

‘Missing jobs’ crisis – not a ‘youth unemployment’ crisis

Webinar “Youth employment in Africa:
Critical issues for job creation”

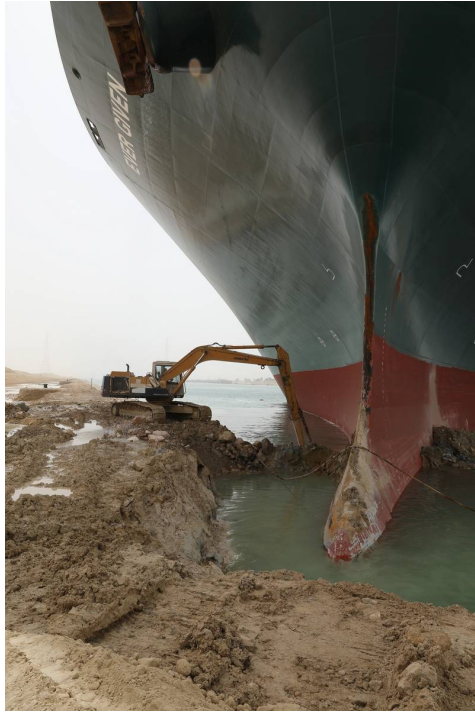
March 2021

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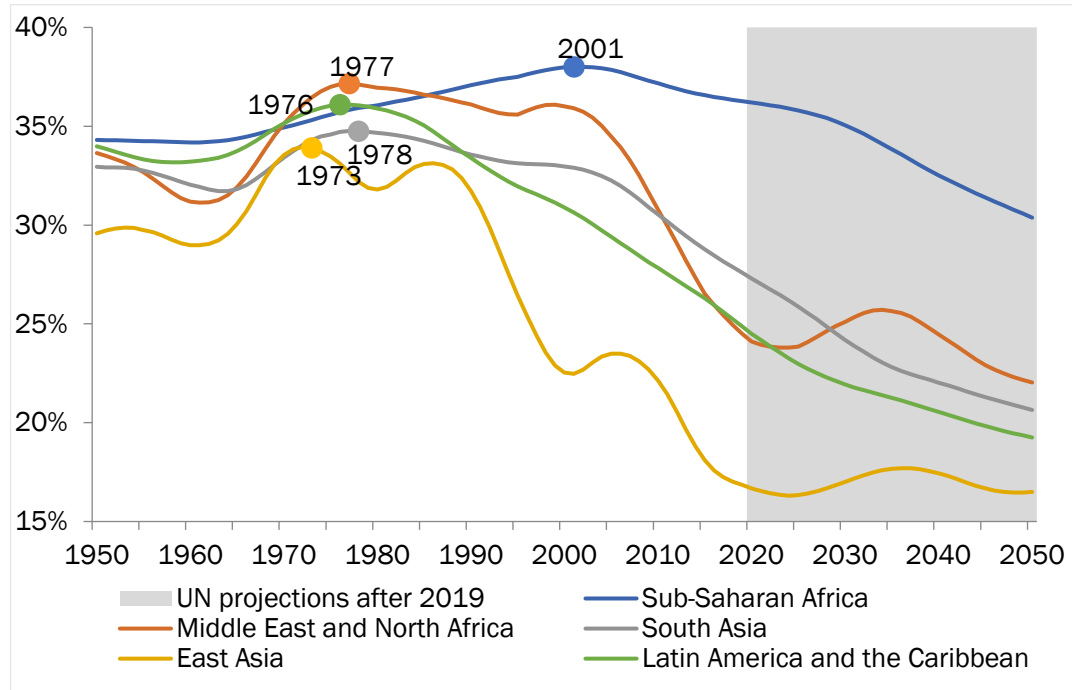
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Paper reference: Fox, L., Mader, P.,
Sumberg, J., Flynn, J. & Oosterom,
M. (2020): **Africa’s ‘youth
employment’ crisis is actually a
‘missing jobs’ crisis**. Brookings
Institute *Brooke Shearer Series* 9.

“Youth employment” vs “missing jobs”



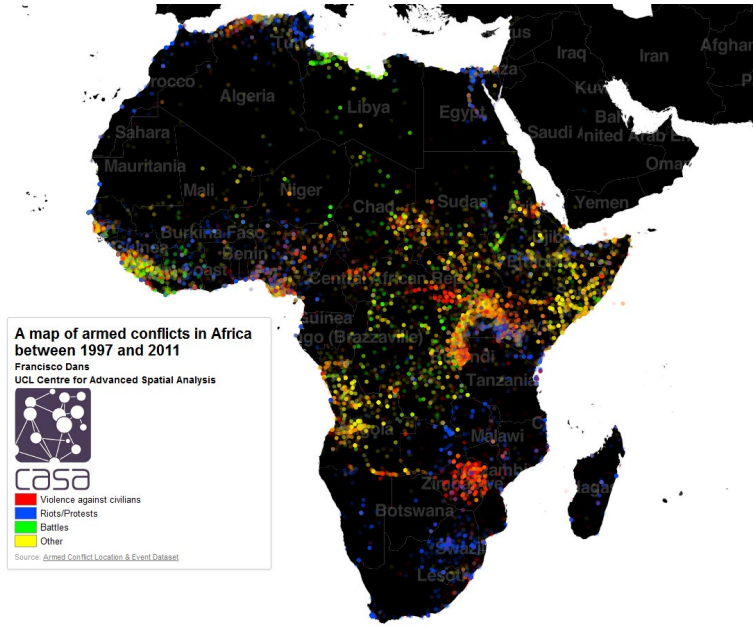
Problem narrative #1: Demographics as threat and opportunity



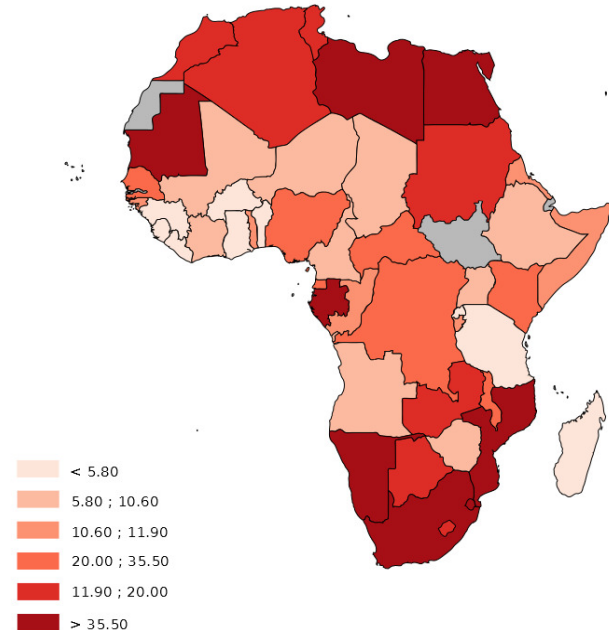
Youth (ages 15-24) Share
of Working Age Population,
actual and projected by
region

Source: *United Nations World
Population prospects 2019 (Medium
Variant)*

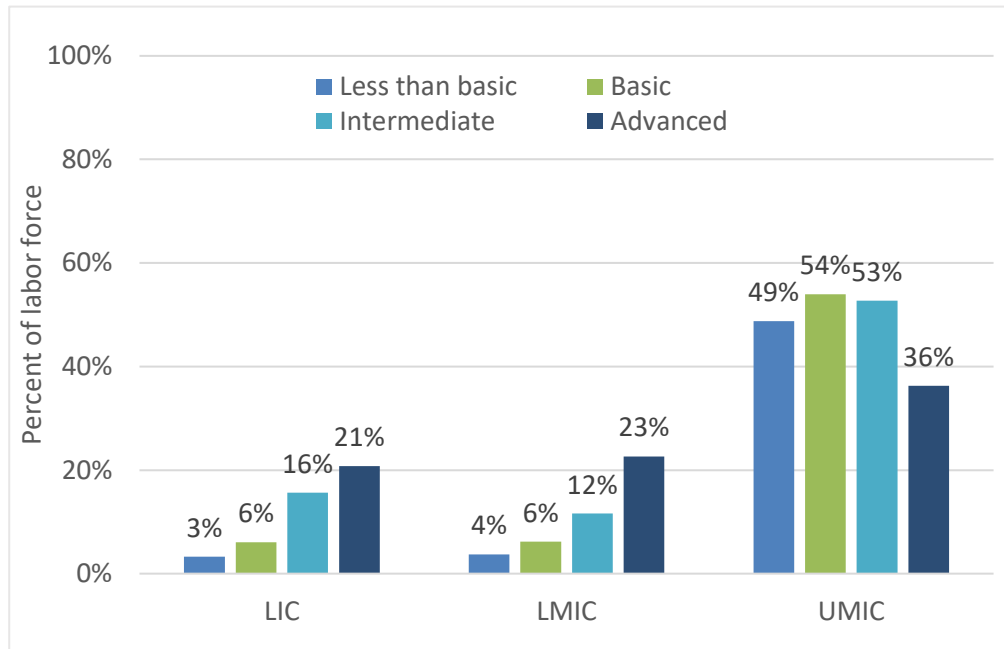
Problem narrative #2: Unemployment leads to violence, unrest, migration



Youth unemployment rate (15 - 24 years)



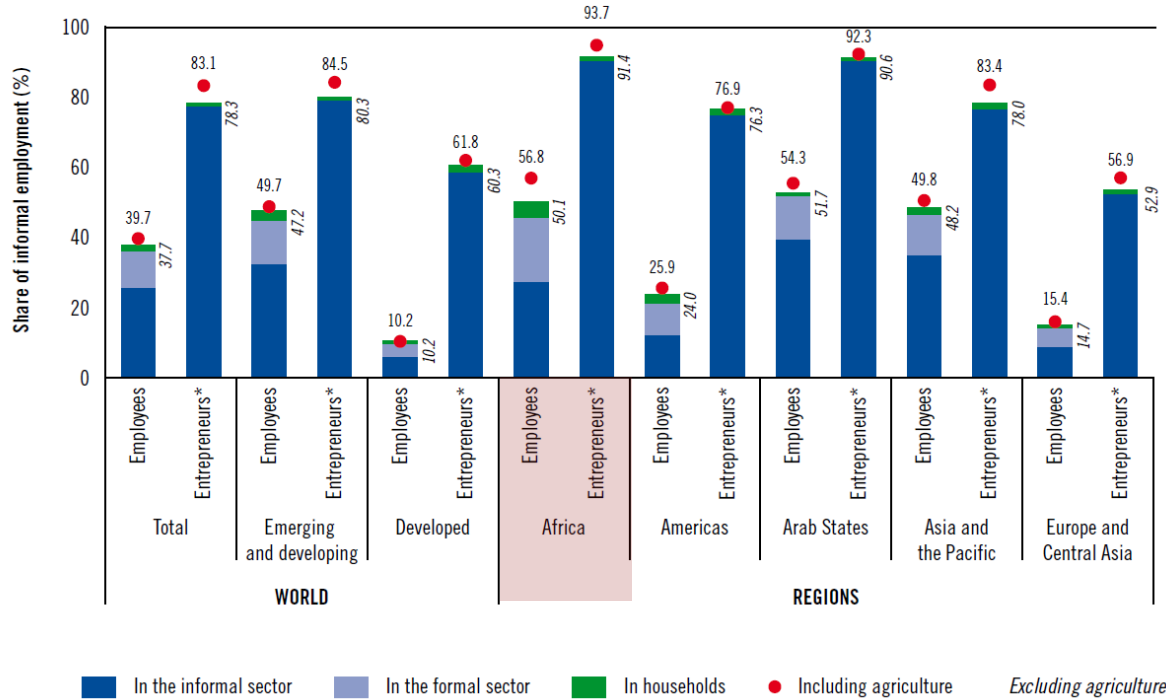
Problem narrative #3: Training and skills lead to jobs



Youth unemployment
by education level

Source: ILOSTAT

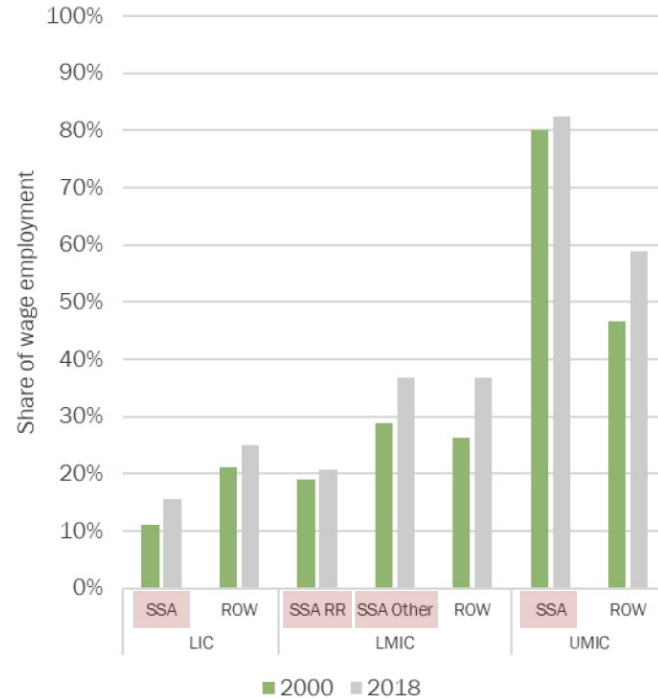
Problem narrative #4: Economic leapfrogging through entrepreneurship



Employees and entrepreneurs in informal employment as a percentage of total employment

Source: ILO 2018

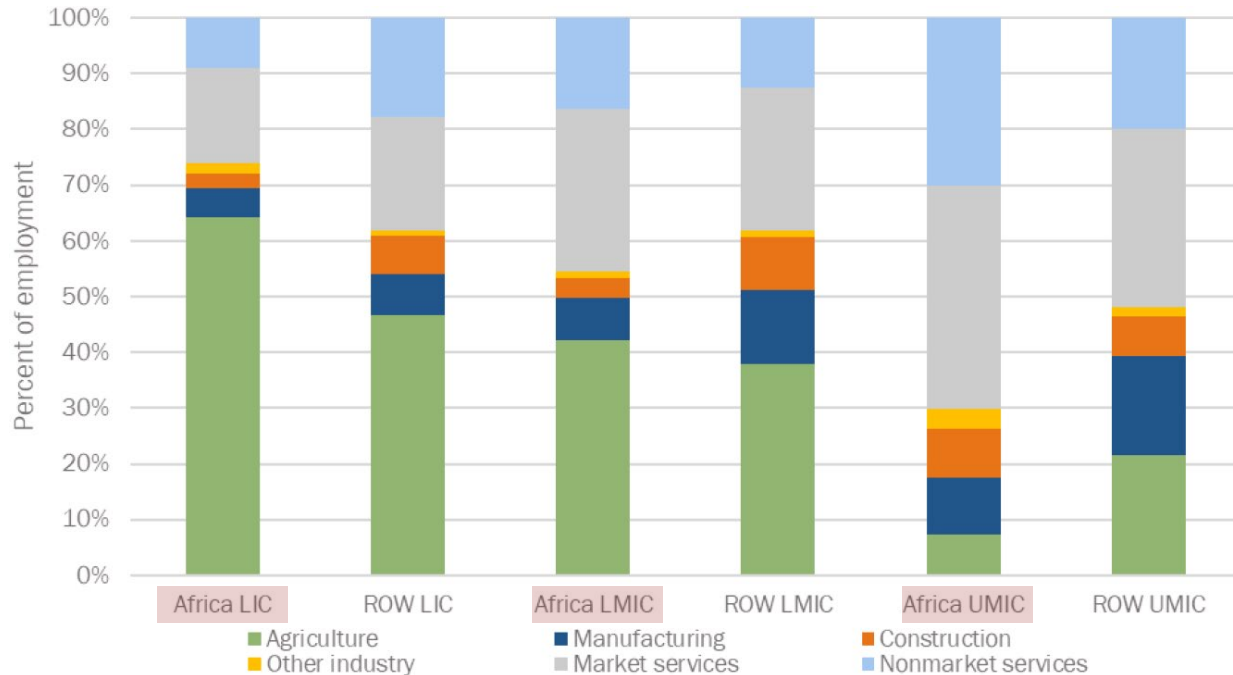
Problem narrative #4: Economic leapfrogging through entrepreneurship



Wage employment,
Sub-Saharan Africa
and for the rest of
world

Source: Fox & Gandhi
(2021). Data: ILOSTAT

Problem narrative #5: Agriculture – poverty trap or prosperity sector?



Employment by sector and income group, sub-Saharan Africa and rest of world, 2018

Source: Fox & Gandhi (2021). Data: ILOSTAT

Conclusions

Moving from...

- “youth are a threat and opportunity”
- “jobs to create peace and prevent migration”
- “more and more training”
- “more entrepreneurship”
- “agriculture is dead / agriculture is the future”

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... to:

- industrial policy (labor-intensive manufacturing and services)
- infrastructure investments
- regional integration
- social protection (e.g. cash transfers, basic incomes)

Thank you.

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