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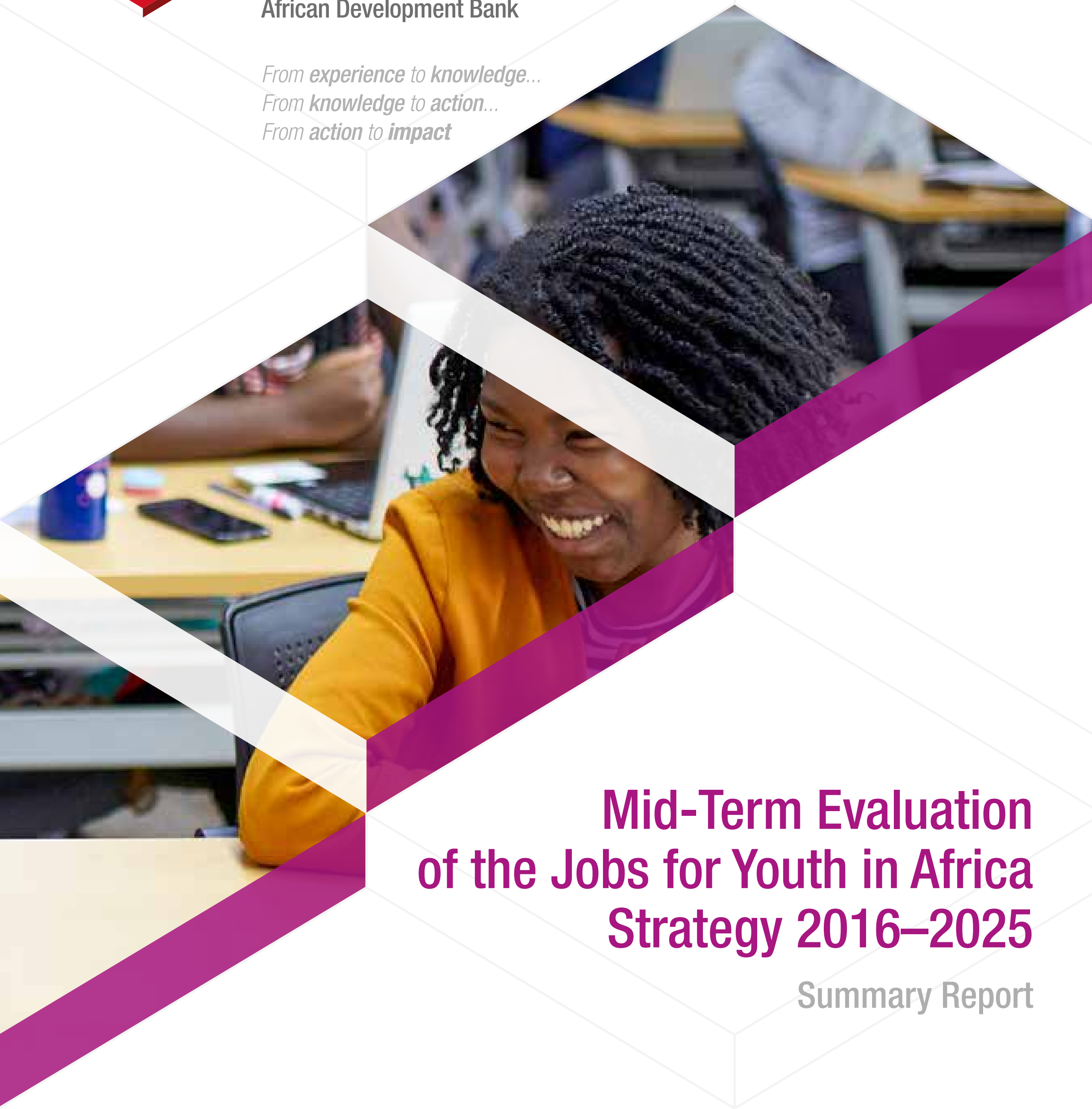

An IDEV **Thematic Evaluation**

Mid-Term Evaluation of the Jobs for Youth in Africa Strategy 2016–2025

Summary Report

AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP

November 2023

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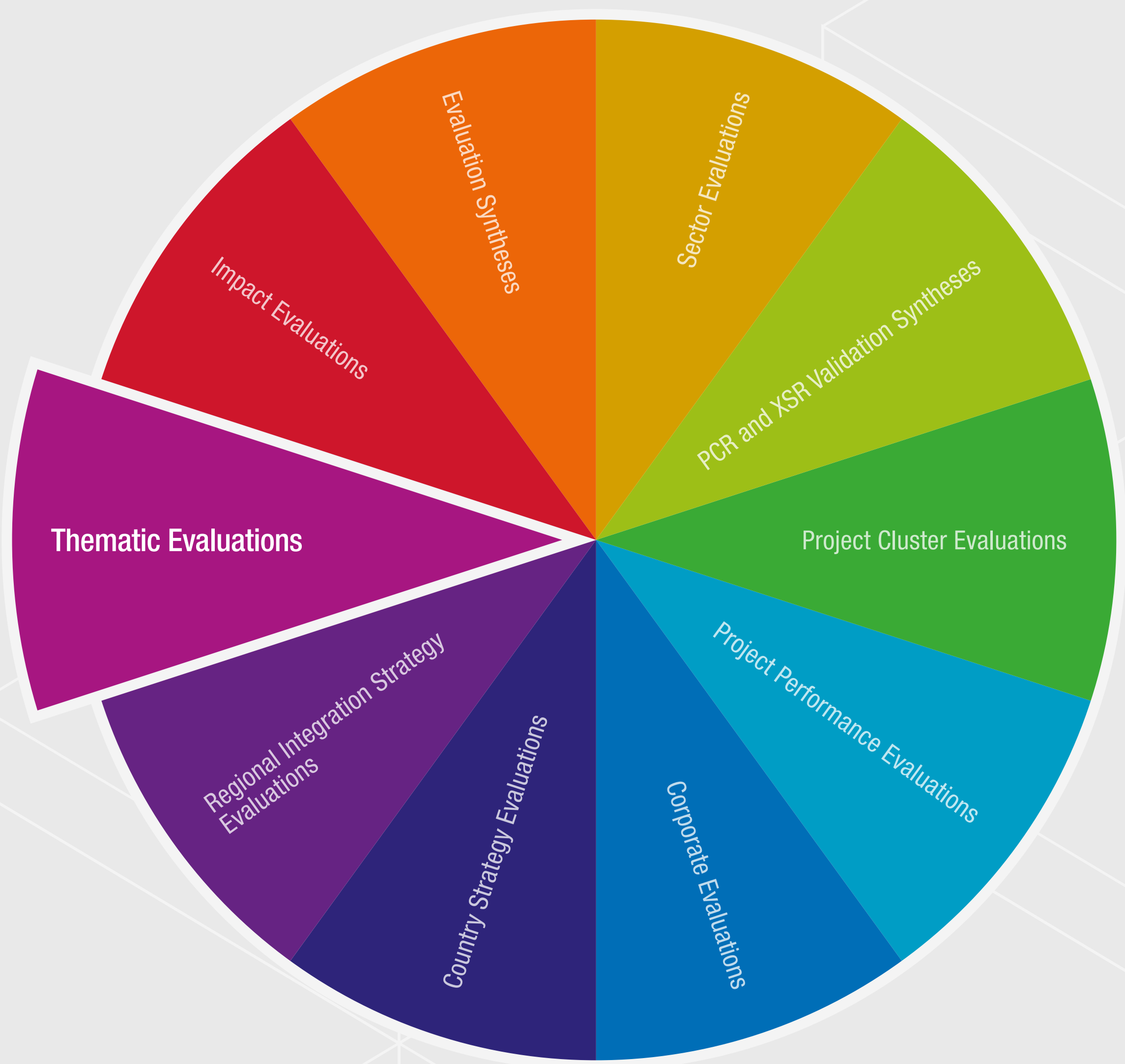

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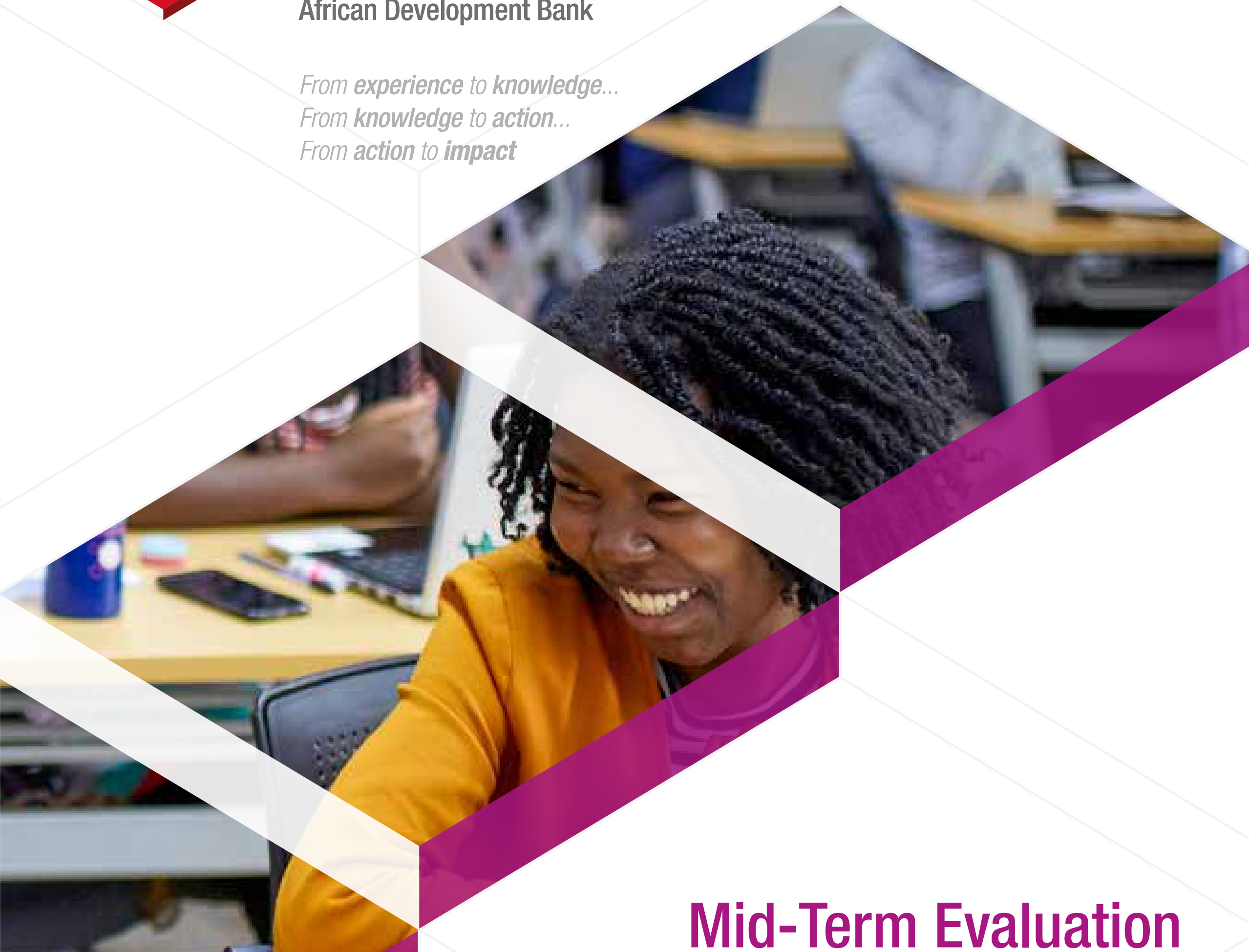

Mid-Term Evaluation of the Jobs for Youth in Africa Strategy 2016–2025

Summary Report

An IDEV **Thematic Evaluation**

AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP

November 2023

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Mid-Term Evaluation of the Jobs for Youth in Africa Strategy 2016–2025 – Summary Report
IDEV Thematic Evaluation, November 2023

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The overarching objective of the African Development Bank Group is to spur sustainable economic development and social progress in its regional member countries (RMCs), thus contributing to poverty reduction. The Bank Group achieves this objective by mobilizing and allocating resources for investment in RMCs and providing policy advice and technical assistance to support development efforts.

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The mission of Independent Development Evaluation at the AfDB is to enhance the development effectiveness of the institution in its regional member countries through independent and instrumental evaluations and partnerships for sharing knowledge.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADER	Annual Development Effectiveness Review
ADF	African Development Fund
ADOA	Additionality and Development Outcomes Assessment Framework
AFAWA	Affirmative Finance Action for Women in Africa
AFD	Agence Francaise de Développement
AfDB	African Development Bank Group
AGF	Africa Guarantee Fund
AHAI	Agriculture and Agro-Industry Department
AHHD	Human Capital, Youth and Skills Development Department
AHVP	Vice Presidency, Agriculture, Human and Social Development
AU	African Union
BII	British International Investment
BIO	Belgian Investment Company for Developing Countries
BDS	Business Development Services
CfE	Coding for Employment
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CRF	COVID-19 Response Fund
CSP	Country Strategy Paper
DFIs	Development Finance Institutions
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECAD	African Development Institute
ECMR	Macroeconomic Policy, Forecasting and Research Department
ECST	Statistics Department
ENABLE	Empowering Novel Agri-Business-Led Employment
ESO	Enterprise Support Organization
ESW	Economic and Sector Work
EUR	Euro
EY	ENABLE Youth
EYE	Enabling Youth Employment
FIRM	Resource Mobilization and Partnerships Department
FY	Financial Year
GCI	General Capital Increase
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
IDEV	Independent Development Evaluation
I-DICE	Investment in Digital and Creative Enterprises Program
ISP	Institutional Support Project
ILO	International Labour Organization
IT/ICT	Information Technology / Information, Communication and Technology
JfYA	Jobs for Youth in Africa
JIM	Joint Impact Model
JSMS	Jobs and Skills Marker System
KFW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau
KII	Key Informant Interview / Interviewee
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LIC	Low Income Country
LMIS	Labour Market information system
LoC	Line of Credit
MDB	Multilateral Development Bank
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise
NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSO	Non-Sovereign Operation
OECD/DAC	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development/ Development Assistance Committee
OeEB	Development Bank of Austria
PAR	Project Appraisal Report

PBO	Program-Based Operation
PCER	Communication & External Relations Department
PECG	Climate Change and Green Growth Department
PEVP	Vice Presidency, Power, Energy, Climate and Green Growth
PGCL	General Counsel and Legal Services Department
PIVP	Vice Presidency, Private Sector, Infrastructure and Industrialization
PIDG	Private Infrastructure Development Group
PCR	Project Completion Report
PSD	Private Sector Development
PTCE	Talent, Performance and Staff Development Department
PTVP	Vice President People and Talent Management
PYAG	Presidential Youth Advisory Group
RDVP	Vice Presidency, Regional Development, Integration and Business Delivery
RISP	Regional Integration Strategy Paper
RMC	Regional Member Country
RMF	Results Measurement Framework
SAP	Systems Applications and Products
SAPZ	Special Agro-Processing Zones
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SECO	State Secretariat for Economic Affairs
SEPA	Skills for Employability and Productivity in Africa
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
SNDR	Development Impact and Results Department
SNPB	Programming and Budget Department
SNSP	Strategy and Operational Policies Department
SNVP	Senior Vice Presidency
TCIS	Corporate Information Technology Services Department
TCVP	Vice President Technology & Corporate Services
ToC	Theory of Change
TSF	Transition Support Fund
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TYS	Ten-Year Strategy of the African Development Bank 2013–2022
UA*	Unit of Account
UN	United Nations
USD	United States Dollar
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
XSR	Expanded Supervision Report
XSRENs	Expanded Supervision Report Evaluation Notes
YEIB	Youth Entrepreneurship and Investment Bank
YEI MTDF	Youth Entrepreneurship and Innovation Multi-Donor Trust Fund

* 1 Unit of Account (UA) = 1.39959 United States Dollars (USD), as at January 2022

Executive Summary

Background and Methodology

In 2021, the African Development Bank Group's (AfDB or "the Bank") Independent Development Evaluation (IDEV) embarked on a mid-term evaluation of the Bank's Jobs for Youth in Africa Strategy 2016–2025 (JfYA Strategy). The JfYA Strategy aims to create 25 million jobs and positively impact 50 million youth (15–35 years of age) by 2025. The Strategy aims to achieve this through three strategic levers: (i) Integration (equip the Bank and Regional Member Countries (RMCs) to address youth employment); (ii) Innovation (working with private and public sector partners to incubate, implement and scale up promising ideas for creating youth employment); and (iii) Investment (catalyzing private and public sector resources to fuel job creation for youth). The Bank estimated that implementation of the JfYA Strategy would cost UA 4.1 billion. This included the mobilization and establishment of a UA 3.5 billion Jobs for Youth in Africa Special Fund and using other funding resources to achieve the objectives of the JfYA Strategy.

Evaluation purpose and scope: The purpose of the mid-term evaluation is to inform the remaining implementation period of the Strategy by assessing the progress made so far, identifying lessons, and recommending improvements and adjustments. The evaluation focused on the following questions:

- How well has the JfYA Strategy positioned the Bank to contribute to improving employment outcomes of youth in Africa?
- Is the implementation of the JfYA Strategy contributing to improvements in youth employment in RMCs?
- Are JfYA Strategy results sustainable or likely to be sustained?
- What are we learning about what works and does not work?

The mid-term evaluation covers the period of implementation of the Strategy from June 2016 to December 2021, with a focus on primary youth employment projects.[1] It cuts across all sectors of the Bank's support, as the Strategy is intended to be a Bank-wide priority.

Evaluation approach, methodology and limitations: The evaluation adopted a theory-based approach to establish the continued relevance, effectiveness, and potential for sustainability of the JfYA Strategy as of December 2021. The evaluation collected and triangulated data through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods including: (i) document review of policies and strategies, project documents and available research; (ii) key informant interviews reaching Bank staff, RMC representatives, project implementation units, private sector organizations and youth; (iii) an online survey administered to youth participants of selected skills and entrepreneurship development programs; and (iv) a series of case studies, including country case studies, flagship programs and the Youth Entrepreneurship and Innovation Multi Donor Trust Fund (YEI MDTF). Complementary reviews, including a portfolio review, policy and benchmarking review, and project review, were conducted to support the generation of evidence-based evaluation findings, conclusions, lessons, and recommendations.

Limitations: The evaluation encountered the following limitations: (i) unavailability and/or variations in the quality of both implementation and outcome data; (ii) difficulty in reaching a larger cross-section of youth due to limitations in social media platforms that could be used for online surveys; (iii) a low response rate in the online survey; (iv) the evaluation did not cover the Bank's jobs-related support to RMCs in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic to avoid duplication with IDEV's evaluation of the AfDB's COVID-19 response that was ongoing in parallel, and because this support was not primarily focused on youth; and (v) difficulty in attribution of outcomes to the JfYA Strategy, given the Bank-wide approach to implementation.

Findings

Bank youth employment portfolio: The evaluation found that 479 or 49.5% of the 967 projects approved during the period June 2016-December 2021 incorporated youth employment considerations. Out of the 479 projects, 176 (36.7%) were categorized as primary youth employment projects, amounting to UA 5.16 billion, and the remaining 303 (63.3%) were in the secondary category, valued at UA 14.19 billion. These projects are predominantly public sector operations cutting across all sectors, with the majority falling within the agriculture (33.8%), social (17%), and governance (13.2%) sectors. Most of the primary youth employment operations are ongoing (67.5 %), with only 11.5% completed at the time of this evaluation.

Relevance and Coherence

The JfYA Strategy was found to be relevant for addressing youth employment across the African continent. The evaluation found that the Strategy and its country projects/programs are aligned with RMCs' development strategies, needs and visions, as reflected in their policy documents, medium-term plans and strategy papers.[2] Although the market-oriented approach that addresses labor demand, supply and linkages through its three strategic levers of Integration, Innovation, and Investment was found to be relevant for addressing the needs and opportunities for youth employment in Africa, its Theory of Change lacks sufficient detail to inform priorities in outcomes and useful measures of success. The evaluation also found that, though risks to the Strategy were identified, the mitigation measures have not been sufficiently implemented, posing a threat to achieving Strategy targets. This situation has been worsened by the unanticipated COVID-19 pandemic that delayed strategy implementation and has affected overall economic growth and job creation.

In terms of coherence, **the evaluation found that the JfYA Strategy aligns well with the Bank's Ten-Year Strategy (2013–2022) and other strategies, as well as RMCs' youth employment efforts**. In addition, the evaluation found that the Bank has taken a leadership role in donor coordination around youth employment in some RMCs and mobilized co-funding opportunities. One of the most remarkable examples is the feasibility study for the Nigeria Investment in Digital and Creative Enterprises Program (I-DICE), which was funded by the YEI MDTF, leading to the unlocking of funding and co-financing opportunities of USD 618 million within the Bank and from other donors, the Nigerian Government, and the private sector. However, the evaluation found that some strategy interventions were not aligned with and feasible within the Bank's systems. One example of this was in the provision of computation thinking in secondary schools, given that AfDB education activities focus on higher education and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

The JfYA Strategy has provided the Bank with quantifiable youth employment targets that have served as a basis for dialogue, resource mobilization, and communication/ visibility around Bank efforts. However, the underlying assumptions behind some of these targets are not backed by evidence. This has undermined the realism of set targets. For example, assumptions that the Coding for Employment (CfE) program – which focuses on training and linking graduates – could create 9 million jobs are not backed by evidence. Moreover, research has indicated that training alone does not create jobs. An overt focus on the number of jobs created also masks the required attention to the quality of jobs, which is a much greater challenge in Africa. Inconsistencies in timelines for the achievement of the targets for high-level indicators complicate planning and measurement processes. For example, job creation and youth equipped targets are set for 2025 in the Strategy's objectives and for 2030 in its results framework.

Effectiveness

The evaluation found actual progress towards the achievement of Strategy results (outputs and outcomes) difficult to establish due to significant monitoring and reporting gaps. Of the 36 JfYA Strategy results measurement framework (RMF) indicators considered for this assessment, only 36% (13/36) have up-to-date information. The evaluation was unable to establish progress on the remaining indicators, due to the lack of reporting and/or inconsistencies in existing information.

A review of corporate data on the results achieved regarding the Strategy's high-level indicators of jobs created and youth equipped was inconclusive. Existing data from the Development Impact and Results Department (SNDR) estimate that Bank projects approved between 2016 and 2021 are expected to create 12,353,080 jobs (3,076,881 direct jobs and 9,276,199 indirect and induced jobs), which represents a 49% expected achievement of the target. However, the direct jobs data used for corporate monitoring and reporting of the JfYA Strategy is based on ex-ante estimates of jobs planned to be created from project appraisal reports, rather than data on actual jobs created. The evaluation found that although some data on actual direct jobs created exists in available project completion reports, they are not being used for monitoring or reporting on the strategy. In addition, both the direct and indirect jobs data are not age-disaggregated to determine the proportion accruing to the youth. The Strategy instead assumes that the majority of any jobs created will go to young people, since the median age in Africa was 19.5 years at the time of Strategy formulation. It is therefore not possible for the evaluation to say with certainty how far the Strategy has progressed in its aim to create 25 million jobs by 2025/2030.

The evaluation did not find consolidated data on the number of youth equipped/trained to assess progress towards the 50 million "positively impacted" target. Such data quality issues pose a high risk of not knowing overall outcomes of the Bank's youth employment interventions by the end of the Strategy. It is also worth noting that with only 11.5% of primary youth employment projects completed during the evaluation period, it is too early to adequately capture the actual results in terms of jobs created, and other outputs and outcomes of these projects, and therefore of the Strategy, at this point of its implementation.

The evaluation found that implementation progress varies across the three levers (Integration, Innovation, and Investment) of the Strategy.

Activities aimed at equipping the Bank to better integrate youth employment considerations were started soon after approval of the Strategy but have mostly stalled in recent years. Despite this slow progress, **Integration** of youth employment considerations into projects and operations across the Bank is occurring, as demonstrated by the large volume of primary and secondary projects (i.e., 84% of the 479 youth employment projects) under the management of other departments outside the Human Capital, Youth and Skills Development Department (AHHD) that houses the Jobs team. However, the evaluation found that a lack of systemic integration is manifested in the form of lost opportunities for addressing youth employment issues, and difficulty in standardizing monitoring and measurement of youth employment outcomes across the entire Bank portfolio. On a positive note, ongoing work on the development of a Jobs and Skills Marker System (JSMS) to maximize the employment impact of Bank investments through better integration of jobs considerations into projects, standardized results measurement, and improved portfolio management is expected to improve the quality and scale of implementation and measurement of youth employment outcomes across the Bank.

Interventions to strengthen RMC capacity to address youth employment through greater integration in country/regional integration strategy papers (CSP/RISPs), Program Based Operations (PBOs), Institutional Support Programs (ISPs) and policy dialogue are also ongoing, but results are not yet readily evident. For example, while 70% of sampled CSPs drafted after the JfYA Strategy's approval include some mention of it, only 43% of them translated this into a dedicated youth employment indicator. Similarly, all the five RISPs include intentions of furthering youth employment, but this is translated into an indicator in only one of them. One of the most significant contributions of the Jobs team was in the design of the COVID-19 Response Facility, bringing in the focus on the protection of enterprises and jobs as part of the strengthening economic resilience and recovery component.

Activities under the **Innovation** lever are ongoing but at a lower scale and pace than anticipated, thereby delaying the likelihood of the achievement of the desired results within the Strategy timeframe. Specifically, the adoption of flagship program models, the projects of which were anticipated to contribute over 88% of the job creation targets, is ongoing but not yet implemented at the scale required to deliver intended results. The aggregated performance of projects under each flagship program shows less than 50% of achievement of intended training, enterprise development, and job creation targets. Assumptions behind some of the targets were not found to be backed by evidence, reducing the likelihood of achievement. The COVID-19 pandemic also affected the timely roll-out and subsequent demand for flagship programs. Experience during the first five years of Strategy implementation has shown that RMCs prefer integrated and customized solutions that address multiple constraints to job creation and productivity over the predesigned flagship stand-alone program models. Though the Bank has now established the Innovation Lab, it is not yet positioned to be the youth employment knowledge generation and learning hub that will inform the scale-up of workable solutions within the Bank and across to other development partners, as intended. The Enabling Youth Employment Dashboard was developed but is yet to be made available for use in policy dialogue.

Though only half of the planned activities under the **Investment** lever are ongoing, they are generating necessary finance and stimulating private sector investment. However, the extent of reach and impact of these interventions on the youth is unknown. For example, the Bank has increased equity in the Africa Guarantee Fund (AGF) in accordance with planned levels towards reducing risks of lending to small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Despite COVID-19-related delays, the evaluation found that equity investments in venture capital funds through the Boost Africa Investment Program are on track to increase access to capital for young entrepreneurs. However, the evaluation found that the intended use of lines of credit (LoCs) through the Africa Small and Micro-Enterprise program for on-lending to youth-led organizations has not materialized as the program continues to lend to SMEs broadly. Despite the lack of youth focus in the investment activities, they are expected to benefit given their dominance in the labor force. The Bank is currently designing Youth Entrepreneurship Investment Banks (YEIBs) to address issues of access to finance and coordination of enterprise support services from the Bank. During the evaluation period, the Bank provided mentoring and coaching to young entrepreneurs through four prize challenges events that saw cash prizes awarded to 110 youth to grow their businesses and networks. However, the evaluation found that the current application of the prize challenges is not aligned with incentivizing market-based solutions to youth employment barriers as envisaged in the Strategy. For example, the 2020 AgriPitch Competition required participants to demonstrate sustainable malnutrition and gender inclusiveness in the agribusiness value chain but was not necessarily focused on addressing a specific youth employment barrier.

Adequacy of resources and systems to support implementation

The Bank has mobilized significant levels of funding for youth employment operations, exceeding the estimated requirement of UA 4.1 billion. This is evidenced by the UA 5.16 billion invested in primary youth employment projects and more than UA 2.8 billion mobilized in co-financing from external partners. However, the Bank did not establish the UA 3.5 billion JfYA Facility (Special Fund), which was expected to contribute 85% of the required funding for Strategy implementation. The evaluation found that overly optimistic expectations may have affected the non-realization of this Facility. Instead, the Bank mobilized resources from development partners to set up the USD 38.9 million YEI MDTF, which has facilitated the catalytic and innovative activities that are unlocking significant employment potentials. However, the absence of dedicated funding from the Facility has hindered implementation of core components of the Strategy. These include staff and RMC capacity-building activities, support for appraisal and supervision activities, facilitation of the Innovation Lab, and support for implementation of flagship activities at scale.

The evaluation found that modifications to the staffing structure and numbers have had mixed effects on the adequacy of human resources to coordinate the implementation of the Strategy. At the time of the evaluation, six of the original 18 positions were still vacant. Despite this, the current Jobs team has played a critical role in different phases of the design and management of youth employment projects. However, changes in staff functions and unfilled positions have affected the delivery of some critical tasks, with downstream implications on the Bank's ability to implement the strategy at scale and achieve sustainability. Specifically, these staffing shortfalls have undermined progress on developing required RMC capacity, the generation of knowledge on innovative scalable ideas, and the provision of adequate financing for youth-led enterprises to grow their businesses.

Though efforts were made to integrate youth considerations into the Bank's monitoring and evaluation systems, the evaluation found these inadequate for strategy management and continuous learning. One remarkable achievement in results measurement was the development and roll-out of the Joint Impact Model, a mechanism for estimating indirect jobs. At the same time, the evaluation found that, while AHHD is considered the sector lead on the Strategy, it does not have the authority, tools, and/or human resources to hold other departments to account for JfYA Strategy indicators they lead on and/or contribute to. Efforts are ongoing to improve the measurement of employment outcomes across the Bank portfolio, including the development and roll-out of the JSMS, standard indicators, and other monitoring and evaluation (M&E) enhancements.

Sustainability

The evaluation found that the JfYA Strategy's design and ongoing interventions demonstrate a strong likelihood of sustainability, given the attention to building institutional capacity and an enabling environment, and developing entrepreneurship and strategic partnerships for addressing youth employment concerns. However, the most significant risks to sustainability are related to inadequate implementation of key elements of the Strategy that could affect the achievement of the required institutional capacity, inadequate focus on youth beneficiaries, limited interventions to address access to finance for youth enterprises, and exogenous factors that affect overall macroeconomic stability and resilience.

Lessons

1. **Over-optimistic expectations around fundamental elements of a strategy, such as dedicated financing through a Special Fund, human resource allocation, and the establishment of the required systems, can undermine progress.** While the JfYA Strategy strived to be innovative, ambitious, and to implement at scale, initiatives that require new operational structures and systems, expertise and skills, and additional resources, require more feasibility analysis, upfront commitment, and attention to risk mitigation. While the evaluation

found several examples of Bank adaptations to some of these shortcomings, risk mitigation and surveillance should have been stronger to signal the required Management action. A thorough analysis of the Strategy's feasibility and its key interventions, ensuring alignment with the Bank policies and procedures, securing upfront commitments, risk surveillance, and continuous monitoring of innovative elements are essential to strategy design and management processes.

2. **Governance structures supported by appropriate management tools, resources, and authority are essential for systematic coordination and oversight of Bank-wide strategies, such as that of the JfYA Strategy.** Such a structure is critical for the implementation of a cross-cutting strategy to review progress, mobilize joint action to address bottlenecks, and leverage opportunities and synergies. While the Jobs team is expected to oversee and coordinate JfYA Strategy activities implemented across different departments, the evaluation found that it does not have the tools, platforms, resources, and authority to effectively do this. The Bank's department-led planning, budgeting, and monitoring systems were found to be insufficient to enable ongoing coordination, resource mobilization, and reporting.

3. **The right incentives paired with accountability mechanisms can strongly advance successful integration of employment considerations across the Bank.** Effective integration of youth employment (or broad employment) within the Bank would mean that programs across the Bank consider and adequately leverage and integrate opportunities for youth employment from the onset. The integration of youth employment in the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) was reported to be more successful when combined with incentives and accountability structures within the institution. Within the AfDB, the gender marker system has enabled better integration of gender across the Bank. In addition, tracking gender and climate change integration indicators in the Bank's RMF, corporate key performance indicators (KPIs), and the delivery dashboard raise the profile and accountability across different complexes.

4. **Skills development, when coupled with access to finance and non-financial support, is key to boosting employability and youth entrepreneurship.** Skills development is essential, but in itself it is insufficient to create jobs. It is therefore important to be realistic about job outcomes from training and skills development activities. Firm creation and expansion create jobs, and this is where the more intense focus on jobs targets and monitoring can be directed.

5. **Small-size grants can be effective in unlocking catalytic opportunities.** In the case of the JfYA Strategy, the evaluation found that what has worked well is the shift towards catalytic efforts to unlock funding and support the achievement of the broader Strategy goals. Specifically, the Bank leveraged the USD 38.9 million YEI MDTF funding to conduct feasibility and research studies of catalytic initiatives and financing of other innovative activities that otherwise might not have been funded.

Recommendations

IDEV makes the following recommendations:

1. **Update the Strategy and its implementation plan based on current circumstances and resources.** Bank Management is specifically advised to:

   - Update the Theory of Change, the Implementation Plan, and the targets for the remaining period of the Strategy, based on the findings from the mid-term evaluation, current realities (including Bank systems, the new AfDB Ten-Year Strategy under development, country specificities, and changes in the macroeconomic environment), and available resources.

- Review and update the risk mitigation measures and surveillance plans to guide necessary adjustments to the Strategy and the Implementation Plan.

2. **Strengthen Results Measurement and Learning.** The Bank is advised to:

   - Advance implementation of the Jobs and Skills Marker System along with the necessary resources, technical assistance, and staff training to improve the quality, implementation, and measurement of youth employment outcomes across the Bank.
   - Improve the quality and consistency of data measuring actually created jobs for youth across the Bank's operations, and enhancing its ability to better demonstrate the results of the JfYA Strategy.
   - Consider adopting a jobs indicator among the Bank's KPIs to provide incentives and accountability for job creation, shared across Bank departments.
   - Review the JfYA Strategy's RMF, including considering reducing the existing number of indicators for delivering youth employment across the Bank, with a focus on relevance, feasibility, and utility. The framework should be accompanied by clear indicator definitions, measurement approaches, annual targets, clear roles and responsibilities, reporting procedures, and resource requirements to support data availability. The framework could also consider indicators of job quality and decent work, in line with building more resilient employment.
   - Capacitate the Innovation Lab to take on its intended core role of generating evidence on and becoming the Bank's center of excellence on youth employment and entrepreneurship, with a view to coordinating learning and knowledge exchange, working hand in hand with regional offices, research, and other departments in the Bank, and other development partners.

3. **Continue to mobilize resources to support catalytic activities and high employment-creating projects.**

   The Bank is advised to expand the scale and scope of the YEI MDTF, in line with the new Trust Fund Policy 2021, to continue its catalytic work including feasibility studies, research and project assessments, and seed financing for innovative activities that will unlock funds for job creation at scale.

4. **Strengthen leadership and coordination of youth employment across Bank departments, building on existing resources and considering other Bank priorities.**

   This can include reviewing the structure, positioning, functions, and resourcing of the JfYA team to provide leadership in the area of youth employment across the Bank. ■

Management Response

Management welcomes the outcomes of the Mid-Term Evaluation of the Jobs for Youth in Africa (JfYA) Strategy 2016-2025,[3] by the Independent Development Evaluation (IDEV) department, covering the period June 2016 – December 2021. Job creation is central to the Bank's mission of spurring sustainable economic development and social progress in Regional Member Countries (RMCs). Management accepts the evaluation findings and takes note that the JfYA Strategy was found to be relevant for addressing youth employment across the African continent. Management also welcomes the recommendation to strengthen strategy execution and progress measurement, in line with the Bank's new Ten-Year Strategy (TYS) 2024-2033 and corporate results measurement framework. Management commits to fully implement the evaluation learnings and recommendations, embracing it as an opportunity to sharpen the execution of the Strategy in the remaining period. This will facilitate accelerated and effective delivery of the JfYA Strategy, as the Bank strives to achieve greater development impact particularly on youth employment.

Introduction and context

The IDEV mid-term evaluation of the JfYA Strategy comes at a time when there are significant developments in Africa's labour market. Youth unemployment, underemployment, and idleness have worsened due to several factors including high youth labour force growth, continued jobless economic growth coupled with the impact of global headwinds and emerging downside risks from the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and geopolitical and food crises.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) Africa's labour market outlook for 2023 foresees a modest increase in the unemployment rate from 6.5% in 2019 to 7.1% in 2023[4] but with a jobs gap rate[5] estimated at 21.3% against the global average of 12.3%. A large share of young people remain outside employment and youth inactivity has remained high, as reflected by the number of young people Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) rate of 26.1% in 2022. Even with employment, 31% are in extreme working poverty conditions, exhibiting challenges of high informality (85%) which characterize the region's labour market.[6]

The JfYA Strategy notes that the consequences of youth unemployment in Africa are pervasive and severe: unemployment translates to poorer living conditions, fuels migration within and out of Africa, and contributes to criminality, conflict, and insecurity on the continent itself. The high share of unemployed and unproductive youth further weakens African economies through the lost opportunity in growing fiscal tax revenues while increasing demand for the governments' social welfare support systems.

In May 2016, the Bank responded to youth unemployment by launching its Bank-wide Jobs for Youth in Africa Strategy 2016-2025, during its Annual Meetings in Lusaka, Zambia, with an emphasis on urgently promoting inclusive socio-economic transformation and jobs-induced growth, to improve the quality of life for all Africans. JfYA Strategy aims to create twenty-five million jobs, and positively impact fifty million youth, by promoting job creating economic growth, strengthened human capital and entrepreneurship, and durable labour market linkages. The Strategy's desired long-term outcome is expanded economic opportunity and increased labour force participation for both male and female African youth.

Institutional commitment to the JfYA Strategy continued through the General Capital Increase (GCI)-7 and Africa Development Fund (ADF) commitments, the Bank's TYS, and harmonization with other sector policies such as the Private Sector Development Policy. The implementation plan approved together with the JfYA Strategy prescribed a phased implementation approach, aimed at ensuring that systems and resources would be established by the fourth quarter of 2016 for implementation of activities in 2017.

However, actual implementation only started in 2018, two years after Board approval when the jobs team was recruited. However, the team was not provided an operational budget nor a cost centre to support Strategy implementation. The identified implementation risks of (1) insufficient funding to support the scale of ambition in youth employment outcomes, and (2) competition with other Bank priorities[7] also materialized. The Bank estimated that implementation of the JfYA Strategy would cost UA 4.1 billion. This included the mobilization and establishment of a UA 3.5 billion Jobs for Youth in Africa Special Fund and using other funding resources to achieve the objectives of the JfYA Strategy.

The retrogressive COVID-19 pandemic also led the Bank to reprioritize its allocation of resources with the establishment of the COVID-19 Rapid Response Facility in 2020 to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on RMCs. While some COVID-19 operations were also designed to impact employment, the resultant number of jobs saved, and job quality improved, are not part of the result indicators of the JfYA Strategy as approved and are therefore not captured in this evaluation. As a result, the Strategy's first half implementation period was reduced by two years, the focus shifted to saving lives, enterprises, and jobs.

Despite these challenges, the Bank continued to make progress in implementing the JfYA Strategy primarily through its Integration lever. Through integration, the Bank set out to leverage sovereign and non-sovereign financing instruments, make strategic use of trust funds and transition state facilities, build synergies and strengthen financial and technical partnerships to achieve scale, impact, and sustainability of the Strategy.

For the evaluation period 2016-2021, Bank investment operations approved by the Board were expected to create 12.4 million jobs, of which 3.1 million were direct and 9.3 million indirect. As of December 2022, the figure of expected jobs had risen to 14.6 million, of which 4.2 million were direct and 10.4 million indirect. The rise was attributed to an increase in the high impact operations and special initiatives that targeted job-rich, women and youth-friendly sectors such as agriculture, digital, and creative sectors.

Management notes that the evaluation did not consider these expected jobs (ex-ante) as they are viewed not as 'actual results' for several reasons including project cancellations and other implementation challenges. Ex-ante data however functions as an implementation yardstick to predict the chances of achieving the Strategy targets. The evaluation computed actual results from Project Completion Reports (PCRs) and Expanded Supervision Reports (XSRs). Since the evaluation focused on the period up to 2021 and considering that the JfYA project portfolio is less than 5 years, Management notes that actual results are still emerging.

Relevance

Management is encouraged to note the evaluation's reaffirmation of the Strategy's continued relevance for addressing youth employment in Africa, along with its continued alignment and coherence with RMCs' policy documents, medium-term plans, and strategy papers.

Management also welcomes the specific findings that highlight areas of the Strategy that require improvement, given the shifting economic growth landscape and recurrent risks. For instance, they call for greater emphasis in addressing insecurity and fragility aspects in the context of job creation, given their impact on youth trapped in such conditions. Furthermore, the JfYA Strategy's Theory of Change is iterative and must adapt to rapidly evolving internal and external contexts and draw on lessons learnt over the first implementation phase. These, in turn, support improvement of the Strategy's results indicators and targets, linked to a practical monitoring and evaluation system for results reporting.

Management also acknowledges the evaluation finding that the adoption of the JfYA Strategy has advanced youth employment advocacy through its integration in Country Strategy Papers (CSPs),[8] contributing to the enhanced alignment of Bank assistance with country needs. However, management notes the evaluation finding that while 70% of CSPs drafted after the JfYA Strategy specifically referenced the analysis, only 43% of CSPs have translated this into youth employment operations. Management will strengthen evidence-based policy dialogue to accelerate the preparation of job-focused CSPs and operations. It will institutionalize job creation as a corporate key performance indicator to accelerate the strategy implementation and achievement of results.

Management also takes note of the evaluation finding on gaps in the JfYA Strategy implementation results tracking. The need for clarity on jobs that accrue to youth, measurement systems that ensure that jobs data are disaggregated by age, as well as the quality of jobs supported by Bank investment operations in RMCs. Management is aware that the Bank's project life cycle currently lacks systematic and standardized guidance on the integration of employment considerations. This leads to lost opportunities for maximizing job creation outcomes, particularly for youth. Other organizations have also reported similar challenges in addressing the complexity of measuring and evaluating job creation. Management will continue to work together with other Development Finance and Technical Assistance Institutions to improve the Bank's results measurement system on jobs.

In this regard, the Operations Committee in November 2022 endorsed the Bank's Jobs and Skills Marker System (JSMS) which is being developed in partnership with the International Labour Organization. The JSMS will provide a structured and standardized approach to maximize employment outcomes of the Bank's sovereign and non-sovereign investment operations in RMCs. With its integration into Bank systems and processes, the JSMS will provide a 'jobs lense' and contribute to enhancing quality assurance of investment operations and corporate results measurement, monitoring, and data reporting on job creation.

Coherence

Management welcomes the evaluation's findings on the internal and external coherence of the JfYA Strategy and its inclusion in the Bank and its cross-cutting sectoral strategies. The Strategy's external coherence and complementarity with other external stakeholders enables the Bank to use its financing instruments and convening power to leverage

Box 1: The Bank's Jobs and Skills Marker System

The ILO situation analysis found the JSMS to be the first of its kind among International Finance Institutions (IFIs). The JSMS seeks to increase institutional emphasis on youth employment as a cross-cutting theme. It complements ongoing Bank actions such as the Joint Impact Model that measure indirect jobs and induced effects, the Additionality of Development Outcome Assessment (ADOA) Framework recently updated to 3.0, the Enhanced Readiness Review, and builds on the successful Gender Marker System.

The JSMS framework adopts a 'jobs lens' in terms of (i) job quantity to measure the total number of jobs supported or created; (ii) job quality[9] ; and (iii) job inclusion to determine how Bank projects facilitate employment opportunities for youth and women.

additional investment financing and wider efforts toward job-centric investments in RMCs.

Management also acknowledges the need for improvements to the Strategy to enhance its increased coherence with current Bank procedures, systems, and frameworks to ensure effective execution of its interventions. Management will ensure that the updates to the JfYA will be in alignment with the new TYS and results measurement framework (RMF) once approved by the Bank's Board of Directors.

Effectiveness

Sharpening the focus on results and development impact is a corporate priority. Hence, Management welcomes the evaluation's finding on the need to address monitoring and reporting gaps to determine actual progress against targeted strategy results.

Management acknowledges the need to revise the Strategy's Results Framework to ensure it is realistic and achievable. The evaluation found that of the forty indicators proposed by the Strategy, 42% were not directly relevant and useful for tracking outcomes. An update of the JfYA will be an opportunity to refine the results framework with more SMART and manageable set of indicators, commensurate with the Bank's level of ambition, data tracking and reporting systems and consistent with the Corporate Results Measurement Framework, and the new TYS. Management will further revise the Strategy's Theory of Change.

The Bank's progressive efforts on job measurement and reporting following the JfYA Strategy adoption, are also noteworthy. In 2016, the Bank developed its corporate Results Measurement Framework (2016-2025) to better position the Bank to report on progress on the High 5s Agenda. This effort integrated indicators on direct and indirect jobs supported by Bank investment operations and subsequently started being reported in the Annual Development Effectiveness Review (ADER).

Continuous improvement of the Bank's jobs measurement has culminated in the Joint Impact Model (JIM) used to estimate indirect jobs generated by Bank operations, as well as the value added by these jobs to African economies. The JIM, being developed through a growing partnership now encompassing ten Development Finance Institutions[10], commenced in 2019, to jointly work towards harmonization of job measurement practice.

Ongoing improvements in the JIM will enable the Bank to further disaggregate indirect job data by age, like the current practice of sex-disaggregated data and its application at the project level to estimate indirect jobs.

The JSMS will provide a system to enhance the credibility of the jobs data through harmonized, standardized, and consistent indicators and data disaggregation reporting. It includes systematic guidance, capacity building, and tools provided across operational sectors to increase the quality of data on direct jobs.

Overall, the Bank aims to focus on improvements in development impact data. In Q4 of 2022, it began revising its RMF including the development and integration of standard indicators to improve inter-alia, alignment, and reporting on cross-cutting employment indicators. Earlier in 2021, the Bank introduced a Results Reporting System that automates and digitizes investment operations results reporting by Task Managers in real-time.

In terms of the evaluation's findings on staff capacity building, as part of the JSMS workstream, in partnership with the ILO's International Training Center, the Bank is developing tailored, self-guided online training modules that could potentially be integrated into the Bank's Operations Academy to strengthen the mainstreaming of jobs in Bank investment operations.

On the Strategy's Innovation lever, Management notes the evaluation findings that recommend strengthening evidence to better inform flagship programs. They further recommend increasing the Innovation Lab[11] research activities to accelerate the development of innovative ideas, employment, and entrepreneurship. In this context, the Bank has developed the ENNOVA online platform that provides access to knowledge and supports capacity building for African Entrepreneurship Support Organization and micro, small and medium, enterprises (MSMEs). ENNOVA responds to capacity gaps by serving as a resource that enables Bank-relevant operations' experts working on entrepreneurship to learn how to deepen the impact of investment operations on youth employment and MSME development.

In line with the evaluation recommendations to implement market-based solutions to address youth employment barriers and youth-centric investments, Management will continue to strengthen actions under the Investment lever by leveraging its traditional African Development Bank (ADB), African Development Fund and other approved private sector vehicles to advance youth employment. In this regard, the Youth Entrepreneurship Investment Banks (YEIB) flagship program that addresses market failures and fragmentation in financing and non-financing services for youth entrepreneurs in Africa in a systemic, scalable, and sustainable manner holds enormous potential for accelerating job creation.

The UA 12 million Liberia YEIB, the first to be approved by the Bank's Board of Directors in July 2023 provides an example in this respect. The project aims to establish a youth-focused (15-35 years) institution to unlock finance, market access, and development services to target youth-led businesses. The thematic lines of credit targeting MSMEs that offer jobs in economic value chains where youth are active could enhance youth outreach and inclusion.

Management is cognizant of JfYA Strategy challenges related to financing, staffing and governance systems as highlighted by the evaluation. The Bank recognizes that structural changes require careful consideration, and that multiple mechanisms and options are available to address the challenge. Management will, therefore, consider optimal actions for strengthening the Jobs Team's effectiveness and delivery of Strategy commitments along with necessary resources. This will be presented together with the strategy update and acceleration plan.

Sustainability

Management is pleased with the evaluation finding of high likelihood of sustainability of JfYA Strategy results. Management also notes, however, the findings related to implementation gaps requiring increased attention to institutional capacity, focus on youth beneficiaries, and exogenous factors that affect overall macroeconomic stability and resilience. As noted under Relevance, the JSMS provides a strong opportunity to maximize youth employment considerations as a modus operandi for investment operations and further strengthen sustainability elements.

Lessons

Management welcomes the evaluation lessons. The five identified lessons will contribute to the successful implementation of the final phase of the Strategy. The Bank is confident of its catalytic role to scale development impact for youth employment in RMCs by leveraging its comparative advantages in financing, evidence-based policy dialogue and convening power.

Management nevertheless recognizes the need to ensure that interventions are realistic and that desired outcomes are achievable, and more importantly they are aligned to the systems and resources that affect the Banks's ability to implement. A more selective and structured approach is planned to follow the approval of TYS 2.0. Management is committed to the specific actions outlined in the subsequent section of this document. ■

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Management Action Record</th></tr>
<tr><th>Recommendation</th><th>Management Response</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Recommendation 1: Update the Strategy and its implementation plan based on current circumstances and resources.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Bank Management is specifically advised to:
i. Update the Theory of Change, the Implementation Plan, and the targets for the remaining period of the Strategy, based on the findings from the mid-term evaluation, current realities (including Bank systems, the new AfDB Ten-Year Strategy under development, country specificities, and changes in the macroeconomic environment), and available resources

ii. Review and update the risk mitigation measures and surveillance plans to guide necessary adjustments to the Strategy and the Implementation Plan.</td><td>AGREED

Actions:
1. The JfYA strategy expires in 2025, and thus have only two years to improve performance, the Bank will review the theory of change, indicators, and targets, in line with the RMF, in consultation with RMCs, and drawing from the evaluation lessons and good practices over the first implementation phase. These revisions will be captured in the Revised Strategy Implementation Plan 2024 – 2025 to be approved by OpsCOm by 31 March 2024.

2. Following a final evaluation of the JfYA Strategy, the Bank will develop a Jobs for Youth in Africa Action Plan 2026 – 2032 aligned to the Bank's New Ten-Year Strategy to be approved by 31 December 2025. AHHD will lead the One Bank team in collaboration with the SNSP.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Recommendation 2: Strengthen Results Measurement and Learning.</td></tr>
<tr><td>The Bank is advised to:
i. Advance implementation of the Jobs and Skills Marker System (JSMS) along with the necessary resources, technical assistance, and staff training to improve the quality, implementation, and measurement of youth employment outcomes across the Bank.

ii. Improve the quality and consistency of data measuring created jobs for youth across the Bank's operations and enhance its ability to better demonstrate the results of the JfYA Strategy.

iii. Consider adopting a jobs indicator among the Bank's KPIs to provide incentives and accountability for job creation, shared across Bank departments.</td><td>AGREED

Actions:

Sub-Recommendations (i) and (ii)
3. Management is preparing the Jobs and Skills Marker System incorporating best practices and learnings benchmarked with other DFIs/IFIs. The JSMS implementation framework will be aligned to the TYS RMF Standard Sector indicators for quality and consistency of data. The JSMS will be presented to OpsCom for approval by June 2024.

AHHD will lead, in collaboration with the PIVP, PEVP, RDVP, SNDR, ECMR, PECG, and TCVP.

Sub-Recommendation (iii)
4. Management will introduce a jobs indicator in the Bank Institutional KPIs, specifically under corporate commitments by 31 December 2025.

AHHD/AHVP will lead in coordination with the SNVP, SNPB, RDVP, PIVP, and PEVP.</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Management Action Record</th></tr>
<tr><th>Recommendation</th><th>Management Response</th></tr>
<tr><td>iv. Review the JfYA Strategy's RMF, including considering reducing the existing number of indicators for delivering youth employment across the Bank, with a focus on relevance, feasibility, and utility. The framework should be accompanied by clear indicator definitions, measurement approaches, annual targets, clear roles, and responsibilities, reporting procedures, and resource requirements to support data availability. The framework could also consider indicators of job quality and decent work, in line with building more resilient employment.
v. Capacitate the Innovation Lab to take on its intended core role of generating evidence on and becoming the Bank's center of excellence on youth employment, and entrepreneurship with a view to coordinating learning and knowledge exchange, working hand in hand with regional offices, research, and other departments in the Bank, and other development partners.</td><td>Sub-Recommendation (iv)
5. The Bank will review the JfYA Results Measurement Framework in line with the Results Measurement Framework, and the Bank's Standard Sector Indicators currently under revision. This will commence after the approval of the Ten-Year Strategy by the Board, which is expected by December 2023, and will be included in the Jobs for Youth in Africa Action Plan 2026 – 2032 by 31 December 2025.
AHHD will lead in coordination with the SNDR and SNSP.
Sub-Recommendation (v)
6. The Bank will strengthen the Innovation Lab as a knowledge repository and centre of excellence for youth employment and entrepreneurship in line with the JfYA strategy commitment. The Bank will further reinforce ENNOVA as a networking and knowledge repository to promote youth entrepreneurship in Africa. The ENNOVA Platform will be operational by December 2024.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Recommendation 3: Continue to mobilize resources to support catalytic activities and high employment-creating projects.</td></tr>
<tr><td>The Bank is advised to expand the scale and scope of the YEI MDTF, in line with the new Trust Fund Policy 2021, to continue its catalytic work including feasibility studies, research and project assessments, and seed financing for innovative activities that will unlock funds for implementing job creation at scale.</td><td>AGREED
7. The main instrument for financing the JfYA strategy interventions over the remaining period will continue to be through the Bank's traditional ADB and ADF financing instruments which present opportunities to leverage co-financing to scale up results. The Bank, in close consultation with its donor partners, will also explore opportunities for expanding the scope of the YEI MDTF financing instruments to mobilize additional resources in line with the Bank's new Trust Fund Policy by December 2024.
AHHD will lead in collaboration with the FIRM and PGCL.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Recommendation 4: Strengthen leadership and coordination of youth employment across Bank departments, building on existing resources and considering other Bank priorities.</td></tr>
<tr><td>This can include reviewing the structure, positioning, functions, and resourcing of the JfYA team to provide leadership in the area of youth employment across the Bank.</td><td>AGREED
Actions:
8. In line with the strategic staffing and budget, the Bank will review the staffing of the Jobs Team, its positioning, functions, and resourcing. Appropriate adjustments will be made with the aim of ensuring effective delivery of the strategy commitments. This is expected to be achieved by 31 December 2025 and it will be included as part of the new Jobs for Youth Action Plan 2026 - 2032. In the meantime, management will consider the creation of a cost center for the Jobs Team to facilitate expedited implementation of the final phase of the Strategy and the preparation of the JfYA Action Plan.
AHHD will lead and be supported by SNPB and PTCE.</td></tr>
</table>

Introduction

This evaluation report summarizes the key findings, lessons, and recommendations of the mid-term evaluation of the African Development Bank Group's (AfDB or "the Bank") Jobs for Youth in Africa Strategy (2016–2025). The Strategy was approved with the aim of creating 25 million jobs and positively impacting 50 million youth (15–35 years of age) by 2025. This Strategy directly contributes to the AfDB's Ten-Year Strategy (TYS) objective of achieving inclusive growth by expanding economic opportunities for all irrespective of gender, age, socioeconomic strata, and geography.

The first section of this report briefly presents the evaluation's purpose, scope, methodological approach, and limitations. The next section discusses the youth employment context in Africa, followed by the section which reviews the Bank's Jobs for Youth in Africa (JfYA) Strategy and portfolio. Followed by the section on evaluation findings regarding relevance, coherence, effectiveness, adequacy of resources and systems, and sustainability. The last section distils a set of conclusions, lessons, and forward-oriented recommendations.

Evaluation Purpose, Objectives, and Scope

The Bank's Independent Development Evaluation (IDEV) has conducted a mid-term evaluation (MTE) of the JfYA Strategy as part of its 2019–2021 Work Program approved by the Bank's Board of Directors. The purpose of the MTE is to inform the remaining implementation period of the Strategy by assessing the progress made so far, identifying lessons, and recommending improvements and adjustments.

The specific objectives of the evaluation are to:

- Assess the continued relevance and validity of the Theory of Change and planning assumptions underpinning the Strategy, given contextual changes and shifts over the past five years;
- Assess the coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the results achieved at mid-term and the likelihood of achieving the intended results in the remaining period;
- Identify enabling and hindering factors to the achievement of expected outcomes; and
- Draw lessons and provide actionable recommendations for areas of improvement, mid-course correction, if necessary, and/or new opportunities to be explored over the remaining course of the Strategy.

The main evaluation questions aligned with the international evaluation criteria guiding this exercise include:

1. How well has the JfYA Strategy positioned the Bank to contribute to improving employment outcomes of youth in Africa? (Relevance, Coherence, and Efficiency)
2. Is the implementation of the JfYA Strategy contributing to improvements in youth employment in Regional Member Countries (RMCs)? (Effectiveness and Efficiency)
3. Are JfYA Strategy results sustainable or likely to be sustained? (Sustainability)
4. What are we learning about what works and does not work?

Specific questions are presented in the evaluation matrix according to the international evaluation criteria (see Annex 1).

The MTE covers the period of implementation of the Strategy from June 2016 to December 2021, with a focus on primary youth employment projects. These are defined as projects that directly promote youth employment and employability, and reflect this in their goals, objectives or results. Secondary youth employment projects are those that do not define youth employment as an objective/result but have potential for creating jobs for youth. The evaluation cuts across all sectors of the Bank's support, as the Strategy is intended to be a Bank-wide priority.

Evaluation Approach and Methodology

The evaluation adopted a theory-based approach to understanding the continued relevance, effectiveness, and potential for sustainability of the JfYA Strategy as of December 2021. The evaluation team re-constructed a detailed Theory of Change (ToC) to better outline the pathways to change and inform the analytical framework for purposes of the evaluation exercise (see Annex 2).

In order to generate the relevant information needed to respond to the evaluation questions, the evaluation used both primary and secondary data sources. The exercise involved triangulation and analysis of the information collected from the different sources to establish the evidence. Methods used to collect data included:

- **Document review** of a cross section of strategy documents, including country and regional integration strategy papers, implementation plans, progress reports, leading research on youth employment in Africa and similar contexts. The full list is contained in the References section.

- **Key informant interviews** were held with over 205 stakeholders, including Bank staff, RMC representatives, partner organizations and implementing agencies, other development agencies, private sector organizations, and stakeholders working in the youth employment space in Africa.

- **Focus group discussions** (5) were held with youth engaged in different JfYA Strategy activities to share their perspectives and opinions on the relevance and impact of the youth economic empowerment activities.

- An **online survey** was administered to youth participants of selected skills and entrepreneurship development programs.

- **Case studies.** A series of case studies was conducted to enable in-depth investigation of different elements of the Strategy across different programs and country contexts. The case studies included an in-depth review of a total of 104 projects.

  - *Country case studies* of five countries (Kenya, Malawi, Morocco, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Senegal) to provide an in-depth analysis and learning on the implementation of the Strategy. The countries were selected purposively to ensure a regional representation, volume of interventions, mix of completed/ongoing/approved primary youth projects, coverage of flagship projects, mix of sovereign/non-sovereign projects, country income status, and fragility/transitional situations. The in-country review considered a purposive sample of 49 projects.
  - *Youth Entrepreneurship and Innovation Multi Donor Trust Fund (YEI MDTF) case study* assessed the only dedicated youth employment fund within the Bank to examine its relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness in contributing to the achievement of results of the overall JfYA Strategy. The YEI MDTF case study considered a purposive sample of 29 projects.
  - *Flagships case study* assessed the planning, implementation and monitoring, and effectiveness of the flagship programs undertaken under the Strategy as a coherent program with stated objectives and targets.

The case study included an in-depth review of all the 26 flagship program projects.

In addition, the team conducted the following reviews and analysis to support the evaluation findings, conclusions, and lessons.

i. **A portfolio review** was conducted to map the size of the Bank portfolio, and the extent to which it contributes to youth employment and employability outcomes. This review also guided sampling of the country case study selections.

ii. **Policy review and benchmarking study**, which provided an assessment of the quality and alignment of the JfYA Strategy to other Bank strategies and efforts of comparator organizations, including the World Bank, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the International Labour Organization (ILO), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Mastercard Foundation. The policy review also included an analysis of a sample of 15 country/regional integration strategy papers[12] to assess the extent of influence of the JfYA Strategy on integration of youth employment considerations and results.

Evaluation Limitations

The evaluation team experienced several limitations during implementation, which were mitigated to the extent possible, as explained below.

- **Availability of data:** There was limited availability of work programs, implementation, and progress reports for both project and operational activities directly implemented by Bank staff. Additional documentation requests were sent out with varying levels of success.

- **Availability and variations in quality of data on jobs created and other outcomes:** Most of the case study projects reviewed were in their early stages of implementation and, as such, data on outcomes including number of jobs created are not yet available. Even where such data were available at the project level, differences in definitions, scope, and/or disaggregation limited assessment of the extent of benefits accruing to youth. This limitation has been considered in the analysis and interpretation of the evaluation findings.

- **Availability of stakeholders:** The evaluation team faced difficulties conducting in-person interviews with some stakeholders during the field missions and benchmarking discussions with comparator institutions. To mitigate this, additional analyses of documents were also conducted to further build up the evidence base and triangulate information as far as possible.

- **Youth participation in the online surveys:** The absence of appropriate social media platforms within the Bank to conduct online surveys affected the potential reach to a wider group of youth respondents. Survey findings presented in the report should not be interpreted as representative of the population of youth beneficiaries in AfDB programs.

- The evaluation of the JfYA Strategy did not include a specific review of the Bank's jobs-related support as part of its COVID-19 response, as this has been covered under the just completed evaluation of the AfDB Group's support to its RMCs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and such support was not primarily focused on youth. Some aspects of the pivots experienced in the implementation of the JfYA Strategy as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic have been documented.

- **Assessment of contribution and attribution of the Bank's investments:** As a development finance institution, the overall objective of investment and activities is to stimulate economic growth and development, one of the outcomes of which is job creation. Given that the JfYA Strategy is a Bank-wide strategy, leveraging activities and finance from existing mechanisms and funds, it is difficult to determine the results achieved specifically due to the adoption of the Strategy, or whether these would have been achieved through the Bank's business-as-usual. ■

Overview of Youth Employment Landscape in Africa

Status of Youth Employment – Statistics and Trends

Africa is currently home to more than 1 billion people. Half of Africa's population will be under 25 years of age by 2050.[13] Indeed, the proportion of young people is projected to increase by more than 25% over the next decade.

According to the ILO, the youth unemployment rate in Africa has risen slightly from 11.6% in 2016 to 12.7% in 2022.[14] There are two key areas of concern. First, there are significant disparities across the sub-regions, from over 50% youth unemployment in the southern regions, to under 6% in some parts of East Africa (Figure 1). Second, the working poverty and underemployment characterizing the whole labor market in Africa, especially among African youth, is predominantly higher than in the rest of the world. In 2020, 63% of African youth workers lived in poverty compared with 50% of adult workers who were working poor (Figure 2).

The high poverty levels in Africa and the dearth of social protection systems mean that the labor market challenges not only manifest through high youth unemployment levels, but also through the share of youth not in employment, education or training (NEET). Africa's NEET rate of 20% is comparable to the global average (i.e., 20% as of 2020).

Some studies imply country heterogeneity in needs and job creation capacity through the difference between the labor market needs of different age groups.[15] However, if Africa's persistent poor labor market outcomes for youth are not addressed,

Figure 1: Youth Unemployment Rates Across Regions, 2000–2020

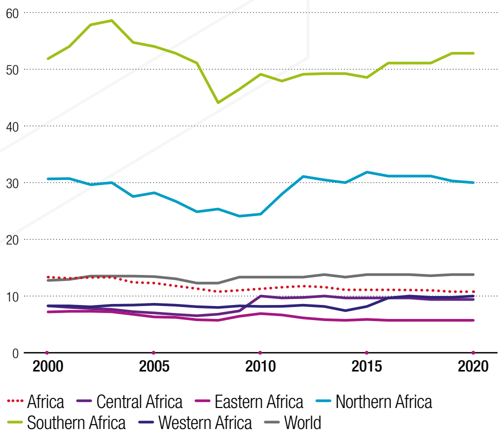
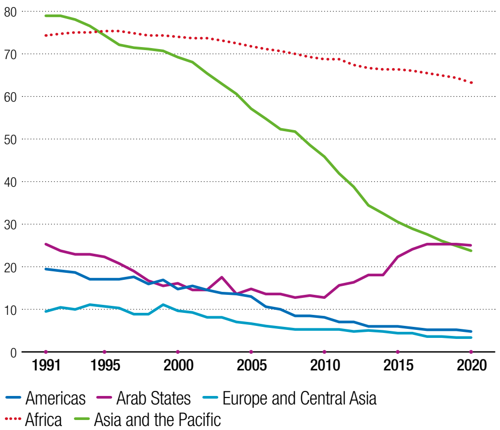


Figure 2: Rate of Working Poverty Across the Globe, 1991–2020



An IDEV **Thematic Evaluation**

this may lead to political and civil strife, persistent inequality, and poverty, undermining efforts to achieve sustainable development (particularly in fragile countries).

Key Challenges and Opportunities to Youth Employment in Africa

Macro-economy and Job Creation in Africa: The Issue of Jobless Growth

In recent decades, Africa's economic growth has not translated into strong job creation. In 2021, Africa's real gross domestic product (GDP) grew by close to 7%, projected to decrease to 4.1% in 2022 and 2023 (AfDB, 2022c). However, between 2000 and 2014, a 1% increase in GDP resulted in a mere 0.41% increase in employment (AfDB, 2019a). Firstly, Africa's economic growth is primarily driven by low value-added sectors that are low paying and not labor intensive, such as oil, mining and commodity exports (ILO, 2019b). Secondly, economic growth stems from a consistently high growth in population and not necessarily structural reforms that improve productivity. This ultimately undermines per capita GDP growth (ILO, 2020). Indeed, across all population age groups, the primary sectors such as agriculture are the main source of Africa's jobs. Moreover, the agriculture sector itself is characterized by low productivity subsistence activities and persistent underemployment. This situation has been worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic that resulted in a loss of an estimated 22 million jobs in Africa, with a disproportionate effect on the youth, women, and other informal workers (AfDB, 2022).

Informality and the Poor Quality of Jobs

In addition to a lack of jobs, Africa also faces a challenge of poor quality jobs. Working poverty is high and acutely affects young Africans. Around 95% of young African workers are in informal employment, either as wage earners or in household farms and firms. Regardless of the nature and causes of informality, countries with larger informal sectors tend to have less access to finance for the private sector, lower labor productivity, slower physical and human capital accumulation, and smaller fiscal resources (Docquier, Müller, and Naval, 2017; La Porta and Shleifer, 2014). Unlike the rest of the world, employment across all ages is overwhelmingly concentrated in the informal sector in Africa (ILO, 2020).

In Africa, as in the rest of the world, informality tends to be concentrated among the least educated in the labor force. Africa also has a modest inverse relationship between age and informality, which is explained by the late entry into the labor force by more educated young Africans. In addition, living in rural areas significantly increases the chances of accessing jobs in Africa in contrasts with the rest of the world). However, living in rural areas reduces the chances of finding formal (as opposed to informal) employment in both Africa and the rest of the world.

Education and Training

Though educational participation and attainment in Africa has increased significantly in recent years, its quality and gender equality remain areas for improvement. For example, between 2000 and 2017, the literacy rate of young people in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) improved significantly from 65.9% to 75.4%. However, African countries consistently rank low on the World Bank's Human Capital Index, primarily because of the low quality of educational outcomes. Indeed, Africa is grappling with both under-skilling and over-skilling. When looking at the current needs of the continent's labor market, 29% of employed youth are under-skilled and 57% are undereducated, while 18% are over-skilled and 8% are overeducated.[16] On the one hand, this means that Africa has a large, under-utilized labor force. On the other hand, the "overqualified" youth experience low returns to education and job dissatisfaction. Interventions therefore need to match education and training to labor market demands and entrepreneurship opportunities, particularly in the rising digital economy.

The Role of Digital Economy

Adoption of digital technologies is still a challenge for Africa's entrepreneurs and workers, presenting a missed opportunity, especially since many digital technologies that are accessible through the internet are well-suited for the current less educated, less skilled workers of Africa. Examples include digital financial services for low-income entrepreneurs and the unbanked; voice- and video-based e-extension services for informal farms and firms; and easy to access gig work platforms (digital platforms that match workers to jobs). There is also an opportunity for entrepreneurs to adapt general technological solutions to local or niche opportunities that target a low-skilled workforce. Already, there is evidence of the digital economy's potential to create much needed jobs in Africa though e-commerce platforms such as Jumia and Uber. During the pandemic, digitalization was a response to the challenges of lockdowns and closed borders. Building on this improved access could create jobs for previously under-served populations.

The Role of Youth Entrepreneurship

Youth entrepreneurship can create much needed quality jobs for young people in Africa. In a survey of 4,000 individuals aged between 16 and 40 years, from Nigeria, Ghana, Angola, and Mozambique, 36% of participants responded that entrepreneurship was the source of their jobs (Forbes Insights and Djembe Communications, 2015). Another survey found that 76% of Africans considered entrepreneurship as a good career choice (World Bank, 2019). However, in Africa the majority of micro and small businesses (including youth enterprises) fail because of high competition and high risk. The failure rate for start-ups by Africa's youth under age 24 is particularly precarious. The average start-up failure rate in Africa was 54 percent in 2020.[17] Indeed, Africa's young entrepreneurs face constraints in accessing formal financial institutions mostly because of lack of traditional collateral. An IDEV evaluation found that the focus of the Bank's access to finance interventions on providing resources to financial intermediaries left many other constraints to finance for the under-served including young entrepreneurs, unaddressed. Interventions also need to better respond to the unique challenges faced by young female entrepreneurs. Despite forming the largest share of entrepreneurs in Africa, women's businesses face greater systemic barriers to access finance and markets. As a result, female-led businesses are less productive and have fewer employees than those of their male counterparts.[18] ■

Overview of the Jobs for Youth in Africa Strategy

Strategy Goals, Approaches and Levers

The Jobs for Youth in Africa (JfYA) Strategy 2016–2025 was adopted by the Bank's Board of Directors in May 2016 and launched the same month at the Bank Group's annual meeting in Lusaka, Zambia. It intends to drive inclusive growth on the continent and unlock the potential that Africa's youth represent. The JfYA Strategy builds on the Ouagadougou Declaration, the Malabo Declaration, and the African Union's Agenda 2063 and African Youth Charter. The Strategy adopts the African Union (AU) definition of youth as those between 15 and 35 years of age.

The primary goal of the JfYA Strategy is to create 25 million jobs (i.e., 5.8 million direct and 19.2 million indirect jobs) and equip 50 million youth[19] over the decade (2016–2025). The Strategy states that the Bank aims both to mobilize funding of UA 3.5 billion (UA 350 million per year) through a Jobs for Youth in Africa Facility and to leverage existing resources in order to meet the estimated UA 4.1 billion cost of implementing the JfYA Strategy.

The JfYA Strategy has three strategic intervention areas:

Integration: equipping the Bank and its RMCs to become engines of job creation. This is expected to be achieved through:

i. ***Building the Bank's capacity to address job creation and employment*** through: (i) development of sector action plans as a framework for incorporating youth employment within the sector; (ii) identification of high employment projects to signal technical assistance and or financial assistance to optimize employment outcomes; (iii) support to strategic procurement to increase the use of local content; (iv) building staff capacity and expertise to better deliver job creation outcomes; and (v) the revision of monitoring and evaluation systems to enable the Bank to better track its progress on youth employment,

ii. ***Building RMC capacity and equipping them with the tools, guidance, and financial support necessary to drive policymaking and activities that are favorable to employment and entrepreneurship.*** Specific activities include: (i) the inclusion of youth employment in country strategy papers (CSPs) and regional integration strategy papers (RISPs); (ii) the use of Policy Based Operations (PBOs)[20] that provide financial incentives to adopt policies more favorable to youth employment and entrepreneurship; (iii) engaging in policy dialogue to highlight youth employment more systematically; and (iv) supporting RMCs to develop institutional and delivery capacity necessary to increase employment through institutional support programs and targeted training, workshops and convenings.

Innovation: aims to incubate, implement, assess, and scale up promising solutions. This intervention area comprises three actions:

iii. Launch of the ***Flagship Programs*** that will implement, assess, refine, and then roll out proven program models across the continent on an unprecedented scale. The Strategy outlined an initial set of six program models[21] across the agriculture, industrialization, information, communication and technology sectors that, when implemented and rolled out across 54,400 sites, would generate an estimated 22 million direct and indirect jobs, and train an additional 24.2 million youth by 2025 and beyond;

iv. Develop the ***Enabling Youth Employment (EYE) Index***, an evidence-based policy tool to deepen dialogue on youth employment; and

v. Establish an ***Innovation and Information Lab*** that seeks to build evidence on existing interventions related to youth employment and entrepreneurship, incubate new ideas that aim to accelerate employment and entrepreneurship, and provide training and other support for entrepreneurs.

Investment: focuses on catalyzing private and public sector resources to fuel job creation for youth. This intervention area is built on three action areas:

vi. ***Jobs for Youth in Africa Facility*** – Through this facility (to be established as a Special Fund at the Bank), the Bank seeks to mobilize UA 3.5 billion (UA 350 million per year) between 2016 and 2025 to implement the activities as outlined in the JFYA Strategy. This resource envelope will consist of funding commitments from the Bank and external funders.

vii. ***Reducing financing risks*** through guarantees for lending to SMEs through the Africa Guarantee Fund and support to student loan finance programs to create an estimated 126,500 direct and indirect jobs;

viii. ***Expanding access to capital*** through: (i) the Boost Africa Investment Fund investments in venture equity fund of funds with employment effects; (ii) the provision of local currency lines of credit (LoCs) for on-lending to SMEs through a collaboration with the Africa SME program; and (iii) direct investment to grow youth centric businesses to create an estimated 1,031,800 direct and indirect jobs; and

ix. ***Challenge prizes and other innovative results-based financing mechanisms*** to incentivize private investment in youth employment challenges to create an estimated 486,700 direct and indirect jobs.

Together these interventions are expected to contribute to increased inclusive employment, improved development of human capital development across the continent, and labor markets linked to financial opportunities.

Portfolio Overview

Portfolio Structure and Evolution

The Bank approved a total of 967 projects worth UA 31.54 billion between June 2016 and December 2021.[22] From this total, the evaluation team conducted a portfolio mapping to establish the extent of the Bank's efforts towards JfYA objectives and results. The evaluation team applied the following definitions when screening the Bank's interventions related to youth employment.

i. Primary youth employment projects: projects that directly promote youth employment and employability and reflect this in their goals, objectives, or results. These projects have been intentionally designed and approved to address youth employment and employability. The evaluation has primarily focused on this category of projects.

ii. Secondary youth employment projects: projects that do not define youth employment as an objective/result but have potential for creating jobs for youth, and as such contribute to JfYA results. This category of projects is characterized by the presence of JfYA-related indicators such as jobs created, youth trained, SMEs supported, and financing made available for investments for youth businesses.

Based on the above, the review found that 479 or 49.5% of the 967 projects incorporated youth employment considerations. Out of the 479 projects, 176 or 36.7% were categorized as primary youth employment projects with a value of UA 5.16 billion and the remaining 303 projects with a value of UA 14.19 billion fall in the secondary youth employment project category.

This portfolio of youth employment projects is predominantly public sector (84.5%) compared with non-sovereign operations (15.5%). The majority of primary youth employment operations were ongoing (67.5%), with only 11.5% completed as of December 2021. The remaining 21% were still at the approval stage. These projects cut across all sectors, with the majority falling within the agriculture (33.8%), social (17%) and governance (13.2%) sectors.

The primary youth employment category was mainly funded through the African Development Bank's window (UA 3.68 billion or 71.4%), followed by the African Development Fund (20%), and the Transition Support Facility (4.8%).

Over the evaluation period, the highest portion of the portfolio (38.5%) was located in middle-income countries, followed by countries in transition (35.2%) and the lowest portion in low-income countries (not transitional) at 9.1%. The review found that although the proportion of the JfYA-related portfolio located in countries in transition appears significant, it accounts for only 15.7%% of the total value of approvals, compared with the investment in middle-income countries at 72.7%. The highest number of primary youth employment projects was found in the West (32.4%) and East regions (18.2%), and in terms of value in the West (35.5%) and Central regions (20.2%).

Following a period of erratic evolution from 2016 to 2018, the review found a gradual increase in the number of primary youth projects, from 24 projects approved in 2018 to 38 projects in 2021, corresponding to a total of UA 1.28 billion.

Investment projects dominated the portfolio of primary youth employment projects (UA 3.6 billion or 70.4% of the portfolio value), followed by program-based operations (21.2%), results-based financing (4.9%), lines of credit/equity (2.3%), and institutional support/study (1.2%).

Youth Entrepreneurship and Innovation Multi Donor Trust Fund Portfolio

The portfolio mapping also identified projects funded by the Youth Entrepreneurship and Innovation Multi Donor Trust Fund (YEI MDTF), a USD 38.9 million grant vehicle established in 2017 to support the implementation of the JfYA Strategy. The donors to the Trust Fund are Denmark, Norway, Italy, the Netherlands, and Sweden. As of December 2021, the YEI MDTF portfolio consisted of 35 projects (six completed, 15 ongoing, eight at the approval stage with the remaining projects at the preparation or commitment stage), amounting to USD 24.98 million (73% of overall donor commitments).

The Fund supports youth entrepreneurship on the continent through provision of: (i) business development services/BDS (representing 35% of the funds committed); (ii) support to enabling environment focusing on technical assistance to fast-track policy reforms in countries (11%); and (iii) research and studies to understand different entrepreneurship ecosystems with the intention of seeding ideas and catalyzing investment across the Bank, for employment opportunities at scale (7%). The remaining 47% are related to interventions that belong to more than one implementation area.

In terms of geographical coverage, 14 projects (40% of the fund operations) were located across the 11 agreed primary focus countries.[23] In line with the regional approach promoted since 2019 to leverage funding, eight Pan-African projects have benefited from the Fund's support. However, the 13 remaining projects covering nine countries were approved outside of the priority list of countries for donors in response to urgent needs and requests from RMCs. ■

Findings

Relevance

This section examines the extent of relevance of the Strategy, given the changing operating context, appropriateness of the levers, and alignment of the Strategy to national and corporate priorities, as well as other International Financial Institutions.

The JfYA Strategy was found to be relevant for addressing youth employment challenges across the African continent. However, the changing economic growth context, recurrent risks, and unrealistic expectations are undermining its validity and the realism of its targets.

Alignment with Needs and Priorities

The evaluation found that the Bank's JfYA Strategy and projects/programs are aligned with RMCs' development strategies, needs and visions, as reflected in their policy documents, medium-term plans, and strategy papers.

Desk review and country field missions showed that in countries where youth employment and upskilling are already a priority (Morocco, Malawi, Senegal, and Kenya), the AfDB is better positioned, and has benefited from synergies in identifying opportunities for support and leverage this mutual objective. Examples are:

In **Kenya**, the government's third medium-term plan 2018–2022, endeavors to develop relevant human capital through TVET to attain its Big Four Agenda. The Bank's TVET project aligns well with the country's investments in TVET infrastructure.

In the **DRC**, the main framework for government development efforts is outlined in its National Strategic Development Plan. The plan outlines the objectives for the country's development for all governmental and partner activities for the period 2019–2023. Both the human capital development and consolidation of economic growth and transformation of the economy objectives are in close alignment with the projects implemented under the JfYA Strategy.

In **Malawi**, government stakeholders revealed good alignment between the challenges in Malawi's youth employment landscape and the JfYA Strategy, with a shared focus on the sustainability and scalability of youth-owned enterprises to create jobs.

In **Senegal**, some of the AfDB's funded projects were found to be in line with the country's National Employment Policy, which aims to establish a conducive environment for economic growth, build youth capacity, create jobs and generate revenues for both youth and women. For example, the Project to Support and Enhance the Entrepreneurial Initiatives of Women and Young People implemented by the Delegation Entreprenariat Rapide, attempts to create the conditions for a strong and dynamic private sector to drive growth through the establishment of economic clusters in alignment with the JfYA Strategy.

In **Morocco**, the Support Program for Financial Inclusion, Entrepreneurship and Micro-enterprises for Economic Recovery, a stand-alone programmatic support operation is in full alignment with the country's priorities and directly supports the national Integrated Program for Enterprise Support and Financing Fund through improved financial services to young entrepreneurs to create 80,000 direct jobs.

Through the JfYA Strategy, the evaluation found that the Bank has been able to advocate for greater emphasis of youth employment in country strategy papers (CSPs) and therefore contribute to a better alignment of Bank assistance with country needs. A comparison of CSPs approved before and after the adoption of the JfYA Strategy shows some improvements in the incorporation of youth employment in the CSP design for eight out of 15 CSPs assessed. These are Lesotho, Senegal, Tunisia, and Uganda, also four countries in transition, namely Mali, Togo, Tunisia and the DRC.

Relevance of the Bank's Strategic Levers

The evaluation found the three strategic levers of the JfYA Strategy to be relevant for addressing the needs and opportunities for youth employment in Africa. For example, the Integration lever that requires mainstreaming youth employment across the Bank and all of its investments was found to be necessary to achieve the desired scale of the JfYA Strategy. This mainstreaming approach is in line with best practices of comparator institutions such as IFAD and the World Bank on scaling employment impact. In addition, the fact that integration focuses on building and engaging RMCs to integrate youth employment in programming and policy reforms further supports scalability and sustainability.

The **Innovation** lever addresses critical labor supply and demand issues through the various initiatives in the flagship program projects, the Innovation Lab and YEI MDTF-funded activities on entrepreneurship ecosystem development activities. Ongoing projects provide training focused on equipping the youth with productive and employable skills. However, inadequate coordination of enterprise development activities across the Bank and the low scale of implementation compared with the level of need were found to undermine the relevance, as discussed further under the Effectiveness Section. Flagship models focus on sectors of agriculture, industry, and information, communication, and technology (ICT), considered as the most promising for large-scale employment opportunities for the youth and RMCs, is relevant to the needs of the continent. However, the assumption that these pre-designed flagship program models would be adopted with customization within pre-determined levels did not sufficiently consider RMC priorities or anticipate the economic impacts of unanticipated crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. This affected the levels of uptake and, subsequently, implementation in line with the original design, limiting opportunities for assessment of efficacy of the different flagship models. Addressing evaluation and knowledge management on promising youth employment interventions is critical in responding to future information needs for both new and ongoing programs.

The **Investment** lever's focus on SME support was found to be relevant, as it enacts a partnership with the private sector for job creation, the largest creator of jobs on the continent. Comparator organizations highlighted that partnership with the private sector as one of the strengths of the JfYA Strategy. The Bank is using multiple channels to address access to finance barriers for youth. However, the limited targeting and use of inappropriate financial instruments under the investment pillar was found to undermine relevance. Pre-existing financial inclusion support, including the Africa SME program, has been included under the JfYA Strategy but the target groups and implementation were not adapted to directly target and monitor impact on youth-led businesses. Up to 60% of the financial sector portfolio is composed of lines of credit that have been found to have limited impact on disadvantaged groups including youth (AfDB, 2020). On a positive note, the use of equity in venture capital funds targeting start-ups and other primary youth employment projects (including flagship program projects) are more directly addressing access to finance barriers for youth.

The evaluation found that the JfYA Strategy recognizes differences in employment barriers for different categories of the youth,[24] but has not consistently provided for tailored responses to them. Though the Strategy does not distinguish between age cohorts of the youth, its skilling[25] and job creation efforts target both the new entrants to the workforce, as well as those already working but who are seeking different opportunities. The Strategy makes specific considerations for the youth in rural areas, informal sectors, women and those in fragile situations. For example, the youth in countries with fragile situations and informality are a priority for the YEI MDTF and flagship programs. Up to 33.5% of overall primary youth employment operations are located in countries in transition. The JfYA Strategy specified that all activities target 50% or more women but did not specify how this target would be reached how programs should address the unique barriers faced by women. In the course of implementation, interventions have been adapted to reach more young women with varying levels of success. Also, institutional barriers to addressing access to finance for the informal sector are still not sufficiently addressed under ongoing programs.

Strategy Design

The Strategy outlines a Theory of Change but it lacks sufficient detail to inform priorities in outcomes and useful measures of success. The JfYA Strategy's high-level ToC outlines three strategic levers of integration, innovation, and investment to increase inclusive employment and entrepreneurship, strengthen human capital, and create durable labor-market linkages and thereby economic opportunities for the youth. Though details within the JfYA Strategy Implementation Plan indicate mechanisms and causal linkages, the illustration and narrative does not adequately describe the impact pathways of the strategic levers or pillars towards achieving the three intended outcomes. This has affected the choice and prioritization of key intermediate outcomes and their measures of success. As will be indicated in subsequent sections, the JfYA Strategy Results Measurement Framework has up to 40 indicators, 42% of which were found not to be directly relevant and useful for tracking outcomes. The evaluation also found that ambiguities in the key outcome level indicators of jobs created and youth equipped have subsequently hindered consistent implementation, monitoring and reporting on results. The evaluation elaborates more on these disconnects in other sections of the report.

The evaluation found that the intentions of the JfYA Strategy were clear, although the assumptions behind the projected targets were not found to be sufficiently explicit and realistic. The JfYA Strategy provides the Bank with quantifiable targets around youth employment that can be a basis for dialogue, resource mobilization and communication/visibility around the Bank's efforts. The Bank has been able to mobilize and invest UA 5.16 billion in primary youth employment projects and an additional UA 14.19 billion in secondary youth employment projects. In addition, the Bank was able to mobilize resources to establish a USD 38.9 million multi donor grant vehicle, YEI MDTF, to support the implementation of the Strategy. The Bank also mobilized a commitment to youth employment in the latest 7th General Capital Increase (GC-VII) and 15th African Development Fund (ADF)-15 replenishments with specific targets for decent jobs and skills development.

However, the evaluation found that underlying assumptions behind the targets are not as well understood across staff and have not been updated following changes in implementation of some components of the strategy.[26] Assumptions that the Coding for Employment (CfE) program that focuses on training and linking graduates could create 9 million jobs are not backed by evidence. Available research indicates that training alone does not create jobs.[27] Though skills development is essential, it does not create as many jobs and should therefore not be expected to make the largest contribution to job outcomes within the 10–15-year period. In addition, overly optimistic expectations of achieving over 85% of the JfYA Strategy job creation and training targets through the roll-out of demand-driven flagship program models funded through a not-yet-established Special Fund/Facility undermine the strength of the design of the Strategy. As will be discussed in subsequent sections, the Bank did adapt implementation to address some of these shortcomings but this still affected the rate of achievement of targets.

The evaluation also found that, despite the naming of the Strategy as Jobs for Youth, it is not clear which proportion of these jobs are expected to be youth jobs. The Strategy assumes that with a median age for the continent at 19.5 years, inevitably most of the job impact will accrue to youth.[28] This ambiguity is translated across projects, with varying attention to creation of jobs for youth vis-à-vis women and other population groups, and measurement systems that are not set up to disaggregate for age. The evaluation found that in comparison with the World Bank, the AfDB focuses more on quantitative aspects of job creation and not as much on more qualitative aspects related to the quality and nature of jobs created. Africa's employment problem is more related to underemployment and quality of work, evidenced by the high levels of informality.

Though risks to the Strategy were identified, the evaluation found that the risk mitigation measures have not been sufficiently implemented, thereby continuing to pose a threat to achievement of Strategy targets. Both the Strategy document and the Implementation Plan identify several high-level risks that could affect implementation and results. The evaluation found that mitigation measures have not been sufficiently implemented and therefore the risks remain a threat to achievement of intended results. Specifically, the shortfalls in funding for specific elements of the Strategy and staffing, and low support for uptake of flagship program models, are impacting the pace and scale of delivery. Even when mitigation measures were identified, there was no action plan and accompanying milestones developed to guide implementation, nor regular monitoring on the status and implications of the risks. Further analysis of the mitigation measures on bank resources and systems and implemented adaptations are discussed in the Section on Effectiveness and the Section on Adequacy of Bank System.

Key changes in the global context have emerged to significantly affect implementation progress and the likelihood of the achievement of Strategy targets. However, the Bank has used the JfYA framework to respond to some of these occurrences. The original Strategy Theory of Change did not explicitly identify critical assumptions that could influence achievement of Strategy goals. While the Bank could not have foreseen the magnitude and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the evaluation found that there was inadequate explicit attention to the effects of the macroeconomy, economic growth rates, and climate change effects on job creation. The pandemic precipitated major (albeit unforeseen) economic shocks that have subsequently affected availability of Bank resources for programs, as well as country headroom,[29] and the ability and willingness to take loans for youth employment projects. In 2020, both Bank and RMC resources were reallocated to support citizens and businesses to weather the pandemic. Worsening social and economic conditions also resulted in the loss of jobs, opportunities for internships, and job placements, as well as dampening overall enterprise growth as economies contracted. The Bank has used the JfYA Strategy framework to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change effects through targeted programs, and youth-led innovations in climate change and resilience, as well as an emerging focus on green jobs as countries transition to green economies. Adaptations to support RMCs in their response to the pandemic are discussed in the Section on Integration Section and in more detail in this IDEV evaluation.

Interviews with Task Managers also revealed that political instability negatively affected project implementation, as well as the ability of RMCs to attract private sector investment for the ongoing implementation of the Strategy in transition states. Incidences of stalled and/or canceled projects due to instability were observed in Guinea, Mali and Eritrea. Other geo-political events, such as Russia's invasion of Ukraine[30] and food crises, have further constrained resources; affecting economic growth, enterprise performance, and the prospects for job creation.

Coherence

This section assesses the extent of coherence of the Strategy internally with other Bank strategies and policies and externally with other partners' efforts.

Coherence with other Bank strategies: Coordination and value added to Bank strategies

The JfYA Strategy aligns well with the Bank's current Ten-Year Strategy and other strategies. The AfDB is currently considered a leader in youth employment efforts at present, being one of the main development institutions on the continent with a focused and named strategy to address this issue. As the continent's leading development finance institution, with the ultimate objectives of spurring inclusive and green growth on the continent, a focus on youth employment is inevitable considering the current economic context and demographic make-up. Specifically, the Bank's TYS 2013–2022 emphasizes job creation, and provides clear scope and relevance for the JfYA Strategy as a Bank-wide priority. The TYS has a specific focus on achieving inclusive growth through decent jobs and enhancing economic opportunities for the youth.[31] This alignment is important in ensuring that all of the Bank's activities are contributing towards the same objectives.

Furthermore, the evaluation found that the JfYA Strategy aligns and is additive to other strategies of the Bank. The JfYA Strategy is aligned with its cross-cutting sectoral strategies, including the Private Sector Development Strategy 2013–2017 and subsequent 2021–2025 Strategy, the Financial Sector Development Strategy 2014–2019, the Fragility and Building Resilience in Africa Strategy 2022–2026, the Gender Strategy 2021–2025, and the Strategy for Economic Governance in Africa 2021–2025.[32] There are notable areas of convergence between these strategies, specifically the focus on human capital development (including skills development), the recognition of the importance of the demographic dividend and harnessing its benefits, and the prioritization of private sector-led growth through private sector development.

Most recent developments within the Bank's policy and program framework, specifically, the Skills for Employability and Productivity in Africa (SEPA) Action Plan 2022–2025, is anchored to and aligns with the guiding principles and goals of the JfYA Strategy. Specifically, SEPA intends to scale up the skills component of the JfYA Strategy, with a special focus on Science, Technology and Mathematics in higher education; TVET; digital technology beyond coding; and online learning skills infrastructure. The SEPA will provide support for an environment conducive to skills development for job creation and youth entrepreneurship.

The JfYA Strategy intends to elevate youth employment and employability to the level of Bank-wide importance, while also consolidating a variety of activities that were already in place to address employment and entrepreneurship. However, the evaluation found that the mechanisms for coordination and oversight for such a Bank-wide endeavor have not been adequately provided (Section on Adequacy of Bank Systems has more details).

The evaluation found that some Strategy interventions were not aligned with and feasible within the Bank systems and were subsequently not implemented. These include provision of computation thinking in secondary schools, as AfDB education activities are limited to higher education and TVET. Actions intended to increase the Bank's knowledge of, and work in using, procurement to increase local content were not found additive to what was already going on and therefore did not take off. In the absence of systems and frameworks for implementation, the provision of student loans for higher education was not initiated.

External coherence

The JfYA Strategy seeks to complement and amplify the ambitions and efforts of other stakeholders. First, the Strategy directly supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) that elevate decent work and economic growth under SDG 8. The JfYA Strategy also aligns well and supports implementation of the African Union (AU) ambitions for youth development. The AU has several youth development policies and programs aimed at ensuring the continent benefits from the demographic dividend. The policies include the African Youth Charter, the Youth Decade Plan of Action, and the Malabo Decision on Youth Empowerment.

Synergy at the country level. Synergy at the country level was assessed through the extent to which the JfYA Strategy helped to strengthen complementarity, and bring value to strategies and programs of other development partners.

The country case studies revealed examples of strong leadership in donor coordination by the Bank. In Senegal and the DRC, the Bank chaired or co-chaired thematic groups in charge of youth employment. In other instances, the Bank played an influential role by generating useful knowledge, and providing platforms and resources on youth employment initiatives. This was the case for the Entrepreneurship Innovations and Advices platform led by the Jobs team in North Africa that mapped all Enterprise Support Organizations (ESOs) with the aim of fostering collaboration and synergy.

The evaluation showed that the Bank mobilized co-funding opportunities with other development partners. The evaluation found that the Bank's primary youth employment projects of UA 5.16 billion leveraged an additional UA 2.8 billion from government and other partners. For example, in Senegal, the Bank was able to leverage EUR 20 million in co-financing from the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) in the Project to Support and Enhance the Entrepreneurial Initiatives of Women and Young People. Another remarkable example of the leveraging effect of the Bank's products is the feasibility study for the Investment in Digital and Creative Enterprises Program (I-DICE) funded by the YEI MDTF that led to the unlocking of funding and co-financing opportunities of USD 618 million within the Bank and from other donors, including AFD, the Islamic Development Bank, the Government of Nigeria and the private sector.

The YEI MDTF was found responsive to the multi-donor strategic priorities.[33] Stakeholder engagements revealed a broad alignment between YEI MDTF's objectives and their respective strategies and support for youth entrepreneurship in Africa. Despite changes in some of the donor policies and priorities, support for youth employment remains an important issue and confirms the relevance of the JfYA Strategy.

Effectiveness

This section assesses the extent of implementation of the key actions of the Strategy, progress towards meeting the objectives of JfYA Strategy at mid-term (2021), the results achieved and/or the likelihood of achieving intended results. The first section reviews the Bank's progress towards the achievement of key outputs and outcome indicators, and the second section provides a detailed analysis of implementation progress of JfYA Strategy actions across the three strategic levers of Integration, Innovation and Investment.

Progress towards the achievement of outputs and outcomes

Though Bank interventions were found to be creating jobs and equipping the youth, actual progress towards achievement of strategy results and outcomes is difficult to establish due to significant monitoring and reporting gaps.

In this mid-term evaluation, the team attempted to map progress against the targets set out in the Strategy's RMF.[34]

General performance: Of the 36 JfYA Strategy RMF indicators considered for this assessment, only 36% (13/36) were found to have up-to-date information. The evaluation also found that only six of the 13 indicators with data registered an achievement of ≥50% at mid-term.[35] Apart from one indicator on youth trained in coding centers, all other indicators performing at ≥50% are output-level indicators related to staff training, the development of sector action plans, and the integration of youth employment considerations in CSPs. This progress should be interpreted with caution as the JfYA Strategy RMF targets were never broken down into annual targets which would have enabled a more accurate mid-term performance assessment.[36]

The evaluation cannot establish progress on the remaining indicators, due to the lack of reporting and/or inconsistencies in existing information. Data are available in some form for eight out of 23 indicators, but these data are not useable for this analysis due to variations in indicator names/definitions making aggregation of results across the portfolio difficult. In other cases, the data have not been disaggregated appropriately to assess progress. Generally, the issue of consistency in indicators and what is actually measured affects 24 of the 36 indicators assessed for the MTE. Some of these indicators were not found to be relevant for the JfYA Strategy and/or feasible for data collection within the Bank systems. More discussion on the underlying challenges to indicator tracking is covered in the section for M&E. Furthermore, only 11.5% of primary youth employment projects were completed during the evaluation period. This implies that it is still too early for some output- and outcome-level results to materialize.

Progress towards high-level results of job creation and equipping the youth

Jobs created. The Strategy targeted to create 5.8 million direct jobs for youth and 19.2 million indirect and induced jobs, including for individuals other than youth, over the decade 2016–2025. However, it anticipated that some of the 25 million jobs will be realized after 2025, given that the job creation impacts of newly approved projects towards the end of the Strategy would not be available by 2025. The timeline for the job creation target in the Strategy's RMF is 2030. Lack of clarity and inconsistencies in the timeline for achievement of the target were found to have complicated planning and monitoring processes.

In terms of progress against targets, as can be seen from Table 1, Bank Management has estimated that projects approved between 2016 and 2021 will create 3,076,881 direct jobs and 9,276,199 indirect jobs over the period 2016–2021, which represents a 49% expected achievement of the target (25 million jobs). The expected results for jobs created for women are promising but below the 50% target. Performance in 2020 and 2021 was lower due to the COVID-19-related delays on project designs and approvals, and the re-allocation of funds.

The evaluation found significant issues with the information on direct jobs, which affects estimations and conclusions on performance. First, the number of expected direct jobs reported is not disaggregated by age to enable the estimation of progress against the 5,800,000 jobs intended for youth (the same applies to the indirect jobs data). Generally, the evaluation found no aggregated information across the Bank on actual jobs accruing to youth; rather, in line with the JfYA strategy, the Bank assumes that since youth form the largest proportion

Table 1: Direct and Indirect Jobs Expected to be Created

Jobs to be created	Approval Year						
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2016–2021
Direct Jobs	731,039	197,651	318,290	821,307	187,970	820,624	3,076,881
Women	322,706	87,250	136,456	393,835	80,754	337,242	1,358,243
Indirect Jobs	1,926,344	2,291,961	1,550,310	2,230,022	393,918	883,644	9,276,199
Women	877,370	1,043,893	716,018	1,028,256	173,885	383,503	4,222,925
Total Jobs	**2,657,383**	**2,489,612**	**1,868,600**	**3,051,329**	**581,888**	**1,704,268**	**12,353,080**
Women	***1,200,076***	***1,131,143***	***852,474***	***1,422,092***	***254,639***	***722,745***	***5,581,168***

Source: SNDR records

of the labor force, they are inherently benefiting most from any new jobs created. Second, the Bank is using only data on expected direct jobs to monitor the Strategy. The expected jobs data compiled by SNDR are based on estimations made in the ex-ante project appraisal reports (PARs) and do not represent the actual number of jobs created. While the latter is available through project completion reports (PCRs)/expanded supervision reports (XSRs), it is not used for monitoring and reporting about the strategy. A quick analysis of the difference between planned and reported results for direct jobs from PCRs/XSRs revealed significant variations, especially for sovereign operations. For example, a set of 124 sovereign projects with PCRs completed between 2016 and 2021 revealed that only 67% of planned jobs were delivered, compared with 98% for the 50 non-sovereign operations (NSOs) with XSRs produced in the same time period. This suggests that the use of job creation estimates from PARs could result in under- or over-reporting, arising from actual implementation experiences. The evaluation team was informed that the Bank is developing a job estimation approach based on project disbursements to establish actual jobs created by its projects.

For these reasons, it is not possible for the evaluation to say with certainty how far the Strategy has progressed in its aim to create 25 million jobs.

Youth equipped/trained. The evaluation did not find any aggregated information on numbers of the youth equipped or trained as a result of Bank investments to enable assessment of progress towards the "50 million youth reached" target. The Strategy states that this indicator is a combination of the beneficiaries of the direct, indirect and induced jobs, as well as the youth benefiting from training activities. This definition poses significant validity and reliability risks. For example, "jobs created" data include age groups other than the youth as targeted by this indicator. In addition, combining jobs creation and results from training will lead to double reporting, especially for the youth cohort who undergo both training and acquire jobs as a result of AfDB assistance. Other corporate RMF indicators tracking training and skills development (i.e., the number of people trained with Bank assistance and the number of people benefiting from better access to education) also carry similar risks as they are either not disaggregated by age or at risk of being under-reported or over-reported.

Portfolio quality and performance. As a whole, primary youth employment projects suffered from delay at start-up,[37] especially for infrastructure projects, which took the longest time to first disbursement (at least nine months). This is not peculiar to youth employment projects. Out of 176 primary youth employment projects for which quality ratings were available, the portfolio flashlight of the Bank (in June 2022) showed that more than half (57.5%) had no implementation issues, 39.7% were displaying some alerts (potentially problematic), and three projects were problematic. Agriculture and social sectors recorded the highest number of flagged projects with, respectively, 44.4% and 17.8%. First disbursement delays (48.7%) and slow procurement (34%) were identified as the most recurrent issues impeding the implementation of primary youth employment projects.

Integration

Despite slow progress in internal systems strengthening activities, integration of youth employment considerations in its operations across the Bank was found to be occurring. Interventions to strengthen RMC capacity to address youth employment are also ongoing, but results are not yet evident. All planned integration actions are ongoing, with varying levels of progress in implementation of sub-activities.

Equipping the Bank

Sector action plans were found to have been developed but do not seem to be used. By 2017, 12 departments had drafted sector action plans, intended to guide the operationalization of youth employment in projects/programs design. This exceeded the original target of five departments. However, the evaluation found no evidence of the use of these plans. None of the Task Managers interviewed about sector action plans expressed awareness of their existence. It should be noted that, since the JfYA Strategy was approved in 2016, there has been a restructuring of departments, through which leadership changes could have impacted attention to youth employment sector action plans.

Similarly, the planned categorization and tagging of "high employment" label to certain projects, enabling them to receive extra support in the form of technical assistance and funding from the Jobs team resources has not happened as planned. The evaluation found no list of high employment projects. Apart from the Additionality and Development Outcomes Assessment Framework (ADOA) system that assesses job creation impacts of non-sovereign operations, there are currently no other systems within the Bank to enable the tagging of youth employment projects.[38]

A Jobs and Skills Marker System, critical to achieving systematic integration and measurement of employment impacts, is being developed. In 2021, the Bank in collaboration with the ILO embarked on developing a JSMS to support an aggregate understanding of the Bank's work on employment and better portfolio management through a clear identification of projects, targeted technical assistance, and the use of streamlined indicators. Stakeholder engagements in the course of the evaluation emphasized that, without specific guidance and status as a mandatory requirement, the integration of youth employment considerations into projects and reporting will be challenging. The JSMS is anticipated to fulfill this role by drawing on lessons from the Bank's Gender Marker (see Box 2). Integration of youth employment in IFAD was reported to be more successful when combined with incentives and accountability structures within the institution. These included integration in KPIs, as well as prizes and awards for successful staff.

Following the situational analysis, the Bank intends to pilot the JSMS in selected countries in 2023 before rolling it out across all Bank operations. The JSMS will be accompanied by guidance materials, training and a toolkit as part of Bank's Operations Academy modules to develop the competencies, and facilitate effective use and integration across sectors.

Staff training and capacity-building activities were found to have stalled. Apart from the initial training of 203 staff in 2017/18, other targeted training and workshops, Bank-wide town halls, and SAP review meetings have not been consistently held, limiting opportunities for raising greater awareness, shared learning and development. While the number of staff trained exceeds the Strategy target of 200 Bank staff by 2025, the evaluation found that many of the current Task Managers joined the Bank from 2018 onwards and were therefore not in their roles at the time of

Box 2: The AfDB Gender Marker

In 2017, AfDB adopted a Gender Marker System as a systematic approach for gender mainstreaming in its operations work to maximize impact on reducing gender gaps and make the best use of gender resources. This marker system categorizes the Bank's projects based on the level of their expected contribution to gender equality and /or women's empowerment. The gender marker has been fundamental enabling the gender team and other departments to integrate gender in operations right from the beginning of the project lifecycle. Frameworks, tools and indicators that can be adapted and easily incorporated have been developed and made available to staff. With these tools, the task of incorporating gender targets and other relevant considerations is easier and more straightforward for task managers.

Bank documentation revealed an increase in the number of projects that have a gender-informed design from 70% in 2017 to 87% in 2022. In addition, multiple stakeholders referenced 'gender' as being successfully integrated and continuously considered. Every project report reviewed had an allocated percentage of targets for women where relevant.

the initial training. In addition, a "youth employment" training module developed for integration into the Bank's Operations Academy to enable ongoing access for incoming staff is not yet available. Nevertheless, some opportunities for raising greater awareness on the JfYA Strategy within the Bank have been through the YEI MDTF focused brown bag sessions, providing opportunities for elaboration on the Strategy and youth employment. However, these sessions are ad-hoc and do not serve the purpose for promoting continuous learning on youth employment within the Bank.

The Jobs team indicated that staff training activities and dissemination of sector-specific guides for integration of youth employment considerations were discontinued in the absence of funding. This break in training has impacted on the extent of integration and consistency in tracking jobs and youth employment outcomes across the Bank. Some Task Managers consulted in the course of the evaluation expressed difficulties in addressing youth employment in their operations due to inadequate guidance (including absence of guidelines and tools), as well as limited understanding of estimation and measurement of job creation effects.

Despite this slow progress, there was evidence of the integration of youth employment components into sector operations, albeit not at the anticipated level and pace. The portfolio review revealed that nearly half of the portfolio of AfDB projects (i.e., 49.5%) approved between 2016 and 2021 had elements of youth employment or supported employability through job creation and enterprise development. Nearly 84% of these youth employment projects (404/479) are managed by other departments outside AHHD that houses the Jobs team. Through discussions with Bank staff and document review, the evaluation found that JfYA Strategy resources, i.e., staff and financial resources, have been deployed to support high-potential projects, to support project design and implementation (as peer reviewers, co-task managers, financial assistance to conduct assessments or feasibility studies), as well as providing important co-financing for innovative youth employment components.

<u>Equipping Regional Member Countries</u>

The intended integration of youth employment in CSPs/RISPs was not found to sufficiently translate into youth specific commitments. The evaluation found that though youth unemployment is highlighted as a pressing issue across the sample of CSPs assessed, the corresponding actions were not commensurate. Up to 70% of CSPs drafted after the JfYA Strategy approval include some mention of it. However, only 43% of CSPs that made specific reference to the JfYA Strategy have translated this into a dedicated youth employment indicator. All the five RISPs include intentions of furthering youth employment but this is translated into an indicator in only one of them. The absence of translation of issues into youth employment specific results and/or indicators weakens the commitment by both the Bank and country in directly addressing this challenge.

Increased focus on private sector development especially with regards to micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME) creation (reflected in 85% of CSPs reviewed) presents opportunities for addressing youth employment. A more vibrant private sector provides opportunities for young entrepreneurs and generates jobs. It is important to note that operationalizing these opportunities for the youth requires an intentional targeting and/or tailoring of interventions to address specific barriers faced by young people (IFAD, 2014: World Economic Forum, 2016).

Intentions to include a youth employment challenge section in CSPs that highlights RMC efforts on youth employment and a listing of the areas for Bank support in addressing JfYA Strategy considerations in the CSPs have not been achieved. The evaluation found that Country Economists and AHHD /Jobs staff have an important role in guiding relevant country-specific analysis needed for CSPs to be a grounding document, and that projects are tailored to specific country needs.

The Bank continues to use Program Based Operations and Institutional Support Projects

to strengthen RMC capacity and the enabling environment for youth employment outcomes.

Program Based Operations: Between July 2016 and December 2021, the Bank approved a total of 77 youth employment related PBOs with a focus on creating an enabling environment for the youth and youth-led enterprises. The portfolio review further revealed that 21% of these PBOs (16/77) fall under the primary youth employment category and 79% (61/76) are categorized as secondary youth employment projects. Addressing youth employment issues was often part of a package of wider reform efforts, as anticipated in the Strategy Implementation Plan.

In 2020, the Bank established a UA 7.4 billion COVID-19 Response Facility (CRF) that included business protection and job creation as part of supporting RMCs to deal with social and economic impacts of the pandemic. The Jobs team played a significant role in the design of the Facility, bringing in the focus on protection of enterprises and jobs as part of strengthening economic resilience and recovery. The 35 CRF operations addressing youth employment valued at UA 1.8 billion make up 27.5% of the primary and secondary youth employment PBO portfolio over the period. However, the just completed COVID-19 response evaluation by IDEV found that this specific component registered a modest performance, largely due to over-ambitious targets against limited resources, and the limited involvement of private sector actors in design of the program. The evaluation also found that the implementation time (on average 12 months) was inadequate to realize the full benefits.

Institutional Support Projects: Over the evaluation period, the Bank supported 18 Institutional Support Projects[39] aimed at building the capacity of RMCs to implement youth employment policies and programming. These ISPs included research/ sector assessments, capacity development of key institutions and development of policies, and regulatory frameworks (in the areas of employment, market-driven skills development, MSME growth and financing) and strengthening labor market information systems to inform youth employment policies. Nearly all the ISPs (17/18) are either at the approval or ongoing stages, with no significant results to evaluate as yet. Other Bank-funded regulatory framework-strengthening activities in stand-alone projects or embedded in broader investment activities are providing promising results (see Box 3).

The evaluation also found examples of projects strengthening national systems for furthering youth employment through the use of local content. Supporting the use of local content to advance youth employment was found to be easier in countries where it is already prioritized as evidenced in Kenya, Rwanda and Morocco. Other anticipated Bank-led training of RMCs to build capacity to implement and measure youth employment ambitions has not taken place as planned. Findings from country case studies indicate that the availability of adequate labor-market information, coordination of employment services and various youth employment projects, and the monitoring and measuring employment impacts of projects are still challenges experienced by countries.

Influence of policy dialogue on elevating youth employment considerations within RMCs is difficult to establish. Since the launch of the

Box 3: Examples of Enabling Environment Activities

Under **Malawi's Jobs for Youth Project**, a Business and Incubation Strategy was developed in conjunction with the Ministry of Trade and Industry. In line with the new strategy, an accreditation system has been developed to ensure systematic quality control of services provided by incubators and Business Development Services providers. The Jobs for Youth Project also supported much needed reviews of the National Council of Youth, Malawi Act and the National Youth Policy. Malawi government stakeholders met during field visits expressed appreciation of these JfYA projects for modernizing the regulatory framework and improving coherence among the different youth related legislations.

Strategy in 2016, the Bank has used various fora and publications to highlight and garner action from both public and private sector actors on addressing youth employment. These have included regional ministerial dialogues held in 2017, Bank annual meetings, ADF replenishment meetings and signature events such as the annual Africa Economic Conference, the Africa Investment Forum and other regional platforms such as the Africa Union–European Union Summit and Youth Connekt. The evaluation found that dialogue on youth employment continues to occur at the country level through country and regional office teams. While some examples of outcomes of high-level dialogue exist, the evaluation was inconclusive on the extent to which this policy dialogue has been systematic and impactful in the absence of a specific policy agenda, clear mechanisms for follow-up, and documentation. This links back to whether commitments on policy dialogue on youth employment have been made in CSPs.

In addition, the Bank has produced a series of reports sharing research and evidence through its Economic and Sector Work (ESW) publications. There are examples where operational research and market assessments have been used in the design of high employment projects and other innovative programs. However, the evaluation found no information on how the broader knowledge products such as the African Economic Outlook and other research products are being used to inform the policy dialogue, reforms, and action on youth employment at the country level.

Innovation

Implementation of all activities under the Innovation lever is ongoing but at a lower scale and pace than anticipated, thereby delaying the likelihood of the achievement of the expected results within the Strategy period. The Innovation Lab is not yet in a position to be the knowledge generation and learning hub to inform scale up of workable solutions. The Enabling Youth Employment Index/Dashboard has been developed but is not yet available for use.

Flagship programs

Flagship program implementation was found to be ongoing but not yet at the scale required to deliver the intended results. Assumptions behind some of the targets were found not to be backed by evidence, reducing the likelihood of their achievement. In the course of implementation of the Strategy, the initial six flagship programs[40] were combined to address overlaps in program features, leverage existing resources, and to create greater synergy. This adaptation was also a response to funding shortfalls following the non-realization of the Jobs for Youth in Africa Facility (Special Fund), which left operations teams to rely on existing traditional Bank resources and/or external financing. The Facility, if fully mobilized, was expected to provide UA 2.49[41] billion to support implementation of flagship programs through the provision of loans and grants to RMCs. The different models are now implemented under three flagship programs in a mix of 26 stand-alone and embedded projects (i.e., the flagship model is implemented as a component of a broader youth employment project) across 19 countries. These include the CfE program pilot, the ENABLE Youth (EY) and the Skills Enhancement Zones under the Special Agro-Processing Zones (SAPZ) projects. These flagships program projects together make up 13% of the primary youth employment projects portfolio.

In the absence of resources from the Facility, the Bank leveraged agriculture flagship programs (EY and SAPZ) and external funding to secure resources for implementation. Bank resources for investment in EY projects at UA 271 million resulted in a total funding of UA 304.92 million. This amount includes government counterpart funding of UA 32.3 million and UA 1.6 million as co-financing from the European Union. SAPZ programs displayed a larger leverage effect of almost 100%, with the Bank contribution of UA 457.96 million attracting an additional co-financing of UA 442.70 million from other partners and UA 90.77 million in government contributions. The Bank also secured a USD 2 million grant from the Rockefeller Foundation to implement a CfE pilot program. However, total mobilized resources for the 26 flagship program projects of about UA 1.174 billion comes to 47% of the original estimated amount required for implementation of flagships at scale.[42] All programs embed strong private sector engagement provisions in the design of demand-led training curriculums, provide internship and placement opportunities, co-funding, and implementation support.

Modification of implementation modalities of the flagship programs was not accompanied by a review of high level Strategy targets. While the rationale for combining implementation of the different program models appears justified, the evaluation found no subsequent discussion on the follow-on implications of these changes on youth trained and job creation targets. In addition, the lack of documentation and the absence of standardized frameworks/indicators for measuring results for each model makes it difficult to generate information on its efficacy, impact, and provide learning that could inform scalability. It also weakens the intended inter-country comparisons and learning through the flagship approach.

Some development results are available but not yet sufficient to draw conclusions on the effectiveness and value of specific program

Table 2: Flagship Program and Project Summary Results

Coding for Employment (CfE) implemented in Nigeria, Kenya, Senegal, Rwanda, Côte d'Ivoire	**Aims to develop premier coding academies, match graduates directly with ICT employers. The program intends to train 243,000 youth and create 9 million jobs**
Results: (i) the program has developed different delivery models tailored to different country contexts; (ii) eight out of the targeted 130 innovation centers of excellence to provide digital training have been established, while two were fully equipped; (iii) trained 64% (149,795/243,000) of the targeted youth coming from 45 countries. The online option adopted during the COVID-19 outbreak enabled the program to reach 130,000 students demonstrating a more cost-effective option for providing digital skills. Up to 73% of youth trained who participated in the online survey reported that they would definitely recommend the program to a friend; and (iv) less than 1% of the trainees have been linked to a job so far. The drop in job linkage numbers was associated with a reduction in recruitment and/or onboarding of interns by businesses and corporate agencies as a result of the pandemic. **Challenges:** (i) though some plans exist, funding for continuation and roll out of this program at scale is not yet available;[1] and (ii) at the current performance the 9 million direct and indirect jobs target even beyond 2025 appears to be unrealistic and unachievable.	
ENABLE Youth (Empowering Novel Agri-Business-Led Employment) with currently six stand-alone; seven embedded projects	**Aims to help young Africans incubate new larger scale agri-businesses and support them in accessing financing for the growth of these businesses targeting to train 10,000 unemployed graduates with a projection of creating 300,000 agribusiness enterprises and generating 1,500,000 jobs.[2]**
Results achieved by ongoing projects: (i) trained 4,486 agripreneurs (including 1,555 women and 1,518 youth); (ii) supported the establishment of 1,358 agribusinesses out of the targeted 300,000 enterprises; and (iii) created about 10,892 jobs. Various approaches for financing youth led enterprises (grants, loans, de-risking facilities) provide opportunities for learning. However, delays in setting up risk-sharing facilities and reaching agreements with financial intermediaries are hindering the timely provision of finance. **Other challenges/weaknesses:** (i) delays in construction of agricultural infrastructure and youth incubation/ training centers; (ii) slow rate of uptake of EY models due to funding constraints and interest from RMCs; (iii) inadequate systems for estimating targets and tracking core data on enterprise development and performance data, as well as job impact created; and (iv) inadequate resources (staffing and funding for monitoring limits more efficient coordination, standardization and quality of program monitoring and fostering joint learning).	
Skills Enhancement Zones under Special Agro-Processing Zones (SAPZ)	**Builds capacities of youth farmers and youth led enterprises/startups and other stakeholders to access and optimize economic opportunities across the value chain in targeted agro industrial zones across 11 countries.**
Results: By December 2021, the Bank had approved 12 SAPZ projects that are expected to create 820,000 jobs and train up to 54,900 persons.[3] However, at the time of the evaluation, there was insufficient information available on the progress of these projects to determine the results and effectiveness of this flagship program.	

1 Currently integrated in the Nigeria - Investment in Digital and Creative Enterprises (I-DICE).
2 These targets are extracted from the ENABLE Youth program voucher. It was difficult to derive targets from existing appraisal reports due to differences in indicators and availability of data across the projects.
3 The exact number of the youth benefiting from jobs and training is not evident as not all projects provide disaggregated information.
Source: Project Appraisal Reports, Implementation Performance Reports and County Missions.

models. The level of adoption and implementation of all three flagship programs is still low. The CfE pilot program was found to be promising and has demonstrated adaptability but is unlikely to achieve its targets under the current design, planning, and financing arrangements. The assumptions on creating 9 million direct and indirect jobs are not supported by evidence. ENABLE Youth embraces a multi-pronged approach to address several constraints to youth employment but is struggling with a lower-than-expected adoption by RMCs. Existing projects have so far registered minimal results in establishing a sizable number of the youth-led enterprises needed to develop and sustain job creation (see summaries on results in Table 2). In addition, there is no evidence of a systematic process for assessing and refining the flagship models, thereby compromising feedback on individual program model performance and the extent of scalability across different contexts.

Generally, the adoption of program models was found to be slow, meaning that they are not yet being implemented at scale to demonstrate the value of the flagship approach. Low demand due to constrained financial resources, the COVID-19 pandemic and civil strife resulted in a break in implementation of some of the activities. Within an environment of constrained resources, there is less appetite from RMCs to take on loans to fund full flagship programs. Implementation experience during the first five years has shown that RMCs prefer integrated and customized solutions that address multiple constraints to job creation and productivity. At this point in time, there is low likelihood of creating the target 22 million direct and indirect jobs, and the training of an additional 24.2 million youth through the flagship program approach, as envisaged in the JfYA Strategy, even beyond 2025.

Innovation Lab

Innovation and Entrepreneurship Lab (the Lab) has laid the foundation for entrepreneurial eco-system support but has made less progress in generating an evidence-base for impactful projects and incubating ideas. The Lab was established in 2019 with funding from the Fund for African Private Sector Assistance, in the framework of funding support to the Boost Africa Investment Program. At the time of the evaluation, the Lab was staffed with six personnel and had mobilized over USD 8 million in funding from different sources.

To date, the Lab is providing, training, mentoring, and equipping ESOs, as well as direct support to targeted youth entrepreneurs (business development services, access to finance, market linkages) as part of its eco-system approach. In the period 2020–2021, the Lab designed the ENNOVA, an online platform to aggregate, connect and enable actors in the African entrepreneurship ecosystem. It also acts as a one-stop shop for resources developed by the Bank and other agencies on entrepreneurship and innovation. However, the additional value of the enterprise development support provided by the Lab is not evident, as it does not demonstrate how it differs and/or leverages similar support provided through the flagship program projects, other YEI MDTF-funded activities and primary youth employment activities in terms of scope and scale. For example, the Southern Africa Regional Development and Business Delivery Office is developing another digital platform, i.e., the SMEnhancer that also aims to link youth/women enterprises to relevant support.[43] The evaluation found that weak coordination of SME and enterprise development support is a challenge across the Bank and therefore not peculiar to the implementation of the JfYA Strategy.[44]

The evaluation found that the knowledge generation component of the Lab is still nascent. As of December 2021, the Lab had completed five research activities that have been used by other JfYA Strategy components and other Bank departments/ country offices to support evidence-based project designs.[45] However, the Lab is yet to position and equip itself as the Bank's youth entrepreneurial knowledge and learning hub, and this affects its ability to implement youth employment initiatives at scale. The evaluation found no system in place yet for the compilation of knowledge and lessons on the Bank's youth employment interventions and/ or evaluation of the flagship models as envisaged under the Strategy. The current design of the Lab does not adequately reflect its role on knowledge generation of scalable ideas and assessment of the Bank's own interventions on youth employment to identify impactful market-driven solutions.[46] Despite progress in increasing staff numbers and funds mobilization, such resource constraints remain a challenge for the Lab.

Enabling Youth Employment Index/Dashboard

The Enabling Youth Employment (EYE) Dashboard is developed but not available to RMCs and the public. The EYE Dashboard was designed to provide an accurate and holistic understanding of the labor-market situation by measuring youth-employment outcomes, as well as the policy and regulatory environment for youth employment. The EYE Dashboard was initially planned as an index that would provide a comparative vision of each country's youth employment landscape and context. It was considered that the Index would be used to compare country efforts.

The EYE Dashboard was developed as a collaborative effort between different Bank departments and then reviewed by technical experts from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Department for International Development, (now Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office) and ILO. The Index draws on existing data from international organizations such as ILO. The first report on the EYE Index and its outcomes was launched in 2017 (AfDB, 2017a). The EYE Dashboard is housed at https://dataportal.opendataforafrica.org/eye# but the site was inoperative at the time of the evaluation. Discussions with Bank staff revealed that plans to grant external access to these data were halted due to the outdated nature of labor statistics and their diminished relevance in light of the impact of the pandemic on the labor market. The dashboard would need to be updated and widely disseminated (including to RMC governments) if it is to be used as a policy dialogue and decision-making tool as intended. If updated and available, the EYE could also complement the JSMS data on youth employment.

Investment

Though only half of the six planned activities under the Investment Strategic Pillar are ongoing, they were found to be generating necessary finance and stimulating private sector investment. However, the extent of reach and the impact of these interventions on the youth is unknown.

Under the Investment pillar, the Bank planned to undertake six activities:[47] (i) provide guarantees for lending to SMEs; (ii) support to student loan finance programs; (iii) investment in venture equity funds through the Boost Africa Investment Fund; (iv) provide lines of credit for on-lending to SMEs; (v) direct investment to grow youth centric businesses; and (vi) use challenges to incentivize private investment in youth employment challenges.

The Bank has increased equity in the Africa Guarantee Fund (AGF) towards reducing the risks of lending to SMEs. The Bank's financing to the AGF was expected to reduce financing risks through guarantees for lending to SMEs. In 2018, the Bank increased its equity in the AGF[48] through a USD 10 million investment as planned under the JfYA Strategy. However, the evaluation found no evidence that a Youth Access to Finance program that would include, amongst others, the provision of technical assistance and partial credit guarantees to financial intermediaries for on-lending to young entrepreneurs and SMEs was launched as planned. Nevertheless, AGF annual reports indicate that, since 2018, the number of youth-led SMEs receiving credit through the guarantees has increased from 12,300 to 16,800. However, the capital structure of the Fund does not allow for ring-fencing of resources to funding agencies and therefore attribution of results becomes difficult. In addition, the AGF has received an additional USD 500,000 under the YEI MDTF to provide capacity development services to train and mentor youth-led businesses (400 entrepreneurs) in Ghana, Nigeria, Mali, Togo, and Zimbabwe to prepare them to access financing from a financial institution. This program has suffered implementation and reporting delays.

The planned student loan finance program was found to be not feasible within the Bank systems. The Bank intended to provide technical assistance and loans to financial intermediaries to issue loans to tertiary and vocational education students to acquire the skills. Interviews with staff revealed that this action never materialized due to the absence of suitable instruments or products within the Bank, i.e., dedicated lines of credit, guarantees and equity investments needed to finance the student loans. It appeared that planning for this activity did not sufficiently reflect a realistic understanding of Bank processes and instruments. This activity would require country level structuring and dedicated partners (e.g., financiers, education institutions, employers).

Equity investments in venture capital funds through the Boost Africa Investment Program were found to be increasing access to capital for young entrepreneurs. However, the absence of age disaggregated data makes it difficult to establish the extent of reach and impact on youth. The Boost Africa Investment Program is a partnership between the AfDB, the European Investment Bank and the European Commission. It aims to expand economic opportunities for youth through skills development and job creation across SSA, with a focus on investment in businesses in the early stages.

By the time of the evaluation, AfDB had met only 14% of its targeted investment of EUR 50 million in the Boost Africa Investment Program through a EUR 7 million investment in the EUR 100 million Partech fund that targets technology-oriented start-ups and early-stage SMEs with an anticipated reach and impact on youth enterprises and jobs. Consultations with relevant Bank staff revealed that efforts to invest an additional EUR 28.5 million into other equity funds was ongoing. This would raise the total AfDB investment to 85% following a COVID-19-related hiatus on equity investments by the Bank.[49] Additional funding from the European Commission is available to de-risk the AfDB investment.

Despite the strong focus on youth in the Boost Africa design document, the implementation team indicated that it faces difficulty in enforcing a youth focus in the equity funds and in measuring youth outcomes. The team explained that, as with other lending institutions, fund managers are unlikely to target youth-specific business without proven track records and collateral. In addition, risk assessment criteria within the Bank are already stringent and have never been adapted for high-risk population segments which include youth. From discussions held with stakeholders within the Bank, the evaluation found that increasing access to capital for such populations has been more successful through the use of dedicated risk-sharing mechanisms, as is done under Affirmative Finance Action for Women in Africa (AFAWA), the collaboration with Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative (WeFi) and green enterprises. In addition, commercial entities such as financial intermediaries often lack efficient measurement systems to track and report on development outcomes, a challenge corroborated by both Task Managers and commercial banks visited in the course of field missions. At the time of this evaluation, there was no information available on the level of funding going to youth-led businesses, or overall and/or net job creation. The Bank's financial services team expected the youth to be the largest beneficiaries, based on the labor force demographics and characteristics of enterprises being supported.

The evaluation failed to establish the extent of reach and benefit to youth enterprises from lines of credit. The JfYA Strategy Implementation Plan anticipated that USD 25 million of the USD 125 million of the Africa SME Program would be allocated to JfYA Strategy implementation to promote lending to youth entrepreneurs, including microenterprises and SMEs. From stakeholder engagements and document reviews, it became clear that the SME Program does not have an explicit youth focus, nor has it adapted its processes in any way to respond to the JfYA Strategy. The SME Program targets SMEs broadly, benefiting all businesses, including youth-led businesses. This was validated by banks issuing LoCs that were visited during the field visits. The evaluation also found no information collected on direct reach and impact on enterprises and jobs created for youth. In addition, the ongoing development of an online SME reporting system does not demonstrate that the Bank will be able to track youth-led businesses. Nevertheless, the financial services team expressed that youth, as the largest demographic, stand to benefit from jobs created arising from an expanded and vibrant SME sector.

As indicated in previous sections, the evaluation found other primary youth employment projects that include components on access to finance for youth businesses in the form of training and business development, linkage to financial intermediaries and provision of loans/credits or guarantees. These include the ENABLE Youth, SAPZ, the Innovation Lab and other YEI MDTF-funded projects. The Bank is conducting feasibility studies on establishing country-led Youth Entrepreneurship Investment Banks (YEIBs) in 10 countries[50]. The YEIBs will provide a more comprehensive range of financial and non-financial services tailored for young entrepreneurs through the different stages of development of their businesses. and enable better access to finance and coordination of enterprise support activities for young entrepreneurs. It remains to be seen how the YEIBs will address the challenges with current programs, including the extent of targeting of the youth, including those in the informal sectors; and the measurement of outcomes.

There is insufficient information to determine the level of direct investments to youth-centric businesses. The JfYA Strategy stated that the Bank would make direct investments of debt or equity into enterprises, targeting businesses that have high potential for job creation, or those that support human capital development. However, the evaluation did not receive any information on such investments.

The Challenge mechanism applied by the Bank did not incentivize market-based solutions to youth employment barriers, as had been planned in the JFYA Strategy. The Bank, through the Innovation Lab and the ENABLE Youth Program, has held four challenge initiatives to support innovation and entrepreneurship among youth, awarding prizes to 110 successful young entrepreneurs. These included the AgriPitch Competitions, held in 2018, 2019 and 2020; and the Africa vs Virus Challenge. While the vision of the Strategy was that such challenges would address market barriers (supply/demand/linkages) directly, the actual prize challenges implemented were not aligned to the strategy intentions. These challenges rather targeted young entrepreneurs to develop and nurture innovations in specific technical areas or address value chain barriers. Although the young entrepreneurs who won the challenges can grow their businesses and hire more people, the designs of the challenge prizes in and of themselves are not solutions to employment barriers. Nevertheless, these competitions provide greater visibility and platforms for the youth to develop and showcase their businesses, as well as generate employment and innovative ideas that can have far-reaching impacts.

Adequacy of Bank Systems, Resources and Operations to Support Achievement of Youth Employment Outcomes

This section assesses the extent to which the Bank provided resources and established systems and platforms to enable the implementation of youth employment interventions and secure JfYA Strategy results.

Financing

The Bank has mobilized significant levels of funding for youth employment operations. However, the evaluation found the nature and type of funding to be insufficient to finance the implementation of some critical elements of the Strategy to address youth employment at scale.

The planned JfYA Facility (Special Fund) was not established. The Bank estimated that implementation of the JfYA Strategy would cost UA 4.1 billion.[51] The Jobs for Youth in Africa Facility, valued at UA 3.5 billion, was expected to contribute 85% of the required funding to implement of the Strategy alongside other Bank-related funds and facilities, and direct co-financing from external donors (estimated at UA 347 million) and RMC cost-sharing (estimated at UA 274 million). The evaluation found that expectations around the level of financing and the time required to establish such a Facility were overly optimistic and aspirational. The expected level of funding for such a Fund could also be considered ambitious, when compared with similar multi-donor trust funds such as the Africa Water Facility that raised only EUR 163 million between 2006 and 2020. The evaluation found no documentation on a resource mobilization strategy to guide the establishment of the Special Fund. The Bank did not make any financial allocation/ investment towards the establishment of this Special Fund to crowd in other funding from other partners and the private sector, as anticipated in the Implementation Plan. Overall expectations of financing the Strategy's implementation primarily through a Special Fund did not adequately optimize Bank systems of funding, country allocations, and work programming.

Instead, the Bank established the USD 38.9 million YEI MDTF to mobilize resources from donors to support growth of the entrepreneurship ecosystem in Africa and to help create jobs for its youth. Being the only dedicated JfYA Strategy funding vehicle within the Bank, the YEI MDTF has been critical in creating enabling environments for youth employment and supporting catalytic activities to unlock significant employment potentials. With funding from this Trust Fund, the Bank has been able to explore innovative ideas, including the YEIBs, JSMS and supporting the continent's growth in progressive sectors such as digital, "fashionomics" and/or the creative sector. However, the resources were not found to be commensurate with the ambitious objectives of the Fund as the main grant vehicle supporting implementation and the scale-up of JfYA Strategy interventions, currently active in 11 countries. More detailed information on the YEI MDTF is provided in a separate Case Study Report.

Other Bank resources and co-financing have come in to play the primary role in facilitating implementation of the JfYA Strategy, with implications for some interventions. As indicated in earlier sections, the Bank invested over UA 5.16 billion in the 176 primary youth employment projects between 2016 and 2021. Other projects worth UA 14.19 billion are also contributing to youth employment outcomes. The Bank was able to leverage an additional UA 2.8 billion from other partners to support implementation of the 176 primary projects. Other externally mobilized resources have supported the CfE pilot phase, facilitated the Innovation Lab, and provided equity financing under Boost Africa. Though the Bank anticipated to initially rely on its traditional lending instruments as the process of establishment and resource mobilization for the Special Fund was underway, these Bank resources and direct co-financing have subsequently become the primary source of funding for JfYA Strategy implementation, exceeding the initial estimate of UA 347 million.

While high levels of funding from across the Bank demonstrate broad ownership of the Strategy, support the One-Bank approach and increase the chances of sustainability of addressing youth employment within the Bank, the evaluation found that this funding does not sufficiently support some elements of the Strategy. The funding for primary and secondary youth employment projects, mostly in the form of investment lending,[52] has left some planned interventions, including capacity building, knowledge management, and innovative/piloting of new ideas, underfunded. Discussions with relevant Bank staff and review of documentation revealed that, in the absence of dedicated funding as originally envisaged, the Bank has not been able to fully implement core components of the Strategy. These include staff and RMC capacity-building activities, support for project appraisal and supervision missions, support for the Innovation Lab, and for flagship activities at scale. The location of the Jobs team under the AHHD Front Office (AHHD.0) also has implications in terms of securing and managing a dedicated budget, as it falls under the AHHD.0 budget and its needs and priorities are considered alongside other critical AHHD.0 priorities. The evaluation team could not establish how much of the estimated UA 31 million for Jobs team administrative expenses as earmarked in the Implementation Plan has been allocated. The Jobs team also considers that this positioning affects its ability to source resources from other Bank departments, as such activities are viewed as "part of" the AHHD department, or an AHHD initiative.

Human resources

Modifications to the staffing structure and numbers were found to have mixed effects on the adequacy of human resources to coordinate implementation of the Strategy.

The JfYA Strategy provided for a dedicated and specialized team to support other departments and coordinate implementation at the Bank and RMC levels. In the course of implementation, the Bank made substantial changes to the staffing structure, with mixed effects on the adequacy of human resources and its ability to coordinate implementation of the Strategy. These changes included the introduction of new positions, including the JfYA Coordinator position, and changes to functions, grade levels and locations of staff within the department and based in the regions.

The Jobs team has played a critical role in different phases of design and management of youth employment projects as anticipated. The portfolio review revealed that the AHHD/Jobs team was directly involved in close to 60% of the primary youth employment projects, as Task Managers (31%) or members of the peer review team (29%). The Jobs team are also part of some project teams. The review also showed that primary youth employment projects benefiting from the expertise of AHHD/Jobs team (as Task Manager or peer reviewer) achieved effectiveness (i.e., 4.4 months compared with 6.1 months) and disbursement (2.8 months compared with 4.2 months) faster. The evaluation found mixed experiences regarding the relocation and/or designation of some of the Jobs team members as focal points across the five regional offices. In some cases, this resulted in more accessible expertise that is enabling better integration of youth employment considerations across the regional portfolio. However, when this role was not structured and formalized as a JfYA Strategy regional focal point, the staff member was more engaged in developing and managing investment projects.

However, at the time of the evaluation, six of the original 18 positions were unfilled. The evaluation could not confirm whether the staffing structure proposed in the Implementation Plan was approved. The JfYA Coordinator position and other staff positions within the immediate Jobs team and YEI MDTF were filled in 2018, over two years into the Strategy, impacting the pace of roll-out of new initiatives. Discussions held with the Jobs team revealed that some job descriptions had been altered in terms of function and purpose, and some staff had been recruited in departments other than AHHD, affecting their availability for JfYA-related tasks. Stakeholders consulted across the Bank expressed the view that the tasks and responsibilities of the filled positions often deviate from what is designed, sometimes extending beyond the mandate of youth employment. Some of the unfilled positions, including that of Investment Officer, have affected the Jobs team's ability to influence investments, especially in the NSO sector. The evaluation found that only five out of 99 NSOs[53] approved between 2016 and 2021 were categorized as primary youth employment projects. Moreover, none of the NSO projects were found to have benefited from the direct support of the Jobs team or received other support to promote youth employment. Discussions with the AFAWA team revealed that having dedicated investment officers has been critical in enabling them to apply a gender lens in investment projects.

In addition, some critical tasks in the Strategy Implementation Plan are not occurring as planned. These include the ongoing assessment and adjustment of the flagship program models, support for capacity development of RMCs, integration of youth considerations in LoCs, support to financial intermediaries, and strategic research, knowledge management and innovation activities within the Lab. The evaluation found that this has an effect on the Bank's ability to implement the Strategy at scale and sustainability. Specifically, capacity to integrate youth employment considerations within the Bank and RMCs is not being sufficiently developed, knowledge on innovative scalable ideas emerging from Bank projects is not generated and availed to staff, and financial services programs are not being adapted to cater for financing for youth-led enterprises.

Governance

Critical governance, advisory and coordination structures have not been established to support the delivery of a Bank-wide Strategy.

The JfYA Strategy Implementation Plan provides for a governing council and two advisory bodies (a Task Force and a Presidential Advisory Council) to provide strategic and technical guidance in the implementation. The Governing Council for the Strategy, composed of the JfYA Facility representatives and technical staff, was linked to the Special Fund and has therefore never been set up. However, a similar governing structure of the YEI MDTF is operational, and stakeholders interviewed have expressed satisfaction with its decision-making performance.

The evaluation found no apparent mechanism for oversight and coordination spanning JfYA Strategy implementation across departments of the Bank. It also found no evidence that the Task Force, a dedicated forum for staff, exists and meets bi-monthly as foreseen. These shortcomings limit opportunities to share experiences, lessons, highlight challenges, and identify and pursue collaborative opportunities across the Bank. The impact of the absence of such a coordination platform is worsened in light of the complex and sometimes siloed approach to work planning within the Bank. The evaluation found that, while a CSP offers more opportunities for integrated planning, corporate-level work programs and budgets are much more department-specific. Apart from the implementation plan prepared in 2016, the evaluation team did not find another Strategy-wide work planning or management tool. Gaps in coordination between departments and sectors were identified at various levels, limiting opportunities for optimizing PBOs, inclusive financial services, and private sector development activities to address youth interests.[54]

The Presidential Advisory Council, also referred to as the Presidential Youth Advisory Group (PYAG) and composed of youth[55] and civil society organizations, was expected to provide diverse input on key strategic and implementation issues, assist the Jobs team in connecting to the youth, and provide guidance and technical assistance as needed. However, apart from the initial planning meetings in 2018 and participation in selected public events, this group has not been very active, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic. The evaluation found no reports on results of implementation of PYAG workplans and attempts to meet with them in the course of the evaluation were unsuccessful. In the past, there was a dedicated officer to support the activities of the PYAG, but this position has not been substantively replaced and resourced in light of funding constraints. The limited functionality of such a committee may have reduced the opportunity for greater resource mobilization, advocacy for key issues, and placing strategy implementation higher on the Bank's agenda. This also means that the anticipated youth engagement at the higher strategy level has not been fully realized.

Monitoring and evaluation

Despite attempts at integrating youth employment considerations in Bank M&E systems, overall JfYA Strategy results measurement and monitoring was found to be inadequate and not systematic enough to inform strategy management and continuous learning. Ongoing work on the Jobs and Skills Marker System and other Bank-wide improvements in monitoring systems are expected to address some of the current challenges.

The JfYA Strategy monitoring and evaluation approach is guided by the Bank's overarching approach and systems for M&E. The Strategy set out to integrate JfYA indicators into Bank performance monitoring systems (i.e., overall Bank Group's Results Measurement Framework (RMF) 2016–2025, Annual Development Effectiveness Review (ADER), the Bank Results Score Card, the Executive Dashboard, sector indicators, and project results based logical frameworks) alongside preparation of regular results briefs and leveraging lessons learned into new M&E systems developed in the course of strategy implementation.

To date, a few JfYA Strategy impact and outcome indicators have been integrated in the corporate RMF, and are collected and reported through Bank-wide systems. These indicators (job creation and levels of youth unemployment) are reported in the ADER and in the Bank's annual report. Others are supposed to be tracked through the ongoing implementation monitoring and self-assessment systems at the complex, department, country and project levels. However, the evaluation found that systematic tracking and reporting across the different complexes and projects has not advanced as expected,[56] due to: (i) burdensome JfYA Strategy results framework that required tracking a high number of indicators some of which are not directly relevant and/or feasible within the Bank; (ii) the absence of a monitoring plan providing standardized definitions, systematic collection, aggregation and analysis of data across key indicators; (iii) unused sector action plans that were supposed to identify and track sector specific employment indicators; (iv) inadequate human resources; and (v) a general lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities for monitoring Bank-wide strategies. Data are available for only 32% of the 40 indicators.

Although the JfYA Strategy is one of the Presidential Initiatives tracked regularly by the Cabinet, none of the key jobs' indicators are included in the delivery dashboard as planned, which limit Bank-wide accountability on job creation. In comparison, climate change and gender indicators are available on this dashboard and tracked across the different complexes.

Similar monitoring challenges exist at the project level and other components of the JfYA portfolio, including the YEI MDTF and the Innovation Lab. From the case studies, Project Implementation Units reported that their M&E capacity is over-stretched and not equipped to systematically track job creation and other indicators. Private sector partners including commercial banks also expressed difficulties in collecting jobs and other outcome data due to capacity constraints and the unwillingness of enterprises to disclose some information for fear of tax implications.

Though the Bank has now established mechanisms for collecting data on (estimates of) both direct and indirect jobs, data quality weaknesses pose significant limitations to the availability of information, its use and assessment of the Bank's progress in creating jobs.

Direct jobs: The evaluation encountered mixed understanding on approaches to measuring jobs, worsened by inadequate and/or outdated documentation on indicator definitions and approaches. Data currently reported at the corporate level are based on planned rather than actual jobs created, without attention to quality, type and net/additional jobs, all of which limit the ability to demonstrate actual Bank performance in job creation. The evaluation also found a likelihood of under-reporting at the corporate level due to capturing results from projects not registered in the SAP and missed reporting. Disaggregation for gender and/or age, even when required, is inconsistent. Apart from supervision missions, verification and quality assurance of project level data could be improved as the evaluation found cases of miscalculations. It is worth noting that difficulty in collecting data on direct jobs actually created is not unique to the Bank. Country missions and discussions with project managers revealed significant challenges in measuring jobs at the project level due to capacity constraints, as well as a lack of sufficient guidance and harmonized indicator definitions. Discussions with selected development finance institutions, revealed that most of them do not conduct primary data collection on the number of direct jobs created, given the resource-intensity of this exercise.

Indirect Jobs: Since 2020, the Bank has adopted the Joint Impact Model (JIM) to estimate indirect jobs,[57] a major development towards improving measurement of development impacts. By capturing the supply chain, induced, and forward effect on jobs, the JIM allows a more comprehensive tracking of the employment effect of the Bank's funding. The Bank now has data on indirect jobs going back to 2016, andis working on providing a more complete set of information on indirect jobs created as a result of enabling impacts in more sectors (currently available for power and financial services), and estimates of project-level indirect jobs.

On a positive note, work started in late 2022 to develop and integrate standard indicators as part of the Management response to the IDEV evaluation of the Bank's RMF will support better alignment and reporting on cross-cutting employment indicators. This will be complemented by the JSMS roll-out and operationalization of the Bank-wide online Results Reporting System launched in 2021, revised guidance, and resumed training sessions on project design and M&E for operations staff by SNDR to stimulate improvements in monitoring practices.

Sustainability

The evaluation found the JfYA Strategy design strong on sustainability, given its attention to building institutional capacity and an enabling environment, and on developing entrepreneurship and strategic partnerships for addressing youth employment concerns. Consequently, there is a high likelihood of sustainability of the results of ongoing activities. The greatest risks to sustainability are related to implementation gaps that could affect the achievement of the required institutional capacity, a limited focus on youth beneficiaries, and exogenous factors that affect overall macroeconomic stability and resilience.

The first five years of the Strategy have focused on putting in place the systems and processes necessary for addressing youth employment over the coming decades. The mid-term evaluation has assessed the design considerations and the likelihood of the sustainability of the project results achieved so far.

Design considerations that increase the likelihood of sustainability

The evaluation found that the design of the JfYA Strategy embedded significant considerations to support sustainability. The Strategy's eco-system approach, and its focus on the private sector and capacity building, if implemented well, increases the likelihood of sustainability.

Strengthening capacity at the Bank and in RMCs supports scale and sustainability of youth employment. The JfYA Strategy's focus on greater incorporation of youth employment considerations into all projects, staff competencies, policies, processes, and systems within the Bank and RMCs lays a firm foundation for sustainability. Integration efforts are expected to enhance institutional and financial capacity thereby equipping Bank and RMCs with the necessary frameworks and resources to improve employment on the continent in the coming decades.

The eco-system approach to employment creation that underpins the JfYA Strategy increases the likelihood of sustainability of youth employment outcomes by addressing multiple barriers, supporting multi-stakeholder engagement, and promoting local solutions. The strong focus on developing youth entrepreneurship alongside skills development supports both job creation potential and improves employability.

Strong focus on the private sector was found to be technically sound and increases the likelihood of success and the sustainability of the results achieved given their role in job creation. JfYA projects were found to be engaging and leveraging the private sector to close the loop between labor supply and market needs, generate additional financing, support co-creation opportunities, and the delivery of more sustainable solutions. For example, linkages have been developed between training institutes/TVET schools and private sector employers across the ENABLE, SAPZ projects, or TVET schools in Kenya requiring private sector input in curriculum design. Partnership with global players such as Microsoft and LinkedIn in to build digital skills increase the employability of youth. Investments in equity funds that focus on the youth, as for example under Boost Africa, have the potential to increase access to finance for youth-led enterprises.

Building the local eco-system capacity: Youth employment interventions being implemented were found to be building capacity to support enterprise development and employment, thereby increasing the likelihood of sustainability. The Innovation Lab, ENABLE and SAPZ projects program models are strengthening training centers, incubation centers, aggregators, and TVET institutions to train and equip young entrepreneurs. For example, country field visits to Malawi revealed that the Jobs for Youth Africa project has expanded the capacity of community training centers and supported the development of several key enabling policies to improve greater access and quality of skills development and business development services for young entrepreneurs. Another project also facilitated the establishment of the first risk-sharing facility in Malawi to improve access to finance for the youth. The likelihood of sustainability is even greater where capacity building has been combined with enabling policy. Examples are the business incubation strategy that supports accreditation of incubation centers and BDS providers in Malawi, the MSME policy in Kenya that supports targeted activities for youth entrepreneurship within MSMEs, and the TVET policy in Kenya that requires collaboration between TVET institutions and private sector organizations in designing training curriculums. The evaluation found that CfE programs were building the infrastructural and technical capacity of local universities/ training institutes for continued provision of digital skills within the countries.

Risks to Sustainability

Inadequate implementation of key elements is one of the major risks to sustainability of JfYA Strategy results. To date, uneven progress in developing necessary institutional capacity diminishes the likelihood of sustainability. Critical activities in building Bank staff capacity, including technical guidance and assistance, and systematic monitoring, is affecting the extent of optimization of the Bank's resources for addressing youth employment. Limited implementation of similar capacity development efforts and labor-market information support at the RMC level are impediments to achieving sustainable progress on addressing youth employment.

Inadequate resources may limit the scale and sustainability of promising interventions started under the JfYA Strategy. For instance, the CfE flagship, with iterations and pivots, is demonstrating fairly strong performance with the donor funding received. Apart from expectations of individual projects integrating a component(s) of the CfE program,[58] the evaluation found no clear plan for the ongoing financial support of CfE after the end of the Rockefeller grant funding. A second example of this type of innovative project is the Souk at Tanmia project in North Africa, funded by a multi-donor trust fund, which demonstrated strong evidence of employability and job creation. However, it has no onward funding at the conclusion of the existing donor funding period. Already the challenges to internally generating funding, both within the Bank and RMCs to support youth employment initiatives, demonstrate that sustained programing needs to be funded from other sources.

Country ownership. There was evidence that projects reviewed as part of the country case studies have been designed and implemented in collaboration with the RMCs/local partner institutions directly responding to the needs identified in the local context. Projects are implemented via local institutions and respond to country conditions. Where poor country engagement was observed, it resulted in low support and weak program designs. This was the case for some of the projects in DRC where it was reported that planning was mainly carried out by AfDB experts or task members, resulting in a limited understanding of the youth employment context in the country. Projects were aligned with government programs but failed to recognize certain barriers faced by the youth. Similarly, pre-designed flagship program models have met with mixed success, as RMCs have preferred to customize and adapt them according to their needs and resources.

Youth engagement. Generally, the evaluation found lower-than-expected levels of engagement of the youth in project processes across the five case study countries. There was stronger engagement of the youth in implementation, as beneficiaries and sometimes as facilitators/service providers than other phases of the project cycle, including design and appraisal. In Malawi, the youth were engaged as facilitators/community trainers and are also represented on a national committee to oversee the risk-sharing facility under the Agricultural Infrastructure and Youth in Agribusiness Project to advocate for youth interests. However, where inadequate engagement has occurred, coupled with incidences of poor communication and implementation delays, as demonstrated in the Kenya ENABLE Youth project, the youth were more demotivated and reported feeling disenfranchised. Low engagement will likely affect long-term outcomes and participation.

Access to finance for enterprises. Inadequate actions to address barriers to financing for youth-led enterprises and overall financing for SMEs will compromise the creation and sustainability of jobs. Across two of the five case study countries, significant implementation delays and/or cancellations of financing options under ongoing primary youth employment projects with access to finance components have highlighted this concern. Importantly, there is currently insufficient information from mainstream financial services projects on youth-led enterprises that have benefited from financial services projects or even how these services are being adapted to address specific barriers faced by the youth (see the previous sub-section on Investments). Again, the evaluation found the YEIBs to be a promising opportunity to improve opportunities for the financing of youth enterprises. An increase in equity funding also provides greater opportunities.

Exogenous risks to sustainability. In addition to the above risks to sustainability within the Bank's control, there remain exogenous macroeconomic risks, such as low economic growth (expected to remain at 4.1% in 2023), political instability, and shifts in global competitiveness that affect general economic growth and impact the structural transformation efforts needed to generate jobs. Over the next few years, the impact of the environment and climate change is expected to increase impacts on health and create an upsurge in humanitarian emergencies. Similarly, reductions in funding for entrepreneurship, in particular for youth entrepreneurship, continue to be a challenge for the Bank and other financial institutions. ■

Conclusions, Lessons and Recommendations

Conclusions

A productive and engaged youth population is at the core of social and economic transformation on the African continent. Failure to address youth constraints to decent employment and engagement in decision-making can have devastating consequences on economic development, and social and political stability within countries and across borders. Decades of jobless growth in Africa have limited economic opportunities for all, especially the youth. Africa's youth are more often stuck in low-paying jobs in the informal sector. They face both over-skilling and under-skilling challenges, which affect their ability to get decent paying jobs. Survival of youth-led enterprises is low as they struggle to access finance and business development services. The COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and geo-political events have worsened this situation by weakening macroeconomic fundamentals, job creation potential, and human development.

The JfYA Strategy was found to be relevant and serves to position the Bank to address youth employment across the continent, in complement with other Bank strategies. However, the changing economic growth context materialization of risks and other design shortcomings were found to undermine the overall validity of Theory of Change and realism of set targets. In terms of coherence, the strategy aligns well with corporate strategies, as well as development priorities of RMCs and other development partners. Though the Bank has mobilized significant financial resources to support the implementation of JfYA Strategy intentions, there have also been shortfalls in funding for some critical areas. Human resources and management systems expected to support the implementation of the JfYA as a Bank-wide strategy have not materialized as planned, with mixed effects on Strategy implementation.

Bank interventions were found to be creating jobs and equipping youth for employment but actual progress towards achievement of Strategy results and outcomes was difficult to establish. The Bank has registered mixed progress in the implementation of the key actions of the Strategy. In the course of implementation, the Bank has demonstrated flexibility in adapting, iterating, and changing actions and approaches to align the Strategy better with the Bank's systems and existing resources and to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and other external shifts that occurred during the evaluation period. While there is evidence of improved Integration of youth employment into operations, this is not yet sufficient at the systems level. The evaluation found that the inadequate systemic integration has manifested in the form of lost opportunities for addressing youth employment issues, and difficulty in standardizing monitoring and measurement of youth employment outcomes across the entire Bank portfolio. The Strategy emphasized the need for collection and dissemination of evidence of what works, but this is not yet happening systematically and this undermines the opportunities for demonstrating value and catalyzing implementation at scale within and across countries. It also prevents learning and activity adaptation and revision. The evaluation found that ongoing actions in development of the JSMS, review of the project classification and other monitoring enhancements all provide an opportunity to systemically adapt and integrate jobs and skills development in the coming years.

The JfYA Strategy design was found to be strong on sustainability given its eco-system approach, its attention to building institutional capacity and an enabling environment, and developing entrepreneurship and strategic partnerships for addressing youth employment concerns. The most significant risks to sustainability are related to implementation gaps that could affect the achievement of the required institutional capacity, inadequate focus on youth beneficiaries, limited interventions to sustainably address barriers to financing for youth-led enterprises and overall financing for SMEs, and exogenous factors that affect overall macroeconomic stability and resilience.

Lessons

1. **Over-optimistic expectations around fundamental elements of a strategy, such as dedicated financing through a Special Fund, human resource allocation, and the establishment of required systems, can undermine progress.** While the Strategy strived to be innovative, ambitious, and to implement at scale, initiatives that require new operational structures and systems, expertise and skills, and additional resources require more feasibility analysis, upfront commitment, and attention to risk mitigation. Although the evaluation found several examples of Bank adaptations to some of these shortcomings, risk mitigation surveillance to trigger required Management action should have been stronger. In the absence of sufficient finance, standardized monitoring and evaluation systems, the value of the flagship approach to scale up proven models seems to have diminished over time. In addition, some aspects of the Strategy did not align well and were not feasible within standard Bank operations and budgeting processes. Thorough analysis of the feasibility of the Strategy and its key interventions, securing upfront commitments, ongoing risk surveillance, and continuous monitoring of innovative elements are an essential part of strategy design and management processes.

2. **Governance structures supported by appropriate management tools, resources, and authority are essential for systematic coordination and oversight of Bank-wide strategies such as the JfYA Strategy.** Such structures are critical for a cross-cutting strategy to review progress, mobilize joint action to address bottlenecks, and leverage opportunities and synergies. While the Jobs team is expected to oversee and coordinate implementation of JfYA Strategy activities implemented across different departments, it does not have the tools, platforms, resources, and authority to effectively do this. Bank planning and monitoring systems were not sufficient to enable ongoing coordination, resource mobilization, and reporting. The Task Force meant to bring together staff from across different departments has not been established. Increasingly, Jobs team staff are over-stretched as they handle multiple activities and increasingly take on project management roles.

3. **The right incentives paired with accountability can strongly advance successful integration of employment considerations across the Bank.** Effective integration of youth employment (or broad employment) within the Bank would mean that programs across the Bank consider and adequately leverage and integrate opportunities for youth employment from the onset. Integration of youth employment in IFAD was reported to be more successful when combined with incentives and accountability structures within the institution. Within the AfDB, the gender marker system has enabled

better integration of gender across the Bank. In addition, the tracking of gender and climate change integration indicators in the Bank RMF and delivery dashboard raises the profile and accountability across different complexes.

4. **Skills development, when coupled with access to finance and non-financial support, is key to boosting employability and youth entrepreneurship.** Skills development is essential, but in itself it is insufficient to create jobs. It is therefore important to be realistic about job outcomes job outcomes from training and skills development activities. Firm creation and expansion create jobs, and this is where the intense focus on jobs targets and monitoring can be directed.

5. **Small-size grants can be effective in unlocking catalytic opportunities.** In the case of the JfYA Strategy, broadly, what has worked well is the shift towards catalytic efforts to unlock funding and support the achievement of the broader Strategy goals. Specifically, the Bank leveraged the USD 38.9 million in YEI MDTF funding to conduct feasibility and research studies of catalytic initiatives and financing of other innovative activities that otherwise may not have been funded. Evidence generated from these analytic studies has been used to unlock significant funding for scaled job creation from both internal Bank funds and other actors, including the private sector. The Fund has also been useful in facilitating other innovative activities. Some of these activities are now being replicated in countries and other regions.

Recommendations

IDEV makes the following recommendations:

1. **Update the Strategy and its implementation plan based on current circumstances and resources.** Bank Management is specifically advised to:
   - Update the Theory of Change, the Implementation Plan, and the targets for the remaining period of the Strategy, based on the findings from the mid-term evaluation, current realities (including Bank systems, the new AfDB Ten-Year Strategy under development, country specificities, and changes in the macroeconomic environment), and available resources.
   - Review and update the risk mitigation measures and surveillance plans to guide necessary adjustments to the Strategy and the Implementation Plan.

2. **Strengthen Results Measurement and Learning.** The Bank is advised to:
   - Advance implementation of the Jobs and Skills Marker System along with the necessary resources, technical assistance, and staff training to improve the quality, implementation, and measurement of youth employment outcomes across the Bank.
   - Improve the quality and consistency of data measuring actually created jobs for youth across the Bank's operations, and enhancing its ability to better demonstrate the results of the JfYA Strategy.
   - Consider adopting a jobs indicator among the Bank's KPIs to provide incentives and accountability for job creation, shared across Bank departments.
   - Review the JfYA Strategy's RMF, including considering reducing the existing number of indicators for delivering youth employment across the Bank, with a focus on relevance, feasibility, and utility. The framework should be accompanied by clear indicator definitions, measurement approaches, annual targets, clear roles and responsibilities, reporting procedures, and resource requirements to support data availability. The framework could also consider indicators of job quality and decent work, in line with building more resilient employment.

- Capacitate the Innovation Lab to take on its intended core role of generating evidence on and becoming the Bank's center of excellence on youth employment, and entrepreneurship with a view to coordinating learning and knowledge exchange, working hand in hand with regional offices, research, and other departments in the Bank, and other development partners.

3. **Continue to mobilize resources to support catalytic activities and high employment-creating projects.**

   The Bank is advised to expand the scale and scope of the YEI MDTF, in line with the new Trust Fund Policy 2021, to continue its catalytic work including feasibility studies, research and project assessments, and seed financing for innovative activities that will unlock funds for implementing job creation at scale.

4. **Strengthen leadership and coordination of youth employment across Bank departments, building on existing resources and considering other Bank priorities.**

   This can include reviewing the structure, positioning, functions, and resourcing of the JfYA team to provide leadership in the area of youth employment across the Bank. ■

Annexes

Annex 1: Evaluation Matrix

Key Questions	Sub-questions/What to look for	Indicators/Measures	Data/Information Sources/ Data Collection Methods
1. How well has the JfYA Strategy positioned the Bank to contribute to improving employment outcomes of youth in Africa? (Relevance and Coherence)			
1.1. To what extent are the Theory of Change, underlying assumptions and risks relevant and valid in the remaining strategy period and are any changes needed to achieve the expected results?	▪ Is the current Theory of Change known, understood and currently used? ▪ Are assumptions and risks still valid and does this affect the achievement of results? ▪ What things have changed in the operational context? How do they affect the implementation of JfYA strategy and achievement of intended targets? ▪ Any identified gaps / opportunities in the Theory of Change needed to support the achievement of the objectives? ▪ How did the COVID-19 pandemic affect the Theory of Change, the underlying assumptions, and the anticipated risks?	▪ Gaps in the Theory of Change, ▪ Extent to which the Theory of Change is valid and relevant for the current context, ▪ Reflection on the current youth employment context in 2022.	▪ Review of JfYA Strategy documents and implementation plan ▪ Review of ESWs and other relevant research and evaluations on youth employment issues in Africa ▪ Key informant interviews with Bank staff, i.e., JfYA Strategy implementation team, regional offices ▪ Country case studies ▪ Review of other contextual information and up-to-date research on youth employment issues
1.2. Are intervention areas and implementation approaches suited to the continent's needs in a changing global context?	▪ How does the JfYA Strategy address constraints, strengths, opportunities and challenges to youth unemployment in Africa across different contexts? ▪ How does the JfYA Strategy consider the different challenges and experiences faced by male and female youth? How has this evolved since the beginning of the Strategy? ▪ To what extent do the strategic levers and the respective activities address constraints and opportunities for employment creation? ▪ To what extent have interventions been adapted to respond to changes in the operating context? What has enabled this adaptive management? ▪ How well did the Bank through the JfYA Strategy respond to emerging issues from the COVID-19 pandemic? ▪ Have the principles identified as enabling factors through lessons learned under each of the strategic intervention areas (pillars) for implementation been incorporated?	▪ Perceptions on relevance and appropriateness of JfYA Strategy intervention areas and implementation approaches; ▪ Proportion of sampled JfYA projects that score satisfactory on relevance (disaggregated by sex, sector, region, country context); ▪ Proportion of sampled JfYA projects that have a gender focus/ target male/female youth differently; ▪ Extent to which JfYA Strategy aligns with the youth and RMC priorities, continental and global aspirations; and ▪ Extent to which JfYA Strategy interventions and implementation has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic and other changes in the operating environment.	▪ Review of ESWs and other relevant research and evaluations on youth employment issues in Africa ▪ Country case studies ▪ Interviews with Bank staff, youth, partners ▪ Online survey
1.3. How does the JfYA Strategy elevate and amplify similar strategies of the RMCs and other key development partners?	▪ How have the strategic levers, which emphasize partnerships, been activated in implementation? ▪ What are areas of convergence, divergence and/or duplication with other agency youth employment and entrepreneurship programs (goals, targets, systems and structures, implementation approaches)?	▪ Areas of leverage from the AfDB to other partner agencies; and ▪ Extent to alignment of JfYA Strategy to RMC policies and priorities.	▪ Review of JfYA against agency strategies, global and continental aspirations ▪ Key informant interviews with Bank staff, RMCs, counterpart MDBs, ILO, IFIs and bilateral agencies ▪ Policy reviews and benchmarking study ▪ Case studies

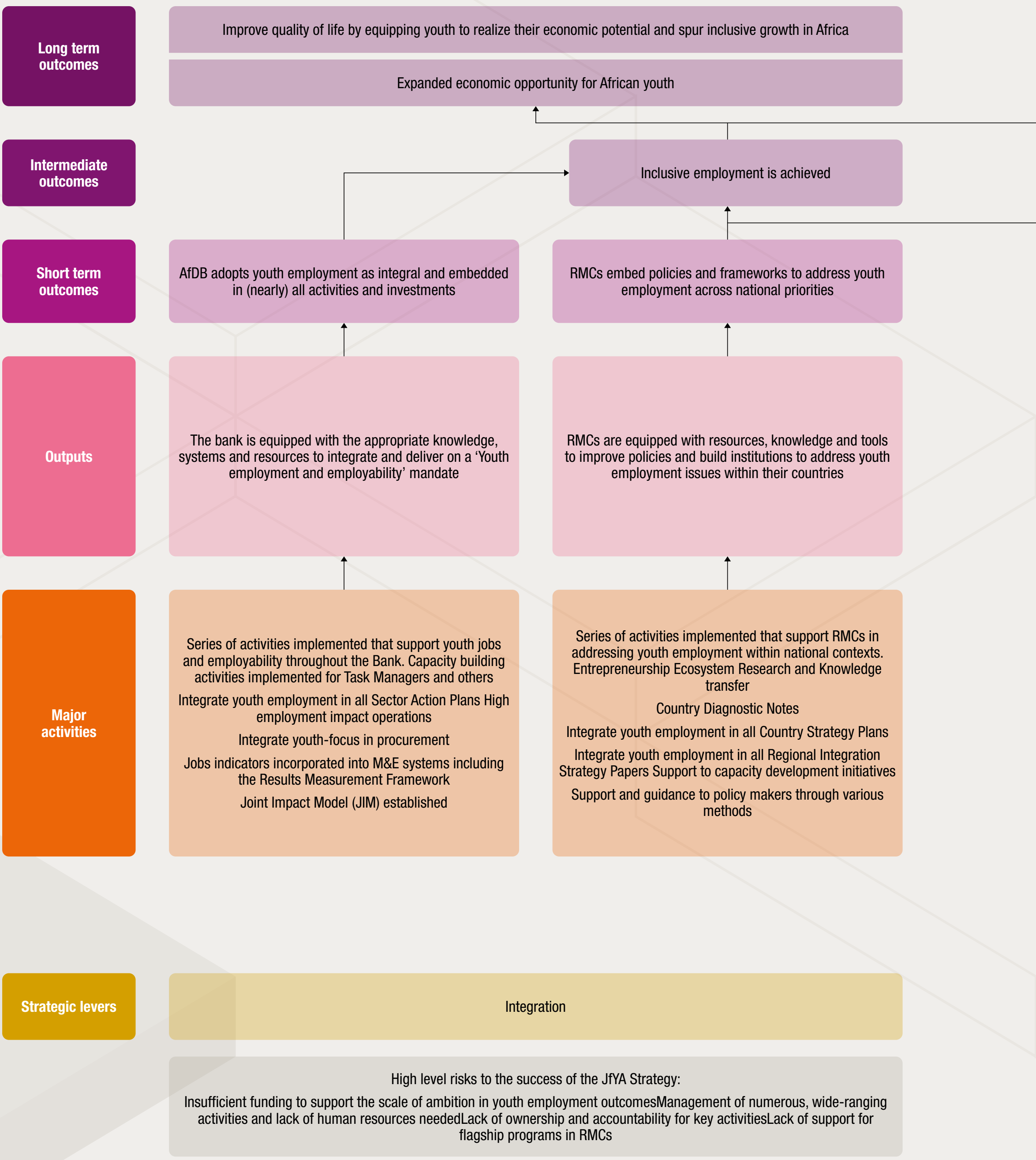
Key Questions	Sub-questions/What to look for	Indicators/Measures	Data/Information Sources/ Data Collection Methods
1.4. To what extent does the JfYA Strategy add value and elevate effort and activities with other Bank strategies and policies?	▌ How does the JfYA Strategy align with other High-5 and cross-cutting strategies? ▌ What are the synergies and interlinkages between the JfYA Strategy, and other interventions carried out by the AfDB? ▌ What is the value added of the JfYA Strategy to other policies and strategies?	▌ Areas of alignment and synergy; ▌ Areas of added value; and ▌ Areas of misalignment or lost opportunities.	▌ Review of the Bank's TYS, human capital strategy, High-5 strategies, private sector, financial services, fragility and resilience, gender, economic governance ▌ Interviews with Bank Management and implementing department staff
1.5. Are Bank resources, systems and structures adequate to support the achievement of intended results?	▌ What systems and structures are available to support JfYA Strategy implementation? ▌ What are the strengths and weaknesses of planning, financing, monitoring & evaluation and management systems? ▌ How has the availability, or lack, and strengths and weaknesses, affected the delivery of the strategy? ▌ Are financial resources and systems sufficient to support JfYA Strategy implementation? What are the gaps? ▌ Are human resources adequate in terms of numbers and skills mix? ▌ Has the available resourcing been able to support the implementation plan as originally anticipated? ▌ To what extent do the Bank's quality assurance process (QaE and exit) support the integration of youth entrepreneurship and employment issues across all Bank operations? ▌ How well has the Bank used its comparative advantage to advance strategy implementation and/or results?	▌ Extent to which planning, management, monitoring, and supervision, financing and quality assurance tools support the achievement of JfYA Strategy aspirations; ▌ Extent to which the PYAG is providing appropriate input in Strategy implementation; ▌ Extent to which the JIM provides data that meet quality standards (validity, reliability, timeliness, precision, integrity); and ▌ Required staffing and budget compared with work plan and tasks expected.	▌ Interviews and discussions with Jobs team, implementation departments and regional staff; Resource Mobilization and Partnerships Department, PYAG ▌ Review of implementation plans, manuals, and progress reports ▌ Assessment of JfYA Strategy results framework, monitoring tools and outputs ▌ Assessment of planning and quality assurance tools and the use thereof; ▌ Review of financial reports ▌ Review of JIM manuals, database and tools ▌ Review of past evaluations on self-assurance systems and plans
1.6. Are partnerships and collaboration mechanisms (i.e., both internal and external) contributing to the achievement of results, operating within the One-Bank Approach?	▌ How well has the One-Bank Approach been applied in implementation of the strategy so far? ▌ How have internal and external partnerships contributed to the results at different levels? ▌ What are challenges, opportunities and recommendations for improvement?	▌ Extent to which internal and external partnerships are affecting the achievement of progress and results; ▌ Perceptions on the Bank and RMC partnership on youth employment; and ▌ Enabling factors and best practices in partnership and collaboration.	▌ Key informant interviews with Bank staff ▌ Key informant interviews with RMCs and partner agencies

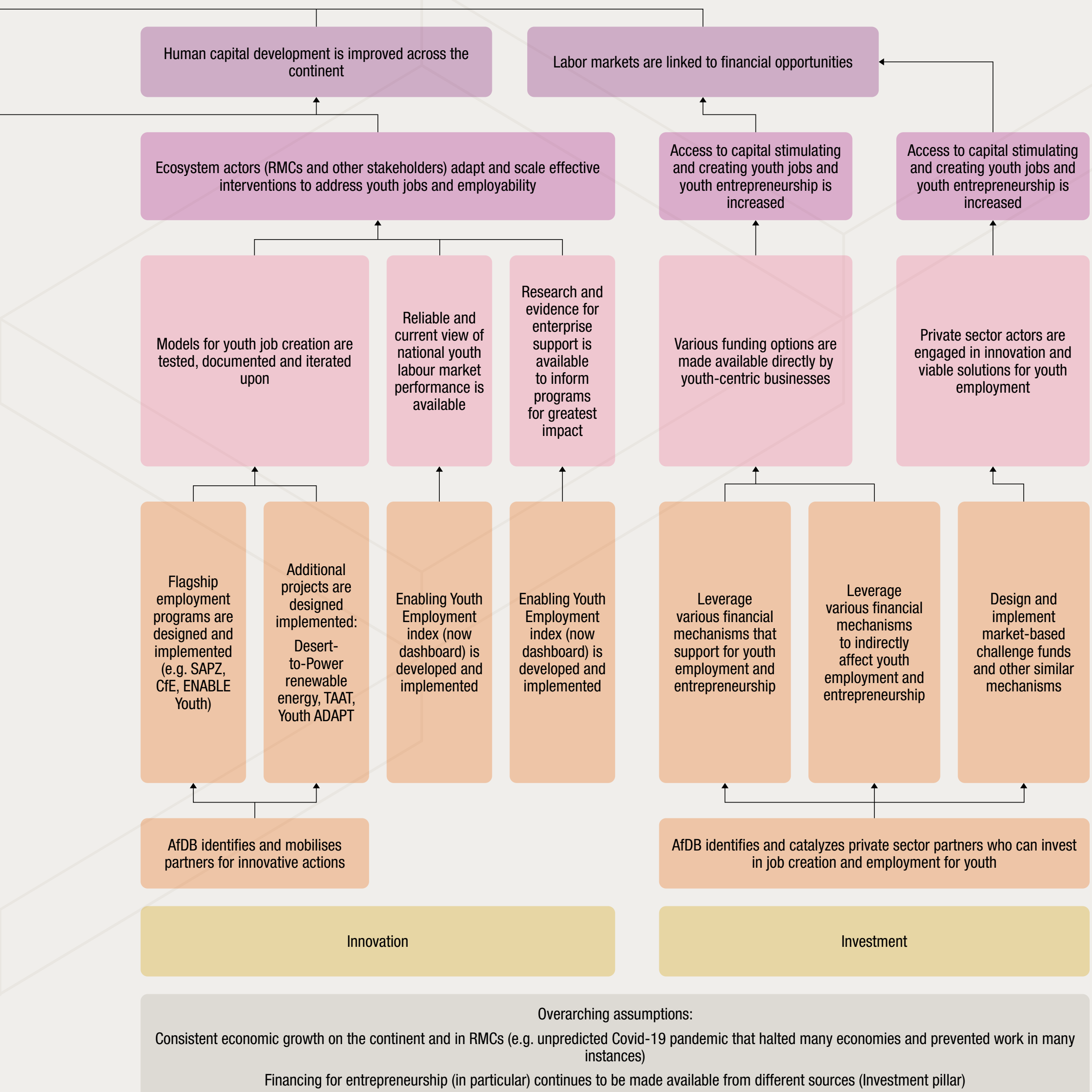
Key Questions	Sub-questions/What to look for	Indicators/Measures	Data/Information Sources/ Data Collection Methods
2. Is JfYA Strategy implementation contributing to improvements in youth employment in RMCs? (Effectiveness and Efficiency)			
2.1. Are the Strategy interventions and actions delivering the intended outputs and outcomes?	▌ What is the status of the implementation of different interventions and projects and initiatives? ▌ What has been achieved? What has progressed well? ▌ What are the observable differences in the Bank, RMCs, private sector partners, and other partners as a result of the JfYA Strategy, the strategic levers and the implementation thereof? ▌ Which results are unlikely to be achieved? Why not? ▌ Does the JfYA Strategy, its strategic levers, and the various activities, appear to be on track to deliver the expected outcomes sustainably within the next five years?	▌ # of implementation plan activities on track; ▌ # of completed projects that scored satisfactory on the effectiveness criteria; ▌ # of RMF indicators registering progress (disaggregated by gender); ▌ Level of Bank staff knowledge and application of JfYA Strategy implementation approach; ▌ Youth perceptions (male and female) of the effectiveness of interventions; ▌ # of projects that have a gender focus, or have accounted for targeting male/female youth in different ways; ▌ # of knowledge products and other ESWs produced and used; and ▌ Extent to which JfYA Strategy implementation is meeting ADF-14 and 15 commitments.	▌ Case studies ▌ Document review – briefing reports, flagship reports, Trust Fund annual reports, ADERs, Project completion reports and project mid-term review reports, PCRs/XSRENs ▌ Project review ▌ Indicator analysis ▌ Interviews and discussions
2.2. What key factors have influenced the achievement or non-achievement of intended outputs and outcomes?	▌ What internal and external factors are enabling the achievement of intended outcomes? What factors are hindering the achievement of outcomes? How might these be altered for greater success in the next five years? ▌ How did the involvement of the youth at different points in the design and implementation contribute to the effectiveness and probable sustainability of the activities? ▌ How did the COVID-19 pandemic affect the anticipated implementation plan, various activities within the Bank, within the RMCs and in the other partner stakeholders?	▌ List of contributing and hindering factors (disaggregated across intervention areas, target groups (including male/female youth), and country contexts).	▌ Case studies ▌ Document review – briefing reports, flagship reports, Trust Fund annual reports, ADERs, Project Completion Reports and project mid-term review reports, PCRs/ XSRENs ▌ Project review ▌ Interviews
2.3. What unintended outcomes (positive and negative) can be observed so far?	▌ What unintended outcomes have been identified as a result of implementation of the JfYA Strategy? ▌ How did the JfYA Strategy contribute to the achievement of these outcomes? ▌ How do they affect progress towards improvement of youth employment outcomes? ▌ How does the emergence of these unintended results influence a change in the Theory of Change, the strategic levers, or the implementation activities?	▌ List of negative and positive unintended consequences, (disaggregated by rural/urban, male/female as appropriate); and ▌ Implications of outcomes on the ultimate goal and objectives.	▌ Case studies ▌ Document review – briefing reports, flagship reports, Trust Fund annual reports, ADERs, Project Completion Reports and project mid-term review reports, PCRs/ XSRENs ▌ Project review ▌ Indicator assessment ▌ Interviews ▌ Focus group discussions
2.4. Which interventions started under the JfYA Strategy have been scaled up and/or are ready for scale up?	▌ What conditions exist to enable scale up: resources, national policies, the capacity of the Bank, RMCs or partners? ▌ How should the strategy leverage successes to date to support the achievement of the objectives and targets?	▌ Number of interventions/ projects that have been scaled up; and ▌ Existence of supportive factors or conditions for scale up.	▌ Key informant interviews with JfYA focal points and team members KIIs with implementation partners, RMCs, other development agencies ▌ Case study ▌ Project review

Key Questions	Sub-questions/What to look for	Indicators/Measures	Data/Information Sources/ Data Collection Methods
3. Are JfYA Strategy results sustainable or likely to be sustained? (Sustainability)			
3.1. How well did intervention strategies and implementation address issues of sustainability?	▌ What specific measures are identified in the design documents and implementation processes to support sustainability? ▌ How have these materialized in the first five years of implementation? ▌ What are the emerging gaps?	▌ List of sustainability considerations in the design and implementation process; and ▌ Number of identified gaps.	▌ Review of the JfYA Strategy document, implementation plan ▌ Key informant interviews with Jobs focal points and team members KIIs with implementation partners, RMCs, other development agencies ▌ Case study ▌ Project review
3.2. Which of the results achieved so far are more likely to be sustained, and why?	▌ Which strategic lever is demonstrating the most sustainable results? ▌ Which technical, financial, institutional, policy capacity has been established to support their sustainability? ▌ How could the emerging successes and systemic changes be further supported for sustainability?	▌ List of results likely to be sustained disaggregated by lever; and ▌ Number of completed projects that score satisfactory on sustainability.	▌ Case studies ▌ Review of PCRs/XSRENs ▌ Interviews with relevant implementation partners, RMCs, other development agencies
3.3. What are the key risks to sustainability of other intended outcomes going forward?	▌ What factors affect the achievement and sustainability of intended outcomes going forward? ▌ What needs to be implemented by the AfDB, RMCs and other stakeholders to support sustained changes and results? Mitigate against loss of momentum and results attained to date?	▌ List of risks to sustainability; and ▌ Rational assessment of risk mitigation strategies.	▌ Case studies ▌ Review of PCRs/XSRENs ▌ Interviews with implementation partners, RMCs, other development agencies
4. What are we learning about what works?			
What are emerging lessons, working and/or promising approaches that can be carried forward?	▌ What are we learning about what works or does not work within the Bank? ▌ How are these learnings being integrated in ongoing planning and management? ▌ What other evidence exists from comparator organizations about promising/best practices that should be considered?	▌ Areas of learning.	▌ Policy review and benchmarking study ▌ Case studies

An IDEV **Thematic Evaluation**

Annex 2: Elaborated JfYA Strategy Theory of Change




Human capital development is improved across the continent
Labor markets are linked to financial opportunities
Ecosystem actors (RMCs and other stakeholders) adapt and scale effective interventions to address youth jobs and employability
Access to capital stimulating and creating youth jobs and youth entrepreneurship is increased
Access to capital stimulating and creating youth jobs and youth entrepreneurship is increased
Models for youth job creation are tested, documented and iterated upon
Reliable and current view of national youth labour market performance is available
Research and evidence for enterprise support is available to inform programs for greatest impact
Various funding options are made available directly by youth-centric businesses
Private sector actors are engaged in innovation and viable solutions for youth employment
Flagship employment programs are designed and implemented (e.g. SAPZ, CfE, ENABLE Youth)
Additional projects are designed implemented: Desert-to-Power renewable energy, TAAT, Youth ADAPT
Enabling Youth Employment index (now dashboard) is developed and implemented
Enabling Youth Employment index (now dashboard) is developed and implemented
Leverage various financial mechanisms that support for youth employment and entrepreneurship
Leverage various financial mechanisms to indirectly affect youth employment and entrepreneurship
Design and implement market-based challenge funds and other similar mechanisms
AfDB identifies and mobilises partners for innovative actions
AfDB identifies and catalyzes private sector partners who can invest in job creation and employment for youth
Innovation
Investment
Overarching assumptions:
Consistent economic growth on the continent and in RMCs (e.g. unpredicted Covid-19 pandemic that halted many economies and prevented work in many instances)
Financing for entrepreneurship (in particular) continues to be made available from different sources (Investment pillar)

Annex 3: Portfolio Review Tables

Table A3.1: Sectoral distribution of primary youth employment projects
(n=176)

S.N	Sector	Number of Operations	Share (%)	Value (UA million)	Share of value (%)
1	Agriculture	61	34.6	1,750	33.8
2	Communications	1	0.6	59.45	1
3	Environment	6	3.5	86.91	1.7
4	Finance	9	5.2	343.66	6.6
5	Industry	1	0.6	86	1.7
6	Governance	26	14.7	682.29	13.2
7	Social	52	29.5	873	17
8	Transport	10	5.6	827	16
9	Urban Development	1	0.6	42.58	1.0
10	Water Supply and Sanitation	9	5.1	413.11	8
	Total	**176**	**100**	**5,164**	**100**

Table A3.2: Regional distribution of primary youth employment projects
(n=176)

Regions	Number of Operations	Share (%)	Value (UA million)	Share of Value (%)
Central Africa	23	13	1,045	20.2
East Africa	32	18.2	744.45	14.3
Multi-region	20	11.4	179.58	3.5
North Africa	18	10.2	872.47	17
Southern Africa	26	14.8	489.5	9.5
West Africa	57	32.4	1,833	35.5
Total	**176**	**100**	**5,164**	**100**

Figure A3.1: Evolution of approval of primary youth employment projects by year

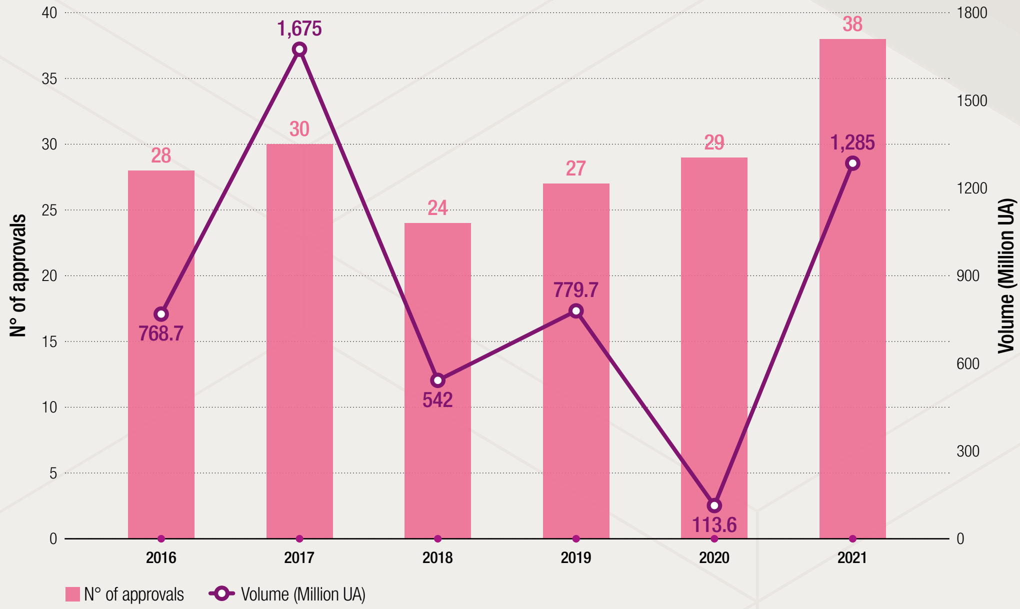
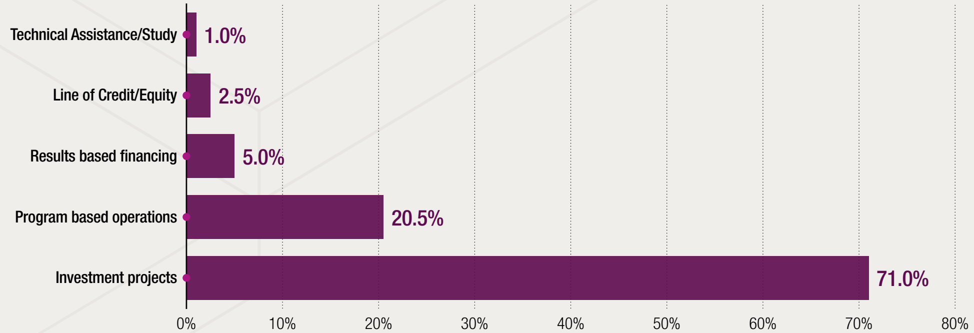


Figure A3.2: Portfolio distribution by instruments (primary youth employment projects)

% of value



Annex 4: Flagship Program Models and Projects

<table>
<tr><th>Sector</th><th>Initial flagship programs</th><th>Current flagship programs</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">ICT</td><td>Coding for Employment (CfE) program: develop premier coding academies, match graduates directly with ICT employers. The program was expected to create 825,000 jobs.</td><td rowspan="2">CfE program: develop the capacity of youth and equip them with technology related skills for the 21st century and in so doing, promote employability and entrepreneurship skills
Job targets: 9,000,000
Youth trained: 234,000
Lead implementing department: AHHD.1
Number of projects: One project implemented in Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Computational Thinking program: introduce digital literacy, logical thinking, and complex problem-solving curricula in secondary schools. The program was expected to create 8,393,000 jobs and train an additional 23,956,800 youth.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Agriculture</td><td>The ENABLE Youth (Empowering Novel Agri-Business Led Employment) program: help young Africans incubate new larger scale agri-businesses and support them in accessing financing for the growth of these businesses.</td><td rowspan="2">ENABLE Youth program: Support young Africans to incubate new larger scale agri-businesses and accessing finance
Job targets: 1,500,000
New enterprises established: 300,000
Youth trained: None provided
Lead implementing department: AHAI
Number of projects: 13 (6 stand-alone, 7 embedded)
* Current targets are extracted from the ENABLE Youth Brochure.
Countries: Zambia, South Sudan, DRC, Madagascar, Kenya, Mozambique Cameroon, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Malawi</td></tr>
<tr><td>Rural Microenterprise program: provide youth with capital, skills training, and mentorship to launch agriculture-based micro enterprises. The program was expected to create 8,383,500 jobs and train an additional 310,500 youth.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Agro-Industrialization Pipeline program: develop a steady supply of skilled labor for agro-industrial companies. The program was expected to create 1,126, 900 jobs.</td><td rowspan="2">Skills Enhancement Zones under Special Agro-Processing Zones (SAPZ): Build capacities of stakeholders in priority agro-industrial areas including youth farmers and youth led enterprises /startups to access and optimize economic opportunities across the value chain.
Job targets: No. program wide targets available
Youth trained: No. program wide targets available
Implemented in partnership with AHFR
Number of projects: 12
Countries: Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, Ethiopia, Guinea, Senegal, Mali, Madagascar, Liberia, DRC, Nigeria, Mozambique</td></tr>
<tr><td>Industrialization</td><td>Skills Enhancement Zones program: develop a skilled workforce aligned to employer needs. The program was expected to create 3,315,000 jobs and train an additional 27,300 youth.</td></tr>
</table>

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Endnotes

1 Primary youth employment projects were defined as those that directly promote youth employment and employability and reflect this in their goals, objectives or results. Secondary youth employment projects are those that do not define youth employment as an objective / result but have potential for creating jobs for youth. This category of projects is characterized by the presence of JfYA related indicators, such as jobs created, youth trained, SMEs supported, and financing made available for investments in youth businesses.

2 This was evidenced in the case study countries of Kenya, Morocco, Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal, and Malawi.

3 Strategy implemented through three strategic intervention levers: (i) **Integration**- *the Bank will equip itself and Regional Member Countries (RMCs) to become engines of job creation for young Africans*; (ii) **Innovation**- *the Bank will work with partners to incubate, implement, assess, and scale promising solutions*; and (iii) Investment- **the Bank will catalyze private sector investments that fuel job creation and employment for youth.**

4 https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---inst/documents/publication/wcms_865332.pdf

5 ILO WESO 2023: A new indicator developed by the ILO, the Jobs Gap, captures all persons without employment that are interested in finding a job.

6 ILO, World Employment and Social Outlook | Trends 2023

7 Annex 2 Risks and Mitigation Measures, page 55, Jobs for Youth in Africa Strategy.

8 CSPs provide a framework for Bank assistance and mark the beginning of the Bank's project cycle i.e., Programming.

9 Job quality refers to the extent to which the job meets the global agenda on decent work (rights at work, employment, social protection, and social dialogue).

10 Including FMO (Dutch Development Bank), British International Investment (BII), PROPARCO, Belgian Investment Company for Developing Countries (BIO), Findev Canada, CIF, KfW, OeEB (Development Bank of Austria), and Private Infrastructure Development Group (PIDG)

11 Action 5: Innovation and Information Lab, Page 37, Jobs for Youth in Africa Strategy. A brochure on the ELAB can be found here https://www.afdb.org/en/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/job-youth/Jobs_for_Youth_in_Africa_Innovation_Lab-it.pdf

12 The study considered all five RISPs and took a random sample of three countries per region. Some countries had more than one CSP in the period 2016–2021.

13 World Bank (2022b) Africa Overview https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/afr/overview. Youth are defined in this report as 16–30 years old.

14 ILO (2022a) Global Employment Trends for Youth 2022: Africa. Youth are defined by the ILO as 15–24 years old..

15 This study finds that men and women aged between 15 and 19 are building human capital and or entering the labor market. At the ages 20–24, men are entering the labor market and searching for a steady livelihood whilst women are beginning to reduce labor force participation to start a family and care for children. At ages 25–35, men are building a livelihood (farm, business, or steady wage job), while women may be re-entering the labor market.

16 Morsy, H. and Mukasa, A.N. (2019), Youth Jobs, Skill and Educational Mismatches in Africa, Working Paper Series N° 326, African Development Bank, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.

17 https://www.statista.com/statistics/1295678/startup-failure-rate-in-africa-by-country/

18 World Bank Group. (2019). Profiting from Parity: Unlocking the Potential of Women's Business in Africa

19 50 million number includes the number of jobs created and additional youth trained.

20 Policy Based Operations are now known as Program Based Operations following the 2012 Bank Group Policy on Program-Based Operations.

21 Agriculture sector (Empowering Novel Agri-Business Led Employment/ENABLE, Rural Microenterprise program); Industrialization sector (Agro-Industrialization Pipeline program, Skills Enhancement Zones program) and Information, Communication and Technology/ICT sector (Coding for Employment (CfE) program, Computational Thinking program).

22 This review covered all projects captured in the Bank's Systems Application Platform (SAP) and the Youth Entrepreneurship and Innovation Multi Donor Trust Fund (YEI MDTF) funded projects." It is possible that there are other youth employment initiatives that are missing. The SAP is a centralized system within the Bank that enables every department to access and share common data.

23 Ghana, Togo, Mali, Nigeria, Guinea, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Rwanda.

24 Age, sex, family status, disability, education levels, and geographical location.

25 Further updates are provided on targeted activities for secondary school children in subsequent sections of the report.

26 Some of the flagship programs expected to contribute most to the achievements of these targets were not implemented as planned. See Section on Integration.

27 See Teal, Francis. "JAE special issue: Education and labor market outcomes in sub-Saharan Africa." *Journal of African Economies* 30.1 (2021): 1–12 on linkage between education outcomes and jobs.

28 See footnote 14 of African Development Bank Group. (2016a). *Jobs For Youth: Strategy for Creating 25 million Jobs and Equipping 50 million Youth, 2016–2025*

29 Up to 23 African countries are either in or at risk of debt distress as of February 2022. This has prompted the Bank to shrink individual country's headroom due to their increasing exposure from debt, a factor that poses serious challenges to the completion and or generation of new projects within individual RMCs.

30 Language adopted in the Communiqué of the Board of Governors at the AfDB Annual Meetings in May 2022; Algeria, China, Egypt, Eswatini, Namibia, Nigeria and South Africa entered a reservation and proposed "Russia-Ukraine Conflict".

31 In the course of 2022, the Bank started the process of designing TYS 2.0 expected to run from 2023-2032.

32 Note that at the time of the evaluation, the Bank was revising the Financial Sector Development Strategy.

33 Denmark, Norway, Italy, Netherlands and Sweden.

34 This mid-term review indicator performance assessment did not address the four impact level indicators.

35 The time frame for some indicators is 2030.

36 The evaluation team did not receive any information on annual targets from either AHHD or SNDR.

37 According to the PD 02/2015 directives, time from approval to first disbursement should be less than six months.

38 The evaluation team became aware on ongoing work on classification of projects in late 2022.

39 This analysis was conducted for only primary youth employment projects and covers both standalone projects and components of institutional strengthening in broader development projects.

40 Agriculture (Empowering Novel Agri-Business Led Employment/ENABLE, Rural Microenterprise program); Industrialization (Agro-Industrialization Pipeline program, Skills Enhancement Zones program) and Information, Communication and Technology/ICT (Coding for Employment program, Computational Thinking program)

41 Flagship program costs were estimated at USD 3.5 billion in the Implementation Plan. The evaluation team has used the conversion rate of May 2016 of 0.70 for changing US dollars to Units of Account. The Special Fund was expected to be composed of Bank resources (AfDB and ADF) and external partner contributions.

42 UA 1.174 billion includes the USD 2 million grant for the CfE program, as well as other leveraged funds. It excludes counterpart funding from RMCs.

43 AfDB (no date). SMEnhancer - Enterprise Development Digital Platform. Fact Sheet.

44 At the time of the evaluation, there was a new initiative under design, i.e., Entrepreneurship Establishment Program (EEP) to coordinate and monitoring of MSME development activities across the Bank. Also in May 2022, the Bank established a separate division under the PIVP complex to coordinate non-financial SME support.

45 Nigeria - Investment in Digital and Creative Entreprises (I-DICE) ; Burundi-Projet d'appui à l'entreprenariat et à la promotion des microentreprises des jeunes et des femmes; Tanzania SAPZ feasibility study; Senegal-projet de zone de transformation agro-industrielle du centre ou agropole-centre; YEIB identification missions. For example, the mapping of 1,082 ESOs across Africa conducted by the Lab is now available to entrepreneurs registered on the ENNOVA to be able to access BDS. It has also been used by YEI MDTF in refining its geographical selection.

46 The target beneficiaries and scope of knowledge generation does not include assessment of Bank's youth employment interventions as expected in the JfYA Strategy document (AfDB 2017b; 2022c).

47 Excludes the activity to establish the Jobs for Youth in Africa that has been covered under the Financing Sub-Section.

48 Since 2010, the AfDB has been a shareholder of the AGF, whose primary mandate is to support access to finance for SMEs.

49 The Bank invested EUR7 million in the Cathay Africinvest Innovation Fund and another EUR 7 million in the Janngo Capital Fund in April 2022 all targeting early-stage ventures, start-ups and other SMEs. Additional projected investment of EUR 14.5 million by January 2023.

50 Bank staff have indicated that 6 countries have been identified for lending in 2023, i.e., Liberia, Ethiopia, DRC, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria and Tanzania.

51 The Implementation Plan estimates the total cost at USD 5,876,452,200, which translates into UA 4,146,142,535.61 using the May 2016 conversion rate.

52 Ref. the Portfolio Overview: the portfolio of primary youth employment projects was dominated by investment projects amounting to UA 3.6 billion (70.4% of the portfolio value), followed by program-based operations (21.2%), results-based financing (4.9%), lines of credit/equity (2.3%) and institutional support/study (1.2%).

53 The portfolio review categorized 53 as secondary youth employment projects and the remaining 41 had no youth considerations.

54 For example, anticipated collaborations around PBOs, work with the Africa SME program, AFAWA as indicated in the implementation plan have not yet materialized. Lost opportunities for country level coordination that could have improved youth employment outcomes across projects were also observed in the country case studies.

55 Current youth representatives are prominent youth entrepreneurs with strong African and international recognition in line with the guidelines set out in the implementation plan.

56 Apart from Presidential Unit briefs prepared ahead of missions, other comprehensive reports are focused on only specific elements of the strategy, e.g., flagship reports or the monthly flash reports that provide updates to the President's office on key deliverables for a specific year. The planned strategy mid-term review that would take stock of implementation status, strategy performance and make relevant recommendations to the Bank's Management was subsequently superseded by this mid-term evaluation in 2021.

57 Indirect jobs are broken down as follows: (i) Indirect impact (supply chain): impacts at the investee/ project's suppliers and their suppliers; (ii) Induced impact related to re-spending of earned salaries; and (iii) Forward impact related to enabling effect of additional products and/or services provided by the investment

58 As was the case for the Nigeria - Investment in Digital and Creative Enterprises Program that was approved in December 2021.

IDEV

Independent Development Evaluation
African Development Bank

An IDEV **Thematic Evaluation**

About this evaluation

Independent Development Evaluation (IDEV) conducted a Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) of the African Development Bank Group's (AfDB or "the Bank") Jobs for Youth in Africa (JfYA) Strategy 2016-2025. Launched in 2016, the JfYA Strategy aimed to create 25 million jobs and positively impact 50 million youth by 2025. The MTE assessed progress from June 2016 to December 2021, focusing on primary youth employment projects, to provide lessons and recommendations to improve the Strategy's effectiveness during its remaining period.

The evaluation found the JfYA Strategy relevant for addressing youth employment across Africa. It aligns with the Bank's corporate strategies, and development priorities within the regional member countries. However, the changing economic growth context, recurrent risks, and unrealistic expectations undermine the validity and realism of the Strategy's targets. While the Strategy provides quantifiable youth employment targets that facilitate dialogue, resource mobilization, and communication/visibility, concerns raised relate to shortfalls in funding, and the absence of necessary human resources and management systems. It was difficult to determine actual progress towards achieving the Strategy's outcomes due to significant monitoring and reporting gaps. The sustainability risks arise from implementation gaps; inadequate focus on youth beneficiaries; limited efforts to address financing barriers for youth-led, and small and medium enterprises; and exogenous factors affecting overall macroeconomic stability and resilience.

The evaluation highlighted lessons on risk mitigation, governance, accountability mechanisms, skills development, access to finance and non-financial support, and utilization of small grants. Recommendations for the Bank include updating the Strategy and implementation plan, strengthening results measurement, learning plus leadership and coordination of youth employment across the Bank, and continuing resource mobilization for impactful projects.

IDEV
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