

In partnership with



# What Works for Youth Employment in Senegal? A Follow-Up Review.



Image licensed from Adobe Stock

**Authors** Thierno Malick Diallo | Abdoulaye Dieye | Lucas Ronconi | Claude Sinzogan

**Date** June 2025

**Working Paper** 2025-19

PEP Working Paper Series ISSN 2709-7331

## Abstract

Individuals aged between 15 and 34 represent 35.7% of Senegal's population and up to 57.5% of the working-age population. This demographic presents a significant opportunity for economic growth but also poses challenges in job creation: over 200,000 new jobs are needed every year, a figure expected to rise to 500,000 by 2050. A common policy response to youth-employment challenges in Senegal has been to invest in entrepreneurship, job placement, and skills training programs. However, the effectiveness of the programs is constantly challenged. In support of Senegal's efforts to secure dignified and fulfilling jobs for its youth, the Mastercard Foundation and the Partnership for Economic Policy initiated a comprehensive follow-up review of youth-employment policies in 2024. The follow-up review employed two primary data-collection techniques: focus-group discussions with young people and key-informant interviews with a range of stakeholders. Significant strides have been made, particularly since 2021, in tackling youth-employment challenges, though obstacles remain. While training initiatives provide valuable skills, weaknesses in the monitoring systems and the lack of follow-up hamper progress. Issues such as limited political inclusivity, high taxes, and complex permitting processes further hinder the entrepreneurial efforts of young people. To improve the effectiveness of youth-employment policies, policymakers should consider more robust follow-up systems, simplified permit procedures, and reduced taxation, as well as enhanced data-collection and evaluation processes, all of which are crucial for measuring policy effectiveness. This follow-up provides valuable insights into the current landscape of youth-employment policies in Senegal, but significant gaps remain, indicating a need for more nuanced, context-specific investigations to inform policy decisions more effectively.

**Keywords:** Employment; Labor market; Youth

## Authors

### **Thierno Malick Diallo**

Lecturer,  
University of Gaston Berger  
Saint-Louis, Senegal  
[malikidiallo@gmail.com](mailto:malikidiallo@gmail.com)

### **Abdoulaye Dieye**

Economist,  
CEPOD  
Dakar, Senegal  
[dieyeabdoulaye@hotmail.com](mailto:dieyeabdoulaye@hotmail.com)

### **Lucas Ronconi**

PEP Research Fellow, Policy Outreach  
Committee  
Professor of Economics, Universidad de  
Buenos Aires-CONICET, Argentina  
[ronconilucas@gmail.com](mailto:ronconilucas@gmail.com)

### **Claude Sinzogan**

Policy Outreach Advisor  
Senior Development Policy Expert, Benin  
[csinzo@hotmail.com](mailto:csinzo@hotmail.com)

## Acknowledgements

This research was carried out with financial and scientific support from the Partnership for Economic Policy ([www.pep-net.org](http://www.pep-net.org)) working in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation.

## Disclaimer

This paper was produced in the context of the What Works for Youth Employment in Africa: A review of existing policies and empirical analysis in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation. It was a three-year initiative that ran between 2021 and 2024 to create a knowledge base of youth employment and related social development policies to inform policy and practices. The views expressed do not necessarily represent those of the Foundation, its staff, or its Board of Directors. For more information about this initiative, please visit: [www.pep-net.org/programs/youth-employment](http://www.pep-net.org/programs/youth-employment)

# Table of Contents

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>I Introduction .....</b>  | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>II Contextual Framework .....</b>   | <b>6</b>  |
| 2.1 Overview of Youth-Labor-Market Outcomes .....  | 6         |
| 2.2 Policy Context: Macroeconomic Trends.....  | 9         |
| 2.3 Employment and Social Security Regulations .....   | 11        |
| <b>III Methods.....</b>  | <b>12</b> |
| <b>IV Review of Youth-Employment Programs .....</b>  | <b>14</b> |
| 4.1 Description of Youth-Employment Programs According to Legislation<br>(de jure) from 2021 to 2024.....  | 14        |
| 4.2 Laws and Tax Policies Relating to Start-Up and Business Creation.....                                  | 17        |
| 4.3 Actual Implementation of Youth-Employment Programs (de facto) ...                                      | 19        |
| 4.3.1 Irregular Payments to Members of the Market Commission.....  | 19        |
| 4.3.2 Claims about Outstanding Payments .....  | 20        |
| 4.3.3 Lack of Monitoring/Evaluation .....  | 20        |
| 4.4 Review of Youth-Employment-Program Evaluations.....  | 20        |
| 4.4.1 Studies Assessing the Indirect Impact of Employment Programs on<br>Youth-Labor-Market Outcomes. .... | 21        |
| 4.4.2 Studies Assessing the Direct Impact of Employment Programs on<br>Youth-Labor-Market Outcomes. ....   | 22        |
| <b>V The Political Economy of Youth-Employment Policies .....</b>  | <b>23</b> |
| 5.1 Profile Of Youth Participating in Focus-Group Discussions .....  | 24        |
| 5.2 Main Findings from Focus-Group Discussions.....  | 26        |
| 5.2.1 Youth-Labor-Market Situation .....   | 26        |
| 5.2.2 Dynamics of Communication and Accessibility of Programs  | 27        |
| 5.2.3 Dynamics of Youth-Integration Initiatives.....   | 28        |
| 5.2.4 Dynamics of Youth-Training Initiatives .....   | 29        |
| 5.2.5 Dynamics of Funding Entrepreneurship Initiatives.....  | 30        |
| 5.3 Main Findings from Key-Informant Interviews .....  | 37        |
| 5.3.1 Lack of a Reference Framework.....   | 37        |
| 5.3.2 Communication and Accessibility of Employment Program  | 37        |

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 5.3.3 Youth Integration, Training, and Entrepreneurship Initiatives | 38        |
| 5.3.4 Policy-Tracking and -Monitoring Systems .....                 | 39        |
| 5.4 Policy Levers for Employment.....                               | 48        |
| <b>VI Conclusions .....</b>   | <b>48</b> |
| <b>References .....</b>   | <b>52</b> |

## I Introduction

Senegal has a population growth rate of 2.5% annually, resulting in a doubling of its population every twenty-five years. Individuals aged between 15 and 34 account for 6.4 million, representing 35.7% of the entire population. As a result, Senegal faces a major challenge in providing dignified and fulfilling work to its large youth population. This demographic trend also emphasizes the need for employment policies that can improve the job prospects of the growing number of young people entering the workforce.

Each year, over 200,000 young Senegalese enter the job market, a figure expected to rise to 500,000 by 2050. Limited formal employment opportunities push most of them toward the informal sector, however. Approximately nine out of ten young workers are engaged in informal employment, and 97% of businesses operate within the informal sector (World Bank, 2018). This high prevalence of informal employment among young workers indicates a lack of job security, social protection, and access to benefits. It also suggests limited access to formal markets, funding, and support systems for young entrepreneurs, hindering their growth and development. Employment challenges also disproportionately affect young people: 62.3% of individuals aged 15-34. In specific, the employment challenge rate in 2018 was notably higher for youth aged 15 to 24 (20.4%) and 25 to 34 (18.4%) compared to adults aged 35 to 44 (13%) (Agence Nationale de la Statistique et de la Démographie, 2020).

Promoting better employment outcomes for young people remains a key objective for Senegal as reaffirmed in the 2024-2028 Priority Action Plan. While achieving this objective has been a long-standing challenge, it has become even more pressing in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, during which young people experienced widespread job losses, reduced work and pay, and interruptions to education and training.

Specifically, the objective of this follow-up review is to assess the effectiveness of youth-employment policies in Senegal. Several reasons make Senegal an interesting case study. First, since 2010 the country has initiated programs through the creation of specialized agencies to promote youth employment, technical and vocational training, and entrepreneurial spirit and to finance youth projects. More recently, the state introduced the Emergency Program for Socioeconomic Integration and Youth Employment, with a budget of approximately \$450 million USD for the 2021-2023 period. Despite measures to improve youth-labor-market outcomes over the past two decades, the challenges young people face in the job market have

remained persistent. Second, the government has invested more than 544 billion XOF (over \$85 million USD) in youth-employment programs since 2010 (Ministère de l’Economie, du Plan et de la Coopération, 2021), making it crucial to assess their impact on young people. Third, apart from few studies (Tsambou et al., 2024a, 2024b; Kane et al., 2020, 2021; Diagne & Cabral, 2017; Echevin et al., 2013; Bourkane et al., 2019), little is known regarding the impact of public-employment programs on youth labor market outcomes in Senegal. Most of these existing studies are typically focused on a single youth-employment program; however, Senegal has several youth-employment programs, which warrant an in-depth review. Moreover, none of these studies have sufficiently addressed governance challenges, such as the lack of transparency in the allocation of benefits and the lack of coordination across employment programs.

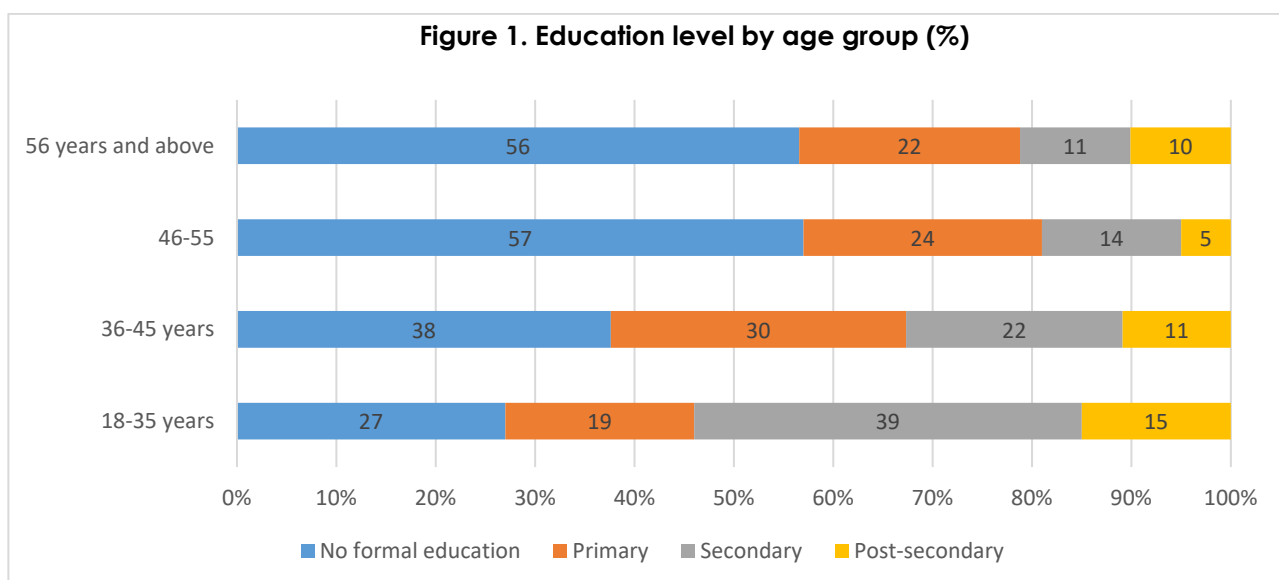
## **II Contextual Framework**

### **2.1 Overview of Youth-Labor-Market Outcomes**

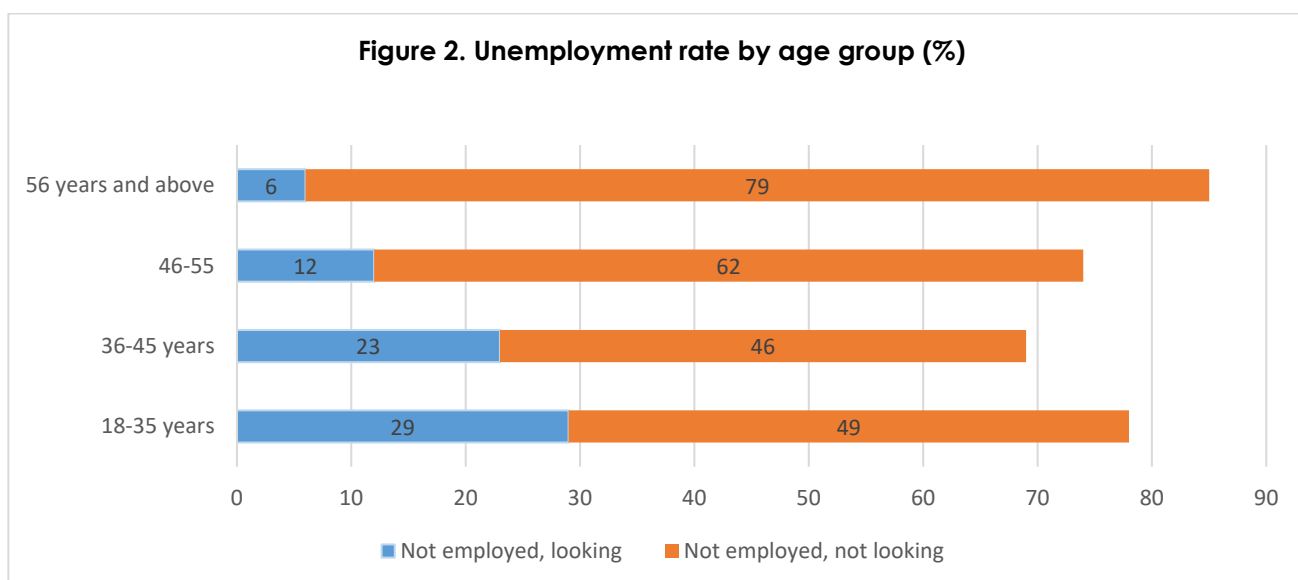
We used the Afrobarometer survey conducted in Senegal in 2022 to provide an overview of youth-labor market outcomes and the perceptions of young people on a range of topics related to education, governance, and political and civic participation. The Afrobarometer Survey Project, which has been increasingly used in political, development, and historical studies concerning Africa, provides a rich source of data. While the primary objective of this survey is to assess the political climate and attitudes toward democracy, it also includes valuable sociodemographic information, making it a valuable resource for broader social research.

The Afrobarometer survey reveals that Senegalese youth (aged 18-35) are, on average, more educated than their older counterparts (Figure 1). In fact, more than half (54%) of respondents aged 18-35 had at least some secondary education, compared to 33%, 19%, and 21% of the successively older cohort groups. Among those aged 46-55, 57% reported having no formal education, which is more than twice the percentage of youth who lacked formal education (27%). Despite being more educated, youth were more likely than their elders to face employment challenges. We estimated that three out of ten youth (29%) face employment

challenges, a significantly higher percentage than among middle-aged (12%) and older individuals (6%) (Figure 2).



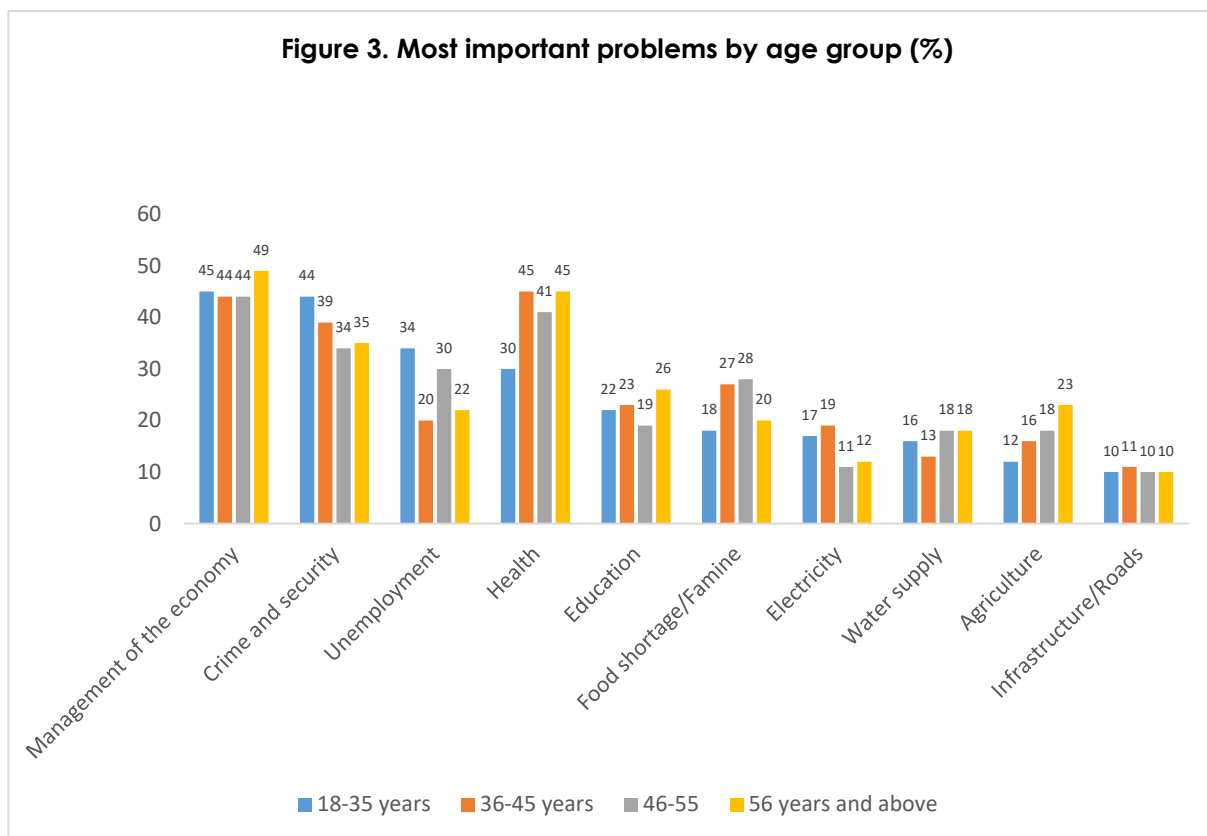
Source: Authors' calculations. Afrobarometer Round 9 survey. Respondents were asked: What is your highest level of education?



Source: Authors' calculations. Afrobarometer Round 9 survey. Respondents were asked: Do you have a job that pays a cash income? [If yes:] Is it full time or part time? [If no:] Are you currently looking for a job?

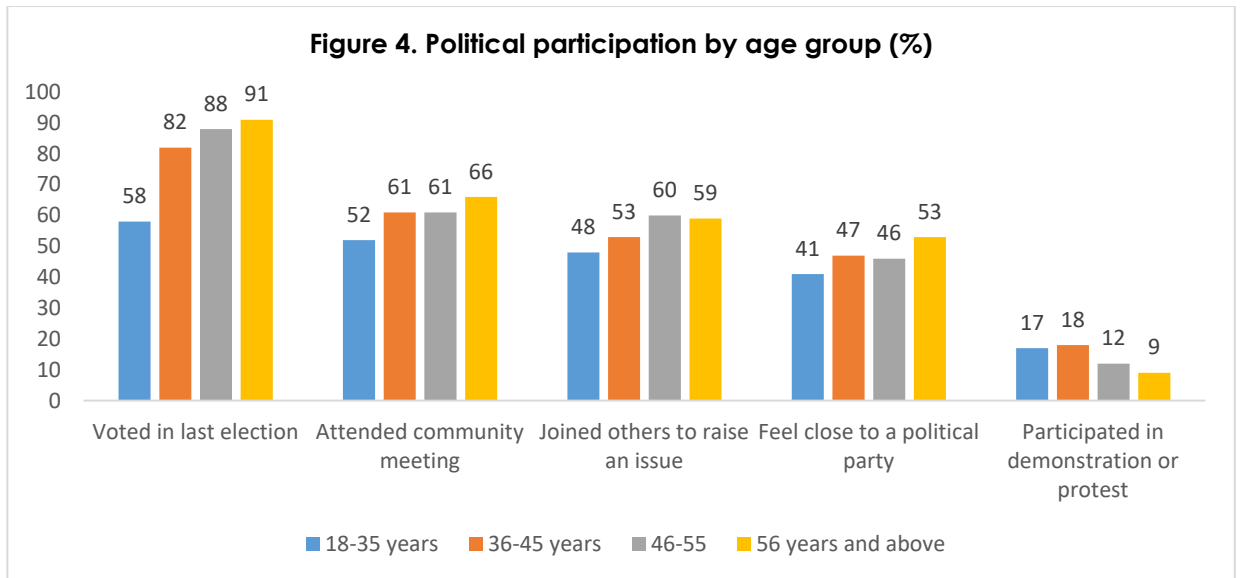
Figure 3 reveals that the top five most important problems that Senegalese youth want the government to address are the management of the economy (45%), crime and insecurity (44%), unemployment (34%), health (30%), and education (22%). Although youth are more likely than older groups to rank unemployment (34% compared to 20%-30%) and crime and insecurity (44% compared to 34-39%) among their most important problems, they share similar

views with older groups on most other policy priorities.



Source: Authors' calculations. Afrobarometer Round 9 survey. Respondents were asked: In your opinion, what are the most important problems facing this country that government should address?

While many young people were dissatisfied with the government’s efforts to create jobs and manage the economy, they tended to be less engaged in activities that could convert their dissatisfaction into positive action. Indeed, Figure 4 indicates that the younger generation has a significantly lower voter-turnout rate compared to older age groups (only 58% of eligible youth voted in the last presidential elections) while 82%, 88%, and 91% of older cohorts participated. Furthermore, youth reported being less likely than their elders to attend a community meeting (52% against 61%-66% of the older groups), to join others to raise an issue (48% against 53%-60%), or to feel close to a political party (41% against 46%-53%) during the previous twelve months. The youth also outnumbered the over-55 cohort in terms of participating in demonstrations or protest marches during the previous twelve months (17% against 9%).



Source: Authors' calculations. Afrobarometer Round 9 survey. Respondents were asked: a) In the last national election, held in 2019, did you vote, or not, or were you too young to vote? Or can't you remember whether you voted? b) Do you feel close to any particular political party? c) Here is a list of actions that people sometimes take as citizens. For each of these, please tell me whether you, personally, have done any of these things during the past year: Attended a community meeting? Got together with others to raise an issue? Participated in a demonstration or protest march?

## 2.2 Policy Context: Macroeconomic Trends

Since its independence in 1960, Senegal has undergone two major peaceful political transitions, one in 2000 and the other in 2012. The government launched the Plan for an Emerging Senegal (Plan Sénégal Emergent) in 2014, as the reference framework for economic and social policy up to 2035. The Plan for an Emerging Senegal is intended to make Senegal an emerging economy through three main pillars: (i) structural transformation of the economy and growth; (ii) human capital, social protection and sustainable development; and (iii) governance, institutions, peace, and security. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, macroeconomic trends indicated strong performance under the Plan for an Emerging Senegal. The Senegalese economy grew by over 6% per year during the period 2014-2018. GDP growth stood at 7.4% in 2017, before falling to 6.2% in 2018 and to 4.6% in 2019. Senegal passed the threshold to become a lower-middle-income country in 2019, with a per capita GDP of \$1,410 USD (World Bank, 2019). According to the World Bank's Doing Business Index, Senegal's position improved from 171 in 2014 to 123 in 2020 (World Bank, 2022).

This strong economic performance has been achieved under the Plan for an Emerging Senegal initiative, though the Plan has put public finances on a path that could prove difficult

to maintain. Since 2014, Senegal’s fiscal space has significantly narrowed as a result of the increase in public debt, which rose from 42.4% of GDP in 2014 to 77.3% by 2022. The continuation of this scenario without an acceleration of economic growth and an increase in revenues could threaten the sustainability of public finances and damage Senegal’s economic-development prospects. Moreover, while the country has seen significant economic growth over recent years, little progress has been achieved in making economic growth more inclusive. In fact, recent economic growth has not translated into sufficient job creation for youth in the formal sector, leading to large migratory flows (Mbaye et al., 2021). This situation, exacerbated by the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, triggered violent protests in March 2021.

Senegal was one of the first African countries to register cases of COVID-19 but has been praised for its effective response. The government quickly promulgated emergency-aid measures by providing food to poor households and setting up a foundation to protect (formal) employment and (formal) enterprises. The informal sector—the backbone of the country’s economy and employment— however, received no aid. The Senegalese economy was also heavily affected by the pandemic, resulting in a decline in economic growth from 4.6% in 2019 to 1.3% in 2020. In 2021, growth was unexpectedly high (6.1%). The Russia-Ukraine conflict is, however, having an adverse effect on the macroeconomic outlook, and a rise in global food and energy prices has exacerbated existing socioeconomic challenges, including the pandemic’s effects and regional insecurity. As shown in Table 1, these challenges increase downside risks to growth and add to inflationary pressure.

**Table 1. Population and Key Macroeconomic Indicators**

|                 | 2014  | 2015  | 2016  | 2017  | 2018  | 2019  | 2020  | 2021  | 2022  |
|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Population      | 14.17 | 14.57 | 14.99 | 15.41 | 15.85 | 16.29 | 16.74 | 17.20 | 17.67 |
| (thousands)     | 5     | 8     | 4     | 9     | 4     | 6     | 4     | 4     | 6     |
| Real GDP growth | 6.2   | 6.4   | 6.4   | 7.4   | 6.2   | 4.6   | 1.3   | 6.1   | 4.7   |
|                 | 42.4  | 44.5  | 47.5  | 61.1  | 61.5  | 63.6  | 69.2  | 73.2  | 77.3  |

Public debt to GDP  
ratio

|                |      |     |     |     |     |   |     |     |     |
|----------------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|-----|-----|-----|
| Inflation rate | -1.1 | 0.9 | 1.2 | 1.1 | 0.5 | 1 | 2.5 | 2.2 | 7.5 |
|----------------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|-----|-----|-----|

Source: International Monetary Fund (2025).

## 2.3 Employment and Social Security Regulations

Labor-market regulations are important public-policy instruments for promoting formal job creation and improving job security and working conditions. However, Senegal's labor regulations face design problems that impede formal job creation for youth. According to Cabral et al. (2014), the promotion of youth employment is ignored by the labor code. In its current form, the labor code is more focused on the protection of employees than on supporting young job seekers. The apprenticeship contract mentioned in Article L. 73 of the Labor Code is the only incentive to facilitate the transition of young people from school to the job market.

The labor code also contains strict provisions regarding employment contracts, dismissals, and working conditions, which often act as barriers to hiring and firing young workers. The cost of dismissing a worker in Senegal can be as much as thirty-eight weeks of wages (Golub et al., 2015). Additionally, Senegal ranks 187 out of 189 countries in restrictiveness of labor-market institutions, making it the third most restrictive country in the world. Furthermore, the labor code is more oriented toward the formal sector, while most young workers (90%) are in the informal sector, that is, without access to labor benefits (World Bank, 2018).

In 2024, Diallo and Ronconi provided new evidence of effective labor regulation in Senegal, including ensuring workers' awareness of their rights and providing access to the judiciary, penalties, and labor-inspection resources. The study highlighted three main points. First, most informal employees, including informal youth workers, are not aware of their rights. They do not know that employers are required to register them and contribute to social security. Most of them do not know the level of the minimum wage, and some are even unaware of its existence. Second, the lack of awareness of labor rights is exacerbated by the reluctance of informal employees to denounce their employers out of fear of losing their jobs. Third, the labor inspectorate in Senegal focuses largely on the formal sector, while labor

violations are more prevalent in the informal sector, suggesting that enforcement institutions are not properly caring for vulnerable workers in Senegal.

This combination of a protective/stringent labor code with meagre enforcement efforts can have significant consequences for youth employment in Senegal. While the labor code may provide certain rights and protections for young workers, the lack of enforcement means that these rights are often not upheld, leaving young workers vulnerable to exploitation and unfair treatment. This can discourage youth from seeking formal employment and push them toward informal and precarious work arrangements, exacerbating issues of job insecurity and economic inequality.

### III Methods

The first stage of the study included a thorough desk review of documents relevant to youth-employment policies, including government reports, research reports, and other relevant materials from national or global sources. This enabled us to cover most recent updates in the Senegal context. As part of the desk review, a literature review was also conducted.

The focus-group discussions and key-informant interviews were conducted in the second stage. The sampling methodology was carefully designed to ensure that the study sample aligned with the first review conducted in 2021.

To ensure representation across the country, the focus-group discussions were held in four regions of Senegal—Dakar, Thiès, Diourbel, and Saint-Louis. These regions were selected based on their demographic weight. According to the latest general population census figures, the four regions account for approximately 54.48% of the population (Dakar - 21.60%; Thiès - 13.67%; Diourbel - 11.54%; and Saint-Louis - 6.67%). In each region, three focus-group discussions were organized, with the following compositions:

- A group of approximately ten young men, aged 15 to 35, consisting of both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of public-employment programs.
- A group of approximately ten young women, aged 15 to 35, consisting of both

beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of public-employment programs.

- A group of approximately ten vulnerable youth (including people with disabilities, refugees, and returned migrants), aged 15 to 35, consisting of both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of public-employment programs.

Focus-group discussions were held between February and March 2024, with the assistance of Social Action's regional decentralized technical services. Each focus-group discussion was led by two facilitators who used a participatory and collaborative approach to generate free and open discussions in a relaxed environment and to reduce self-censorship. Facilitators outlined general rules of organization and ensured strict anonymity in transcriptions. Before the focus-group discussions began, the guide was translated from English into the Senegal's national language (Wolof) to ensure maximum participation. Focus-group discussions were recorded with the agreement of the participants and then translated into French and English before the thematic content analysis. A series of questions guided the discussions, and participants provided examples from their own experiences or impressions in response to each question. Most, if not all, young participants enjoyed the focus-group discussions and wanted to continue the conversation. Hence, some focus-group discussions lasted up to two hours.

Key-informant interviews took place between January and April of 2024 across a number of regions, including Dakar, Thies, Diourbel, Kaolack, Ziguinchor, and Saint-Louis. To ensure a comprehensive perspective, interviews continued until no new information or insights were obtained. In total, we conducted ninety-two interviews: twenty-three with staff of government institutions (at the central, regional, and local levels), five with representatives of non-governmental organizations, six with labor inspectors, twelve with individuals from civil-society organizations, and forty-six with youth leaders. Key informant contacts were facilitated at the national level by the Center for Development Policy Studies (Centre d'Etudes de Politiques pour le Développement) and at the regional level by Social Action Services. To diversify the pool of profiles, the team used a snowball approach in which key informants were requested to refer other informants from their networks with different backgrounds. Key informants were selected based on their availability, willingness to be interviewed, and aptitude for effectively conveying their opinions. The interviews were conducted primarily in

French, but also in Wolof for stakeholders who were not proficient in French. In all cases, key informants were promised confidentiality to enable them to speak frankly about their opinions and experiences. A guide that listed topics and questions was provided, which was slightly modified to fit the interviewees' organizations. Interviewees were sent questions beforehand, upon request, so they could be prepared to respond.

## **IV Review of Youth-Employment Programs**

### **4.1 Description of Youth-Employment Programs According to Legislation (de jure) from 2021 to 2024**

Significant improvement has taken place in addressing youth employment since 2021 with the development and implementation of the Emergency Program for Youth Employment and Socioeconomic Integration. This program, with funding of 450 billion XOF over three years, was launched by the government in April 2021 to meet the urgent training, employment, and entrepreneurship needs of young people.

The program has ambitiously aimed to reach 516,916 beneficiaries with the support of the private sector and development partners. It is designed around seven pillars: (i) special recruitment (employment and entrepreneurship centers for youth and women that bring together all public-employment programs); (ii) public projects of community interest (through the creation of a database of beneficiaries of public funding); (iii) a national government-employer agreement (performance contracts with public structures in charge of implementing youth-employment policies); (iv) labor-intensive public investment projects; (v) apprenticeship-training; (vi) entrepreneurship and empowerment financing; and (vii) a school-uniform subsidy. This emergency program is a holistic employment-support program intended to improve the effectiveness of government interventions through better coordination.

Significant outcomes have been achieved since 2021. For example, the General

Delegation for Rapid Entrepreneurship of Youth and Women (Délégation Générale à l'Entrepreneuriat Rapide des Jeunes et des Femmes) has increased the pace of intervention since 2021 (see Table 2). The data revealed a fluctuating trend in both micro- and nanocredit<sup>1</sup> amounts over the years. Microcredit decreased from 2021 to 2022, followed by a significant increase in 2023. Conversely, nanocredit experienced a considerable rise from 2021 to 2022, then dropped in 2023, although it remained substantially higher than the initial 2021 figure.

**Table 2. General Delegation for Rapid Entrepreneurship of Youth and Women Financing since 2021 (in XOF)**

|      | Microcredit   | Nanocredit     |
|------|---------------|----------------|
| 2021 | 1,937,447,955 | 3,796,410,000  |
| 2022 | 1,844,639,062 | 22,829,630,350 |
| 2023 | 3,063,178,000 | 15,877,194,000 |

**Source:** Directorate of Studies, Planning, and Monitoring Evaluation.

To support very small businesses and small and medium-sized enterprises, the Directorate of Studies, Planning, and Monitoring Evaluation has offered financial assistance since 2021, as outlined in Table 2. Between 2021 and 2023, the Directorate provided funding to a total of 3,793 very small businesses and small and medium-sized enterprises, amounting to a total financial volume of 30,879,301,466 XOF.

**Table 3. Support for Very Small Businesses/Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises**

|      | Number of beneficiaries | Number of credits | Total amount of funding (in XOF) |
|------|-------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2021 | 1,858                   | 1,981             | 14,495,500,628                   |
| 2022 | 1,408                   | 1,488             | 9,937,967,872                    |
| 2023 | 527                     | 527               | 6 445 832 966                    |

**Source:** Directorate of Studies, Planning, and Monitoring Evaluation.

The National Convention of State Employers (Convention Nationale Etat-Employeurs) has made breakthroughs since 2021, with a budget increasing from one to fifteen billion XOF as part of the emergency program. This increase has facilitated the creation of renewable fixed-term contracts for two years, whereas previously the National Convention of State Employers could only provide its beneficiaries with internship contracts. Additionally, the National Convention of State Employers has expanded to include agriculture and agribusiness.

<sup>1</sup> Microcredit is a financial product targeting the economic support of women and youth, offering loans up to one million XOF to the most vulnerable individuals or groups. In contrast, nanocredit provides loans between 10,000 and 500,000 XOF to assist individual entrepreneurs with restricted access to conventional financial services. The General Delegation for Rapid Entrepreneurship of Youth and Women initiated the pilot phase of this innovative financing option in June 2020.

In the same vein, the functionality of the Employment and Entrepreneurship Division for Young People and Women (Pôles Emploi et Entrepreneuriat des Jeunes et Des Femmes) and the Local Job Initiative Centers (Centre d’Initiative pour l’Emploi Local) has been strengthened, resulting in the creation of 19,737 dignified and fulfilling jobs in 2022, including 4,253 community jobs, 2,628 renewable fixed-term contracts, and 12,856 internships. Additionally, 1,742 establishments were opened in 2022, generating 8,333 dignified and fulfilling jobs.

Between 2021 and 2023, the emergency program also created several thousand dignified and fulfilling jobs in various sectors as presented in Table 4.

**Table 4. Key Outcomes**

| Sectors                      | Outcomes  |
|------------------------------|---|
| Education                    | 4,628 dignified and fulfilling jobs created of 5,000 planned  |
| Cleaning                     | 8,721 dignified and fulfilling jobs created of 10,000 planned |
| Environment                  | 9,140 dignified and fulfilling jobs created of 10,000 planned |
| Socio-educational activities | 349 dignified and fulfilling jobs created of 500 planned      |
| Public-interest work         | 2,899 dignified and fulfilling jobs created of 2,000 planned  |
| Health                       | 364 dignified and fulfilling jobs created of 400 planned      |
| Security                     | 6,000 dignified and fulfilling jobs created of 6,000 planned  |
| Civic service                | 698 dignified and fulfilling jobs created of 1,000 planned    |
| Tourism                      | 162 dignified and fulfilling jobs created of 200 planned      |

In December 2023, the government agreed to renew the emergency program for a period of three years, expanding its scope and including new target groups. What stands out however, is that these initiatives primarily promote labor-supply initiatives, such as entrepreneurship programs, rather than demand-side initiatives, such as reducing the economic constraints that inhibit business development and job creation.

## 4.2 Laws and Tax Policies Relating to Start-Up and Business Creation

In line with national policy and strategic development frameworks, including the Plan for an Emerging Senegal and the “Digital Senegal 2025” Strategy, the Senegalese government has placed emphasis on the promotion of innovation and the significant ripple effect it could have on the national economy. In recognition of the importance of these issues, Senegal has decided to work toward building a strategic, institutional, and legal environment conducive to the development of startups that drive the digital ecosystem in Senegal. Nevertheless, despite the government’s considerable efforts, an objective analysis of the current situation reveals that certain limitations persist in creating an environment conducive to the development of startups in Senegal, including weak strategic frameworks for promoting innovation, insufficient consideration of the specificity and vulnerability of startups, the inadequacy of traditional financing methods for the needs of startups, and the absence of a legal framework that considers the particularity of these actors in Senegal’s digital industry.

To address these constraints, Senegal passed Law No. 2020-01, pertaining to the establishment and promotion of startups, on January 6, 2020. This law defines a startup as any innovative and agile company, legally established for less than eight years, with a strong capacity for value creation and which seeks a disruptive economic model and funding mechanisms tailored to its specificity. The law has brought, among other things, the following innovations:

- The establishment of a specific legal framework to support and govern Senegalese startups;
- The establishment of a suitable legal framework for the registration and labeling of Senegalese startups;
- The establishment of a resource center dedicated to Senegalese startups intended to streamline certification processes;
- The implementation of relevant incentive measures that align with the

imperative of promoting and supporting the development of Senegalese startups.

Through Law No. 2020-01 of January 6, 2020, concerning the creation and promotion of startups in Senegal, the government established an inclusive evaluation, support, and coordination commission for all public, private, and societal stakeholders, including providing the expertise needed for startup development. Registration is accessible online to any startup and serves to facilitate access to information, including a directory of startups. In addition, any registered startup benefits from tax advantages and facilitation measures, customs regimes, guarantees for obtaining credit, direct public or private financing, and the implementation of capacity-building measures. Startups that are legally registered with approved support structures can also receive support from the government that subsidizes the formalization of the company, ensures the protection of the startup’s innovations with national and international intellectual property organizations, and covers any other necessary assistance during the startup’s initial phase (République du Sénégal, 2020).

The table below provides the different formalities for setting up a sole proprietorship and an Economic Interest Group.

**Table 5. Formalities for Setting Up a Sole Proprietorship and an Economic Interest Group**

| Enterprises         | Procedures  |
|---------------------|---|
| Sole proprietorship | <p>Can be created at the Business Creation Support Office.</p> <p>The required documents are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two copies of a national identification document (national identity card, passport, driver's license).</li> <li>• Two copies of the passport are required for foreigners.</li> <li>• A sworn statement, available at the Investment Promotion and Infrastructure Agency, filled out and signed by the applicant or a criminal-record extract dated within the last three months.</li> <li>• A recent extract from the criminal record of the country of origin, dated within the last three months (for foreigners).</li> <li>• A residence certificate (issued by the police or the town hall)</li> <li>• A copy of the marriage certificate (if applicable)</li> <li>• Two fiscal stamps of 2000 XOF.</li> <li>• The incorporation fee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The filing fee for sole proprietorships without a trade name</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

is 10,000 XOF;

- The cost for individual businesses with a trade name is 20,000 XOF, with 10,000 XOF allocated for registering the trade name with the African Intellectual Property Organization and 10,000 XOF for registration fees.

Economic Interest Group

The establishment of an Economic Interest Group (Economic Interest Group) involves completing the following formalities:

- Drafting the articles of association and the minutes of the constitution and appointment of the founding members and directors;
- Registering the articles of association and minutes in three (3) copies with the relevant Registration Office.
- The establishment of an Economic Interest Group requires the completion of the following formalities:
  - Drafting the articles of association and the minutes of constitution and appointment of founding members and directors;
  - Registration of the articles of association and minutes in three copies with the competent Registration Office;
  - Registration with the trade registry at the regional court office based on the submission of the following documents:
    - An original copy of the registered articles of association.
    - An original copy of the registered minutes of the constitutive general assembly, indicating the identities of the members of the executive committee or board of directors or management, as applicable, with their respective roles.
    - A legalized copy of the [resident's identification document and a criminal record less than three months old.
    - The address of the residence or registered office of the members of the executive committee, board of directors, or management.

### 4.3 Actual Implementation of Youth-Employment Programs (de facto)

Determining the effectiveness of youth-employment programs requires an understanding of how programs are delivered, though detailed information about delivery is often lacking.

#### 4.3.1 Irregular Payments to Members of the Market Commission

According to the provisions of Article 2 of the Public Procurement Code, the Community Agricultural Domains Program (Programme des Domaines Agricoles Communautaires) is not a contracting authority. For the management years 2019, 2020, and 2021, it no longer had a procurement committee because the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (Autorité de Régulation des Marchés Publics) failed to renew its authorization. As a

result, procurement was carried out under the auspices of the procurement committee of its parent ministry. However, it was observed that the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority made payments of indemnities to members of the procurement committee in violation of the provisions of Article 5 of Order No. 012972 of August 2, 2013, which stipulated that “the indemnities as a result of members and the rapporteur of the procurement committees of contracting authorities shall be charged to the budget lines provided for this purpose.”

#### 4.3.2 Claims about Outstanding Payments

As part of the fight against the effects of the COVID pandemic, the National Agency for Integration and Agricultural Development received 300,000,000 XOF from the COVID-19 Relief Fund, intended to settle a portion of suppliers’ debts during the 2015-2019 period. The amount of 301,478,132 XOF was paid to cover these debts, representing an execution rate of 100.49% compared to allocated funds. However, analysis of the supporting documents revealed that expenses amounting to 29,068,171 F XOF did not constitute payments of outstanding debts. The National Agency for the Promotion of Youth Employment also received 383,432,041 XOF from the COVID-19 Relief Fund to cover unpaid debts. Of this amount, 383,257,043 XOF has been utilized, resulting in an execution rate of 99.95%. This amount includes expenses amounting to 72,237,770 XOF that are not unpaid obligations.

#### 4.3.3 Lack of Monitoring/Evaluation

The Fund for the Financing of Vocational and Technical Training (Fonds de Financement de la Formation Professionnelle et Technique) includes the implementation of a monitoring-and-evaluation system by the General Directorate that is to issue periodic progress reports regarding each initiative’s action plans and objectives. The system has not been implemented, however, and the aforementioned reports have yet to be developed. Similarly, the Fund produces an activity report but does not yet issue a performance report.

### 4.4 Review of Youth-Employment-Program Evaluations

Since 2010, the government has dedicated over 544 billion XOF to youth-employment

policies (Ministère de l'Économie, du Plan et de la Coopération, 2021). Given the substantial resources allocated to addressing employment issues, it is crucial to use evidence-based data to monitor the implementation of programs and assess their impacts. In what follows, we focus on empirical studies that have assessed both the direct and indirect impact of employment programs on youth-labor-market outcomes.

#### 4.4.1 Studies Assessing the Indirect Impact of Employment Programs on Youth-Labor-Market Outcomes.

In its 2023 internal report, the United Nations Capital Development Fund examined the employment challenges faced by young individuals living in the suburbs of Dakar. By conducting a series of interviews with Senegalese youth from Dakar and its surrounding areas, the July 2022 report uncovered several employment barriers, including insufficient experience, a disconnection between job-market needs and the training provided to young people, an overly theoretical education system, limited internship opportunities, and a scarcity of specialized or technical skill areas.

The Challenge Fund for Youth Employment (2021) undertook a scoping study to examine the specific factors that affected youth employment in Senegal. The study collected information through desk research, structured interviews with key stakeholders—including private sector firms, NGOs and government representatives—and focus-group discussions with youth. The study revealed that young people showed great pessimism and discouragement about job prospects in Senegal because of the lack of decent jobs and technical skills and limited support from the government. According to the Challenge Fund this situation is also a result of the fact that employers prefer to hire experienced workers rather than build the capacity of younger workers.

Echevin et al (2013) investigated the challenges and opportunities youth face in the labor market in Northern Senegal, using four data-collection methods: interviews with stakeholders, focus-group discussions with youth and community leaders, a household survey, and a firm survey. The findings indicated that young people had difficulty finding decent jobs, both in the formal and informal sectors. Most youth worked in agriculture with little or no job security or in family aid or apprenticeships with low or non-fixed wages. Youth also maintained a pessimistic view of their labor-market prospects and tended to spend little time searching for

a job. The lack of structured support to orient, inform, and finance youth also hindered their job searches. The findings additionally highlighted the fact that most companies complained that they were unable to find the skills they sought among young people, resulting in many unfilled vacancies.

#### 4.4.2 Studies Assessing the Direct Impact of Employment Programs on Youth-Labor-Market Outcomes.

Similarly to Kane et al (2021), Tsambou et al (2024a, 2024b) used non-experimental evaluation methods to assess the impact of the National Convention of State Employers on employment. Overall, the authors found that the participation in the National Convention improved the employability of beneficiaries, noting that participation in the National Convention increased the chances young people would find regular and stable employment. The impact was greater for men than for women, however. Findings also revealed that participation in the National Convention increased the chances of finding a regular job but did not ensure a high degree of job security.

Diagne and Cabral (2017) used the Inverse Propensity Score Matching and instrumental-variable methods to assess the impact of the National Agency for Integration and Agricultural Development on employment, migration, and several dimensions of smallholder well-being. The findings indicate that National Agency for Integration and Agricultural Development farms employed more than twenty-five full-time equivalent workers than did other farms and that the share of individuals who sought new employment was lower in National Agency for Integration and Agricultural Development farms (35%) vs. other farms (49%). The intention to migrate was also less pronounced among beneficiaries (5%) than among non-beneficiaries (9%).

Bourkane et al (2019) conducted a study on the impact of Plan for an Emerging Senegal on employment using a dynamic computable general equilibrium model combined with a micro-simulation model. Their results indicate that the contribution of the African Development Bank to Plan for an Emerging Senegal investment during the 2014-2018 period had a positive impact with a creation of 28,852 jobs, 35% of which were held by women and 54% by youth. Nevertheless, most of these jobs were unskilled, reflecting the structure of employment at the national level. During the same period, 73.22% of the jobs created through the African

Development Bank were occupied by uneducated individuals, compared with only 3.54% by those with greater education.

Using a recursive dynamic computable general equilibrium model, Ngom et al (2021) evaluated the effect of public investments planned in the Priority Action Plan 2 (i.e., the second phase of the Plan for an Emerging Senegal) on youth and women’s employment in Senegal. Their results showed that the investments undertaken in the Priority Action Plan 2 were likely to lead to an overall improvement in economic performance with an average GDP growth rate of 8.6% accompanied by the creation of 121,007 jobs over the 2019-2023 period. In sum, while the government of Senegal has initiated several programs to promote youth employment, very few empirical evaluations have been conducted. Without proper evaluation, it is challenging to determine which programs are successful and which need improvement. Therefore, increased efforts in monitoring and evaluation are essential to ensure that resources are being used efficiently to address youth-employment challenges.

**Table 6. Evaluations of Youth-Employment Policies and Programs in Senegal**

| Type                | Composition                          | Takeaway   |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| Type of literature  | Scientific articles/research reports | The literature on the evaluation of youth-employment policies and programs in Senegal is nascent, and publications on the subject are very recent.   |
| Geographic context  | Senegal 100%                         | Very few publications on the evaluation of youth-employment policies and programs in Senegal exist, and very few programs (National Convention of State Employers, National Agency for Integration and Agricultural Development, Plan for an Emerging Senegal, Priority Action Plan 2) have been the subject of impact assessment studies. |
| Year of publication | Published since 2014                 | The recent nature of this literature shows that the evaluation of youth-employment policies and programs remains particularly weak in Senegal.   |

## V The Political Economy of Youth-Employment Policies

We wanted to examine how political and economic processes interacted within a society. What was the fundamental nature of the governance system, who wielded power and for whose benefit, and what were the primary challenges facing socioeconomic structures and institutions? To address these questions, we examine the keys findings of the focus-group discussions and key-informant interviews.

## 5.1 Profile Of Youth Participating in Focus-Group Discussions

As mentioned, we conducted twelve focus-group discussions with three focus-group discussions per region. Table 7 provides a breakdown of the overall sample, distinguishing between non-vulnerable and vulnerable youth. Out of the 119 youth participants, the majority, accounting for 64%, were non-vulnerable youth. Among the vulnerable youth, persons with disabilities made up 23% of the group, refugees accounted for 5%, and returned migrants represented 8%.

**Table 7. Structure of the Overall Sample**

| Youth (15-35)                  | Freq. | Percent |
|--------------------------------|-------|---------|
| Non-vulnerable (men and women) | 76    | 64      |
| Vulnerable (men and women)     |       |         |
| People with disabilities       | 27    | 23      |
| Refugees                       | 6     | 5       |
| Returned migrants              | 10    | 8       |
| Total                          | 119   | 100.0%  |

Table 8 shows that most participants (55%) were between 18 and 29, while the remaining (45%) were between 30 and 35. Table 8 also highlights that 23% of young participants had a primary education or less. Those with secondary and tertiary education represented 38% and 39%, respectively. Youth beneficiaries of public-employment programs represented 34% of the overall sample, compared with 66% of non-beneficiaries.

**Table 8. Characteristics of Participants**

|   | Dakar                |       | Dakar            |       | Thies                |       | Thies            |       | Diourbel             |       | Diourbel         |       | Saint-Louis          |       | Saint-Louis      |       | Overall  |
|---|----------------------|-------|------------------|-------|----------------------|-------|------------------|-------|----------------------|-------|------------------|-------|----------------------|-------|------------------|-------|----------|
|   | Non-Vulnerable Youth |       | Vulnerable Youth |       | Non-Vulnerable Youth |       | Vulnerable Youth |       | Non-Vulnerable Youth |       | Vulnerable Youth |       | Non-Vulnerable Youth |       | Vulnerable Youth |       |          |
|   | Men                  | Women | Men              | Women | Men                  | Women | Men              | Women | Men                  | Women | Men              | Women | Men                  | Women | Men              | Women |          |
| <b>Age</b>  |                      |       |                  |       |                      |       |                  |       |                      |       |                  |       |                      |       |                  |       |          |
| 18-29   | 6                    | 11    | 0                | 3     | 7                    | 6     | 2                | 1     | 4                    | 3     | 1                | 0     | 9                    | 4     | 5                | 3     | 65 (55%) |
| 30-35   | 4                    | 0     | 6                | 3     | 2                    | 3     | 5                | 2     | 3                    | 5     | 7                | 2     | 3                    | 6     | 1                | 2     | 54 (45%) |
| <i>Overall</i>                                    | 10                   | 11    | 6                | 6     | 9                    | 9     | 7                | 3     | 7                    | 8     | 8                | 2     | 12                   | 10    | 6                | 5     | 119      |
| <b>Education</b>                                  |                      |       |                  |       |                      |       |                  |       |                      |       |                  |       |                      |       |                  |       |          |
| None or Arabic                                    | 0                    | 0     | 0                | 0     | 3                    | 2     | 0                | 2     | 0                    | 0     | 1                | 0     | 2                    | 0     | 0                | 3     | 13 (11%) |
| Primary   | 0                    | 0     | 0                | 0     | 0                    | 1     | 3                | 1     | 0                    | 0     | 2                | 1     | 2                    | 3     | 1                | 0     | 14 (12%) |
| Secondary   | 3                    | 6     | 2                | 4     | 0                    | 3     | 2                | 0     | 2                    | 3     | 3                | 0     | 4                    | 7     | 4                | 2     | 45 (38%) |
| Tertiary  | 7                    | 5     | 4                | 2     | 6                    | 3     | 2                | 0     | 5                    | 5     | 2                | 1     | 4                    | 0     | 1                | 0     | 47 (39%) |
| <i>Overall</i>                                    | 10                   | 11    | 6                | 6     | 9                    | 9     | 7                | 3     | 7                    | 8     | 8                | 2     | 12                   | 10    | 6                | 5     | 119      |
| <b>Beneficiaries of Youth-Employment Programs</b> |                      |       |                  |       |                      |       |                  |       |                      |       |                  |       |                      |       |                  |       |          |
| Yes   | 3                    | 4     | 1                | 3     | 1                    | 2     | 0                | 1     | 6                    | 4     | 6                | 1     | 3                    | 2     | 1                | 2     | 40 (34%) |
| No  | 7                    | 7     | 5                | 3     | 8                    | 7     | 7                | 2     | 1                    | 4     | 2                | 1     | 9                    | 8     | 5                | 3     | 79 (66%) |
| <i>Overall</i>                                    | 10                   | 11    | 6                | 6     | 9                    | 9     | 7                | 3     | 7                    | 8     | 8                | 2     | 12                   | 10    | 6                | 5     | 119      |

## 5.2 Main Findings from Focus-Group Discussions

### 5.2.1 Youth-Labor-Market Situation

Our initial set of questions gauged the perspectives of youth participants regarding their employment status, especially since 2021. The objective was to gain a holistic understanding of how young people perceived government efforts to address their needs. The analysis indicated that, while a small number of respondents noted some positive changes, the majority experienced stagnant or deteriorating conditions. One participant expressed a common sentiment, emphasizing that “a lot of effort still needs to be made because out of a thousand young people, only a hundred have found employment, leaving the majority still struggling with unemployment.”

Some even argued that the situation of young people had worsened, despite multiple programs and strategies. A returned migrant commented that the growing number of young people fleeing to Europe or the USA was clear evidence that the situation had not improved since 2021. Furthermore, he emphasized that, despite the abundance of skills and qualifications among young people, they continued to face challenges in securing decent employment.

In the same vein, a young woman expressed that, “In my opinion, things have worsened since 2021. What has been happening in recent years is unprecedented. Women who have the courage to take pirogues with their children to go to Europe. It is a sign of total despair. A good number of young people have perished in the sea and in the desert, on the road to the West. It is extraordinary. These are our friends, our husbands, brothers, and sisters who are dying like this.”

The lack of improvement in the conditions of young people, particularly those with disabilities, was strongly emphasized during the focus-group discussions. According to a young leader of an Economic Interest Group living with a disability, the government has overlooked individuals with disabilities in efforts to promote employment. Specifically, he pointed out that “it is us, people with disabilities, who are the most disadvantaged in youth-employment-promotion strategies implemented by the government. People with severe disabilities who cannot leave their homes are even more forgotten. The government’s special-recruitment programs (public service, street sweeping and cleaning, road maintenance, etc.) are not

suitable for people with disabilities.”

Young refugees expressed the same viewpoints. A young woman shared her experience of being unable to continue her education or find employment, despite submitting applications for various job opportunities. As a result, she found herself in a situation where she was neither studying nor working.

### 5.2.2 Dynamics of Communication and Accessibility of Programs

The consensus across all four regions was that employment programs have shown no significant progress in their communication efforts. In this regard, a young woman graduate had this to say: “I believed that the efforts made by the government do not reach young people. There is truly a lack of information. Most of the employment programs implemented by the government are still unknown to young people.” A young, non-educated participant felt similarly: “The information is not well conveyed, the majority of young people are not aware of the existence of these programs, or they do not know how to proceed to benefit from them.” A leader of an association of youth with disabilities, advocating for greater inclusivity in entrepreneurial financing, also emphasized the need for proactive outreach from the entrepreneurial financing program, the Directorate of Studies, Planning, and Monitoring Evaluation. He highlighted the lack of awareness among people with disabilities about the process of applying for financing.

Most participants believed that the communication gap was the result of the fact that the channels used did not allow the majority of young people access to information. This is mainly because digital platforms are only accessible to highly educated young people. For example, one university graduate commented, “I know about [Plan for an Emerging Senegal ]. It was recommended to me, and I visited their website.” Another secondary level participant added, “I know about Pôle Emploi, which trains and funds young people. I found out about it through social media.” Some participants also mentioned television advertisements, which, however, do not provide comprehensive information to most young people. Most participants also expressed their lack of awareness regarding the activities organized by the National Agency for the Promotion of Youth Employment. The activities, held periodically in neighborhoods and municipalities, are intended to educate young people about opportunities

and processes of youth-employment-promotion programs. Participants nonetheless noted that the activities had limited attendance and were sporadically organized, particularly for those in remote and rural areas.

Addressing accessibility issues, a returned migrant stated: “Following our return from abroad, our association, composed of 147 migrants, met with the Minister of Employment to discuss our issues and present him a six-million-XOF project. He initially expressed support and encouraged us to increase the budget. Since then, however, all attempts to reach him have been unsuccessful, leaving us feeling ignored and unable to move forward with our plans.”

Accessibility issues were also raised by young refugees in the focus-group discussions. One expressed the difficulty in gaining access to the programs, explaining that, without personal connections or knowledge of the right individuals to approach, engaging with program managers presented a challenge. Refugees also claimed to face significant barriers in access to employment programs as a result of their lack of a Senegalese identification card, a prerequisite for these programs. Moreover, the absence of an established information system from the government further hindered their ability to navigate resources and opportunities.

### 5.2.3 Dynamics of Youth-Integration Initiatives

During focus-group discussions, a series of questions was intended to gather participants’ views on changes they had noticed in their professional integration since 2021.

In the four regions, responses primarily highlighted recruitment within the emergency program for youth employment (Xëyu Ndaw Ñi) as well as in government entities such as the civil service and other public structures. A participant mentioned witnessing a positive change since 2021, when many of his friends had been hired by structures like the Solid Waste Management Coordination Unit and the Autonomous Road Maintenance Fund. A young woman with a master’s degree shared that it wasn’t until 2023, three years after completing her training, that she finally secured a one-year contract through the Xëyu Ndaw Ñi program. Many other participants highlighted the positive impact of special-recruitment programs on integrating young people into the workforce.

In relation to these special recruitments, however, many youth participants raised three primary concerns. First, they argued that the impact of recruitment on young people was

minimal because the number of available positions was small. Critics claimed that the state's target of 65,000 jobs was disappointingly low. Second, the precarious nature of these jobs is a significant concern. Most contracts are one-year renewable agreements, with no guarantee of renewal, often tied to specific projects. Third, another concern raised by participants is the perception that special recruitments may be influenced by political affiliations or personal connections. For example, a participant shared that being affiliated with the government or having connections seemed to be prerequisites for recruitment at structures like Autonomous Road Maintenance Fund.

Furthermore, participants in all four regions expressed a lack of awareness regarding the employment-integration initiatives of the Directorate of Employment and the Directorate of Integration, with only one participant in Dakar claiming familiarity with the National Convention of State Employers. Additionally, the majority of focus-group discussions participants were unaware of job-integration initiatives conducted by the Directorate of Integration, which falls under the ministry responsible for vocational training, apprenticeship, and integration.

#### 5.2.4 Dynamics of Youth-Training Initiatives

Since 2021, the availability of training programs for young people has increased notably, as evidenced by many participants who have either personally benefited from these programs or know others who have. This widespread observation across different regions further confirms the growing availability of training opportunities for young individuals.

Focus-group-discussion participants across all four regions consistently criticized training programs for their lack of follow-up. This includes the absence of systematic support in job placement, integration into the workforce, and financial assistance for entrepreneurship. Consequently, the trainings failed to benefit the intended recipients, as one participant conveyed: "The training programs offered by structures such as Fund for the Financing of Vocational and Technical Training are inadequate and do not align with our aspirations. It appears that their primary focus is on producing a higher number of trained young individuals, rather than ensuring employment opportunities for those who have completed the training." An additional criticism, voiced by a minority, pertained to the lack of impartiality in the

administration of training programs. One participant, who possessed a master's degree, provided testimony that underscored the influence of political affiliation on program selection. Specifically, the participant observed a situation in which an individual with only primary education was favored over a candidate with secondary education solely because of the former's affiliation with the program manager's political party.

Furthermore, the lack of inclusivity in training programs was a subject of criticism, particularly when in terms of supporting such vulnerable groups as refugees. A young woman refugee, who had completed secondary education, highlighted the limited options available for refugees, with only ASHER offering scholarships for refugee students and Caritas providing essential support such as school supplies and food kits.

#### 5.2.5 Dynamics of Funding Entrepreneurship Initiatives

Focus-group discussions. Participants across all four regions identified the General Delegation for Rapid Entrepreneurship for Youth and Women (Directorate of Studies, Planning, and Monitoring Evaluation) as the most prominent financier of entrepreneurship. They also acknowledged the significant contributions of the Fund for the Financing of Vocational and Technical Training and the National Agency for the Promotion of Youth Employment in this area. For example, a young leader from an Economic Interest Group composed of individuals with disabilities successfully secured funding from the Fund for the Financing of Vocational and Technical Training to acquire screen-printing machines.

Despite the increase in budgets since 2021, the promotion of entrepreneurship through funding did not produce the expected improvement in youth employment, as reported by numerous participants. Furthermore, participants unanimously expressed their dissatisfaction with the current state of entrepreneurship funding. Multiple hurdles were identified, such as convoluted application procedures, arbitrary denials, perceived favoritism in fund allocation, inadequate funding amounts, problematic repayment terms, and burdensome taxes and expenses for business owners.

Participants who needed funding expressed that the numerous administrative procedures posed significant barriers to gaining access to funding. For example, they found it

challenging to navigate the requirements of preparing a business plan without proper guidance and were overwhelmed by the documentation needed to open a bank account. Additionally, they were unaware of the procedures to obtain essential documents such as a Senegal tax-identification number, a Trade Registry certificate, and an Import/Export card, which were necessary to qualify for funding.

Several participants expressed dissatisfaction with the amounts they received, stating that the government seems to prioritize quantity over quality. They argued that, instead of funding significant projects led by young leaders, the budget was distributed among many people, resulting in small amounts insufficient for meaningful projects. Additionally, some recipients found repayment burdensome as a result of the short repayment period and what they considered to be significant monthly payments.

That said, participants emphasized that entrepreneurship was made difficult in Senegal by taxes and related expenses. For instance, a young woman with a secondary level of education noted that, "We formed an Economic Interest Group. We were a group of five people and we set up a multiservice business. But the high taxes and rental fees forced us to close down as we lacked financial support." Similarly, participants with construction or office-supply businesses found the tax burden overwhelming, particularly because a tax-clearance certificate was often required to secure contracts, resulting in substantial tax payments. Contrary to the claims of some participants, others argued that the tax authorities were quite accommodating and could provide tax incentives for young entrepreneurs. For example, a thirty-two-year-old entrepreneur in the field of civil engineering stated that, after explaining his situation to the tax service, he was granted a grace period. He also mentioned obtaining a tax-clearance certificate by completing forms and paying a fee of 9,000 XOF.

Describing the challenges faced to start his business, a young refugee with a secondary education expressed, "Initially, I encountered difficulties. After seeking information at the town hall regarding the regulations and steps required to establish a fast-food restaurant, I was instructed to submit an application that ultimately did not progress. Consequently, I returned to inquire about the process for obtaining the essential documents, only to be advised to exercise patience. Following an eight-month wait, I found myself with no alternative but to lease a premises in order to commence my entrepreneurial venture."

As another example, a thirty-two -year-old entrepreneur and technician in civil

engineering, who considered himself a professional with all the necessary legal documents, expressed concerns regarding the problematic allocation and awarding of contracts. According to him, larger and foreign companies tended to win the contracts and then subcontract them to smaller companies, resulting in reduced earnings for the latter. As a local young entrepreneur, he found it challenging to obtain approvals and felt let down by the government that he felt should support and nurture entrepreneurship.

**Table 9. Key Focus-Group-Discussions Findings**

| Themes                             | Non-Vulnerable Youth/Vulnerable Youth   |   |  |  |   |
|------------------------------------|---|---|--|--|---|
|                                    | Men   | Women   | Refugees (women and men)   | People with disabilities (women and men)   | Returned migrants (women and men)   |
| Job-Market Situation               | Most young men believed that the employment situation has not improved despite government programs. They found that the programs fail because young people, who are their main target, are not involved or included in decision-making, especially during the design phase of these programs. | Young women believed that the employment situation has not improved; they feel that the government does not listen to young people because many young graduates still struggle to found work. According to them, the lack of employment pushes women to engage in small jobs such as informal trading. Worse still, these young women firmly believed that it is this lack of employment that drives their peers to take the risk of attempting to reach Europe via the sea (increasing the phenomenon of illegal immigration among women). | Young refugees do not see an improvement in the employment situation; they are left behind and do not receive assistance from the authorities, in terms of training or employability; They believed that young people must have an entrepreneurial spirit because the state cannot satisfy everyone. | Young people with disabilities feel that their situation has not improved. They feel themselves to have been left behind and stated they did not benefit from privileges that the state makes available to young people. Also, their unique concerns are not addressed in youth-employment policies because no channels exist for them to communicate their needs to government officials. | Young returned migrants believed that the employment situation has not improved at all, which is why they continue to engage in clandestine immigration. They feel that the government does not listen to them and only uses them for political purposes. |
| Communication and Accessibility of | Young men claimed that information is not   | Young women believed that   | Young refugees face a real problem   | Youth with disabilities have pointed out that  | Young returned migrants face the  |

Employment Programs

well conveyed. According to them, most young people are unaware of the existence of the programs or do not know how to proceed to benefit from them.

government efforts do not reach them. Most of the employment programs implemented by the state are still unknown to young people. In their view, several government initiatives were interesting, but communication was not effective.

gaining access to youth-employment programs. In fact, they do not know who to turn to, which is why some of them have not had the courage to apply.

mobility difficulties and the physical inaccessibility of infrastructure prevent them from having access to information.

same difficulties as their peers, even though some have still been able to benefit from these youth-employment programs.

Placement and Integration of Young People

Despite recognizing the state's efforts to integrate young people through programs like the Solid Waste Management Coordination Unit, the Autonomous Road Maintenance Fund, and the Xëyu Ndaw Ñi program, young men expressed disappointment with the limited number of recruitments, which they believe have a minimal impact on the situation. Moreover, they expressed frustration over limited political inclusiveness in the recruitment process.

Despite acknowledging government efforts to promote the integration of young women through programs like Fund for the Financing of Vocational and Technical Training, General Delegation for Rapid Entrepreneurship of Youth and Women, and Xëyu Ndaw Ñi , young women voiced concerns about unstable job conditions and short-term contracts associated with these initiatives.

Young refugees reported facing significant barriers in gaining access to these programs as a result of their inability to obtain Senegalese identification documents, a requirement for employment. Furthermore, the absence of a government information system exacerbates difficulties in navigating resources.

In addition to sharing similar experiences as their peers, young people living with disabilities voiced concerns about insufficient enforcement of the social-orientation law, which they see as a potential solution to their challenges. Furthermore, they emphasized inadequate promotion and awareness surrounding the equal opportunities card.

Young returned migrants echoed the same sentiments as their counterparts.

|                                       |   |  |   |  |  |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|---|--|--|
| <p>Training and capacity building</p> | <p>Young men noted that government training programs often failed to address their specific needs and aspirations. Instead of focusing on the successful integration of these individuals into the workforce, the government seems more concerned with increasing the number of trained young people.</p>   | <p>Most young women felt that training programs lacked proper follow-up and often provided short-term trainings that failed to reach intended beneficiaries. This group argued that the programs do not effectively target the right individuals, resulting in missed opportunities.</p>           | <p>Young refugees pointed out that training needed to be relevant to their specific needs and tailored to their specializations. Additionally, they perceived a dearth of programs aimed specifically at refugees, apart from ASHER and CARITAS, which offer school supplies and food kits.</p> | <p>Youth with disabilities, particularly those with mobility difficulties or who encounter obstacles in attending training sessions or completing tasks, often feel that the training opportunities provided do not sufficiently take their disabilities into account and fail to address their specific requirements.</p> | <p>Young returned migrants found the training programs offered by various government structures, such as Fund for the Financing of Vocational and Technical Training, to be interesting, and these programs have allowed some of them to gain experience in their field of work. However, they criticize the lack of follow-up and the failure to integrate beneficiaries into the work world.</p> |
| <p>Financing entrepreneurship</p>     | <p>Most young men do not engage in entrepreneurship as a result of a lack of funding and support from the government. Those who manage to start their own businesses use their own resources or have family help. Few young men received financial assistance from state structures such as the General</p> | <p>Most young women do not engage in entrepreneurship primarily as a result of a lack of funding. They believed that limited political inclusivity was a key reason why funding was frequently allocated to women's groups, which are primarily made up of older members. Those who managed to</p> | <p>Young refugees in Senegal, unable to access youth-employment-promotion programs as a result of the lack of national identity cards, have found alternative ways to support themselves. They have turned to entrepreneurship through digital platforms, which they have found more</p>        | <p>Despite numerous challenges, many young people living with disabilities are eager to pursue entrepreneurship. However, they often encounter discrimination and find themselves lacking support from government institutions like the General Delegation for Rapid</p>   | <p>Despite the lack of government support, returned migrants have found ways to engage in entrepreneurship, including activities like poultry and livestock farming, motorcycle-taxi driving, auto mechanics, and the sale of spare parts. While some have been fortunate enough to receive</p>  |

Delegation for Rapid Entrepreneurship of Youth and Women, the National Agency for the Promotion of Youth Employment, or the Support Program for the Development of Education in Senegal. Unfortunately, government funding was often insufficient to meet their needs for launching their activities.

start their own businesses secured funding either through family support or through a bank loan, which came with a high interest rate.

lucrative and advantageous.

Entrepreneurship of Youth and Women, which are meant to provide financial assistance to aspiring entrepreneurs.

assistance from organizations such as the Fund for the Financing of Vocational and Technical Training, the National Agency for the Promotion of Youth Employment, the Islamic Microfinance Development Program in Senegal, or and the International Organization for Migration, many still faced challenges in establishing and growing their businesses.

## 5.3 Main Findings from Key-Informant Interviews

### 5.3.1 Lack of a Reference Framework

Despite the increase in employment-promotion programs in Senegal under President Macky Sall, a reference framework, which should provide clear guidelines and standards for public-employment programs, including their objectives, principles, targets, resources, activities, management processes, and evaluation methods, to guide and oversee initiatives aimed at promoting youth employment is lacking. This framework

The key-informant interviews indicated the lack of a specific framework for addressing youth-employment-promotion in Senegal. As a result, labor inspectors tended to use terms like “promotion strategy” or “employment programs” instead of referring to an actual employment policy. According to one labor inspector, Senegal does not have an official employment policy, and the government consistently delays the signing of the employment-policy document. Nonetheless, there is a glimmer of hope. A request has been made to the International Labor Organization, as mentioned by an employment program manager during the interviews, and a new initiative will be launched to streamline the employment-policy-development process and create a national policy document accompanied by an action plan.

### 5.3.2 Communication and Accessibility of Employment Programs

Despite multiple efforts, youth-labor-market outcomes have not shown substantial progress. One factor in play is inadequate communication by and about employment programs. A representative of a public-employment program shared the following: “The programs are not accessible because young people do not receive the information as they should, which indicates a communication issue within the programs themselves.”

We asked interviewees to evaluate the accessibility of programs, and their responses were divided. For most program managers, ensuring fair access to programs is a priority. In this regard, a program manager noted, “A selection committee is always in place, and it is led by the prefect [who] oversees all activities related to this selection..” Other key informants, however, saw systemic problems. An NGO representative highlighted the issue of limited information flow and the fact that only a small percentage of young people benefited from the

programs, indicating the need for improved dissemination of information. Many young leaders also believed that political interference and favoritism played a significant role in the selection process of employment-promotion programs. As the coordinator of a youth movement put it, the quotas of politicians had to be respected and beneficiaries without connections had greater difficulty in access.

### 5.3.3 Youth Integration, Training, and Entrepreneurship Initiatives

Public youth-employment programs in Senegal provide opportunities for training, professional integration, and financial support. The main goal of these initiatives is to help young individuals develop skills to enter the workforce and to encourage entrepreneurial endeavors.

The Directorate of Studies, Planning, and Monitoring Evaluation was widely regarded as one of the most successful institutions in promoting employment in Senegal, mainly as a result of the funding it provides to young entrepreneurs to carry out their projects. This aspect sets it apart from other programs that focus merely on training or instilling entrepreneurial leadership. However, most respondents, while approving of the General Delegation for Rapid Entrepreneurship of Youth and Women initiative, criticized the lack of follow-up.

Training opportunities were also regarded as satisfactory by most interviewees. They noted that the Fund for the Financing of Vocational and Technical Training effectively communicated its availability and that requirements for participation were not overly challenging. The coordinator of an employment program emphasized the inclusivity of the Fund, stating that it was open to individuals of all educational backgrounds, including those who may not have attended school. A young leader attested to the significant number of young people who had received training in various fields through the government's training programs. He commented, "I have observed the presence of technical training centers in this area, which provide young women with valuable skills in fields such as catering, livestock farming, tailoring, agriculture, horticulture, and more."

The National Convention of State Employers has also played a crucial role in fostering the participation of young men and women in the workforce through internships in both private companies and educational institutions. According to a National Convention of State

Employers official, in addition to the integration of fixed-term contracts within the National Convention of State Employers, the program has expanded to include the agriculture and agribusiness sectors. She added that during the period from 2021 to 2022, the National Convention launched an activity called “72 Hours with the Employment Center” in Pikine, Keur Massar, Dakar, and Guédiawaye. Through this initiative, registered youth were given the chance to be interviewed by prominent business figures, leading to successful placements in companies that formalized agreements and contracts in the presence of the minister.

#### 5.3.4 Policy-Tracking and -Monitoring Systems

During interviews, several program managers acknowledged the existence of dedicated monitoring and evaluation officers who track the progress of programs. According to a program manager, supervision missions are conducted for each program, typically overseen by the monitoring and evaluation officer.

In this regard, the Directorate of Planning confirmed the implementation of a monitoring-and-evaluation system for public employment-promotion programs. An official from the Directorate stated that they are responsible for overseeing the Xëyu Ndaw Ñi Program and conducting evaluations of employment policies. They gather data through surveys to assess the effectiveness of employment-support mechanisms and monitor the initiatives of the Directorate of Employment and other newly established programs. The Directorate of Employment compiles quarterly reports and serves as the secretariat for a Technical Committee consisting of stakeholders. In addition, several managers of employment and entrepreneurship centers indicated that they regularly submitted quarterly reports to supervising authorities in the prefectures.

While most managers of employment programs acknowledged the existence of monitoring-and-evaluation systems, a significant number voiced dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of these efforts. A representative of an employment and entrepreneurship center said, “As far as I know, at the national level, there is still a lack of program monitoring and evaluation. I dare to say this openly. The proof is that, if there was truly a national monitoring-and-evaluation system, the situation of young people would have changed long ago.” Most key informants believed that systems for monitoring and evaluating employment-promotion

programs were ineffective, citing the politicization of the programs and the increasing youth-employment challenge in Senegal, which has led to a significant increase in illegal migration. To illustrate their point, a leader and coordinator of a youth movement stated, “Despite the establishment of the General Delegation for Rapid Entrepreneurship of Youth and Women in 2019, which aimed to support rapid youth entrepreneurship, and the substantial financial resources allocated to it, the migratory phenomenon has not decreased. This can be attributed to the misallocation of funds, which deprives rightful beneficiaries of the intended support.” At the same time, the General Delegation for Rapid Entrepreneurship of Youth and Women was widely acknowledged as one public program that is regularly monitored and evaluated by employment officials. As stated by a National Agency for the Promotion of Youth Employment official, “[The General Delegation] is the sole institution that undergoes thorough monitoring and evaluation, which is understandable given the substantial investment of billions of dollars. In the Kaffrine region alone, five billion XOF has been allocated, while at the departmental level, nearly three billion XOF have been injected.”

Moreover, the annual reports of programs that are only accessible to a select few and known by a limited number of individuals were often dismissed by those being interviewed. Critics asserted that these reports were not a true reflection of the situation and were deliberately manipulated to serve political agendas. Program managers also showed resistance during the interviews when it came to sharing their quarterly or semi-annual evaluation reports with investigators. Some made promises but failed to provide the reports, while others openly expressed their unwillingness to share them.

Overall, most interviewees were of the opinion that current monitoring-and-evaluation systems were ineffective. A representative of the Directorate of Employment acknowledged this inefficiency, stating, “The major flaw in our public policies is the monitoring and evaluation of programs, especially evaluation. When we don’t evaluate, we can’t make corrections. Nowadays, the word ‘evaluation’ is seen as something negative by people, to the point that when you mention evaluation, people think of audits. Perhaps it’s also the approach that is not good because when evaluation reports are published, we tended to primarily focus on financial elements, overlooking other significant aspects of evaluation.” This situation is further confirmed by the audit reports conducted by the state’s oversight bodies which pointed out a variety of gaps in programming, including a lack of monitoring/evaluation, lack of transparency,

irregular compensation payments to market commission members, and claims about outstanding payments.

**Table 10. Findings from Key-Informant Interviews**

| Interviewees                                    | Program Managers   | Labor Inspectors  | Youth Leaders, including Young Entrepreneurs  | Civil-Society Representatives, Including Media & Private-Sector Actors   |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| Existence of a reference framework              | Program managers still deplore the lack of a reference framework, which they partly attribute to weak coordination among youth-employment programs   | Labor inspectors view the lack of a reference framework as a failure to fulfil international commitments to support youth employment.   | Most young leaders have no idea whether there is a reference framework for youth-employment policies. They tended to confuse it with the Plan for an Emerging Senegal.                    | Civil-society actors are not well-informed about the existence of a reference framework for youth-employment policies in Senegal.  |
| Coordination and harmonization of interventions | The coordination of employment programs is deemed satisfactory by officials, who consider the creation of a one-stop shop through employment centers as an organizational innovation.                        | Labor inspectors consider the coordination of youth-employment-promotion programs to be very weak. They attribute this to the politicization of employment programs and the lack of an official reference framework for all interventions related to youth integration. | Most young leaders are dissatisfied with the coordination of youth-employment-promotion programs, noting the presence of numerous scattered and overlapping initiatives.                  | According to civil-society actors, there is a lack of coordination in implementing youth-employment programs as a result of the absence of a universally accepted employment policy, designed and based inclusively.                                   |
| Program accessibility                           | According to program managers, the programs are open to all young Senegalese nationals aged 18 to 40, with a particular focus on supporting vulnerable individuals through positive discrimination measures. | Most labor inspectors criticize the lack of democratic access to youth-employment-promotion programs. They accuse the State of politicizing employment for electoral purposes.  | Most youth leaders found it challenging to gain access to programs, citing a lack of accurate information and perceiving limited political inclusivity in the selection of beneficiaries. | Civil-society actors largely shared the same ideas as young leaders. According to them, youth-employment-promotion structures are less accessible as a result of the politicization of employment and a lack of communication in their implementation. |
| Skills-training opportunities                   | Program managers mostly believed that the training offer has increased since 2021, particularly with the Xëyu Ndaw Ñi program. Overall, they praised the   | Labor inspectors acknowledged that training opportunities have increased in recent years. They highlight the High Intensity Labor programs, the most well-  | Young leaders also noted the improvement in training opportunities after the events of March 2021. According to most of them, however, this increase has                                  | Despite an increase in training opportunities, civil-society actors raised concerns about the disconnection between the training and the demands of the job market, as well as limited political   |

|                               |   |   |  |   |
|-------------------------------|---|---|--|---|
|                               | <p>achievements made by the Fund for the Financing of Vocational and Technical Training and National Agency for the Promotion of Youth Employment. However, they call for these structures to be strengthened in all aspects (budgetary, personnel, training of managers, etc.). Despite the recognition of the positive impact of the Xëyu Ndaw Ñi Program on employment opportunities, officials admitted that employment challenges in Senegal have not decreased significantly. They emphasized the need to prioritize entrepreneurship and address the limitations of the private sector, which they believe is preventing the population from fully benefiting from government initiatives.</p> | <p>known of which are the Solid Waste Management Coordination Unit and the Autonomous Road Maintenance Fund.</p>  | <p>benefited the supporters of the ruling party, preventing access for a significant number of young people.</p>   | <p>inclusivity in training programs.</p>  |
| Job integration opportunities | <p>While program managers acknowledged the positive impact of the Xëyu Ndaw Ñi Program on funding accessibility, they underscored the need for further efforts to ensure a broader reach among young people population.</p>   | <p>Labor inspectors argued that young workers' rights are often disregarded in the recruitment process for labor-intensive investments, hindering the effectiveness of professional-integration programs.</p> | <p>Many young leaders expressed dissatisfaction with employment policies in improving job integration for youth, citing both limited opportunities and program inefficiencies.</p>   | <p>Civil-society actors argued that professional integration opportunities for young people were insufficient, asserting that public-employment programs have failed to address their training and support requirements. As a result, they advocate for a comprehensive overhaul of existing programs to align with the demands and dynamics of the labor market.</p> |
| Access to funding             |   | <p>Despite improvements in access to financing, labor inspectors argued that the distribution of funds was affected by limited political inclusivity.</p>   | <p>Young leaders generally claimed that funding was less accessible to the wider population and noted a lack of sufficient support and monitoring from youth-employment programs, which undermines the likelihood of entrepreneurial</p> | <p>Civil-society actors argued that the availability of funding for youth-employment programs in Senegal needed improvement. They also argued that statistics on program beneficiaries did not accurately reflect the number of young people who had successfully secured employment through</p>  |

|  |   |  |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|--|
|  |   |  | success.   | funding. Additionally, they expressed concern over the lack of proper monitoring and follow-up.  |
| Tracking and monitoring systems of policies          | According to most employment program managers, program monitoring and evaluation are lacking. They believed that rigorous monitoring and evaluation would identify major flaws in program coordination and lead to significant improvements in youth-employment outcomes. | Labor inspectors commonly asserted that monitoring-and-evaluation systems for employment-promotion programs lacked effectiveness because of factors that included inadequate resources, insufficient data collection and analysis, and a lack of coordination between different government agencies involved in monitoring and evaluation. As a result, the impact and outcomes of employment-promotion programs are often difficult to assess accurately, hindering efforts to improve and optimize these programs. According to labor inspectors, the government has invested heavily in the | Most young leaders point to the lack of a dedicated monitoring-and-evaluation system for employment-promotion programs. According to most of them, if there was a proper monitoring-and-evaluation system in place, employment challenge would not continue to worsen in the country. They also criticize the politicization of employment, which they attribute to the absence of an appropriate monitoring and evaluation mechanism for employment programs. | Civil-society actors are unsatisfied with the current monitoring and evaluation of youth-employment-promotion programs, arguing that the absence of a proper assessment system contributed to the ongoing youth-employment challenges. |
| Experiences and challenges of youth entrepreneurship | According to program officials, most young people in Senegal are not well-trained and lack the necessary experience to venture into entrepreneurship.   | entrepreneurship of young people and women in recent years. However, many of these entrepreneurs still complain about the burden of taxes and the complexity of the business environment, which limits their ability to thrive and create dignified and fulfilling jobs.   | Most young leaders who aspire to invest in entrepreneurship had a limited understanding of tax legislation, and most young leaders who were entrepreneurs found themselves burdened by tax obligations.  | Most of the interviewed actors in society have advocated for a better business environment and a reduction in tax burdens to encourage young people to invest in self-employment.  |

## 5.4 Policy Levers for Employment

Senegal has implemented various employment promotion initiatives to address youth-employment challenges, including funding and technical support initiatives, job placement initiatives, and skills-training initiatives. Among these, skills-training programs have proven to be the most effective policy levers, as indicated by findings from the focus-group discussions and key-informant interviews.

Young people who took part in the focus-group discussions found the training programs offered by various government structures, such as Fund for the Financing of Vocational and Technical Training, to be interesting. These programs have allowed some participants to gain valuable experience in their fields. Program managers also noted that training opportunities have expanded since 2021, especially with the Xëyu Ndaw Ñi initiative. They commended the progress achieved by the Fund for the Financing of Vocational and Technical Training and the National Agency for the Promotion of Youth Employment but emphasized the need to enhance their frameworks in terms of budget, staffing, and manager training. Moreover, labor inspectors acknowledged that training has increased in recent years, indicating a positive trend in availability and accessibility. That said, young leaders observed that these opportunities often favor supporters of the ruling party, restricting access for many young individuals.

Overall, training programs in Senegal have proven to be the most effective policy levers as a result of their ability to engage and interest young people, the increase in training opportunities, and improved opportunities. Areas for improvement remain, however, such as the need for better follow-up, integration of beneficiaries, and alignment with market demands. Addressing these issues can further enhance the effectiveness of these programs in reducing youth-employment challenges.

## VI Conclusions

The purpose of this study was twofold: first, to assess the effectiveness of youth-employment policies in Senegal in improving employment opportunities for youth and,

second, to identify areas for improvement. Using a desk-review approach, focus-group discussions, and key-informant interviews, we reviewed current programs and initiatives as well as their outcomes.

The findings revealed that enormous efforts have been made, especially since 2021, to address youth employment. Policymakers have implemented initiatives to provide training, support for professional integration, and financial assistance for entrepreneurship, which have proven beneficial for a number of young individuals. Challenges to youth entrepreneurship that remain, however, include insufficient follow-up, transparency and inclusion issues, high taxation, and complicated permit procedures. Additionally, the study points out deficiencies in the systems used to monitor policy effectiveness, noting considerable shortcomings in data collection and policy evaluation.

## **6.1 Policy Implications**

To improve the effectiveness of youth-employment policies, policymakers should consider implementing more robust follow-up systems to ensure that trained individuals can successfully transition into employment. Simplifying permit procedures and reducing taxation could also encourage more youth to pursue entrepreneurship. Furthermore, enhancing data collection and evaluation is crucial for accurately measuring policy effectiveness and making informed adjustments with the goal of improving outcomes.

## **6.2 Policy Levers for Employment**

Training initiatives have provided valuable skills to young people, yet they lack crucial follow-up such as job placement and financial assistance, which have a particular impact on young women and marginalized groups. Additionally, the effectiveness of these policies is undermined by limited political inclusivity, which particularly affects refugees and youth with disabilities.

### **6.3 Effectiveness of Startup Laws and Tax Policies in Promoting Entrepreneurship**

The study revealed that current policies appear to be a double-edged sword for fostering youth entrepreneurship. While some entrepreneurs benefit from tax incentives and accommodations such as grace periods and clear procedures for obtaining necessary documents, many face significant legal and tax barriers that stifle their business efforts. High taxes, rental fees, and the complexity of obtaining essential permits like a national tax-payer identification number for businesses and Trade Registry present significant challenges, indicating that more targeted support and clearer guidance are needed to empower young entrepreneurs.

### **6.4 Tracking and Monitoring Systems**

Current systems for monitoring employment policies in Senegal show significant weaknesses, particularly in data collection and the lack of systematic evaluation. Despite the claims of employment programs regarding the integration of monitoring and evaluation practices, the absence of comprehensive annual reports and the focus on pre-program rather than post-program outcomes (which would include the ways in which youth-employment interventions influence long-term access to dignified and fulfilling work), highlight critical gaps. To address these shortcomings, policymakers should consider establishing a national observatory for employment and training to serve as both a centralized monitoring and evaluation body for all public-employment programs and as a site for the systematic collection and analysis of data to improve policy effectiveness and transparency.

### **6.5 Research Gaps**

While the study offers important insights into the state of youth-employment policies in Senegal, notable evidence gaps require attention. The success of current training programs is uncertain as a result of inconsistent follow-up and a lack of research that tracks long-term results. Furthermore, the effects of high taxes and complicated permitting processes on youth entrepreneurship are only partially understood, highlighting the need for additional research. Nor did we address the ways in which digital and technological advances

might affect youth employment, underscoring the need for more detailed, context-specific analyses to guide policymaking.

## **6.6 Limitations**

While our qualitative analysis provides valuable insights, the inherent subjectivity of the broader youth population means that young people may not be fully represented. Additionally, the short time available for the follow-up review limited our ability to assess long-term outcomes thoroughly. Future studies should consider incorporating quantitative methods and extended review periods.

## References

- Agence Nationale de la Statistique et de la Démographie (2020). Population du Sénégal: Année 2020. Dakar, Senegal: République du Sénégal/ANSD.
- Bourkane, L., Cabral, F. J., Mamno, V. L., and Diagne, K. (2019). L'impact du Plan Sénégal Emergent (PSE) sur l'emploi. Abidjan, Ivory Coast: Groupe de la Banque Africaine de Développement. [https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/documents/projects-and-operations/rapport\\_emploi\\_senegal\\_10-12-2019.pdf](https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/documents/projects-and-operations/rapport_emploi_senegal_10-12-2019.pdf).
- Cabral, F., J, Diakhaté, I., Gavlo, K., Fall, M., and Ndao, S (2014). *Diagnostic sur l'emploi des jeunes au Sénégal: Étude réalisée dans le cadre de l'Initiative conjointe pour l'emploi des jeunes en Afrique*. Dakar, Sénégal: République du Sénégal. <https://www.ilo.org/fr/publications/diagnostic-sur-lemploi-des-jeunes-au-senegal-etude-realisee-dans-le-cadre>.
- Diagne, A and Cabral, F. J (2017). Agricultural transformation in Senegal: Impacts of an integrated program. Partnership for Economic Policy Working Paper No. 2017-09. Nairobi, Kenya: PEP. <https://portal.pep-net.org/document/download/30244>.
- Diallo, T.M. and Ronconi, L. (2024). Beyond the law-in-the-books: Labour enforcement in Senegal. *The Economic and Labour Relations Review*, 35(2), 276-291.
- Echevin, D., Sylla, M. B., Ly, M. A., and Seck, F. G. C. (2013). Youth employment in northern Senegal: Creating job opportunities for young people—Final report. Baltimore, MD: International Youth Foundation. GPYE\_Assessment\_Creating\_Opportunities\_for\_Youth\_6.pdf.
- Golub, S., Mbaye, A., and Chwe, H. (2015) Labor market regulations in Sub-Saharan Africa, with a focus on Senegal. University of Cape Town. Development Policy Research Unit Working Paper 201505. Cape Town, South Africa: DPRU.
- International Monetary Fund (2025). Senegal: World Economic Outlook (April 2025). 15 Indicators, 1980-2030. <https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/profile/SEN>.
- Kane, A., Ndoye, M. L., and Dogbe, A. K. (2020). Programmes de stage et accès à l'emploi: Une application à la Convention Nationale État-Employeurs du Secteur Privé au Sénégal. *Revue d'Economie du Développement*, 28(4), 47-81.
- Kane, A., Ndoye, M. L., and Seck, A. (2021). Efficacité du dispositif d'accompagnement à l'insertion professionnelle des jeunes au Sénégal. *African Development Review*, 32, S106-S118. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8268.12486>.
- Mbaye, A., Aly, F. G., Beye, A., Dia, A. K., and Mbaye, M.(2021). Employment creation potential, labor skills requirements, and skill gaps for young people: A Senegal case study. Africa Growth Initiative Working Paper #29. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution/AGI.
- Ministère de l'Economie, du Plan et de la Coopération (2021). Programme d'urgence pour l'emploi et l'insertion socio-économique des jeunes. République du Sénégal. [https://economie.gouv.sn/sites/default/files/2021-07/Brochure%20Xeyu%20Ndaw%20Gni-version-finale\\_compressed.pdf](https://economie.gouv.sn/sites/default/files/2021-07/Brochure%20Xeyu%20Ndaw%20Gni-version-finale_compressed.pdf).
- Ngom, A., Diakhite, S., Ndoye, E. M. Y., Ndoye, O., Diop, A., Sall, H. B., and Emini, C. A. (2021). Incidences de la stratégie d'investissement 2019-2023 du Sénégal sur la croissance, l'emploi des jeunes et des femmes: Analyse à l'aide d'un modèle EGC dynamique. Partnership for Economic Policy Working Paper 2021-18. Nairobi, Kenya: PEP. <https://portal.pep-net.org/document/download/36700>.

- Tsambou, A. D., Diallo, T. M., Kamga, B. F., and Asongu, S. A. (2024a). Impact of employment support programs on the quality of youth employment: Evidence from Senegal's internship program. *Sustainable Development*, 32(5), 4606-4632.
- Tsambou, A. D., Mafang, L., Diallo, T. M., and Kamga, B. F. (2024b). Impact of job training program on employment outcomes in Senegal. *SN Business & Economics*, 4(84).
- World Bank Group, The (2018, 4 October). Systematic country diagnostic of Senegal. Washington, DC: The World Bank. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/336611539873310474/pdf/systematic-country-diagnostic-of-senegal-post-roc-for-rvp-clearance-clean-20181004-002-10122018-636754106488285264.pdf>.
- World Bank Group, The (2022). Economy Profile Senegal. Doing Business 2020. Washington, DC: The World Bank. <https://www.doingbusiness.org/content/dam/doingBusiness/country/s/senegal/SEN.pdf>.
- World Bank, The(2019). New country classifications by income level: 2019-2020. *World Bank Blogs*. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/new-country-classifications-income-level-2019-2020>. Washington, DC: The World Bank.