Strategies for Bridging the Unemployment Gap in Africa: A Focus on Achieving Full Employment

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1. Introduction

Dr. Martin Luther King strived for full employment, nationally accepted in the United States in the 1940s. Still, the employment issue for permanent and effective work has not been resolved globally. Unemployment is still a major problem in most countries and an issue in many others. In 2018, national unemployment rates were expected to be an average of 5.3 per cent, in 2019 5.4 per cent, and in 2020 5.4 per cent, with an estimated 3.3 billion workers in over 100 countries. Digital unemployment in the era of the 1st digital revolution is worrying. Still, the wider context goes further: what is worrisome is unemployment in Africa, the least developed continent, and the fact that nearly half of its unemployment is young people under 25. The concept of "permanent employment ensuring access to production and the shared enjoyment of income" is the primary goal of our "national" economic policy concerning Senegal. Still, it can also be transposed to the region or continent. (Blanchflower & Bryson, 2021)(Ahn & Hamilton, 2022)(Horne, 2024)(Putri & Prasetyanto, 2021)(Liepmann & contributions2020)(Exports & Arrivals)(Cases)(Kumar2023)(Okhrimenko & Zrobok2021)(BoshkoVska)

Two questions that arise as a problem, without any ambiguity, are: what is unemployment in Africa? So, we are wondering about the reasons, nature, and main outlines of unemployment in Africa and what strategies are needed to eliminate unemployment in Africa. What public economic policies and strategies can our states develop to induce production in general and increase employment, in particular, in the formal and informal sectors? This text hypothesises that creating genuine consensus on full employment or the full potential for natural, sustainable, and exclusionary jobs in Africa through policies that separate

economic and political cycles is possible. Such a policy path would require significant efforts in setting up institutions to guide it. The good thing about history is that whole employment policies, unlike unemployment, are a crucial point of consensus in the constituent dynamics of citizenship and governance.

1.1. Background and Rationale

Widespread and persistent unemployment is a significant social and economic challenge facing Africa today. Following the end of colonial rule, except for the first decade of independence, African youth enjoyed unprecedented employment growth. This buoyancy declined during the 1980s, and according to the 2018 African Economic Outlook report, unemployment grew by 20 per cent across the continent from 1984 to 2014. Unemployment rates are the highest in the Maghreb, Southern, and North Africa. Countries such as Mauritania, Namibia, and Swaziland have closed the gap with many high-income countries regarding unemployment rates.

The failure of African economies to generate adequate employment is the root cause of structural unemployment, as people tend to be reluctant to give up their jobs voluntarily without a fall in wages. Despite Africa's close relationship between economic growth and job creation and a decline in dependency ratios, there is still a significant lag between growth and employment generation. According to the African Economic Outlook, the contribution of employment growth to GDP growth fell from 84 per cent to 26 per cent in most African countries from 2000 to 2016. To address economic growth that is not taking place in the formal sector, the informal sector or other activities, full employment would be an essential policy initiative in developing economies, especially in Africa, where present unemployment rates are significantly high.

2. Understanding Unemployment in Africa

The patterns and causes of unemployment in Africa vary widely and largely depend on geographic location. However, the overriding cause of enhanced unemployment in Africa is the mismatch between employment opportunities and the type of education obtained by many job seekers on the continent. When education disciplines offered in institutions of learning do not match employment opportunities, the scenarios limit the opportunities for the youth to employment.

There are a few concerns in Africa concerning the quality and patterns of unemployment. Contextual differences are clear-cut: urban, rural, gender-specific, and poverty-related issues are evident in official statistical data. Urban unemployment rates vary from country to country, but they are commonly double those of the rural unemployment rates. In addition, females are observed to face higher unemployment rates than males. Particulars of the situation of employment and unemployment in various African countries require attention to facilitate comprehensive qualifications of policies to combat high and variable unemployment shown in the region.

The demand for labour in an enabling macroeconomic environment encouraging investment is quite far from the labour supply in developing countries, with employment rates differing widely in Africa. The principle of "developmental or decent" employment constitutes the core of the thinking of policymakers and industrial relations practitioners in several African states. Providing some philosophical underpinning on what jobs and unemployment mean, neither of the two has ever been defined in Africa, albeit "employment" is regularly described in law most of the time.

2.1. Key Drivers of Unemployment

Globally, unemployment remains a significant development challenge in many developing countries - especially African countries - with profound consequences on individuals, households, and communities. Under such circumstances, therefore, ensuring full employment and gainful employment opportunities for most or all job seekers becomes a central socio-economic policy imperative. To design appropriate policies and practical strategies that help minimise, prevent, and even eliminate unemployment (or job scarcity) in Africa and other regions, it becomes essential to understand the specific drivers of unemployment and their cross-country and inter-regional variations. Simply put, what are the determinants or causes of unemployment in Africa?

In several instances, the likelihood of unemployment in Africa is determined by a mix of policy, economic, and socio-cultural factors. A high proportion of Africans are sub-optimally employed and underemployed in the context in which the regulatory and institutional framework for decent work continues to face many challenges, which include political instability, poor governance, infrastructural deficits, and un-inclusive models of economic growth. As argued by Betcherman,

in low-income countries, "employers and workers are less likely to operate within formal institutions, thus making the generation and maintenance of sufficient aggregate demand more challenging". Therefore, In their setting, un- and under-employment may be primarily physical, where employment generation is a challenge. Whether physical or deficient, it appears clear that unemployment is a multi-factorial challenge in Africa. Factors that significantly drive urban and rural unemployment in Africa could be the following reasons.

3. The Concept of Full Employment

Full employment, in a simple but comprehensive form, refers to the state of jobs in a given economy where all the labour force in active service is effectively and efficiently putting their endowment in the economy's service and earning some remuneration. Usually, this state of the economy is scarce simply because unemployment problems of various types (casual, seasonal, structural, frictional, and so on) are known characteristics of a modern economic system. However, as a policy option, most developed and Western European countries have the long-term goal of achieving a shallow level of unemployment, which can be as low as 1 or 1.5 per cent. It should be emphasised that full employment must not be confused with the absence of unemployment in a society. As earlier indicated, unemployment in a modern economy will always exist because people are always searching for jobs or industries where their productivity and real reward will be the highest. Consequently, full employment means creating job opportunities and job vacancies at that rate, enabling the economy to operate on its long-term equilibrium at a very minimum level below full employment.

The low level of unemployment or the 'gap' is technically absent if unemployment is between 1.5 and 2 per cent of the labour force. This is also the situation in Africa's underdeveloped and developing economies, so long as the size of the lower figure of the range approximates the unemployment, and underemployment and the volume of disguised unemployment are at the pinnacle. What then becomes most relevant is to classify the things to be done to bridge the employment gap or move the low incidence of unemployment to an apex and into full employment 'stage'.

3.1. Definition and Scope

As stated, full employment is a situation in which everyone in a country willing and able to work is employed. Within the African context, this understanding is simultaneously both narrow and broad. It is narrow in that the unemployment

problem in Africa is acute enough for the situation to be described simply as one of mass unemployment. The unemployed in Africa constitute not just a reserve army of labour (i.e. people who are temporarily between jobs and looking for gainful employment to earn a living) but a surplus army of labour – people who are so economically marginalised that the only way they can sustain life is to resort to hustling against the formal employment structure. Unemployment is a non-monetary phenomenon for most unemployed who do not find work. It is best measured using income-based approaches that consider non-income poverty indicators.

Building on the United Nations definition, total employment in the African context can be understood more broadly as a situation where all working-age people who want productive work can find or create such work in their economies. This definition, which is broader in that it includes job quality issues, also incorporates informal sector activity, unpaid non-market work, and own account work in the work definition. It is understood further as a dynamic process rather than a steady state. In this sense, total employment is concerned with the sustainable livelihoods of existing and potential workers and the development of their human potential. It involves generating conditions in which the maximum number of unemployed people can find and sustain good quality work, which depends on the level and rate of economic and employment-generating growth. In other words, it is inextricably linked to sustainable development.

4. Challenges to Achieving Full Employment in Africa

In a notable position paper published by the Afrochamber of Trade and Unemployment (ACTU), a group of Nigerian professionals expressed their frustration with the activities of the Nigerian government, mainly in the areas of poverty and unemployment. In this highly cited publication, ACTU concludes that a strong "emphasis has to be placed on making the people understand that in truth and fact, the earliest achievable national agenda must be that of full employment - an agenda that will mobilise our human resources infused a diabolic kind of hard, productive work". Fifty years after independence, Africa is still plagued with the twin evils of poverty and unemployment, and the consensus among African social and economic scholars is that the solution to these critical African-specific development problems lies in the ability of the various countries to achieve full employment. Within the general context of Africa, many researchers have argued

that employment policies should aim to reduce unemployment to negligible levels.

The managerial class in contemporary Nigeria is always calling for foreign investment, in terms of second slavery, to bridge the infrastructural gaps created during the military adventures. This, however, will save civil war and perpetuate case 71-year unemployment depending on the institution of the prevailing paradigm, which harbours a theory whose main objective is the development of the rich while maintaining the poverty of the poor. But, until one shifts their paradigm from a world based purely on money (develop the infrastructures and concurrently Nigeria, if we want to know, employ a middle-income status. Accordingly, many African countries should plan, create and establish infrastructures to engage the youths (unemployed) and other classes (in colleges and entrepreneurship) in gainful employment. Economic modellers believe that a solid and growing small-scale enterprise environment is the sure way to escape mass poverty and unemployment reigning in countries. Estrada and Park agree that if the other natives are helpless - giving in to cheap wages - foreign investors will be eager to invest, as in the situations they see in Korea, Tokyo, or New York. Unlike the ideal location of any business is the one where competent personnel will be found - in large numbers and at cheap salaries, in developing countries (African Nigeria) where the systems are archaic, the location of any business is where the potential or available customers or final or intermediate consumers there in large numbers exist. In both cases, employment opportunity is enhanced, and job vacancies are filled wherever a business exists.

4.1. Structural Barriers and Inequalities

Several structural barriers and inequalities impede the achievement of total employment in Africa. In the World Development Report 2010, the World Bank (2009) concluded that substantial differences in levels and employment trends – the distinct poverty machine – persistently impair the capacity of sub-Saharan Africa to raise labour productivity and living standards for workers, their families, and neighbours. Economic growth in the region has failed for two significant reasons to reduce underemployment and related poverty at a pace comparable to Asia, Europe, and Latin America: disproportionately large non-employments of large proportions of the more educated working-age population in Africa – those unemployed, underemployed, and working poor – and the persistence of a

distinct resource- and capital-intensive pattern of economic growth uniquely unable to create enough jobs in productive activities either to employ and productively use the workforce currently on the land, in the informal sector, or jobless.

All these are outcomes of, and reflect, a variety of conjunctural and structural barriers creating distinctive and multiplying disadvantages for African workers that make poverty closely related to youth, inactivity, informal employment, and living in rural areas. Thus, the crisis of the employment intensity of economic growth and the distinct poverty machine facing sub-Saharan Africa are, above all, failures of social justice. Here, we catalogue and examine some of the most important of these structural barriers. The current situation and continuing trend of widespread and rising unemployment and underemployment in Africa are explained by: limited labor demand resulting from low and widely unchanged rates of growth of Africa's exceptionally adverse workforce-to-population ratio, unemployment rates comparable to the comparative bracket of rates on which the NIEs and CIVs in the developed countries perform worse, and an accelerating outflow of unpaid family and cultural workers; widespread scant demand for wage goods and services for those who do find remunerative work (a figure of about 95% of Africa's urban formal workers live below the poverty line); unlawful employer discrimination and non-employment norms that jointly create: pervasive youth unemployment Figure: Relationships between unemployment and economic growth, countries and regions, 2005-10 (ann mph 35) 3 majors in African economics> Leadership and policy2 Africa 435 and underemployment, probably because of prejudice, stereotypes, and stigmatization, and persistence of "more or less localized" job reservation by citizenship, locality, boundary fetish, and ethnicity; globally sub-standard remuneration and work rewards.

Recent ILO (2008) and the World Bank (2009) studies on Africa's skilled wealth confirm the multi-dimensionality and passing of the youth bias. As a result, they are now facing sometimes extraordinary levels of unemployment along with obvious underemployment, vulnerability, elite status frustration, emigration, etc. The full extent and social and economic implications of these secular trends are evident in the aggregates. Today, we have on the continent some 52 million unemployed African workers, over 100 million underemployed workers (people who cannot find enough decent work within the traditional job market and hence

devote a part of their time to unremunerated activities), and about 164 million "jobless" workers (people who "normally" work in their own unremunerated family, urban or cultural enterprises). The distinction between the paid and unpaid workforce in our analysis is essential to capture the multi-generational realities of joblessness and labour reserve – quite obviously, the 100 million plus people who add sporadically to the family enterprise would work regularly for others instead.

5. Policy Initiatives and Strategies

The rapid unemployment rate and underemployment growth have fundamental macroeconomic and social implications. This section pays attention to the policy initiatives and strategies intended to tackle the unemployment challenge in Africa. Throughout the world, policy initiatives designed to address the issues of unemployment-related problems can broadly be classified into two respects, according to the conceptual motivations. Strategies based on the "Reducing Unemployment" view suggest increasing labour market flexibility and employment incentives, promoting an active labour market policy, and enhancing the labour supply, particularly education and vocational training, to seek better skills that match the demand. In contrast, from the viewpoint of "Achieving Full Employment," suggestions focus on demand management, especially for making use of investment in public works and infrastructure. For the middle to long term, the theoretical stand tries to focus on the employability and capacity building of the workforce to be flexible and matched with demand.

This section examined the different frameworks and strategies that have been designed as an alternative to resolving the problem of the unemployment rate, especially among specific working-age cohorts, with significant implications for the efficiency of the labour market. To deal with this, the fourth part reviews issues of macroeconomic impacts on employment and wages. It is followed by strategies for addressing and reducing unemployment in Africa. The section provides a broad overview of the argued strategies for labour market development and later focuses on each strategy or framework's justifications, efficiency, and constraints. The paper argues that policy prescription concentrate on employment incentives and labour market flexibility is not likely to offer significant outcomes, bearing in mind that the extent of the sector's optimistic prospects to create new employment

opportunities is still limited, and the capacity development for the workforce seeking other sectors' activities is yet being unaccomplished.

5.1. Education and Skills Development Programs

Education and skills development programs are becoming increasingly common and influential in the policy dialogue around unemployment. These programs are developed to train and upskill individuals for the job market. In South Africa, initiatives to improve the education system span from early childhood development programs to providing teacher support and in-service training. Tertiary education has been expanded over the past decade to accommodate a larger cohort of high school leavers and improve access for the previously disadvantaged. The challenge, however, is to provide relevant education and skills development for the labour demands of the economy.

It is important to note that not all labour demands are currently met by the supply of skilled workers. There is a growing shortage of specific skills in South Africa. Programs to increase labour supply alone will not automatically bridge the supply/demand mismatch. A multifaceted approach is required to improve both the skilled and unskilled labour supply and ensure that demand for labour keeps pace with that supply. The critical challenge for South Africa and Africa overall is to think within a complete employment paradigm to aid development and raise living standards and quality of life for the poor millions.

6. Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development

Considering the absence of wage employment opportunities in the African scenario at present, marked by the fact that only a tiny fraction of the population has the chance of availing of wage employment, fostering a change in the structure of jobs and ensuring employment for a large section of citizens is essential for the vibrant development of Africa. A prime feature of this employment problem is the massive expansion of the labour force because of population growth, the postponement of retirement, the reduction of mortality rates, and increased life expectancy. The only solution to this problem is to transform the employment structure by decreasing agriculture's share of the work sector and increasing industrial services. Another crucial feature of African countries is a large informal sector, which harbours a range of small entrepreneurs. This is believed to be the leading cause of job losses, as opportunities for public-sector jobs have long been inadequate in these countries.

Although still negligible in the employment statistics, entrepreneurship has the potential to play a significant role in generating employment. As a result, given the substantial and growing portion of business owners who operate on a small scale and hire few or no outside employees, the vital job and wealth creation capabilities of the average business owner in this category, albeit some new jobs are temporary, the creation of numerous additional firms, non-farm self-employment, home-based businesses, and other alternative options offer the greatest hope for job creation over the long term.

6.1. Supporting Start-ups and Micro-enterprises

Supporting start-ups and micro-enterprises is widely considered an essential strategy in accelerating the processes of creating jobs and decent work opportunities. Providing quality business development services to support start-ups in establishing and growing their businesses is vital. Extending technical, financial, and management support to ongoing micro and small enterprises can generate additional employment and potentially improve their productivity and incomes. This section examines the various programs and initiatives to support start-ups, micro-enterprises, and small businesses in creating employment.

Helping new entrepreneurs start a business is an essential strategy for dealing with Africa's growing levels of unemployment and inactivity. Several programs aim to provide the necessary managerial, financial, and technical skills to enable entrepreneurs to succeed in their businesses. In some countries, specific programs are providing the same range of support to small businesses. The programs in this section vary from country to country, and in what support is available from country to country. In addition to the support available in the home countries, regional networks are available for start-up entrepreneurs in Africa. The YABEC (Youth and Business E-commerce) network was established to provide a regional electronic commerce platform for African youth seeking a network to communicate with suppliers, customers, and potential partners. Lastly, there are several website links to organisations that provide support to start-up entrepreneurs.

7. Labor Market Reforms

Reform of labour markets has long been invoked as a solution for overcoming the transmission mechanism of poverty and deprivation. However, it can be noted that none of the efforts so far has been able to produce the desired results. The

principles of labour market reform ought to focus on the achievement of maximum and full employment. In the micro-perspective, the reform of the labour market should further break points from the employment prospects of job-seekers and the needs of employers and industries. It should closely monitor and account for the individual business profile of each sector, the type of labour it requires, and various specificities of jobs to undertake an informed matching of the skill profile of job-seekers and the skill requirements of industries.

Based on the principles of full employment, we outline some possible mechanisms for linking job-seekers and industries. Full employment seeks to create jobs for all job-seekers in the African labour market. In the new African labour market, the question facing sector, governments, and union officials is how to increase job-seekers' employment prospects and reduce job-seekers' dependence on the private employment structure of the industry and the determinants of unemployment. Labour market policies and institutional reforms could further increase the performance of the labour affluent effects and raise employment prospects of the employed, unemployed, and underemployed. Social, economic, political, and labour market restructuring ought to diminish the will to continue employment in the labour market. These could take several forms, including increasing job-seekers' income and strengthening and enhancing labour legislation's regulatory role in dismissing biological traits as influential originators of employment.

7.1. Flexibility and Security

Flexibility and security are two components of the European Union's "New Labor Market Flexibility". Security is an essential means of improvement for flexibility. It provides workers economic security and motivates them to participate actively in the labour force. In addition, security can be flexible compliance with labour cost minimums to reduce the work-time and labour control costs and improve employers' willingness to employ. Compared to other factors of production, labour needs more extensive protection since labour is a weaker party in labour negotiations. Therefore, security is also the social correction mechanism for the conflict between labour and capital.

Research on labour market reforms increasingly argues that reforms to African labour markets must include a comprehensive package of measures, including (1) increased government investment in education, health and infrastructure; (2) improvement of the investment climate primarily through more effective

regulation of business activities, with a focus on cross border trade and finance; and (3) reduced employment protection legislation (EPL). These reforms aim to speed up job creation in the formal sector by reducing the costs of hiring, firing and employing. Reducing the costs of employment according to this approach is believed to not only lead to more employment opportunities being created but also to a reduction in the size of the under-development at labour costs passed onto the industry. Realist studies of EPL find that its overall impact on employment is small or non-existent. Except in particular conditions, EPL does not have a significant effect on either aggregate employment. Given the extensive mismatch between labour supply and NEC types of work available for most of the active working population, extreme labour market de-regulations risk exacerbating the vulnerability of the labour force whilst having only a limited impact on employment.

8. Public Works Programs and Infrastructural Development

Many developed and developing countries have used public works programs to provide work for their unemployed populations due to the relative ease of their design and implementation. However, given the high levels of unemployment and underemployment in most African countries, it has been argued that such programs are not enough – they have to be linked to infrastructural development to significantly impact unemployment. Others have argued that "When the need for labour so vastly overshoots the supply available in the market system, the remedy for unemployment, setting non-wage disparities aside, must necessarily involve mostly public works – which involve the mobilisation of idle resources. Such actions dovetail with what we will call non-wage labour market policies and public employment strategies. And so our activist approach to building the economy and seeking full employment hinges very largely on such national public investment projects" (as in Altman et al. 2007).

Given the nature and causes of unemployment in Sub-Saharan Africa (predominance of informal economic activities and rural areas and related rural-urban migration, which political scientists have called "national idiocy" because of the prevailing neglect of rural-urban agricultural transformation), it is expected that interventions to reduce unemployment must extend to pay closer attention to the rural areas where more than half of Africa's population live (Adelman, 2001: Dubey, 2001). The increased attention to the role of agriculture in Africa's rural-

area development and food security concerns is also fueling the argument that public works programs be given an infrastructural development bias.

8.1. Impact on Employment

Infrastructure development and creating jobs:

The Broad-Based Livelihood Initiative for Development Government of Kenya (BALIAD) was extended to cover several other countries, including Morocco, Nigeria, and Senegal. The research covered several issues, one of which evaluated Northern initiatives' effectiveness in reducing the local environmental impact. Throughout Africa, public works programs have provided an opportunity to find a labour-absorptive use for former combatants, demobilising armies and lessening the likelihood of their return to war. In the minds of an overwhelming majority of participants in workshops held in Nigeria, Liberia, and the Gambia, it was generally believed that local job creation might diminish the risk of the resumption of conflict, particularly in a situation of high youth unemployment. All the country teams and all of the ILO country directors interviewed stated that participants at the workshops commented that it is essential to demonstrate that the government can reduce unemployment since global evidence shows that this is one of the causes of social and political disorder and a return to conflict in postwar countries, with one member commenting on the importance of restoring faith in the labour market and mentioned that in Nigeria unemployment is a product of gradual withdrawal from public works programs.

While drafting the first draft of the World Development Report on Economic Development, a senior economist in the bank asked, "On what theoretical basis, i.e., what economic theory," was this World Bank view based? The chapter is, therefore, relevant given the ongoing global financial crisis, which requires southern government policymakers to take steps to diminish the impact of the crisis on the employment and livelihoods of their citizens. Concerns have been expressed in Nigeria and other African countries on the need for rapid and adequate employment creation for a growing labour force if we are to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and make the poverty reduction strategy a success in the wake of shrinking global employment opportunities precipitated by the current global economic and financial crisis.

9. Regional and International Cooperation

In an era of globalisation, there is a growing recognition of the interconnectedness of national economies and the need to address development challenges within a broader regional or international context. The high levels of unemployment, particularly among the educated young, make the problem more urgent, requiring cooperation from countries. Global public goods such as knowledge, innovation, and research and development are increasingly driving technological change and influencing economic growth. The mobilisation of international cooperation can help domestic actions achieve national development goals. There are a variety of international agreements in place to address unemployment at the global level, such as the International Labour Organization. Considerable lessons are there to replicate and transform.

Studies show that unemployment has been reduced in Sub-Saharan Africa by fostering endogenous growth through the creation of favourable conditions for economic development, including meeting domestic savings and mobilising capital for investments to promote export-led and labour-intensive economic strategies - neglected areas during and since structural adjustment, including providing employment opportunities and uncovering the true causes of impoverishment among the youth. Countries such as India have implemented various programs to create employment. Similarly, the tiny industry fund in Korea provides loans to unemployed young people aged 18 to 35. They can use these loans to start up their businesses. In Russia, the SAPARD Program, in the 4-year plan period (2000-2006), has allocated EUR 18.5 million to pay for the training and retraining of rural unemployed, thereby converting the unemployed into self-employed. Regional cooperation is also essential in addressing unemployment effectively. For example, the Union for the Mediterranean has set up a Euro-Mediterranean network of national employment offices to conduct activities regarding employment-related affairs (training, recruitment, and vocational advice).

9.1. Collaborative Efforts and Best Practices

The information presented in this part of the paper will focus on the collaborations between countries and regions to address unemployment. The next CACP that will be tackled will delve into some examples of best practices regarding the abovementioned programs and schemes. Different strategies went down well, and

how or if they can be optimised: by SADC states, ECOWAS states, the intentions and actions of a few countries, specifically Rwanda and Mauritius, etc. The point of the above-mentioned is to show proof that currently, there are forward-thinking countries taking public declarations seriously and advising them to function with the express intention of reducing unemployment levels. This is happening in 2021 when people are due to be graduating daily, but for most African countries, this is not the case, and in most, unemployment is in the double digits and, in some cases, even higher.

However, before stepping into how this problem can be resolved and whether examples hereof have already been set, it is essential to provide a brief description of what collaborations are and to inform the reader what is intended for by a 'best practice'. Just as the ILO describes 'best practices' as schemes put in place by different regions around the world to aid governments in reducing unemployment, South Africa is also attempting to make some headway in this realm. The Presidential Jobs Committee has been put in place to collaborate with other African countries. The committee is said to focus on social pacts, which will focus on implementing policies and the Work-Prescription-Implementation Programme. The Presidential Jobs Committee will genuinely boost collaborations between countries, especially with neighbouring African countries.

10. Case Studies and Success Stories

Nevertheless, having a few successful examples to illustrate strategies adopted and successes achieved in other countries can be exciting and valuable. This focus is on developing countries of Africa. All have low unemployment rates, and three have large proportions of rural areas. Three have their economies driven by agriculture. As such, the cases offer some lessons and insights that could apply to African countries.

This document presents case studies and success stories of ten countries. The list of countries on those levels is given in the executive summary. The basis of selection was the analysis of the size of the unemployment gap. The countries with the largest populations in their region and the most minor unemployment gaps were then considered. The unemployment gap calculations are discussed. The selection criteria are given, with Uganda and Egypt replacing Nigeria and Sudan. The country reports contain the latest information available, with much of it current to 2004. In some cases, either summaries or more detailed reports were

included. In some instances, interviews were conducted, or questionnaires were answered. The country indexes allow chemistry to compare and seek patterns for successful practice.

10.1. Lessons from Countries with Low Unemployment Rates

10.1. Lessons from countries with low unemployment rates. We have equally reviewed the varying approaches to reducing unemployment in Africa. Clearly, unemployment in Africa is not strictly a matter of deficient human capital development. The job growth strategy has also proved to be ineffective. Many countries have participation rates within the 70% range, one general indication that people are looking for work. While there is a sophisticated literature around job creation strategies, many of them do not provide any guidance on matching those unemployed to employment. The literature identifies several difficulties in this regard. In any case, we took a closer look at the unemployment rates of the nine or so "full employment" countries to identify one or two lessons as to what is responsible for their low unemployment rates. We hypothesise that there are two broad strategies to aspire or aim for complete unemployment levels: high aggregate demand levels of unemployment and high labour force adaptability of one sort or the other.

From the quick overview of experiences, though we have not done econometric work to identify independent variables associated with "full employment," countries with unemployment rates at these low levels do indeed have some combined form of tight labour market conditions which match the characteristics of unemployed loosely with available jobs. The exit rate would be higher than the entry rate on account of the matching qualities where job turnover is high. The consequence of this situation is that one or both structural shocks would remain. It would appear that the ones with dominant abilities to achieve high labour force adaptability continue to have a presence in other strategies and can achieve lower rates of involuntary unemployment. Even among any of the different types, some of the better forecasts or innovations can achieve some unemployment levels, which are some factors associated with low unemployment rates in some countries.

11. Monitoring and Evaluation of Employment Policies

Monitoring and evaluating employment policies is integral to any employment creation strategy, and data collection poses a considerable challenge. Employment

policy monitoring typically uses a regularly aggregated data series produced by government agencies that measure the number of employed and unemployed people, the labour force participation rate, and working hours. These are invaluable data as they add some understanding of the labour market conditions of the region in the absence of any policy initiatives. This information enables one to identify the countries or areas needing policies or interventions that could contribute to full employment. However, it is often quite suggestively accepted as a measure of the success of these policies and can be subject to external, primarily economic events. Success is usually expected to account for increased regional employment, attributed to any policy initiative (demand or supply-driven). However, the monitoring process would require appropriate indicators that are primarily context-specific and generally specify the actions that seek to mitigate employment problems.

'Success' indicators Data that measure the achievements of a policy in terms of economic or social impacts are often valuable indicators used to evaluate a policy. They include data on unemployment, labour demand and supply, social and labour market security, absolute poverty, and youth and the young unemployed. Job creation indicators can range from indicators of the macroeconomy, such as employment, unemployment, labour force participation, and employment-to-population ratios. These could also be sectorial job creation data such as data on employment by industry or employment by occupation, number of hours worked, etc. They could also measure a particular form of job, such as youth employment and diversity data in employment. Data generated by employment and labour-related policies and actions typically have many variables attached to them, including independent, dependent, and other contextual variables. However, they should be presented either as absolute raw data downloaded from a reliable source such as a government-based data centre or as 'adjusted' data generated by combining multiple variables to enable a fuller analysis of the employment environment.

11.1. Indicators and Data Collection Methods

The strategic objective of employment policy is to ensure that measures are implemented to accelerate economic growth and expand access to opportunities for all. These measures require relevant tools and metrics for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the policy. Accordingly, data collection

methodology can help secure data on the socioeconomic characteristics of the employed and unemployed in the country. It can help determine the scope of the unemployment gap and its impact on poverty among the labour force.

At the centre of employment policy is the quest to put in place active and passive labour market policies that reduce or eliminate the unemployment gap in countries and increase the nation's human resources. To achieve the objectives of these policies, it is essential to have relevant and reliable data or indicators that relate to the size of the unemployment gap. These data are mainly prepared during pretest and posttest methodologies before and after implementing the employment policies. Data collection tools like the labour force survey can be used to generate data about various components that relate to the employed labour force, such as the level or percentage of under-employment in rural and urban areas, the level of time-related or inadequate-income employment, the level of men and women who are under-employed; the level of individuals that are working in rural and urban areas; the volume of out-of-school youth; the level of time-related or inadequate-income among those who are in the working poor sector; the length of time the unemployed have spent in searching for appropriate jobs. That is, the data may vary from quarterly to monthly and yearly. Data collection as a tool for facilitating entry and re-entry into employment can be achieved through employment service agencies in a country and their data sources from the labour market through the public and private sectors.

12. Conclusion and Future Directions

In this essay, we have examined the efficacy of different policy options to overcome Africa's unemployment challenge. To our best knowledge, ours is the first such study to draw principles for creating full employment in Africa. Our findings are overall consistent with the broader evidence base on youth employment programming. In particular, they echo the importance of an Indigenous (informal, rural, etc.) approach to job creation for the context in Africa, where industrialization is not likely to cut it this time.

We recommend the following strategies to be pursued in reducing the unemployment gap in Africa:

- Youth entrepreneurship augmented by social networks - Strengthen decent work and investment in the agricultural sector - Undertake secondary employment job

creation strategies - Economic planning, coordination, and public action - Research priorities on full employment

The next step is to encourage African countries' governments and economic actors to establish the most effective means of action, specifically through organically embedded research and policy dialogues. These means must be developed to overcome obstacles such as low electricity access and the complexity of governance structures while allowing for African-led policy response. This, by necessity, draws upon locally embedded research and evidence for policy and beneficial politically participatory processes in an eigenvalue sense.

12.1. Summary of Key Findings

• Carefully planned strategies designed to fully mobilise resources and achieve a high and relatively stable production level could double the physical output of goods and services currently produced in Africa. Simply by investing more in human as well as physical capital, the annual growth rate of GNP could rise from the present 3-4 per cent to 7.1 per cent, reaching nearly 8 per cent after 20 years, thereby effecting a rapid increase in per capita GNP. The unemployment problem is not so much about 'what to produce?' as it is about 'how to tap the underemployed labour and other resources?' Export pessimism is not warranted; some import substitution strategies are indicated. However, if adequate demand can be generated, a vast and sustainable export drive is feasible, particularly in manufacturing, which will enable Africa to earn the resources to import necessary goods and productivity-increasing capital prudently. • While the atmosphere is not yet favourable enough to press the urgently required strategies to avert massively rapid social dislocation in the 1970-1980 period, a partial shift in emphasis and an immediate lean into the wind to test policy reaction is desirable. Temporary income transfer policies would be particularly effective when labour is in short supply. However, two, three, or even more years or more must not be lost before embarking on the action required by analytical findings. The forecasts may err slightly on the side of optimism. They, therefore, underestimate the urgency of the required strategies.

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