

## A FUTURE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Africa's rural regions offer new  
job prospects

### Recommendations for action

- ▶ A coherent agricultural, trade and finance policy
- ▶ Investment in rural regional development
- ▶ Complying with internationally valid labour standards
- ▶ Educating and training young people



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**By 2030, 600 million young people world-wide will be seeking work. One out of three of them are going to be from Africa, according to the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Everyone desires decent work that provides a livelihood. But this is in short supply in Africa. In many countries, agriculture is still the chief source of income. Therefore, new jobs and apprenticeships should also be created in rural areas. For this, however, good infrastructure, investing in the development of businesses as well as good governance and fair international relations are essential prerequisites.**

The village of Mandu lies in the scrubland of Sierra Leone, a four-hour gravel-track journey away from the provincial capital of Bo. A rice mill is rattling away in a forest clearing, and young men are shovelling the harvest into the machine. After the grains have been cracked and peeled, the white rice is filled into sacks, ready for sale. At the Agriculture Business Center, directly next-door, women are processing manioc tubers into chips. Five hundred smallholder family farms have come together to form a co-operative in Mandu. Here, 50 youths can find training and paid work, supported by the Welthungerhilfe Skill Up programme (see Box). But apprenticeships and jobs like these are rare in rural Africa.

World-wide, two billion people are younger than 15 years, while 1.2 billion are between 15 and 24 years old. This is history's largest generation of young people, which presents a mammoth task for governments as well as for business and development co-operation! At present, seven out of ten young people south of the Sahara are, at best, in precarious employ-

ment; 64 per cent of all those employed are living on less than 3.10 US dollars a day, while 220 million are suffering from hunger. And this is all happening in areas where food is produced – in rural districts. At the same time, for 90 per cent of the poorest people, smallholder agriculture is still the chief source of income. This is why in rural regions in particular, new jobs urgently have to be created in order to offer young people prospects for the future.

Cropland is becoming scarcer, and with a lack of training and ecologically sustainable cultivation methods, yields are increasing comparatively slowly. Young African women and men are familiar with the hardships of everyday life. They were “born into” farming – without any sound training. Day-to-day life on the farm means backbreaking work, and mechanical implements are only rarely available, while income is low. Access to markets and credits is difficult, and harvest losses are severe, owing both to extreme weather conditions and to poor storage facilities. Economically and socially compatible structural change



Nineteen-year-old Immaculate Mweresa is proud of being able to do an apprenticeship in mechatronics.

Photo: Brandstaetter/Welthungerhilfe

is urgently needed. In addition to a modernisation of family farming, above all it is essential to create new jobs in the processing of agricultural products as well as in the crafts and services sector.

African villages seldom have electricity and clean drinking water, while schools frequently fail to impart the necessary knowledge and skills. Those having to transport goods are repeatedly confronted with the problem of roads in disrepair as well as corrupt civil servants. No wonder that many young people are dreaming of a better life in times of globalisation. If they migrate to the cities, with their low qualifications, most of them are forced to rely on poorly paid jobs as day labourers. Unlike in other world regions, where industrialisation goes hand in hand with job creation, this has only taken place in a handful of African cities so far. The rest may emigrate to other countries or continents – an outlet that entails opportunities as well as high risks. If the local labour market is unable to absorb young people, many young men in particular may seek this option given their lack of prospects. Or, if the worst comes to the worst, they may join rebel or terror organisations.

Much has gone wrong over the last few decades. African governments have woe-

### Jobs – urgently required

**Jobs  
Wanted!**

Educating and training young African people in rural regions is crucial to development, economic growth and a way out of hunger and poverty. This is where the Welthungerhilfe transnational programme Skill up! comes in. It offers 15,000 youths in Sierra Leone, Uganda, Kenya and Tajikistan opportunities to generate their own income. Skill up! focuses on training modules in local workshops as well as the setting up of training centres. However, government approval and co-operation with local authorities are key to the scheme. Training and education is generally up to the government and therefore has to become an integral element of education policy.

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fully neglected investing in rural regions, for example in transport routes, energy supply, communication, healthcare or education. The private sector has invested only little, too, partly because of a lack of government economic reforms. And for decades, international development co-operation has neglected the promotion of rural development.

### Sound training is key

For young African men and women, sound vocational education and training is the key to a globally interconnected world with growing knowledge societies. Especially with a view to combating poverty and hunger, new professional and training opportunities – as well as new jobs – ought to be created in rural regions. Not only do corresponding qualifications enable rises in production, but they also ensure a better income. Outside the agricultural sector, additional jobs can be created in processing and thus in adding value to agricultural products – ideally through small and medium-sized enterprises in the small towns of rural regions. Experience has shown that the cultivation of staple food for the domestic market, often in connection with export products, has a positive impact on food security in rural areas; it is a central element of diversification and hence of overcoming hunger and realising the human right to food! In the course of promoting the local economy, further jobs can be created in the crafts and services sector.

Strengthening trade relations between smallholder producers and the growing number of urban consumers offers further opportunities, too. Via direct marketing in networks, farmers can earn a higher income, and in return, consumers are supplied with healthy and affordable food. Thus the purchasing power on the local markets can rise, villages become more attractive, and the urban population have to resort less frequently to imported goods and poor fast food.

Investment from Africa as well as from Europe and other world regions could support such structural change. However, this can only work if social minimum standards are observed and natural resources are treated in an ecologically responsible manner. Innovative ideas and willingness to engage in the long term are required here since there is no blueprint for the challenges in the very different regions concerned.

### Governments and industry have to invest

It is up to African governments to meet their commitments. They have to support rural regions with poverty-reducing investments, above all in infrastructure, healthcare, and the education of young people, especially of girls. In the 2014 Malabo Declaration, they earmarked at least ten per cent of the government budget for this purpose. However, they also have to implement the long due reforms to establish the rule of law and to pro-

*Never before  
have so many  
young people  
world-wide been  
seeking  
employment*

mote private-sector initiatives. For their part, both Germany and the EU as well as further industrialised countries and emerging economies have to ensure fair co-operation with Africa, especially with a view to coherence in agricultural, trade and financial policies. Investments by the private sector are urgently required, especially in order to create new sources of income for young people, including both men and women. Of course all this has to proceed in compliance with internationally valid labour and social standards and a maximum of transparency.



Young people in Sierra Leone are active in the private sector. They collect and sell waste, some of which is recycled.

Photo: Brockmann/Welthungerhilfe

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In the Welthungerhilfe Skill-Up! project in Watoto Wa Lwanga, Kenya, young trainees learn how to process food. They also run catering services.

Photo: Halbe/Welthungerhilfe

## Developing one's own future

In Agenda 2030, the international community of states pledged to support lasting, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, productive full employment and decent labour for all. In Africa, the rural regions and the fate of young people will be crucial to mastering this challenge. They seek a decent life with an income securing a livelihood and offering them

an opportunity to have a say in developing their future.

The prerequisite for this is security and peace as well as participation in political processes and opportunities to develop their own abilities. For a good life, the provision of basic goods and services, as well as justice and freedom to live in a self-determined way, are essential.

## Literature

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## Recommendations for action

### For the German government

- Efforts at EU, G7 and G20 level to achieve more coherence in agricultural, trade and financial policies to promote family farming

### For African governments

- Participatory rural regional development with investments totalling at least 10 per cent of the government budget in infrastructure, health and education and training
- Reforms to promote the rule of law and business initiatives

### For businesses

- Engagement in rural regions in compliance with internationally valid labour and social standards
- A special focus on training young people

## Imprint

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