



An empirical review of youth employment policies and programmes and their impact in Senegal

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Key messages

To address youth unemployment in Senegal and create a pathway to dignified and fulfilling employment, the Government should integrate the national employment promotion strategy into a development strategy for the 10 priority sectors identified in the country's second Priority Action Plan (PAP 2A).

Specifically:

- Ensure inclusive dialogue with the private sector on key bottlenecks and imperatives for scalable solutions for youth employment;
- Reorient technical and vocational education and training (TVET) towards professions that are essential for the development of the 10 priority sectors identified in the PAP 2A.

High rates of unemployment and vulnerable employment blight Senegal's youth

Senegal is one of the youngest countries in the world with close to 75% of its population below the age of 35 (ANSD, 2020a). While this demographic trend has the potential to drive the country's economic growth and development, it poses a major challenge in terms of employment.

Youth are particularly vulnerable to unemployment. Young people aged 15 to 34 represent 58.2% of the working-age population, but also the majority (62.3%) of people who are unemployed. The unemployment rate in 2019 was higher for youth aged 15 to 24 (19.8%) and 25 to 34 (18.2%) than for adults aged 35 to 44 (13%) (ANSD, 2022b).

Young people also face precarious working conditions. **There are only around 30,000 formal jobs for the approximately 300,000 young people who enter the labour market each year.** This situation pushed most into the informal sector, accounting for nearly 90% of youth employment (World Bank, 2018; CFYE 2021).

The low level of qualifications and skills of young people is also a problem. According to the 2014 PSE (Plan Sénégal Emergent/Emerging Senegal Plan), almost 46% of young people looking for their first job have no education, while 24% have not completed secondary education. In addition, 36.2% of youth are not in employment, education or training (NEET) (MEPC, 2021).

Objectives

The study aimed to comprehensively review youth employment policies and programmes (YEPs) in Senegal while also assessing and comparing two options that may address the ongoing challenges to youth employment. The study aimed to investigate how young people can be best supported to respond to labour market challenges and opportunities. See **Methodology** for how the authors did this.

Methodology

Three mutually complementary methods of desk review of existing youth employment policies, focus group discussions (FGDs), and key informant interviews (KIIs) were used in the study. The desk review used many documentary sources including government reports, research reports and other relevant documents from national or global sources, such as nationally representative household surveys conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics (ANSD).

Participants in the FGDs comprised young men and vulnerable youth (women, people with disabilities, refugees, and returned migrants), all between the ages of 15 and 34. Both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of public employment programs were included in the sample.

KIIs were conducted with 83 “key informants”, representing government institutions (at central, regional, and local levels), non-governmental

organizations, labour inspectors, civil society organizations, and representatives of beneficiaries (i.e., youth leaders).

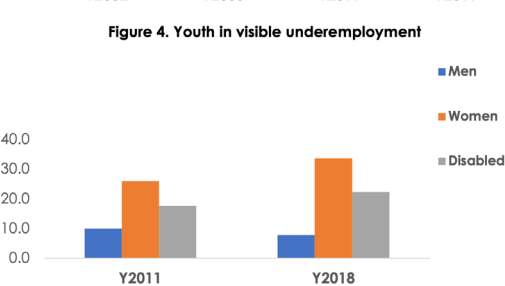
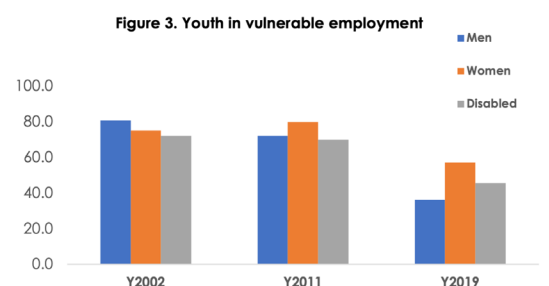
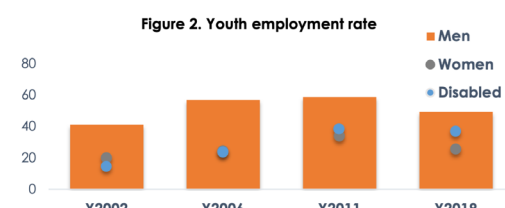
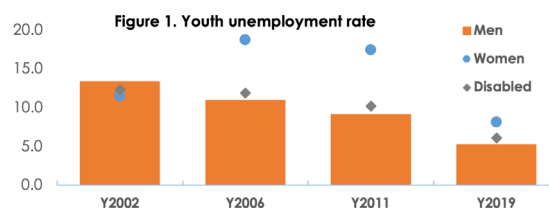
To compare the two “alternative” policy options, the authors used a multicriteria approach. This was based on qualitative data obtained from interviews with different types of stakeholders: five programme managers, three youth leaders, two labour inspectors, and one civil society representative. These stakeholders evaluated the two policy options against four criteria: equity, efficacy, social acceptability, and political feasibility. They were also asked to weight these criteria to reflect their relative importance in relation to the two alternative policy options. The authors then determined the overall ranking by calculating the arithmetic mean of the overall performance of each policy option from the perspective of the different stakeholders.

Analysis: Policies create jobs but have not significantly reduced youth unemployment

Senegal has implemented several public employment programmes to promote youth employment over recent decades. Despite creating thousands of jobs for young people, data from household surveys (ANSD 2002, 2006, 2011, 2019) show that youth labour market outcomes are still lagging behind.

In addition to low youth participation and employment rates, the situation is compounded by the large share of youth in low-quality jobs with little or no social security coverage. Young women and youth with disabilities are more likely than young non-disabled men to be unemployed, underemployed or in vulnerable employment (see Figures 1-4 above).

Key informant interviews conducted by the authors show that most youth express a desire to work, but employment opportunities are limited and it takes connections or politics to get internships or jobs. They also tend to be over-exploited and sometimes face extortion. The situation is even more difficult for vulnerable youth, particularly those with disabilities, who maintain that most of the difficulties they face



in the job market relate to the non-implementation of Senegal's Social Orientation Law.

The authors' analyses highlight several obstacles to the functioning of public employment programmes:

- Youth are not familiar with these programmes
- Management shortcomings
- No follow-up on the allocated funding

But above all, it is a lack of coordination between programmes that makes them less effective. There is no structure recognized by all stakeholders as being responsible for coordinating, monitoring and evaluating interventions, not even the Ministry of Employment, Vocational Training, Apprenticeship, and Integration (MEFPAI) or the Ministry of Youth.

Alternative policy options

To address the obstacles to well-functioning youth employment programmes, as identified above, the authors compared two alternative policy options. These options aim to improve the coordination and efficiency of the interventions:

Option 1: Developing a national employment strategy within the framework of the development strategies for competitive sectors or value chains.

- This would provide an anchoring framework for the national youth employment policy, allowing it to align to Senegal's national policy of emergence and development.
- Projects financed in a particular sector would be better monitored within that sector.

Option 2: Integrating the national employment promotion strategy into a development strategy for the priority sectors selected in Senegal's second Priority Action Plan (PAP 2A).

- This would combine a demographic policy with an education and training policy to enhance youth employability.

Analysis: Option 2 preferred despite no consensus on the performance criteria

Overall, the second policy option (integrating the National Youth Employment Strategy into the development of the 10 priority sectors identified in the PAP 2A) emerged as the preferred option, despite there being no consensus on whether the two policy options performed similarly on any of the criteria used to assess the programmes.

The different interests and priorities of the various stakeholders meant that they assigned different importance to the chosen criteria. The programme managers gave the highest weight to political feasibility, while the two labour inspectors assigned the highest importance to efficacy. The civil society representative gave more weight to equity and

feasibility. Interestingly, no criteria were assigned the same weight by all 11 stakeholders.

Option 2 ranked first with an overall performance of 1.74. In the appraisal exercise, this option emerged as the preferred policy option for the civil society representative, labour inspector 2, youth leaders 2 and 3, and all of the programme managers.

The overall rankings assigned to the first option were significantly lower, and in some cases negative. Programme manager 5, in particular, had the most critical views on this option. However, youth leader 1 and labour inspector 2 had a clear preference for the first option.

Table 1. Outcomes of evaluation of policy options

Stakeholders	Option 1	Option 2	Preferred option
Programme manager 1	-1.14	+2.57	2
Programme manager 2	+1.44	+2.11	2
Programme manager 3	-0.50	+2.83	2
Programme manager 4	-0.37	+2.50	2
Programme manager 5	-1.87	+2.50	2
Youth leader 1	+2.25	-1.25	1
Youth leader 2	+1.50	+2.75	2
Youth leader 3	+1.75	+2.75	2
Labour inspector 1	+0.44	2.00	2
Labour inspector 2	+1.75	-1.12	1
Civil society representative	-0.10	+1.50	2
Overall performance	0.47	1.74	2

Table 1 illustrates the final option rankings that were produced by each stakeholder.

◀ **Note:** Option 1: Elaboration of a National Youth Employment Strategy within the framework of competitive sectors or value chains development strategy; Option 2: Elaboration of a National Youth Employment Strategy through the development of the 10 priority sectors identified in the PAP 2A.

Policy roadmap

To make Policy Option 2 sustainable over time, it is crucial that:

- the Ministry of Youth, Entrepreneurship and Employment (MJEE) ensures participatory and inclusive employment programmes that include youth in the programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- the MJEE engages youth leaders to reach out to young people, who are best placed to share their aspirations and challenges.
- the MJEE supports youth-led organizations in their advocacy, participatory planning, and accountability efforts.
- the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Cooperation (MEPC) establishes inclusive dialogue with the private sector to discuss key bottlenecks and imperatives for scalable solutions for youth employment.
- the Ministry of Vocational Training, Apprenticeship and Integration (MFPAI) strengthens technical and vocational education training (TVET) programmes by reorienting the curricula towards professions that are essential for the development of the 10 priority sectors identified in Senegal's PAP 2A.
- the MJEE improves the coordination and management of youth employment initiatives by opening one-stop shops dedicated to youth employment, as is the case with the employment and entrepreneurship centres.
- Above all, the MJEE, in collaboration with the National Agency for Statistics and Demography (ANSD), implements a youth employment information and management system.

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The 'What Works for Youth Employment in Africa' initiative

The Partnership for Economic Policy is partnering with the Mastercard Foundation for a three-year initiative on What Works for Youth Employment in Africa. The initiative aims to provide evidence that can drive policy reform to increase youth employment in 10 African countries: Ghana, Kenya, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Uganda, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and South Africa.

The initiative aligns with the Mastercard Foundation's Young Africa Works strategy that seeks to enable 30 million young Africans, particularly young women, to access dignified and fulfilling work by 2030. Teams of local researchers and policy stakeholders are carrying out gender-aware policy and impact reviews in each country. The resulting analysis and findings will build a body of knowledge on youth employment policy in Africa, and will be stored in a new online knowledge repository.

For more information, please visit: www.pep-net.org/programs/youth-employment

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