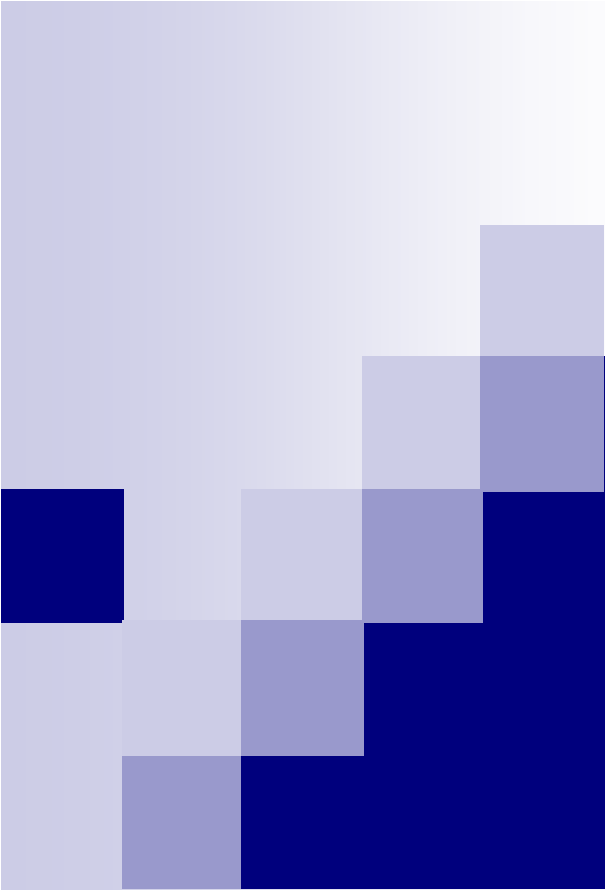


**AFRICA**  
**DEVELOPMENT**  
**INDICATORS**  
**2008/09**

Youth and Employment in Africa:  
The Potential, the Problem, the Promise





# Youth and Employment in Africa: The Potential, the Problem, the Promise

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**2008/09**



# Why youth?

- ❑ 62% of population in Africa is below 25 years
- ❑ Youth unemployment rate is 50% higher than that of the general labor force
- ❑ Youth, especially females, face more obstacles than adults in establishing themselves in the labor market



# The potential

- The demographic transition makes youth the most abundant asset, thus making it a window of opportunity to boost Africa's economy

# However, unemployment, underemployment and low paid jobs lead to poverty traps among youth

More than 70% of youth live under \$2 per day

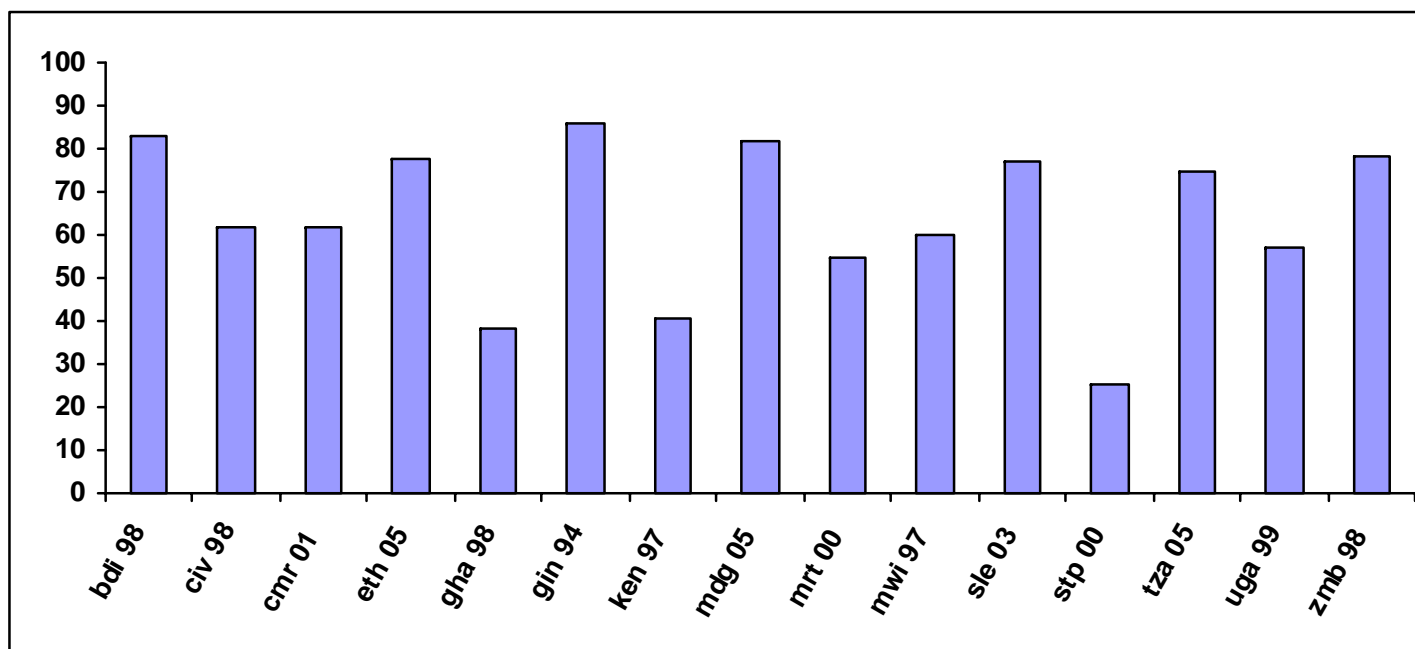
Country	Less than US\$ 2 per day
Burundi, 1998	85.7
Côte d'Ivoire, 1998	46.5
Cameroun, 2001	49.1
Ethiopia, 2000	70.7
Ghana, 1998	66.5
Kenya, 1997	54.4
Madagascar, 2001	81.7
Mozambique, 1996	75.4
Malawi, 1997	66.3
Nigeria, 1996	92.9
Sierra Leone, 2003	68.0
Uganda, 1999	93.8
Zambia, 1998	86.3
<b>SSA-13 (mean)</b>	72.1
<b>SSA-13 (median)</b>	70.7



## The youth, especially girls, face several disadvantages

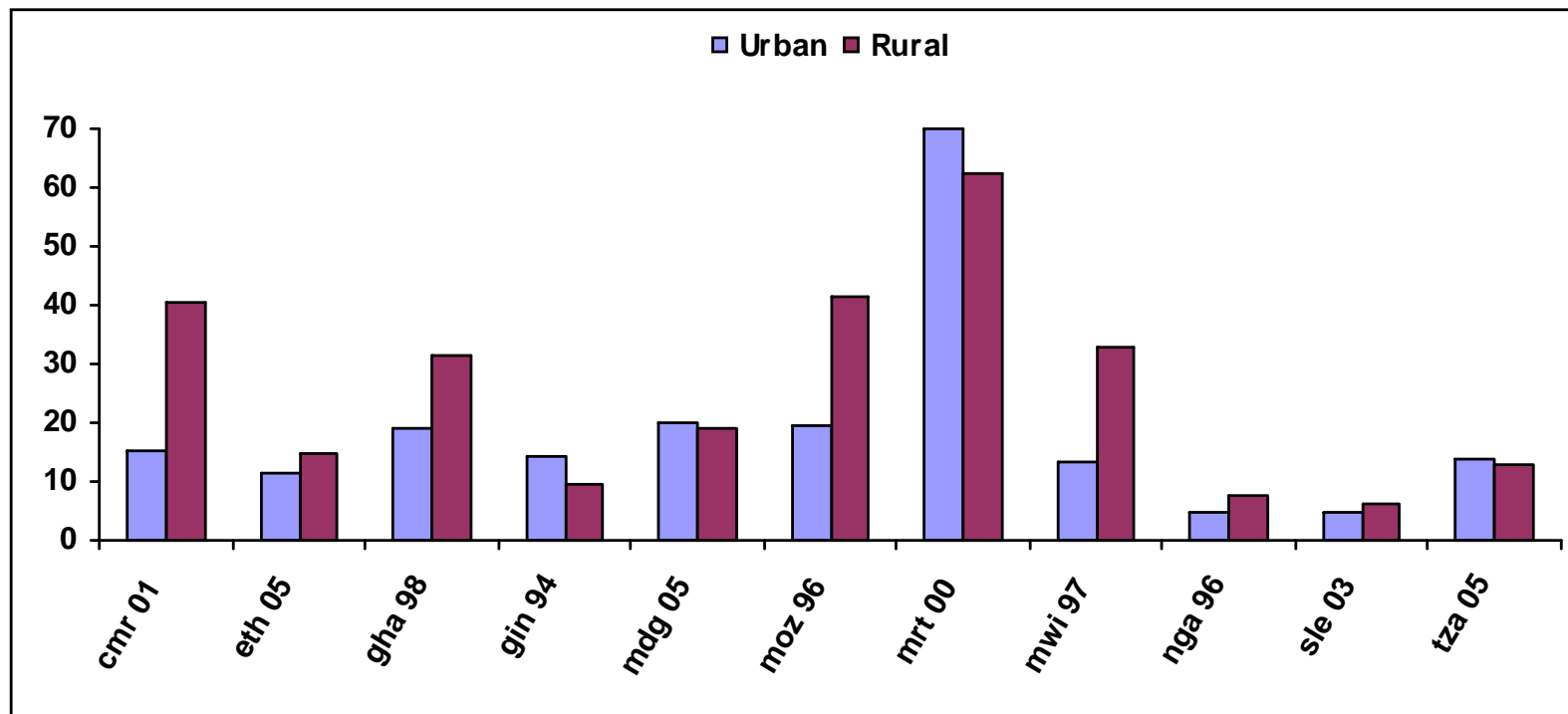
- ❑ Youth are more likely than adults to work in the informal sector, and less likely to be wage employed
- ❑ Young rural-urban migrants are less educated than their urban counterparts, and more likely to work in insecure jobs
- ❑ Women work more hours than men and are more likely to engage in non-market activities

Youth are employed primarily in agriculture, in which they account for 65% of total employment



Percent of employed youth working in agriculture

# Most youth in rural areas are underemployed, working in subsistence agriculture or as unpaid family labor





# Unskilled youth are more vulnerable

- They are:
  - Less likely to find work
  - More likely to be stuck in low quality jobs
  - More vulnerable to economic shocks
  - More vulnerable to early marriage and parenthood



# The problem

- Poverty traps firms and farms in low-scale production with low productivity, explaining the **number** and **types** of jobs created



# The challenges

- ❑ Create jobs to meet the growing supply of young labor force
- ❑ Minimize the deleterious impacts of rapid urban migration, while preparing rural youth for more rewarding mobility



## Policy responses: lessons learned

- ❑ In many countries interventions have focused on programs that are:
  - **Narrow** in scope
  - **Limited** in time
  - **Biased** toward urban areas
  
- ❑ Investing mainly in urban programs may fuel migration, increasing unemployment and underemployment



## The knowledge foundation for policy responses

- ❑ 70% of the youth population is in **rural areas**
- ❑ In the short term only rural activities, **farm or non-farm**, can create occupations for most new job seekers
- ❑ The **informal sector** will continue to play a key role as a means of job opportunities for a long time to come



## Policy response: need of an **integrated approach** that

- Balance the demand and supply sides of the labor market in rural **and** urban areas
- Take into account the youth **mobility** from rural to urban areas, combined with targeted interventions to help young people, especially girls, overcome disadvantages in entering and remaining in the labor market

# Manage youth flows by delaying rural urban migration to

- Mitigate the growing urban youth unemployment pressure
- Prepare rural youth for a more successful migration
- Improve the well-being in already congested cities






## *Policy responses: Making agriculture an attractive job option by*

- Introducing commercialization and productivity improvements, infrastructure support and rural diversification
- Increasing investments in irrigation, water resources management, and research and extension
- Exploring the immense potential of the non-farm sector for job and wealth creation



*Policy responses: Making rural areas an attractive living option by*

- Increasing rural public services
- Investing in human capital in rural areas to fight poverty and to create opportunities for people to migrate more successfully



## *Policy responses: Improve access to education and skills by*

- Synchronizing education and training policies with other policies and programs for productivity, income growth, and job creation
- Providing more and better access to disadvantaged urban and rural youth, the less educated, and girls
- Developing second chance education programs
- Strengthening inter-ministerial coordination and collaboration among different stakeholders



*Policy responses: Encourage and support entrepreneurship by*

- Addressing the barriers of doing business, especially challenges faced by young people
- Nurturing and helping young entrepreneurs develop their businesses




## *Policy responses: Improving labor market conditions by*

- Promoting active labor market policies and programs in rapidly growing urban areas where demand for skilled workers is on the rise
- Providing youth with vocational and labor market information in order to facilitate them to select right training programs
- Recognizing the need of appropriate regulations to protect the youth, who are usually more vulnerable and insecure, without inhibiting firms from hiring



*Policy responses: Improve the investment and macroeconomic environment by*

- Bettering investment climate to stimulate job creation: youth are particularly attractive to employers in new and growing sectors because they are more adaptable than older workers to new production methods
- Avoiding economic collapses, which impose a particular burden on the youth



## *Policy responses: Support neglected groups and issues by*

- Supporting young women entrepreneurs, especially in rural areas
- Supporting the informal economy to improve the quality of employment and increase productivity
- Promoting accessible and effective sexual and reproductive health programs
- Empowering women



## *Policy responses: Addressing youth in violent and post conflict settings by*

- Designing programs that meet the needs of youth in conflict-affected countries
- Supporting essential services and educational opportunities
- Promoting participation of youth in decision and policy-making
- Transferring prior skills to civilian use through certification and vocational training of ex-combatants with disabilities



# Conclusions I

- ❑ Youth employment reflects economic, geographic, demographic, and other conditions, and the particularities of **each country**
- ❑ Achieving productive and secure employment for young people entails **long-term action** covering a wide range of economic and social policies



## Conclusions II

- ❑ A successful policy framework requires **coherent** and **integrated** responses, recognizing especially the very large share of **rural youth**, their demographic traits, and the severe labor market constraints
- ❑ Programs need to be part of an integrated development strategy for growth, including job-creation in both rural and urban areas, as well as targeted interventions to help young people, specially **girls**, overcome the **specific barriers** they face in entering and remaining in the labor market

# The promise: A peaceful and prosperous Africa





**THANKS!**