

# Labor market opportunities in academia and non-academic industries

Tigist Mekonnen Melesse (PhD)  
World Bank

Southern Africa Regional Students and Youth Conference

“Reshaping, Re-planning and Re-Committing to the Youth Agenda in the Southern African Region”

Lilongwe, Malawi  
August 24-26, 2022

# Outline

- Context
- Opportunities
- Challenges

- Africa's large and increasingly digitally connected young population presents both challenges and opportunities for the continent's dev't.
- Of **1.4 billion people** in Africa, **70%** are less than the age 25.
- The median age is **19.7**, according to Mo Ibrahim Foundation report in 2020.
  - In Ethiopia, **2 million** new youths are entering the labor market every year (World Bank, 2018).
  - **100,000+ youths** are graduating from **45** public universities every year.
    - **98** private colleges and **35** vocational schools.
  - The Nigerian National Youth Policy in 2019 target to create **3.7 million** jobs annually between 2019 to 2023.

- This huge and immediate challenge requires **committed leadership and robust governance**
  - **If Africa is to enable its young people to build the prosperous and peaceful future.**

## On the one hand;

- The education and training system **lag in its readiness for preparing the youth for the new realities of 21st-century business environments.**
  - There is a major gap in building entrepreneurial capabilities to prepare **young people for venture creation and entrepreneurship.**
  - The system is designed for mass training of students in generic disciplines for mostly public sector employment.

## On the other hand;

- The share of the industrial sector to employment in Africa slightly increase from **10%** in 2005 to **14%** in 2020 (IGC, 2020).
  - 12% in Nigeria.
  - 7% in Ethiopia.

## From higher education perspective

- Universities in Africa help graduate class students navigate the scholarship going process as well as career opportunities.
  - **Preparing new graduates is particularly important in the continent's increasingly competitive and constantly changing terrain.**

## For instance, in Europe,

- Universities support and introduce students to potential employers through partnerships and networking with the ESF.
- **EURES** organize employer presentations, skills workshops, and job fairs.
- Europe's largest career portal for students & graduates like **Graduateland** helps to find the right graduate program to kickstart their career.

## **In the USA, programs like;**

- Pathways for students and recent graduates to federal careers.
- Federal workforce recruitment program.

## **Other programs like “Reach Higher”**

- Exposing students to college/scholarship and career opportunities.
- Understanding financial aid eligibility that can make college affordability a reality.
- Encouraging academic planning and summer learning opportunities.

- Universities in Africa helping graduate class students to navigate the scholarship, research grant application process and career opportunities will highly support.

## Including;

- How to write motivation or research interest (max. 1 page)
  - CV
  - References letters
  - Transcripts
- Partnering with organizations like AfDB, offering students courses in **entrepreneurship, problem-solving & creative skills that complement their chosen studies & fit them better for the world of work.**



- **The World Bank Group** have different fellowship and internship programs.
  - World Bank Group Africa Fellowship program.
  - African and African Diaspora Fellows for Infrastructure.
  - The Bank Internship Program (BIP)- two times per year.
  - World Bank Group Young Professionals Program (YPP)

- **Mo Ibrahim Foundation** provides MSc and PhD scholarships for the outstanding young Africans.
  - London Business School
  - School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)
  - University of Birmingham
  - Chatham House (The Royal Institute of International Affairs).
- Each year the foundation also provides opportunity for **3 young outstanding African leaders** to work in the executive offices of AfDB, ECA & ITC for 12 months (stipend of 100,000 USD).

## MasterCard Foundation

- Internship Program for Students in **Canada, Ghana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, and Uganda.**

## The Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders

- Ages between 25 to 35.
- For all Sub-Saharan African Countries.

- **Center for Effective Global Action (CEGA) at UC Berkeley.**
  - Provides fellowship for East African countries for 4 months.
  - 10,000 USD for research.

## **How to identify fake and credible call for scholarships?**

- Carefully check the organization website.
- Contact previous fellows.
- Network of Impact Evaluation Researchers in Africa (**NIERA**).
  - Impact evaluation and capacity building training to advance development programs in Africa.

## 2. Policies perspective

### Short-term plan:

- Intervention to support youth and women employment programs.
  - Governments in collaboration with World Bank and AfDB financing:
    - Small-scale entrepreneurship including SMEs and MSMEs.
    - Support private sector dev't to create more jobs.

- **We establish Social Innovation and Impact Institute (Si3).**

## *Si3 practice (major activities)*

- Targeting unemployed youths who graduated from public, private, and vocational schools, and those who are in the transition from school to job,
  - Si3 will offer **job-oriented, technology, and entrepreneurship capacity building training**, as well as **mentoring services** and **seed grant for promising startups to fill the missing links between jobs and young talented graduates**.
  - The institute will also be a bridge to **connect those trained individuals with industries and companies**.

## *Si3 Research*

- Conduct impact evaluation, and monitoring and evaluation on the progress of projects
- Databases of trained individuals;
  - For tracking purpose
  - Labor market research
  - To conduct inter-generational poverty-related research

## Long-term plan:

- Investing in the **industrial sector** reduces youth unemployment.
- Investing in **agricultural transformation** would also prepare the young people for the contemporary labor market.



# Thank You