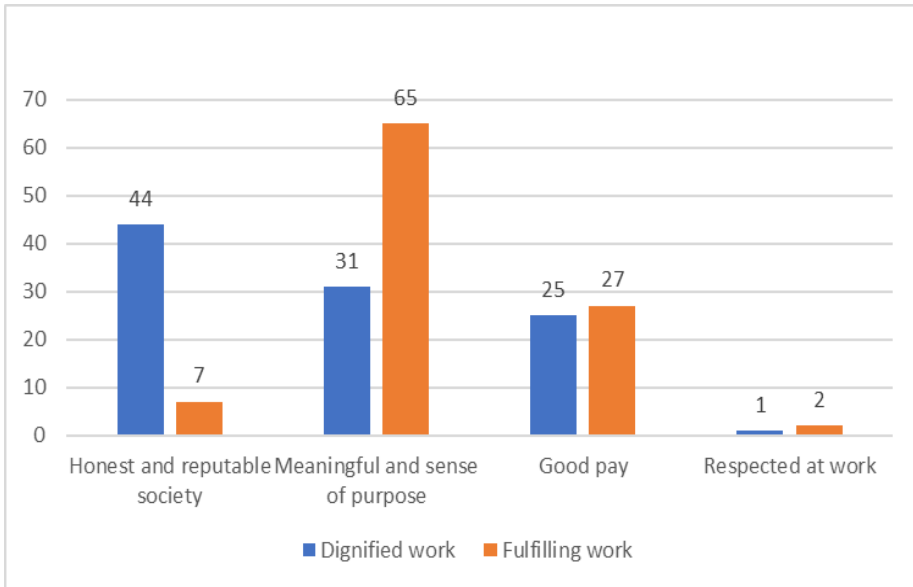


Figure 3 : How youth defined dignified and fulfilling work

Quantitative data on how youth defined dignified work is presented in Figure 3, showing four dimensions: (i) meaningful and sense of purpose (ii) has good pay (iii) honest and reputable work; and (iv) offers respect and safety.

There was convergence of ideas in both quantitative and qualitative analysis on the concepts of dignified and fulfilling work. Qualitative data showed that dignified work across all four countries referred to a working environment where employers respect the youth. This corresponded with “honest and reputable work” and work that “offers respect and safety” at work seen in the quantitative analysis. The qualitative data also showed dignified work as an employment system where youth are compensated sufficiently to enable them ‘settle down’ and support others. This is consistent with “good pay” in the quantitative analysis. An additional insight gained from the qualitative data is that dignified work also means work that is safe and is without fatal outcomes, in contrast with risk-prone or hazardous work, such as motorbike riding and sex work among young women and men.

Fulfilling work, emerged from the data analysis, as a work environment that gives freedom to rest, travel, recreate, and diversify experiences. The evidence also shows fulfilling work as work that derives a sense of satisfaction, purpose and accomplishment, which is highly consistent with the quantitative finding.

“A dignified job should not have negative effects on your life, in that you spend the money you earn to treat such effects” (Young Male, Urban Uganda).



“When the society frowns against the job as not dignified, it means it does not command respect, and there is no job security. An occupation like prostitution, robbery, and drug dealing goes against societal norms and can lead to diseases like HIV/AIDS or serving a jail term”. (Young women, FGD Ghana)



Among Ghanaian young women and men dignified and fulfilling work is understood as work that helps them achieve satisfaction through job security and financial sustainability, leading to improved livelihood. They also defined an ideal employer as one who creates a conducive environment for career and personal growth. In Ghana, for instance, the expected monthly average salary ideal for dignified living in Ghana, as described by the youth, was in a range of GHc 2000 – Ghc 2200⁴ compared to the current monthly minimum wage of about GHc 350⁵. A respondent explained that:

divides, whether rural or urban areas, young women and men defined dignified work as work that helps them attain their aspirations and those of their immediate community. This agrees with Appadurai (2004) who argued that “aspirations are never simply individual but are always formed in interaction and the thick of life”. For instance, a youth living with a person with disability in Migori County reported success because their business grew despite minimal government support, and they could support other people. He said,

“For us here at [... edited for confidentiality], dignified employment is where young people get into either wage employment or self-employment or whatever entrepreneur business, they find themselves in, whereby they can sustain themselves financially and can have some form of job security and safety at the workplace as well”. (Government representative, Ghana)



“We started with three people and decided to form a group. Now we have recruited people who are younger. We started to save money for issues like educating our children, relatives, and helping ourselves to live a better life.” (Urban youth, rural Kenya)



4 Approximately USD 179 - 197 as of July 2023 based on Oanda.com.
5 Approximately USD 32 (ibid)

In Senegal, young women and men defined dignified employment as work where they were not exploited and that provides them with monthly remuneration. They also described non-dignified work as work that did not pay well and was unacceptable to religion and society. These findings were especially emphasised by those from poor rural areas. There was consistency across the majority of youth that dignified work was work that earned respect and pride, was not exploitative, and which remuneration was sufficient to meet family needs. An ideal employer is respectful, strongly committed to the contract, and provides good working conditions beyond monetary provision. Senegalese youth suggested that an average salary expectation that would enable them to live with dignity varied between CFA137,500 Francs – CFA 267,000 per month. This was comparable to Ghana youth’s idea of a liveable wage being 2200 Ghana Cedis per month or about \$379 per month. A female respondent in Senegal described a dignified job as:



“A job with which we earn enough to satisfy our needs. And we won’t have to beg or ask another person to solve our problems” (Unemployed young woman (housewife), Senegal).

Overall, the quantitative and qualitative data on the meaning of dignified and fulfilling work emphasised four dimensions: societal reputation, respect, good pay, and a sense of purpose and meaning, the qualitative data provided additional perspective on the safety of the work being done and freedom.

3.4 Resilience and coping strategies



Figure 4: youth resilience strategies

Young men and women in Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, and Senegal demonstrated what could be described as resilience despite many socio-economic, structural, and governance challenges that continued to marginalise and exclude them. The quantitative analysis (see figure 4) shows that almost half the participants indicated they have taken some action to tackle the challenges they faced and approximately two-thirds indicated they have received some result through their actions. The actions taken were predominantly saving (46%), followed by furthering education (22%) and obtaining professional training (14%). Additionally, some youth (18%) sought advice from more experienced individuals and built social capital through networking (9%). Again, professional training is not prioritised as much as continuing education. Mentoring and networking, which

are critical for business development, were pursued by far fewer youth. There is no significant difference between women and men regarding actions taken to advance their aspirations.

Both qualitative and quantitative datasets, youths in Ghana, Kenya, Senegal, and Uganda emphasised that they worked hard to raise business capital. Closely linked to their saving practices were the creation and membership of self-help groups such as garbage collection associations to empower themselves economically. In Kenya for example, a strategy used by young people to promote their business was micro-savings. A participant in a focus group discussion said:

“I save two thousand per month in a self-help group, where it earns interest, and we get the money at the end of the year; with your shares you can get a loan to start a business. The challenge is finding the two thousand to contribute; if you fail to pay there is a penalty”. (Rural Mixed FGD, rural Kenya)



Another group member said:

“We have a ‘Merry-go-round’; we contribute 350 every Saturday then we divide it among ourselves at the end of the year. (Female youth (PWD), rural Kenya)



Across the study countries, young women and men were also embarking on different forms of training and education (either formal or professional) as a strategy to pursue their aspirations. For example, a young woman in Ghana, in narrating how she advanced her career aspiration, said:

“I want to be a pop-star and so I have recently joined a music school where I get trained and mentored on music skills and business. I am also keen on completing a degree in music and performance to be able to pursue a career in music”. (Young woman, Rural Ghana).



A young male from Kenya, who is interested on pursuing a career in computer science, narrated how he made a decision to go back to school after over ten years to pursue his dream and build his career. He said;

“I finished my secondary school in 2009 and missed to go university as I did not qualify for government sponsorship. After many years of struggling with my wife, we both made a decision to go back to school and pursue our dream...I am now finishing a degree in computer science and physics and I hope that I can secure a job afterwards” (Young male, Nairobi, Kenya)



From the above illustrations, it is evident that young women and men consider education and professional training as important to building their capacities and skills in pursuing their aspirations, interests and to meet their needs.

Additional insight derived from the qualitative data related to the concept of ‘hustling’ as a strategy to make ends meet and prepare for the future. ‘Hustling’, as used in the report, is a transitory informal economic activity often undertaken by young people to survive. Hustling does not define a particular form of work but often involves juggling through different occupations to survive in the informal economy while looking for better alternatives. Thus, many Kenyans, Ghanaian, and Ugandan youth who described their informal everyday economic activities as ‘hustling’ viewed them as transitional. They hoped to get a big break, either a breakthrough as an entrepreneur or secure formal, dignified employment during the transition period.

Young people in Uganda undertake multiple actions to advance their career goals, including working in informal urban centres and agriculture. Among the four countries, only Uganda had some youth expressing a passion for agriculture to secure a livelihood. This aspiration was strikingly different from Kenya and Ghana, where agriculture was considered a waste of time compared to quicker ways of making money. Similarly, most Senegalese young people did not place a high priority on farming. Instead, like their Kenyan and Ghanaian counterparts, they preferred quicker means of generating money, such as using technology or investing in get-rich-quick schemes or lottery. For example, a male Ghanaian youth said:

“

Me I buy lotto tickets. The last time someone made [won lottery] GHC1,200; it is not small money. I wish that would work [win the lottery], but I want to be an electrical engineer. (Young male, urban, Ghana)



Most youths in these three countries viewed agriculture as exhausting, with no corresponding rewards. For example, most young Senegalese in the FGDs did not consider farming a career prospect because it was physically demanding due to inadequate modern machinery to practice farming. They also reported that since the state set pitiful prices on agricultural produce, farmers did not benefit. It is worth noting that even though the majority of the youth in Kenya, Ghana and Senegal did not appear to like agriculture, some of them called for effective agricultural policies that assured good management of arable land for growing food and cash crops for both local and export markets, which may be a source of employment for youth.

Most youth working in Agriculture were self-employed (63%) or working in the family businesses (20%). They earned meagre salaries, with the majority (56%) in the category of working poor (earning \$1.9/day or less) and only 4% earned at least \$500/month. Nevertheless, they were ambitious. At least one-third aspired to earn at least \$500/month. This probably explained the desire of many to leave the sector (only 34% desire to remain). Many wanted to go to trading (12%) and other modern jobs (11%). Their preferred future employers were government (44%) and their own business (35%). There were also youths planning to shift to agriculture from other occupations, mainly from domestic work, unemployed or trading occupations. Youths in Ghana, Kenya, and Senegal were apathetic to agriculture as an aspiration, while the interest in agriculture among the youth in Uganda (explored later) could be because most of Uganda’s population remains heavily dependent on subsistence agriculture.

Demographic Variable		Actions taken to advance career goals				
		Education	Professional Training	Seek Advice	Networking	Savings
Gender	Female	44%	21%	15%	17%	9%
	Male	48%	22%	13%	19%	9%
Residence	Rural	53%	17%	10%	16%	9%
	Urban	38%	27%	18%	20%	9%
Age	15-19	19%	40%	11%	13%	6%
	20-24	44%	24%	15%	17%	12%
	25-29	58%	13%	17%	20%	10%
	30-35	64%	10%	13%	22%	9%
Education	Never	71%	6%	6%	21%	4%
	Primary	45%	17%	11%	16%	7%
	Secondary	41%	27%	14%	18%	12%
	Tertiary	33%	40%	30%	19%	13%
	Postgraduate	65%	26%	26%	30%	30%

Table 3. Actions taken to advance aspiration

In Senegal, an increase in unemployment saw youth move to the informal sector to start businesses. A young woman who runs a shop, selling baby clothes in Tambacounda town in Eastern Senegal, said she had opted to start a business to earn a living as a response to lack of formal job. She stressed that other young people, especially young women, were opting to start even small scale trading in order to earn a living.

“I started my business so that I could be able do something after waiting for three years waiting to get a job. Here in Tambacounda there are very few formal jobs and so getting a job even with the government is not easy. Many of my peers are now owning small businesses, selling bread, cosmetics and some food stuffs”. (Young Female, Senegal)



This finding is in agreement with recent data that demonstrate the exponential growth of the informal sector in Senegal. As the ILO 2023 Youth Country Brief underscores, the informal sector in Senegal has grown in recent years, providing youths the opportunity to advance their career aspirations as an alternative to the limited government opportunities (ILO 2023). What this implies is that most young people exercise agency and do whatever they can to help earn a living and be able to survive.

A majority of youth also preferred entrepreneurship for its flexibility. Even though some participants appreciated that the civil service work environment had improved over time, many young people felt their dreams would not be attained in 'controlled' work environments, as argued by a young man:

“*You see someone who is active in the informal sector, has their small business, and can organise themselves to have a very successful business...In this conception, many often believe that it is necessary to fight to make your business a sustainable one which allows you to earn much more money. Civil servants' conditions have improved a lot with all the advantages but in the Senegalese mind, they cannot accept the fact that at the end of the month, they cannot earn more than a given amount of money.”* (Young man, Senegal)



Interestingly, as part of the motivation to start their own business, young men and women want to have opportunities to help others and offer employment to others. As the analysis of aspirations showed, a majority want to make impact through the support they can give to others – their families, the vulnerable and needy, including those not necessarily related to them, and to contribute to the growth and development of their communities. One young woman who owns a tech-business in Nairobi, Kenya, mentioned;

“*I started my business around 2018. Initially, I used to sell computers online, mainly, among university students and through referrals. However, as the business grew, I wanted to expand and make more impact, employ others and support the needy. Although I have not achieved that successfully, that is still my goal.”* (Young woman, Kenya)



In spite of the innovativeness and creativity in creating opportunities for themselves through entrepreneurship, young women and men continue face a raft of challenges including a highly competitive informal sector that makes it difficult for start-up businesses to thrive; unfavourable tax regimes; lack of capital to start off; and in some cases skills gap around business, such as marketing and financial management. As self-employment and entrepreneurship bear greater potential in expanding opportunities where young people can pursue their goals and access dignified and fulfilling work, it is important to create measures that will ensure the youth are effectively empowered to start their own business. Strong public-private partnership frameworks that ensure that young people are prioritized and enshrines mutual collaboration between governments and the private sector in empowering youth could help.

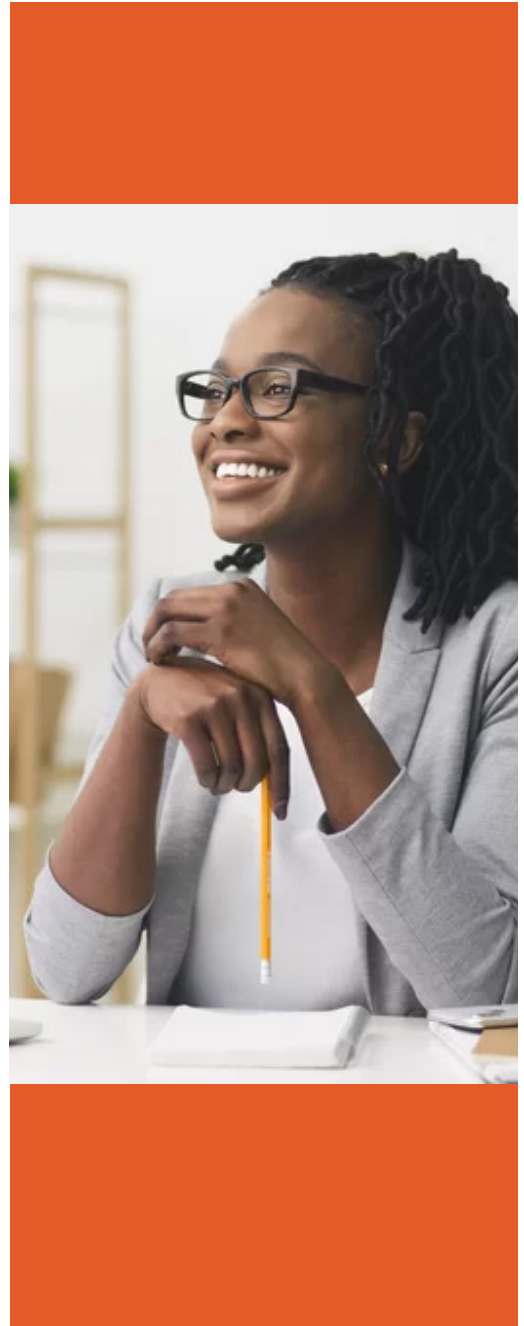
Another resilience strategy that young women and men demonstrated was participation in politics and governance. Unlike in Uganda, young women and men in Kenya and Ghana were actively taking part in politics at national and sub-national levels. This important finding builds on the need to facilitate youth access and representation in political and government issues in countries like Uganda and Senegal, where youth representation was still low (Lekalaje and Gyimah-Boadi, 2016). Across the four countries, however, female youth express little aspirations to engage in politics or contribute voices in political spaces. This disengagement or lack of interest in politics among young women could have serious implications; it could result in inadequate female youth representation and presence in decision-making spaces. It may also mean that in some cases, young women's issues are not adequately and appropriately articulated, resulting in unresponsive policy decisions.

Role models

With reference to role models and mentors, many youths in the countries were conscious about their need for mentors and role models. Youth in rural Uganda and Senegal strongly referred to role models from their families who they admired for their character and hard work. Youths in Senegal also expressed admiration for persons they observed to be wealthy and engaging in philanthropic causes as would-be mentors. Yet some urban youth in Kenya and Uganda had a global frame of reference, aspiring to be like celebrities such as Bill Gates. These admirations of prominent people drive and motivate young people towards working on their dreams. Given this, most respondents reported that youth-oriented organisations and the government should invite distinguished personalities to share their successes and challenges periodically with them. These sessions would broaden their perspectives. Overall, youth in the four study countries preferred entrepreneurship for their future career due to perceived 'freedom of choice' and the desired level of satisfaction with self-employment. The youth preferred to own/operate a business due to difficulties getting employment and distrust in the government.

Constraints to achieving dignified and fulfilling work.

Young women and men in Africa encounter varied but closely interlinking constraints to advancing their aspirations. These range from information constraints, lack of resources both capital assets and money, inadequate or skills mismatch, to a raft of social ills including corruption and mismanagement.



Source : Shutterstock

4.1 Access to information

Whereas the quantitative data showed varied sources of information available to young people, such as radio, television, and the Internet, only 25% were aware of youth programmes in their respective countries. More men (29%) than women (21%) have heard about youth programmes across all four countries. This lack of awareness of youth programmes can prevent many young people from accessing services meant for them and needs addressing.

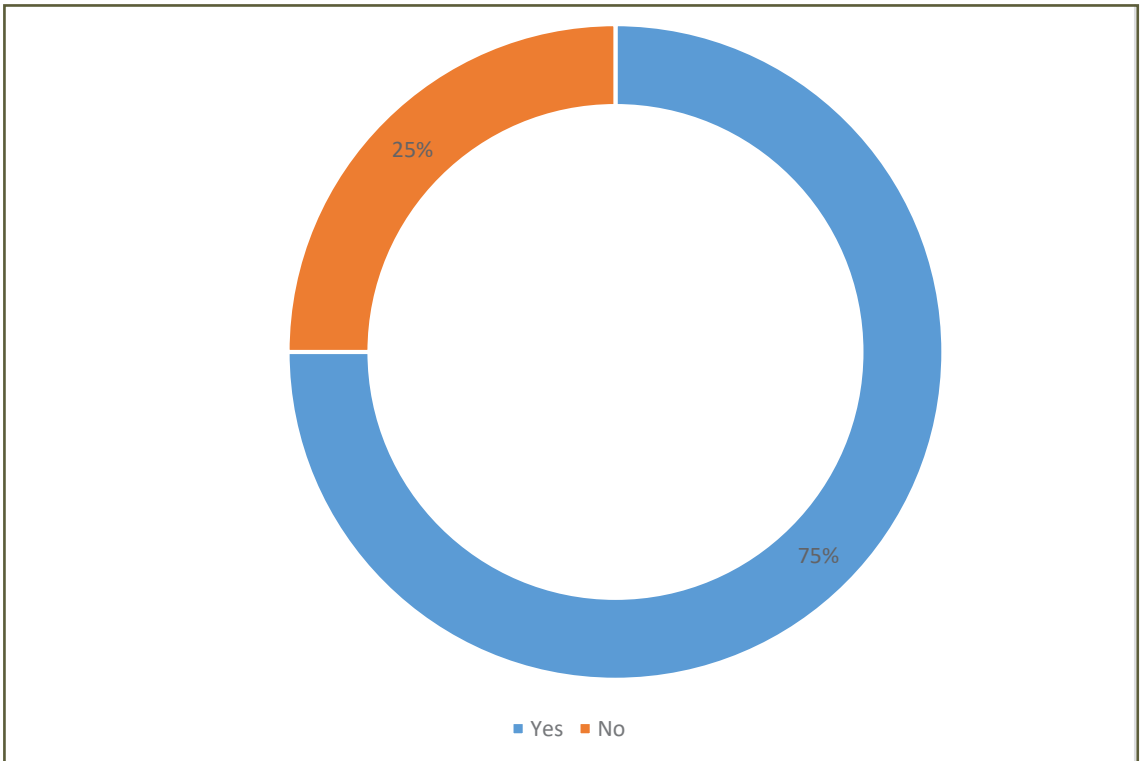


Figure 5: Awareness of information about existing opportunities.

The lack of awareness of programmes also raises questions about the reach of youth programmes in the study countries. Furthermore, despite advancement in digital technology across the four countries, only 27 per cent of the respondents had internet access. The limited access to the internet may explain the lack of awareness of youth programmes.

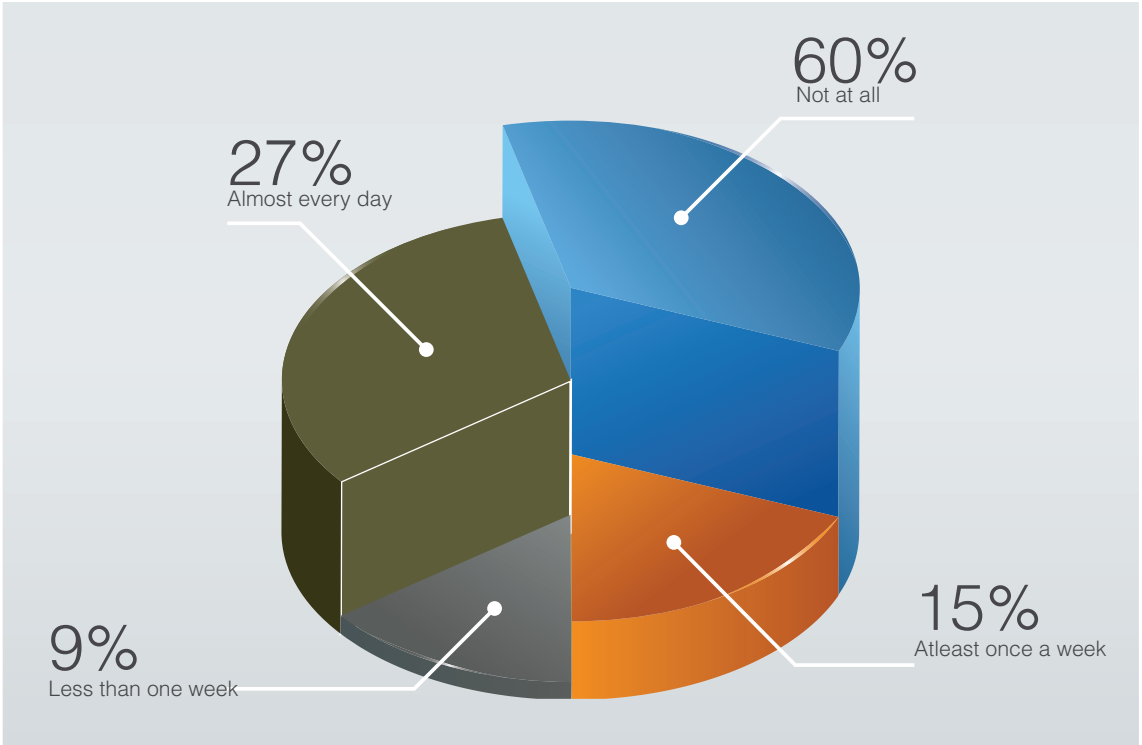


Figure 6: Youth access to internet

In the qualitative data, the youth in Ghana, Kenya, and Uganda, had high awareness of existing entrepreneurs’ funding programmes. However, they made little attempt to access these government services because they preferred support from friends and family. Poor youths in rural areas were less aware of government programmes. When they tried to access them, they faced corruption and numerous bureaucratic bottlenecks as the main hurdles preventing them from accessing the funds to fulfil their career aspirations.

As explained earlier, the qualitative data analysis revealed two main challenges both employed and unemployed youth face in advancing their aspirations of securing dignified and fulfilling work. These were: i) corruption and nepotism and ii) young people’s inability to access financial capital for business activities.

4.2 Corruption and nepotism



Source : Shutterstock

One of the main impediments to young people's ability to secure dignified and fulfilling employment was the perception of corruption and nepotism (when someone is favoured because they know or are related to the employer). Despite providing good fortune for a few youths due to their ethnic and cultural connections, nepotism and other forms of corruption were regarded by youths as the most significant impediment to their career and business aspirations. The extract below shows how young people use their social capital to access opportunities. It also presents a scenario for nepotism, where families help each other to access work opportunities not necessarily by merits but because of social connection.

“ I came to Nairobi, and I was living with my uncle. He helped me look for a job, and I got one where there were very many Kikuyus. He took many of us, almost ten people’ (Urban Youth, Kenya).



Evidence from this study and elsewhere (see for instance, (Ngono, 2023; Ogbonna, Adediran, Oloko, & Isah, 2022), including in OECD countries (Kirsanli, 2023), suggest that corruption in employment through cronyism and bribery is viewed as a significant impediment to youth aspirations that puts them in a ‘tight corner’. Participants in a focus group discussion spoke about the impact of corruption in Kenya in these comments:

“ Kenya is corrupt right now, for you to get access or get a job you have to bribe your way through. That’s why many people are leaving Kenya to work in places like Uganda, Sudan because of corruption (Mixed FGD, Kenya).



Young women and men reported systemic hurdles, including corruption, police brutality, political repression, and sexual harassment for young women. They reflected on ways and means of making the best out of their circumstances (agency in tight corners). A youth group running a garbage collection association in Nairobi described how police often frustrated them through numerous arrests and accusations. The following quotes from youths interviewed in Kenya illustrate this point:

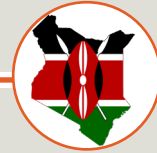
“

“In city hall [a holding place where suspected offenders are held while being processed for minor offence by the Nairobi City County security officials] if you deny a charge you stay for one week; if you accept you are fined [KES] 3000. We were three people and fined [KES] 3000; we accepted, and we used the group savings to pay. We tried to complain but the person at the county council did not listen. We accepted our fate and continued with our business”. (Youth leader, Kenya).



“

“The police who were sent by the county council were working together. We had our licenses when they arrested us; we called the person in charge of this area at City Hall. He ordered them to release us as we had our licenses, but they refused because we did not bribe them. They said they would release people at city hall”. (Female youth employer, Kenya).



The findings in Ghana, Kenya and Uganda on the role of corruption in curtailing youth aspirations resonated with a similar study which showed that governance influences youth unemployment through factors such as corruption, disrespect for property rights, lack of sound economic policies and political instability in several African countries (Abé Ndjié, Atangana Ondoia et al. 2019). Although the African Union member countries, including the countries studied in this report, had undertaken reforms to improve governance structures seen to impede service delivery to youth, corruption has continued unabated, further disenfranchising youth and their aspirations.

Similar to Ghana, Kenya and Uganda, Senegalese youth are not optimistic about the future of work due to obstacles created by perceived high levels of corruption. Career progression in the public sector was based on individual or familial relations, not competency. For instance, one

“

If you don't have anyone to give you a hand, you don't move forward. People get positions based on their relations, not their skills. You can see people in positions: you are the one who deserves the position, but he has the connections (Mixed FGD with young employees, Senegal).



Despite the challenges of securing jobs in government, youths still hoped to work for the government for job security and benefits. Conversely, young people employed by the government still wished to run a side business for self-reliance.

4.3 Access to financial capital

There was general perception of lack of access to financial capital there were more concern about financial constraints that hindered access to education and training opportunities. The qualitative data emphasised lack of access to financial capital for business activities. For example, participants faced bureaucratic hurdles when accessing government funding for entrepreneurship projects in Kenya and Uganda. According to the one unemployed Youth in Dakar, lack of finance curtailed their interest to do business. Entrepreneurship was viewed as a difficult engagement due to a lack of start-up funds, hence the interest in getting a good job that meets their needs. Some of them had to depend on friends, relatives in their communities for support. A young Kenyan confirmed this:

“

“I will say yes to support from my community and relatives. Just as stated earlier, I had a problem with getting capital. I raised most of my capital from friends and relatives even though I started paying back when my business started picking up” (Young male, rural Kenya).



While the problem of access to financial support from formal and mainstream systems was profound, as seen from the statement above, the majority of young people look up to their social networks to raise capital for their businesses. Such support from family and friends was based on collective action and trust. No security or collateral was demanded as pertains in the formal systems. The creditors were also accommodative and understanding if challenges in payment occur. Such community networks further forged a sense of identity and belonging, and agency. Understanding such initiatives may need to stretch beyond comparing government/formal schemes and communal/informal arrangements.



Source : Dreamstime

4.4 Perspectives and attitudes on technology and youth futures



Source : Dreamstime

Knowledge and use of information communication and technology (ICT) was central to the daily life of young people. Although a majority (64%) had noted they had ICT knowledge and skills, only a little over a quarter (27%) had access to the Internet daily. Most of them used the internet for communication purposes. Some had used the internet for job search while others used it for business. In the qualitative analysis, participants described technology as an enabler of youth aspirations for youth entrepreneurs in the four countries. Young people said they had used technology for several functions, including advertising and marketing their products and services. They also employed technology to keep digital records. For those in Kenya and Uganda, technology-enabled easier payments and loans using the mobile money platform MPESA. A successful rural youth interviewed in Kenya had the following to say about the role of technology:

Businesses depend a lot on advertising. I have been able to use social media like Facebook and Instagram to advertise my business. This has brought me a lot of customers because I have a large follower base on Facebook. Also, technology has helped me in record keeping. I store most of my records on the computer, and I do less paperwork. Keeping papers is not easy because sometimes they get lost. I also have the ETR machines, which make my tax calculation easy (Rural female Youth, Kenya).

In Uganda, five out of seven participants said that in 20 years, they wanted to be successful farmers rather than become heads of real estate and ICT businesses. On the other hand, youth in Senegal used technology to improve the job application process, facilitate business operations, and work remotely. However, young people noted that some youth also use technology negatively to engage in cyber-bullying and gambling in Kenya, Uganda, and Ghana.

Conclusion

This synthesis report has examined the aspirations and resilience of young people from four African countries: Ghana, Kenya, Senegal, and Uganda. Unemployment is a major challenge for young people in these countries. At the core of this report is the young people's quest for dignified and fulfilling work – work that is capable of providing good pay, is reputable, offers a sense of purpose and respect. The need for funding to support businesses and entrepreneurs, a healthy family, and a healthy society also form a critical part of their aims.

The report has highlighted how young people make sense of their future and aspirations, the actions they take to advance their aspirations and the challenges they face in pursuing their aspirations towards dignified and fulfilling work.

From the analysis, the concept of 'hustling' has emerged, shifting from what was ordinarily defined as 'waithood' – a period of transition from school-to-work characterized by anticipation of the future and kind of a 'waiting moment' before the big break or getting the job. Due to the increased unemployment, a majority of youth are forced to rely on the limited opportunities available both in the formal and the informal sector, where they engage

in 'hustles' – doing any- or every-thing possible to survive and meet their needs. Rather than view youth as being in constant wait, hustling regards them as active agents of change, and recognizes their efforts in building their vision and achieving their desired future. Although mostly prevalent among urban male youth, hustling is now considered a common reality among African youth across geographical settings and gender in Kenya, Ghana, Uganda and Senegal.

African youth have demonstrated remarkable resilience despite significant obstacles. Additionally, African youth recognised the critical role technology plays in fostering their ambitions and creating business opportunities. However, there were concerns about impediments to technological advancement, evidenced by the apparent lack of access to reliable internet and technical tools.

Overall, although African youth are resilient and aspire to dignified and fulfilling work, there are concerns over access to opportunities such as funding, education, and skills training. Females face more constraints than males, mainly because of the deeply rooted socio-

Recommendations

Against the backdrop of the forgoing discussions, the following recommendations are proffered as strategies and actions to address Africa's young women and men's challenges and promote effective youth engagement and empowerment toward realizing their aspirations and accessing dignified and fulfilling work. It is important to note that respective governments across Africa, as first-level duty bearers, are responsible for ensuring that Africa's young women and men, especially women, are supported to meet their aspirations. Other development partners, such as the Mastercard Foundation, through its programmes under the Young Africa Work's Strategy should play a part in empowering and harnessing the skills, capacities and innovation of young women and men towards enabling them to achieve their goals and aspirations.

Recommendations for Governments and public institutions

cultural factors favouring young men more than young women.

- a. *Create mechanisms to facilitate access to finance through grants targeting youth in various sectors.* One of the major hurdles for Africa's young women and men, especially those with entrepreneurial aspirations relates to access to finance to enable them set up and successfully run their businesses.
- b. *Create awareness and adopt relevant mechanisms to engage with and communicate policies for effective youth involvement.* As solution to the youth information challenges, there is need for governments to constantly engage the youth in relevant programmes and effectively explore new strategies to communicate government policies.
- c. *Set responsive policies that target youth especially in acknowledging their aspirations and perspectives to dignified and fulfilling work.* These policies and regulations should aim to promote youth entrepreneurship and innovation. Further, a review of existing employment policies is necessary, this includes reviewing the minimum wage to better align with youth's definition of dignified and fulfilling work and aspirations.
- d. *Create an enabling environments for youth who are hustling so they can thrive and grow.* Actions to support the expanding

the informal sector, by diversifying it, to accommodate young people with innovative ideas, and integrating hustling as a pathway to achieving aspiration are need.

- e. *Promote inclusion and effective engagement of young women and men in all levels of leadership and decision making.* To bridge the existing gaps on inclusion and representation of youth voices in critical decision-making organs and public institutions, there is need to boost youth representation especially for women at various levels of leadership, decision making and policy implementation. Creating mandatory quota representations for youth in these programmes is important.
- f. *Harness technology and ICT for youth empowerment and employment.* Evidently, technology has transformed workspaces and provided new opportunities such as the growing gig economy and online trading, among others. However, the findings from this report show that a majority of young people still lack access and necessary skills to exploit these new opportunities. Ensuring equitable access to technology and training in necessary skills will enable more youth to tap into this space.
- g. *Address corruption and other social ills such as nepotism: These social ills prevent young women and men from access opportunities.* They weaken their trust in government. African governments must be ready to

Recommendations to the Mastercard Foundation and other development partners

create systems that are corruption free and that are based on merit to facilitate youth to access resources, opportunities and ventures that support young people.

- a. ***Design programmes and interventions informed by the needs and aspirations of Africa's young women and men:*** To be effective, youth programmes and employment interventions should reflect the different pathways and aspirations of the youth, and seek to stimulate their own efforts towards achieving their goals and aspirations. Supporting youth entrepreneurship through skills development, provision of start-up capital, opening up business incubation hubs and mentorship programme will help increase opportunities.
- b. ***Create programmes to reach youth in the informal sector:*** to support their innovation and creative ideas in order to maximise growth of their ventures. This can be done by maximising investment in sectors such as fashion and design, the creative industry, youth-owned small and medium enterprises to ensure that a significant youth population are supported to aspirations and access dignified and fulfilling work.
- c. ***Create support for young women and men that aim to enhance their capacities and skills set for employment.*** The findings highlight the growing mismatch in youth capacities, skills and aspirations to available employment opportunities. There is need to address these gaps by empowering youth to be equipped with appropriate skills and knowledge of existing opportunities.
- d. ***Support youth enterprises through grants and seed funding.*** Young women and men have shown remarkable resilience and adaptability to challenges including limitations in accessing adequate finance to start and run their own businesses. For the majority of entrepreneurial youth, especially women, providing targeted financial support through grants and youth-innovation seed funding has proven effective.
- e. ***Enhance gender-responsive action toward empowerment.*** While young women and men alike face challenges relating to underemployment and informality, there are gender variations with young women more affected due to low coping strategies and socio-cultural hindrances that oftentimes hinder their work. There is need to pay attention to the gendered perspectives of aspirations, reliance and adaptability if youth support interventions and programme are to be effective.
- f. ***Harness programmes that cushion young women and men*** against socio-economic and political shocks such as COVID-19. Youth-specific social protection programmes and interventions that are specific to the youth have proved effective in supporting young people.

References

- Abbink, J. (2005). "Being young in Africa: The politics of despair and renewal." *Vanguard or vandals: Youth, politics and conflict in Africa* **4**.
- Abé Ndjilé, A., H. Atangana Ondo and H. Ngoa Tabi (2019). "Governance and youth unemployment in Africa." *Labor History* **60**(6): 869-882.
- Abebe, T. (2020). "Lost futures? Educated youth precarity and protests in the Oromia region, Ethiopia." *Children's Geographies* **18**(6): 584-600.
- Africa Insights Desk (2020). "Africa Youth Employment Insights: Ghana Brief." Netherlands. The African Business Council.
- African Union (2006) "African Youth Charter."
- Afroze, J. (2022) To be respectable, to be good – aspirations of young people in the context of everyday precariousness in Bangladesh. *Ethnography and Education*, 17:3, 241-256.
- Ahaibwe, G. and S. Mbowe (2014). "Youth unemployment challenge in Uganda and the role of employment policies in jobs creation." *Africa in Focus*.
- Akindès, F. and S. K. Yao (2019). "How is digital technology changing the lives of urban dwellers in Africa 'from below'?" *Afrique contemporaine*(1): 87-107.
- Anyidoho, N. A., J. Leavy and K. Asenso-Okyere (2012). "Perceptions and Aspirations: A Case Study of Young People in Ghana's Cocoa Sector." **43**(6): 20-32.
- Atnafu, A., L. Oucho and B. Zeitlyn (2014). "Poverty, youth and rural-urban migration in Ethiopia."
- Barnes, L. K. (2021). "Challenges South African youth face in education and their quest to eradicate issues of the past." *Alternate Horizons*.
- Boughzala, M. and M. Kouki (2003). Unemployment persistence and the informal sector. E. W. P. Series, Economic Research Forum.
- Branch, A. and Z. Mampilly (2015). *Africa uprising: Popular protest and political change*, Zed Books Ltd.
- Chigunta, F. and learning (2017). "Entrepreneurship as a possible solution to youth unemployment in Africa." *Laboring* **10**: 433-451.
- Coulter, C., M. Persson and M. Utas (2008). *Young female fighters in African wars: conflict and its consequences*, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.
- Dhillon, N. and T. Yousef (2009). *Generation in Waiting: The Unfulfilled Promise of Young People in the Middle East*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.
- Di Nunzio, M. (2015). *Embracing uncertainty: Young people on the move in Addis Ababa's inner city*. *Ethnographies of uncertainty in Africa*, Springer: 149-172.
- Fox, L. and D. Gandhi (2021). *Youth Employment in Sub-Saharan Africa: Progress and Prospects*.
- Fox, L., L. W. Senbet and W. Simbanegavi (2016). "Youth employment in Sub-Saharan Africa: challenges, constraints and opportunities." *Journal of African*

Economies **25**(suppl_1): i3-i15.

- Garcia, M. and J. Fares (2008). "Transitions to working life for Africa's youth." Youth in Africa's labor market: 15-25.
- GeoPoll (2019) Gambling in Kenya: Mobile Phones and Football Boost Popularity.
- GeoPoll. (2022). Report: Betting in Africa. Retrieved from <https://www.geopoll.com/blog/betting-report-africa/>
- Ghana Statistical Service. (2022). Ghana 2021 Population and Housing Census: General Report.
- Gibson, C. (2017). "Elaboration, generalisation, triangulation, and interpretation: On enhancing the value of mixed method research." Organisational Research Methods **20**(2): 193-223.
- Hellandendu, J. M. a. (2012). "Contributory factors to the spread of HIV/AIDS and its impacts in sub-Saharan African countries." European Scientific Journal **8**(14).
- Honwana, A. (2014). 2 'Waithood': Youth Transitions and Social Change. Development and equity, Brill: 28-40.
- Honwana, A. M. (2012). The time of Youth: Work, social change, and politics in Africa, Kumarian Press Sterling.
- Ile, I. and E. S. Boadu (2018). "The paradox of youth empowerment: Exploring youth intervention programme in Ghana." Cogent Social Sciences **4**(1): 1528709.
- ILO (2013) Global employment trends for youth 2013: A generation at risk (Geneva).
- ILO (2019). Enhancing the knowledge base to support the promotion of decent work in rural areas Decent Work in the Rural Economy Policy Guidance Notes ILO.
- ILO (2020) Report on employment in Africa (Re-Africa) – tackling the youth employment challenge – International Labour Office – Geneva
- ILO (2020). "Global Employment Trends for Youth: Africa." International Labour Organisation. Briefing Note.
- ILO (2022) Global Employment Trends for Youth in 2022: Africa.
- ILO. (2023a). *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2022: Africa*. Retrieved from https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/briefingnote/wcms_853322.pdf
- ILO. (2023b). *Youth Country Briefs: Senegal*. Retrieved from https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_886414.pdf
- Iwilade, A. (2020). "Everyday agency and centred marginality: being "youth" in the oil-rich Niger Delta of Nigeria." Ateliers d'anthropologie. Revue éditée par le Laboratoire d'ethnologie et de sociologie comparative (47).
- Juma, K., F. M. Wekesah, C. W. Kabiru and C. O. Izugbara (2020). Burden, drivers, and impacts of poor mental health in young people of west and Central Africa: implications for research and programming. West African Youth Challenges and Opportunity Pathways, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham: 233-265.
- Kabiru, C. W., C. O. Izugbara and D. Beguy (2013). "The health and wellbeing of young people in sub-Saharan Africa: an under-researched area?" BMC international health and human rights **13**(1): 1-7.
- Kabiru, C. W., C. O. Izugbara and D. Beguy (2013). "The health and wellbeing of young people in sub-Saharan Africa: an under-researched area?" BMC International Health and Human Rights **13**(1): 11.
- Kabiru, C. W., C. O. Izugbara, D. Beguy

- and h. rights (2013). "The health and wellbeing of young people in sub-Saharan Africa: an under-researched area?" *BMC international health* **13**(1): 1-7.
- Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2020). Labour Workforce Report.
 - Kirsanli, F. (2023). Unemployment – Corruption Relationship in OECD Countries: System GMM Approach. *Business and Economics Research Journal*. doi:10.20409/berj.2023.400
 - Leavy, J. and N. Hossain (2014). "Who Wants to Farm? Youth Aspirations, Opportunities and Rising Food Prices." *IDS Working Papers* **2014**: 1-44.
 - Lefko-Everett, K. (2012). "Ticking time bomb or demographic dividend? Youth and reconciliation in South Africa."
 - Lekalake, R and Gyimah-Boadi (2016). "Does Less Engaged Mean Less Empowered? Political Participation Lags among African youth, especially Women" *Afrobarometer Policy Paper No. 34*.
 - Lonsdale, J. (2000). "Agency in tight corners: narrative and initiative in African history." *Journal of African Cultural Studies* **13**(1): 5-16.
 - Losch, B. (2016). Structural transformation to boost youth labour demand in sub-Saharan Africa: the role of agriculture, rural areas and territorial development, International Labour Organization.
 - Louise Fox, Philip Mader, James Sumberg, Justin Flynn and M. Oosterom (2020) "Africa's 'youth employment' crisis is actually a 'missing jobs' crisis." *BROOKE SHEARER SERIES Number 9*.
 - Mastercard Foundation (2018) "Young Africa Works: Mastercard Foundation Strategy: 2018-2030."
 - Mussa, E. C. (2020). "Youth aspirations, perceptions of farming, and migration decisions in rural Sub-Saharan Africa: Further empirical evidence from Ethiopia." *ZEF Discussion Papers on Development Policy* (296).
 - Namuggala, V. F. (2017). "Gambling, dancing, sex work: Notions of youth employment in Uganda." *IDS Bulletin* **48**(3): 67-78.
 - Ngono, J. F. L. (2023). Corrupting Politicians to get out of unemployment: Empirical evidence from Africa *Journal of Knowledge Economy* **14**, 1004-1032. doi:https://doi.org/10.1080/0023656X.2019.1645320
 - Odame, H., & Atela, M. (2022). How to grow, sustain jobs in the agriculture sector for youth. *The Star*
 - Odame, S. K., E. N.-B. Quarshie, M. Oti-Boadi, J. Andoh-Arthur and K. O. Asante (2021). "Adolescent problem gambling in rural Ghana: Prevalence and gender differentiation." *Journal of gambling studies* **37**(1): 83-105.
 - Ogbonna, A. E., Adediran, I. A., Oloko, T. F., & Isah, K. O. (2022). Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and youth unemployment in Africa. *Qual Quant*, 1-23. doi:10.1007/s11135-022-01600-9
 - Oosterom, M. and J. Sumberg (2021). "Are Young People in Rural Sub-Saharan Africa Caught in Waithood?"
 - Page, J. (2012). Youth, jobs, and structural change: Confronting Africa's "Employment Problem", African Development Bank Tunisia.
 - Peatrik, A., (2020) Towards an anthropology of youth in Africa, *Ateliers d'anthropologie* URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/ateliers/12620> ; DOI : <https://doi.org/10.4000/ateliers.12620>.
 - Rocca, C. (2020). Africa's Youth: Action needed now to support the continent's greatest asset. *International Youth Day Research Brief*, Mo Ibrahim Foundation.
 - Roopnarine, L. (2013). "Africa's rising

- population and youth unemployment challenge.” *The Guardian* **11**.
- Sambo, W. (2016). “Factors affecting youth entrepreneurship development within Kibera, Kenya: The perspective of entrepreneurship education.” *Problems and Perspectives in Management* **14**(2-2): 2-2.
 - Selboe, E. (2010). Youth and social change in Dakar, Senegal: intergenerational differences and power battles in local mosques. *Forum for Development Studies*, Taylor & Francis.
 - Semo, B. W., & Frissa, S. M. (2020). The Mental Health Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Implications for Sub-Saharan Africa. *Psychol Res Behav Manag*, **13**, 713-720. doi:10.2147/PRBM.S264286
 - Singerman, D. (2007). “The economic imperatives of marriage: Emerging practices and identities among youth in the Middle East.” Middle East Youth Initiative Working Paper (6).
 - Ssewanyana, D., & Bitanihirwe, B. (2018). Problem Gambling among Young People in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Front Public Health*, **6**, 23. doi:10.3389/fpubh.2018.00023
 - Statista. (2022). Gambling among youth in Africa. Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1305048/gambling-among-the-youth-in-africa-by-country/>
 - Sumberg, J., T. Yeboah, J. Flynn and N. A. Anyidoho (2017). “Young people’s perspectives on farming in Ghana: a Q study.” *Food Security* **9**(1): 151-161.
 - Thamari, M. (2019). In dhako moromo? “Femininity, gender relations and livelihood vulnerabilities in the fishing villages of southwestern Kenya.” Doctoral dissertation, University of Birmingham.
 - Turner, S. F., L. B. Cardinal and R. M. Burton (2017). “Research design for mixed methods: A triangulation-based framework and roadmap.” *Organisational Research Methods* **20**(2): 243-267.
 - Uganda Bureau of Statistics. (2022). *National Labour Force Survey 2021: Main Report*
 - UNAIDS (2012). “UNAIDS report on the global AIDS epidemic.” Global Report. Geneva: UNAIDS.
 - UNAIDS (2023) Fact Sheet 2023: Global HIV Statistics. Accessed from https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/UNAIDS_FactSheet_en.pdf
 - UNECA and UNDP (2011). Regional Overview: Youth in Africa. Fact sheet.
 - UNESCO (2010). Education for all global monitoring report 2010—Reaching the marginalised, UNESCO Paris.
 - UNESCO, T. G. E. c. (2019). “Tertiary school enrolment, per cent of all eligible children “ Retrieved 21/11/2021, from https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/rankings/Tertiary_school_enrollment/.
 - United Nations (2018). “Youth 2030 working with and for young people.” United Nations Youth Strategy
 - World Population Review. (2021). “Ghana Population 2021(Live).”
 - Yeboah, T. (2017). “Navigating precarious employment: Social networks among migrant youth in Ghana.”
 - Yeboah, T. and J. Flynn (2021). “Rural Youth Employment in Africa: An Evidence Review.” IDS Evidence Synthesis Paper
 - Yeboah, T., Crossouard, B., & Flynn, J. (2021). Young people’s imagined futures. In *Youth and the rural economy in Africa: hard work and hazard* (pp. 155-172).
 - Zeufack, A. G., Calderon, C., Kambou, G., Djiofack, C. Z., Kubota, M., Korman, V., & Cantu Canales, C. (2020). *Africa’s Pulse, No. 21, Spring 2020: An Analysis of Issues Shaping Africa’s Economic Future*. Retrieved from Washington DC: <http://hdl.handle.net/10986/33541>

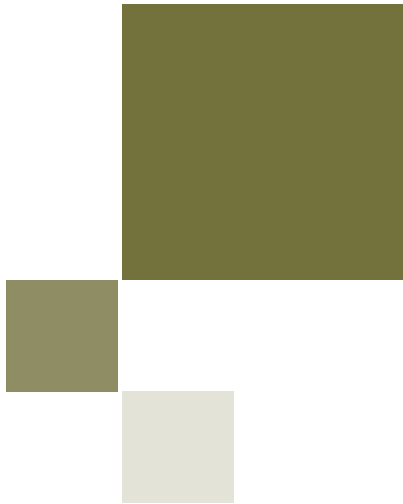


6th Floor, I & M Building
2nd Ngong Avenue, Upper Hill
P.O. Box 76418-00508
Nairobi, Kenya

Website: www.pasgr.org

Email: info@pasgr.org

Tel: +254 (0)20 2985000
+254 (0)729 111031
+254 (0)731 000065



Source : Shutterstock

