

REGIONAL INTEGRATION POLICIES TO SUPPORT JOB CREATION FOR AFRICA'S BURGEONING YOUTH POPULATION

George Kararach
Knowledge Expert
African Capacity Building Foundation

Kobena T. Hanson
Head, Knowledge and Learning
African Capacity Building Foundation

Frannie A. Léautier
Executive Secretary
African Capacity Building Foundation

Abstract

Africa is going through a youth bulge with more people under 25 than above 50 in all of its countries. Creating opportunities for the burgeoning number of youth is a challenge that cannot be solved only at the country level. Regional integration policies that expand the opportunity space by increasing the size of economies and markets will be critical. Also needed are regional policies that can support the development and enhancement of innovation systems including investment in science and technology education to speed up the creation of a cadre of young people that can lead the transformation of stages of production from dependencies on primary products and extraction. Policies and programs that can modernize agriculture and support effective creation of value chains that enhance the value added from agriculture that can excite youth back to the rural areas would also be needed. This paper explores the challenges facing countries in Africa in relation to its demographic transition, investigating the type of policies that would be most effective to address the challenge. The subsets of policies at the regional level are given special attention due to their opportunity expanding nature. Concrete examples of what has potential from observed results in other regions of the world are provided.

Key words: ACBF, Africa, green economy, infrastructure development, regional integration, rural-urban nexus, youth unemployment, job creation.