

Youth employment: A global portrait and call to action

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Global Donor Platform for Rural Development





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Global Employment Trends for Youth 2024

Europe and Central Asia

Key points

- ▶ In Europe and Central Asia, youth unemployment and NEET rates have now fallen below their pre-pandemic values. At 14 per cent in 2023, the youth unemployment rate was 1.4 percentage points below the rate in 2019. Likewise, by 2023, the youth NEET rate stood at 13.1 per cent, 1 percentage point below the rate recorded in 2019.
- ▶ Among the subregions, only Eastern Europe saw an increasing rise in the share of youth NEETs. Also, employment rates for both young men and young women remain very low in the subregion; only one in four young person (25.3 per cent) was in employment in 2023; this is one of the lowest rates of all the world's regions.
- ▶ Gender disparities in youth labour market outcomes in the region are relatively small when seen against global averages. But in Central and Western Asia, sizable gender gaps reveal the continuing (though slightly improved) disadvantages of young women. The NEET rate of young women in the subregion was 1.8 times higher than that of young men in 2023 (at 24.1 per cent and 13.4 per cent, respectively).
- ▶ Youth unemployment rates are expected to increase very slightly from 14 per cent in 2023 to 14.1 per cent in 2024, before declining to 13.8 per cent in 2025.
- ▶ Young adults with low levels of education face severe disadvantages in their labour market outcomes. They have both higher NEET rates than those with higher-level degrees and a higher chance of working a low-paid job. And the outcome gaps have grown over time, pointing to a worsening of inequalities of opportunities in the region.
- ▶ Uncertainties both within and outside youth labour markets are weighing on young people in the region, pushing down their well-being. The relative well-being of young people worsened in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, with many young people feeling uncertain about their future economic prospects and their hopes of financial independence.



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Global challenges for youth: persisting and augmented

Lack of jobs

1 in 3 economically active youth in Arab States and North Africa are unemployed.

Lack of decent work

3 in 4 youth in sub-Saharan Africa lack secure work.

Educational mismatch

2 in 3 young adult workers in developing economies hold qualifications that do not match well to their job.

Rising youth anxiety levels

2 in 3 young people worried about losing their job.

Demographic pressures

Youth labour force in Africa grows by 76 million by 2050, while all other regions face a contraction in young workers.

Inequalities of opportunities

In high-income countries, 4 in 5 young adult workers (aged 25–29) are in a regular paid job. This number falls to 1 in 5 in low-income countries.

Is recovery from the COVID-19 crisis now fully secured?

12.8%

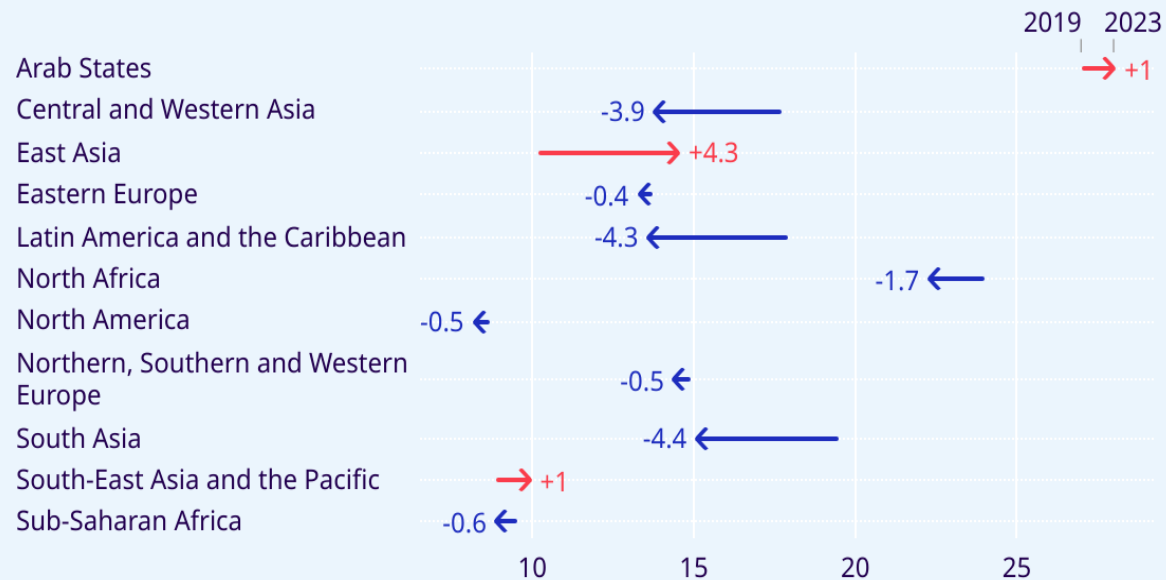
GLOBAL YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

**At global level :
a full recovery from COVID-19 peak & a decrease from the pre-pandemic years**



But recovery remains uneven ...

► Youth unemployment rates by subregion, 2019 and 2023 (%)



Source: ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates, May 2024

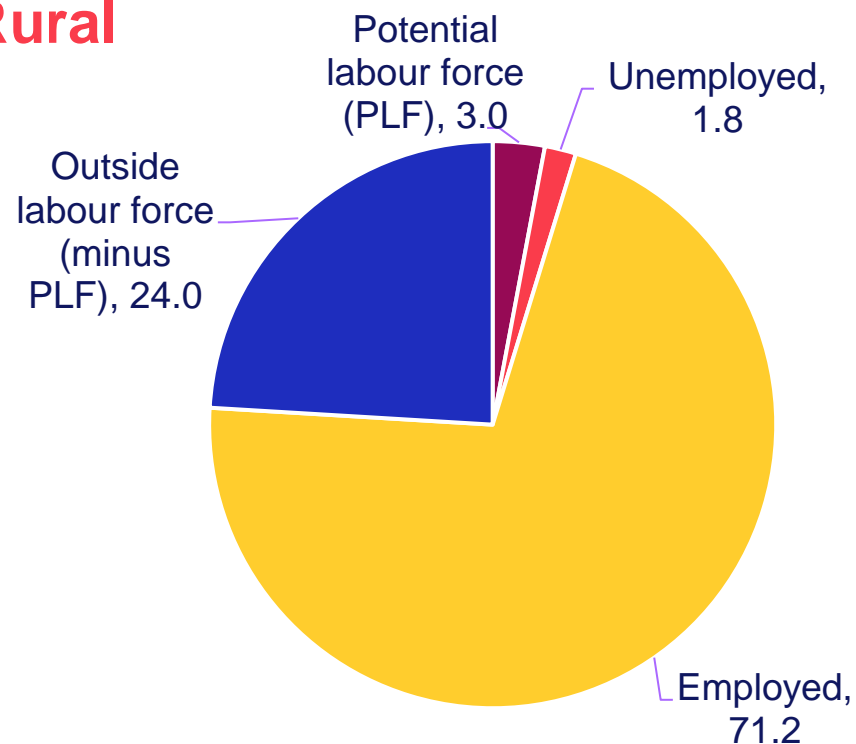




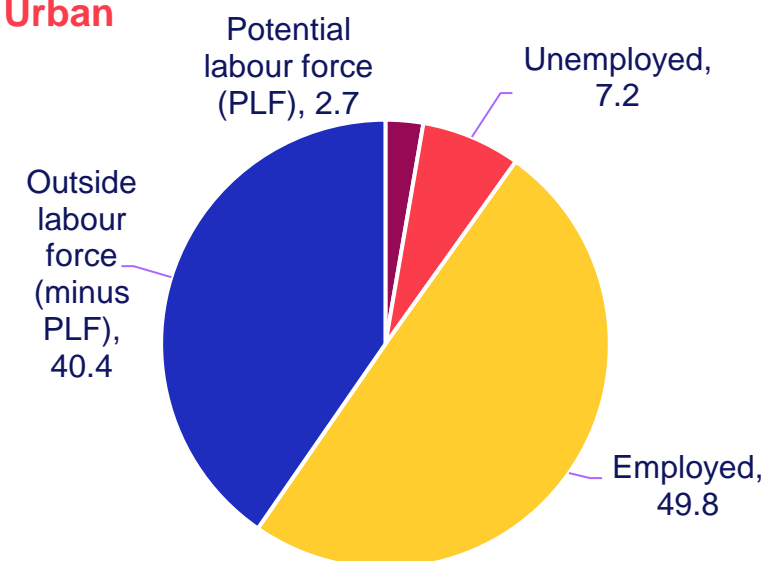
And the geographic context certainly matters

Uganda: Distribution of youth population (aged 15-24) in rural areas by main economic status, 2021 (%)

Rural



Urban





And still too many young people are not in employment, education or training (NEET)

Over **20%** of youth are not in employment, education or training (**NEET**) in 2024



More than **2 in 3** young NEETs are **women**, indicating a strong gender bias



1 in 3 young people live in a country that isn't meeting its SDG commitment to reduce the number of youth NEETs





► Regressive progress in access to decent jobs and better jobs skewed in favour of higher-income economies

► High-income countries



4 in 5 young adult workers (aged 25-29)
are in a regular paid job



63% of youth in
school or training

► Low-income countries



1 in 5 young adult workers (aged 25-29)
are in a regular paid job



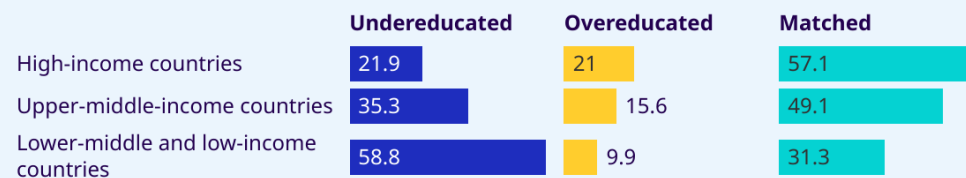
40% of youth in
school or training



The skills story is complex ...

► Share of young adult women (aged 25 to 29) in employment by situation of educational mismatch, 2023 (%)

■ Undereducated ■ Overeducated ■ Matched

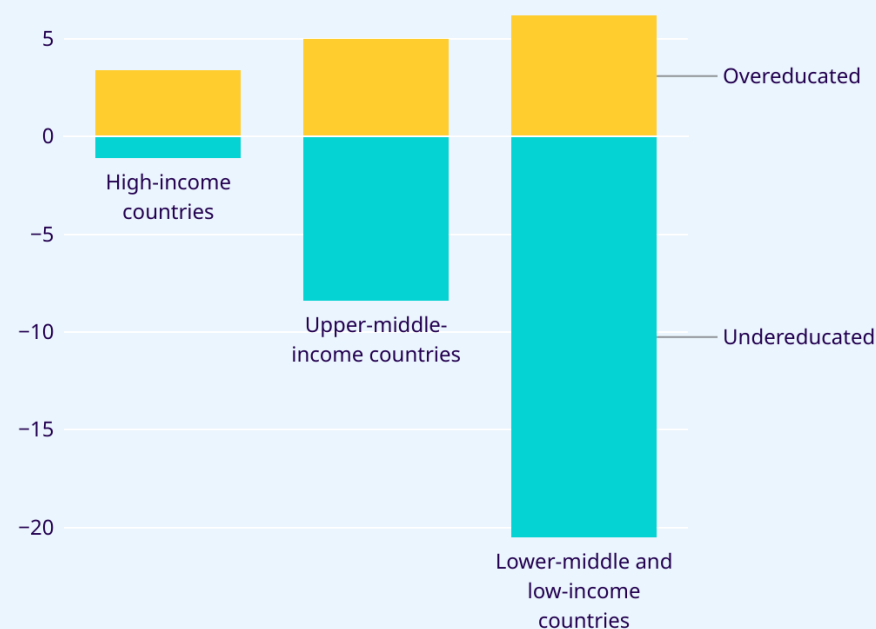


Source: ILO, Global Employment Trends for Youth 2024. • Created with Datawrapper

Skilling up is still important in lower-income countries, even as the higher skilled struggle to find jobs.

Advancing social justice, promoting decent work

► Change in share of young adult women (aged 25 to 29) in situation of education mismatch from 2013 to 2023 (percentage point)

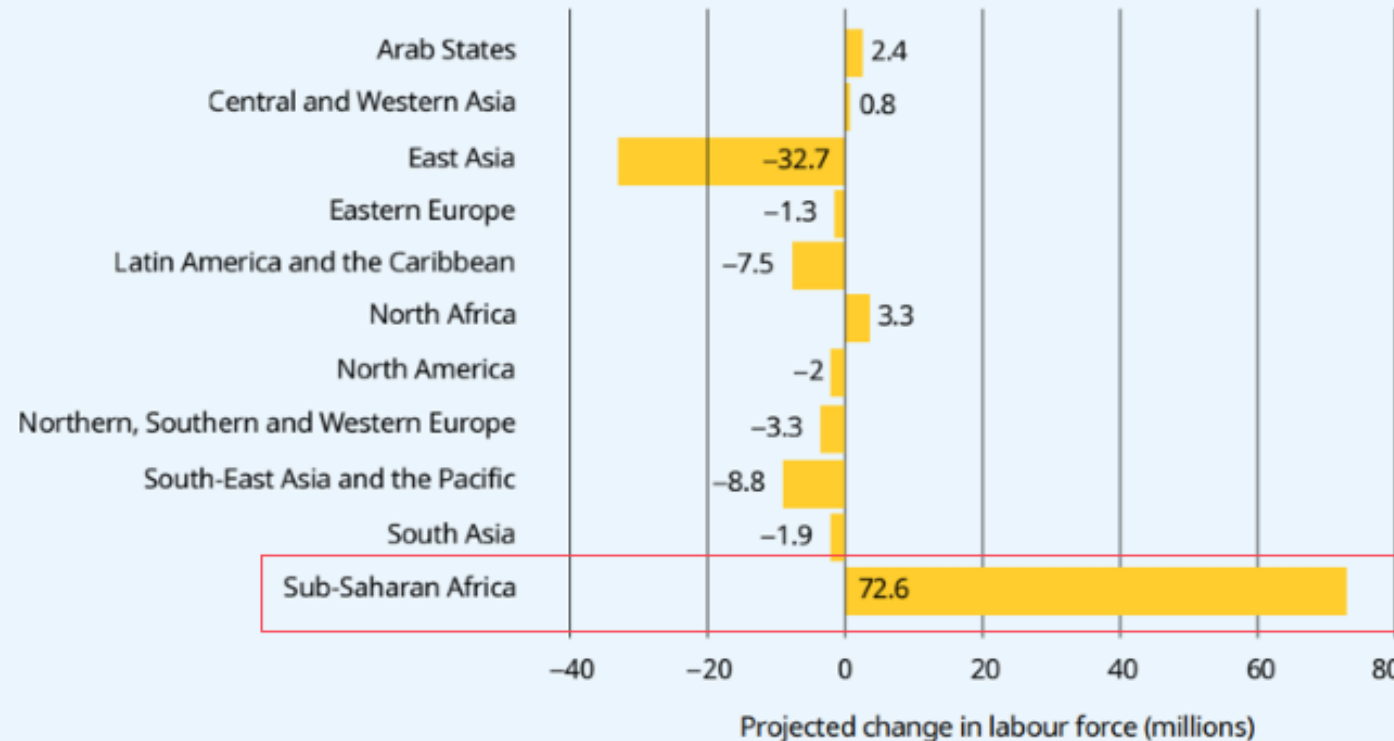


Source: ILO, Global Employment Trends for Youth, 2024. • Created with Datawrapper

Africa could provide the youth workforce of tomorrow

► Estimated cumulative change in youth labour force between 2023 and 2050, by subregion (millions)

Making sure that African youth can thrive becomes everyone's business.



Note: The estimation is made by holding the 2023 youth labour force participation rate steady and calculating the youth labour force of 2050 by applying to the 2023 rate to the 2050 population estimate from UN World Population Prospects 2022 by age group.

Source: ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates, November 2023 (LPR); and UN World Population Prospects 2022.



No wonder young people are more worried than ever



2 in 3 young people
are worried about
losing their job

- **1 in 3** young African are extremely concerned by the issue of job stability
- Nearly **3 in 5** young people in North America, Europe, Middle East & North Africa, and Latin America & the Caribbean feel worse off than their parents.
- Share of 25 year olds in the United States financially independent from their parents dropped from **3 in 4** in 1980 to **2 in 3** in 2021.

Moving ahead



A package for the promotion of youth employment



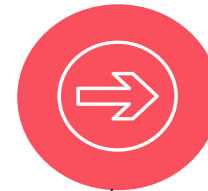
Creating opportunities for youth

- Macroeconomic and fiscal policies
- Employment policies
- Sectoral and industrial policies, especially in emerging sectors: **digital, green, care**



Preparing youth for the labour market

- Quality apprenticeships
- TVET
- Higher education
- Recognition of prior learning
- Second-chance training programmes



Facilitating youth placement

- School-to-work transition programmes
- Employment services
- Hiring and wage subsidies
- Entrepreneurship promotion & SME support
- Care support



Inclusiveness

- Social protection
- Occupational safety and health (OSH)
- Psychosocial support measures
- Youth rights & voices

Thank you!