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Rural Youth Employment in the WAEMU

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Joël Cariolle, Research Officer, Ferdi

Andrea Dsouza, Research Assistant, Ferdi

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This document, drafted as part of a research partnership agreement between FERDI and the WAEMU Commission implemented over the period 2023-2025, is the report associated with the specific action "AS.5. Youth employment policy" of this agreement. Among the data used, this report draws on the *Enquête Harmonisée sur le Conditions de Vie des Ménages* (Harmonized Survey of Household Living Conditions)—EHVCM, conducted among approximately 60,000 households in the eight WAEMU countries in 2018 and 2019, in order to provide a unique analysis of youth access to employment in rural areas of the WAEMU region. Furthermore, by providing a detailed overview of youth access to the labour market, this report complements the reports produced under the specific action "AS.3. New dynamics around the digital economy" of this agreement, which focuses on the impact of digital connectivity, particularly mobile connectivity, on rural transformation in the region.

We would therefore like to thank Mr. Abossé AKUE KPAKPO, Mr. Juste COULIBALY, Mr. Souleymane DIARRA, Mr. Sansan KAMBIRE, Ms. Barbara KY, Mr. Ousseynou THIAM, and the staff of the WAEMU Commission (in particular the DDH) for their support during the drafting and finalization of this report. We would also like to thank David A. CARROLL for his contribution to the processing of EHCVM data, and Olivier SANTONI for his help in processing certain geospatial data. We hope that this analysis of contemporary dynamics of access to employment in member states will be useful to decision-makers and policies on digitization and support for the agricultural sector, rural areas, and especially young people in the WAEMU region.

The authors,

Joël Cariolle (Research Fellow, Ferdi, CERDI-UCA, Clermont-Ferrand),

Andrea Dsouza (Research Assistant, Ferdi, Clermont-Ferrand).

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Executive summary

Context

Young people between the ages of 15 and 34 form two-thirds of the working-age population in the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU). That is an estimated population of over 99 million young people by 2050. This 'youth bulge' represents an important source of the current and future labour force, which could be a driver of development in the WAEMU economies. However, capitalising on this population advantage is subject to the ability of countries to deliver on adequate education, training and employment for this population, as well as the infrastructure to facilitate access to markets and information. This report draws a comprehensive picture of the opportunities and obstacles to employment for rural youth in the WAEMU zone. It draws on the existing literature, macroeconomic data, as well as micro-level data from the *Enquête Harmonisée sur le Conditions de Vie des Ménages* (Harmonized Survey of Household Living Conditions)—EHCVM 2018-19 and *l'Enquête Régionale Intégrée sur l'Emploi et le Secteur Informel* (Integrated Regional Survey on Employment and the Informal Sector)—ERI-ESI 2017-18.

Youth in the WAEMU are entering the labour market in a context of low agricultural productivity, climate change, conflict and digital transformation, that are transforming the economic and employment landscape of the region. Furthermore, the opportunities available to rural youth are a function of conditions at the national, local and household levels. At the national level, the state of structural and rural transformation shapes the structure of the labour market; locally, the natural resources and proximity to cities and markets determine the economic opportunities available in specific rural areas; and finally, the economic and livelihood profile of the household determine the education and resource endowments of young individuals.

The WAEMU is a 167.57 billion USD (2022) economy, and despite shocks from the recent global crises, and conflict related insecurity, the zone has seen a steady economic growth, at 5.2% for 2021-23 and is projected to grow further at 7.5% in 2024. Agriculture plays an important role in the WAEMU economy, accounting for a quarter of the GDP and nearly two-thirds of total employment. Yet, the sector is characterised by low productivity, with a low adoption of agricultural technology and low levels of irrigation. The zone also faces overlapping crises of conflict and climate change—particularly in the three landlocked central Sahel states of Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali. Climate-related disasters are becoming more frequent, temperatures are rising and rainfall is decreasing, further exacerbating the risk of conflict, by disrupting livelihoods of the population. Agriculture is especially vulnerable to these disruptions, and income diversification serves as an important adaptation strategy.

A profile of youth in the WAEMU

45% of youth in the WAEMU—51.3% of young women and 36.5% of young men—have had no education. Educational attainment has improved for the younger generation but large urban-rural and gender inequalities remain—rural youth fall far behind in education than their urban counterparts, with 65% and 48% of young rural women and men respectively having no education. Beyond formal educational attainment, a lack of basic literacy and numeracy skills[1] directly impedes access to and the effective use of information and technology, and efficacy of vocational and job training.

Marriage, with its accompanying social and financial responsibilities, directly affects the educational and employment pursuits of young people. **The average age for marriage for youth (15-34 years) in the WAEMU is 19 years for women and 24 years for men**. Women tend to marry earlier than men, and the age of marriage is lower in rural areas—on average, 18 years for women and 22 years for men.

Unemployment is relatively low, but underemployment is a larger issue for youth in the WAEMU. The ERI-ESI 2017-18 estimates an unemployment rate of 6.1% while the combined rate of time-related unemployment and underemployment is 18.1% for youth, pointing to a trend of labour underutilization and a scarcity in productive employment opportunities supplied by the labour market. For a broader picture, it is useful to also consider youth outside the labour force altogether. **Share of youth (ages 15-24) not in employment, education or training (NEET) was at 26.8% in 2019.** That is one in every three women and one in five men in the WAEMU between the ages of 15 and 24.

[1] The ability to read, write and understand simple mathematical concepts.

Rural youth in the WAEMU lag severely behind their urban counterparts with respect to access to the internet. 89.4% of rural youth have at least one phone in the household but only 8.9% of rural youth in the WAEMU have access to the internet. Internet access can have a broad range of welfare effects, particularly in rural areas. Among others, it improves labour market outcomes by reducing transaction costs for job seekers, increases consumption, and facilitates access to market information and financial services. Here too, gender inequality persists, as 94.2% of young rural women have no internet access. Mobile phone and internet access of young households closely resembles that of non-young households.

Rural youth employment in agriculture

Even as non-agricultural employment increases, **a majority of rural youth—75% in the WAEMU continue to work in the agricultural sector.** Productivity in agriculture is lower than in other sectors; however, this is partly due to seasonal nature of the activity—the productivity gap narrows considerably when productivity is measured per hour worked rather than per worker. Barriers faced by youth in agriculture are often the same factors that impede agricultural productivity—notably, limited technological adoption, a lack of access to land, markets, financial and extension services and training. It is important to note here that these constraints are faced by the population as a whole, and are not specific to young people, even if the effects can sometimes be stronger for youth. Creating decent and productive employment in agriculture for rural youth therefore requires a policy focus on broader rural development policies that address the constraints to agricultural productivity first, and then focus on challenges specific to youth.

Non-agricultural employment

While agriculture continues to be the largest employer of rural youth, non-agricultural employment has increased over the years. Rural transformation involves a diversification of income, moving away from solely agriculture dependent livelihood. Given the seasonal nature of agriculture and the increasing vulnerability of the sector to climate shocks, income diversification will be an important adaptation strategy for rural youth. Young people with no/low levels of education—the majority in rural WAEMU—are less likely to be absorbed into the formal labour market. Two important sectors of employment for rural youth in this context are household enterprises and artisanal mining.

Household enterprises (HEs), which consist mainly of self-employment individuals and family workers, will be the main source non-farm jobs in a largely informal WAEMU economy. While many HE's are subsistence based, and operate at low levels of productivity, they nonetheless serve an important income smoothing function for households—46.8% of rural households in the WAEMU operate at least one HE during the year. Most HEs operate in sectors with low barriers to entry, such as sales and trading, and those in rural areas are more likely to be seasonal. Household enterprises also tend to be gendered in nature, with prominent feminine and masculine sectors of activity. Access to credit for start-up costs and a lack of training and skills—literacy, business skills and activity-specific skills—are the main barriers to entry for youth in the sector.

Artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM), in particular gold mining is one of the primary alternatives to urban migration for rural youth seeking non-agricultural employment. Research carried out in the region also points to the use of gold mining as a livelihood diversification strategy when agricultural incomes are adversely affected. Women and young men form a large share of the ASM workforce, since the sector is a relatively easy source of employment. Artisanal mining is additionally an important source of intraregional migration, and contributes to the development of local economies around mining sites. Despite its economic significance, the sector remains highly unregulated, and employment in the sector, although financially lucrative, tends to be informal, and characterised by hazardous working conditions and environmentally unsustainable practices.

Unpaid care work

Based on the distinction made by the ILO between work and employment, this report looks at unpaid care work to understand how it constrains employment. The ILO estimated that every day 16.4 billion hours are spent on UCW, the equivalent of 9% of the global GDP. Globally, women spend 3.2 times more time on UCW than men—this equates to 201 working days for women per year and 63 working days for men. In rural areas and less developed contexts, unpaid care work is more time consuming and physically demanding. These care responsibilities start early, as children, first hindering their access to education and subsequently their access to employment opportunities. In the UEMOA, **young**

rural women devote on average 21.5 hours per week to unpaid (care and care-related) work, **4 times more time than the 5.1 hours per week for young rural men**. In addition, young rural women who are married or cohabiting with a partner spend almost twice as much time per week on unpaid work than those who are unmarried. Unpaid care work, is often the main reason stated by women for not being in the labour market. For women in employment, the impact of marriage and childbearing is likely to cause increased vulnerability to precarious work and a penalty on earning potential. Improving the employment prospects of young rural women will require policy action to reduce and redistribute the time they spend in unpaid care and care-related work, through improved infrastructure, social protection and services provided by the state. Targeted investments in education, health and long-term care can also simultaneously generate jobs in the care sector.

Priority issues and policy implications

This report presents an overview of rural youth in the WAEMU, their employment in the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors, as well as unpaid work, to identify the challenges and opportunities they face in employment. A common thread across the report is the structural constraints to human development and infrastructure that act as barriers to employment. Policy recommendations are structured around the priority issues outlines below.

Education, skills and training: Despite progress in educational attainment across generations, a large majority of rural youth have no education and lack basic literacy skills. The human development profile of rural youth is notably different from their urban counterparts. As such, their education and skills needs should be addressed specifically in national strategies for youth and adult literacy. Other recommendations include investment in alternative education programs to invest in basic literacy and numeracy, programs for vocational training and soft skills development, as well as strategic alignment of skills development with priority sectors for the WAEMU.

Bridging the digital gap: Access to internet in rural WAEMU remains relatively limited. Mobile phones and internet connectivity can essential drivers of economic participation, facilitating access to markets, financial services, information and agricultural extension, as well as access to non-farm employment and entrepreneurship. Investments in digital infrastructure from the government as well as the private sector will be essential to bridging this gap. In addition, digital literacy skills should be integrated into education and skills development strategies.

Access to markets: In addition to digital connectivity that can facilitate access to market information, physical access to markets can improve productivity and economic prospects for rural youth in agricultural and non-agricultural sectors alike. As such, it will be beneficial to invest in transport infrastructure, especially road connectivity to cities and urban centres, and to complement this with investment in market infrastructure—storage capacity, food processing and transformation, etc.—in urban centres.

Improving access to land for rural youth: For rural youth in agriculture, access to land is one of the primary barriers for entry into the sector. Land access relates directly to the level of investment in productive agricultural technologies. Reforms to secure land rights can reduce labour absorption of agriculture, leading to a reallocation of labour off the farm without affecting agricultural productivity. It can also be valuable to evaluate the land reforms for their impact on rural employment and agricultural investment.

Investing in women's employment: Results throughout the report indicate that young women are at a disadvantage compared to young men—they marry earlier, are less likely to be educated or employed, are less likely to access mobile phones and the internet, and face higher levels of unemployment and informality. The analysis of unpaid care work allows to shed some light on how women face systematically different constraints to employment. Addressing these will require reducing women's time poverty through investments in care policies to reduce unpaid care work, improved access to reproductive healthcare and promotion of gender-inclusive education policies and training programmes.

Adapting for the informal sector: Rural youth in the WAEMU will continue to be employed in the informal sector at this stage of economic development in the economy. This will necessitate a certain flexibility in governance in order to support the mass of rural youth that comprise the informal workforce. Designing social protection policies that are

inclusive to informal workers and provide them a safety net can be a first step. Another recommendation is to invest in the training and formalization of skills for youth in informal sectors.

Other policy recommendations include coordination across ministries and governments for a whole-of government approach to address youth employment, investing in data collection and monitoring and evaluation capacity, and the systematic integration of gender analyses in policy design. To conclude, it is important to recognize that many constraints faced by rural youth and common to the overall population. Effective policy action for rural youth employment will therefore involve a mix of broad rural development policies and policies and interventions targeted to youth to address constraints that are youth-specific. A thorough analysis of local conditions and opportunities should guide specific policy choices and the prioritization of these actions.

1. Introduction

The WAEMU countries, like many of their African counterparts are faced with a predominantly young and rural population. Young people between the ages of 15 and 34 form a third of the population and two-thirds of the WAEMU workforce. The absolute numbers of youth in the WAEMU puts intense pressure on rural labour markets that are characterised by a dependence on subsistence agriculture, high levels of informality, and a limited supply of formal, stable, wage employment. Yet, with the right policy and infrastructure support, this 'youth bulge', even more pronounced in rural areas, can be a valuable opportunity for rural development. Youth entering the workforce in the WAEMU today will do so in the backdrop of climate change, a potentially chronic security crisis, and a boom in digitization, which are transforming the economic and employment landscape of the region. In this context, shaping effective rural employment policies for young people is a priority, necessitating a deep understanding of the immediate barriers to employment, as well as anticipating the needs of evolving economies and labour markets.

The objective of this report is to build a comprehensive and up-to-date picture of the employment sources and opportunities for rural youth, grounded in an understanding of the broader national and regional context they are in, and the socio-economic characteristics that determine how young people interact with the labour market, in both the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors. By identifying the main barriers to rural youth employment, the report aims to inform key policy priorities and good practices to support sustainable livelihood diversification and the productive employment of rural youth. The report draws on the existing literature on rural and youth employment in the region. It combines macroeconomic analysis using development and labour statistics from international institutions (such as the World Bank or the International Labour Organisation), with a more granular analysis at the microeconomic level. The latter is based on data from two nationally representative surveys—*Enquête Harmonisée sur le Conditions de Vie des Ménages* (Harmonized Survey of Household Living Conditions)-EHCVM 2018-19 and *l'Enquête Régionale Intégrée sur l'Emploi et le Secteur Informel* (Integrated Regional Survey on Employment and the Informal Sector)-ERI-ESI 2017-18[2]—carried out across the WAEMU member states. The young population that this report focuses on are individuals between the ages of 15 and 34, divided into two subgroups by age: 15-24 and 25-34. This distinction highlights two distinct phases of professional and family life.[3]

The WAEMU is an agrarian economy and the majority of rural youth continue to be employed by the agricultural sector. As a low-productivity, low returns sector, employment in agriculture remains mostly rain-fed and thus seasonal, and is characterised by time-related underemployment. A lack of access to land, a subsequent low adoption of agricultural technology and a limited access to markets and market information is holding back agricultural productivity, for youth and adults alike. Inadequate access to financial services is another important barrier to productive employment in agriculture. Mobile banking holds great potential here but will require significant improvements to the digital and regulatory infrastructure in rural areas, that are severely lagging behind their urban counterparts. Finally, addressing literacy, vocational training and capacity development for young farmers is important. Moving out of poverty, improving incomes and building resilience in the face of climate change will require young farmers to move from subsistence to a more commercialized, productive agriculture.

[2] Results from the ERI-ESI 2017-18 are taken from the AFRISTAT-UEMOA Regional report on the survey.
[3] Some sections focus more closely on young people aged 15 to 24 where relevant or due to data constraints.

A dynamic of rural transformation that creates jobs also involves a diversification of income, moving away from a dependence on agriculture. Rural youth seeking non-agricultural employment often move from self-employment in agriculture to self-employment in household enterprises, as off-farm wage employment opportunities are limited and the demand for off-farm work far exceeds the number of wage jobs available. Household enterprises generate the majority of non-farm employment and the sector is especially relevant for youth with low levels of education, as they are much less likely to be absorbed by the wage employment sector. Employment in household enterprises largely concerns youth aged 25-34, as youth in the 15-24 age group are more likely to be inactive or employed in agriculture. Household enterprises are also often gendered in their typology, with a concentration of women entrepreneurs in less profitable sectors. Access to credit for start-up costs and a lack of training and skills—literacy, business skills and activity-specific skills—are the main barriers to entry for youth in the sector.

In addition to household enterprises, artisanal and small-scale mining, particularly gold mining is increasingly emerging as an employment solution in various WAEMU member states for rural youth and women. While individuals with low levels of education and training find jobs as miners, the growth of small-scale formal mining companies also creates opportunities for employment in more technical roles. The sector is dominated by youth and women, and is slowly transitioning from a seasonal activity to a source of primary employment for many. Artisanal mining is also an important source of intraregional migration, and contributes to the development of local economies around mining sites. However, employment in the sector is often precarious and hazardous in terms of health effects. This sector also has detrimental consequences on the environment. A focus on better regulation of the sector will be crucial to improving working conditions and labour rights of those employed in the sector.

Finally, based on the distinction made by the ILO between work and employment, the latter being the subset of paid work, this report looks at unpaid care work to understand how it constrains employment. Particularly for young rural women and girls, the burden of unpaid care work, closely linked to marriage and childcare responsibilities, adversely affects education and their employment and earning prospects. For women, unpaid work is often the primary reason for non-participation in the labour market. Promoting young women's employment in the region will depend on the ability of the state to provide the infrastructure and services that reduce the time spent by women on unpaid care work.

Across agricultural and non-agricultural sectors, low levels of literacy, soft/non-cognitive and sector-specific skills, a lack of digital connectivity and financial services as well as limited access to markets continue to be barriers to productivity. From a policy perspective, it is important to acknowledge that many of the constraints to the productive employment of rural youth are structural and institutional, related to low levels of rural transformation in the WAEMU, and these constraints are faced by the population as a whole. Effective policy action for rural youth employment will therefore involve a mix of broad rural development policies and policies and interventions targeted to youth to address constraints that are youth-specific. A thorough analysis of local conditions and opportunities should guide specific policy choices and the prioritization of these actions.

The report is structured as follows: Section 2 offers a conceptual framework outlining the relationships between structural transformation, rural transformation and the patterns of rural employment. For rural youth in particular, employment opportunities are understood within the context of national, local and household conditions. Section 3 is an economic and socio-demographic overview of the WAEMU, setting the backdrop for analysing the employment prospects of rural youth in the zone. Section 4

presents a profile of youth in the WAEMU, and discusses how their socio-economic characteristics and endowments determine their access to the labour market. Section 5 focuses on the different forms of work and employment of rural youth in the WAEMU. It consists of three sections: i) employment in agriculture, ii) employment in the non-farm economy; specifically, employment in the household enterprise and artisanal mining sectors, and iii) unpaid care work and access to employment. Section 6 concludes with a discussion of the main constraints identified and outlines policy recommendations for improving rural youth employment in the zone.

2. Rural transformation and youth employment: a conceptual framework

Understanding the evolution of rural employment within the broader economy can be useful to contextualize the challenges and opportunities faced by rural youth. This section presents a conceptual framework of rural employment, and more precisely, the employment of rural youth, integrating insights from economic theory and a multi-level analysis by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD, 2019). It focuses on how structural and rural transformation influence the employment and livelihoods of rural youth and on identifying the main barriers to employment.

Structural transformation in an economy refers to the process of transition from an economy based on the agricultural sector to one based on industry and services, both in terms of income and employment. Rural transformation is a process of economic and social change in rural areas, characterised by diversification of livelihoods and modernisation of agricultural and non-agricultural activities, and a shift away from subsistence agriculture (IFAD, 2019, Christiaensen & Maertens, 2022). The process of rural transformation will therefore be accompanied by important changes in the composition or structure of rural employment—through increased non-agricultural employment, often wage and formal, and through migration to high productivity rural areas. Structural transformation in turn can drive rural-urban migration, driven by job creation in urban areas (Christiaensen & Maertens, 2022).

Articulating rural and structural transformation dynamics, IFAD (2019) details a multi-level framework for understanding the opportunities open to rural youth—based on the determining national, local and household circumstances with which they are confronted.

Level 1: Country-level transformations

At the national level, two parameters determine a country's transformation typology—the level of structural transformation (ST), measured as the share of non-agricultural activity in a country's GDP, and the level of rural transformation (RT), understood as agricultural value added per worker. Countries are classified as having either high or low levels of structural and rural transformation. A graphic representation of this country transformation typology can be found in Figure 2.1. Under this framework, Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger and Togo are classified as Low ST-Low RT, appearing in the lower-left quadrant of Figure 2.1, Senegal is in the upper-left quadrant - High ST-Low RT, and Côte d'Ivoire is placed in the lower-right quadrant, classified as Low ST-High RT. Six out of eight WAEMU countries are Low ST-Low RT; compared to countries in the other groups, least transformed economies have the largest share of young people in rural areas and fewer resources and capacity to invest in youth.

Figure 2.1 : Country transformation typology

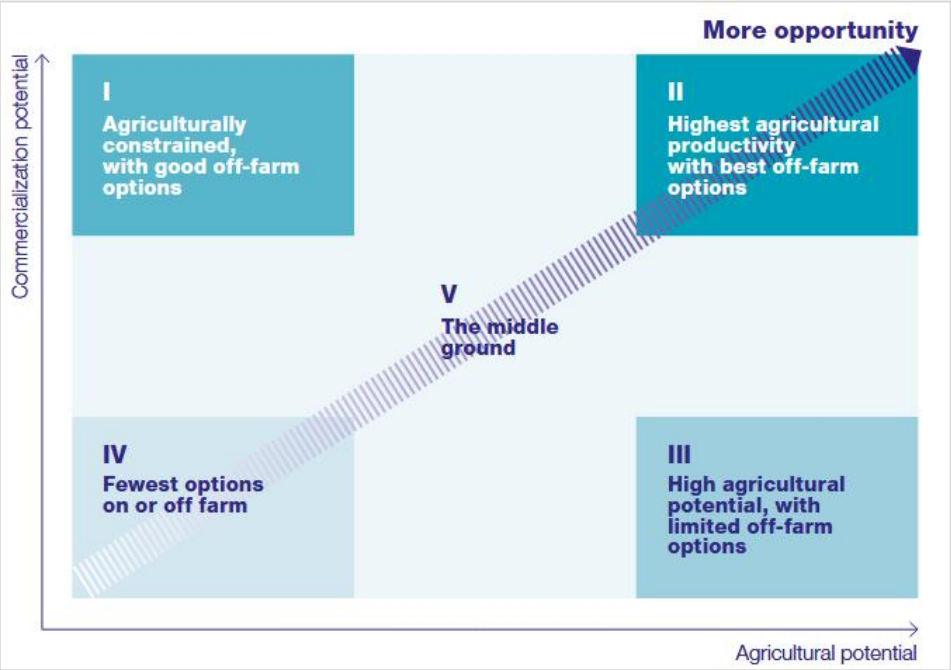
Source: Creating Opportunities for Rural Youth. 2019 Rural Development Report. IFAD (2019)

Level 2: The local opportunity space

Within countries, an economic geography framework is used to conceptualize the ***rural opportunity space (ROS)***. In this framework, irrespective of the local context, social norms and individual preferences, opportunities for youth in a particular rural area are determined by two factors: i) **its commercialization potential**, dictated by the degree of market access of the area, and ii) **potential agricultural productivity**, determined by the natural resource base. Figure 2.2 graphically represents this rural opportunity space. **Commercialization potential increases with physical and virtual connectivity to markets and cities, and improves off-farm options.** In this context, secondary cities and towns are highlighted as crucial for improving welfare in rural areas and driving inclusive growth.[4] A more detailed classification of rural areas based on the rural opportunity space is outside the scope of this report.

[4] Compared to big cities, smaller cities and towns are more accessible as migration destinations to rural youth.

Figure 2.2: Rural opportunity space



Source: Creating Opportunities for Rural Youth. 2019 Rural Development Report. IFAD (2019)

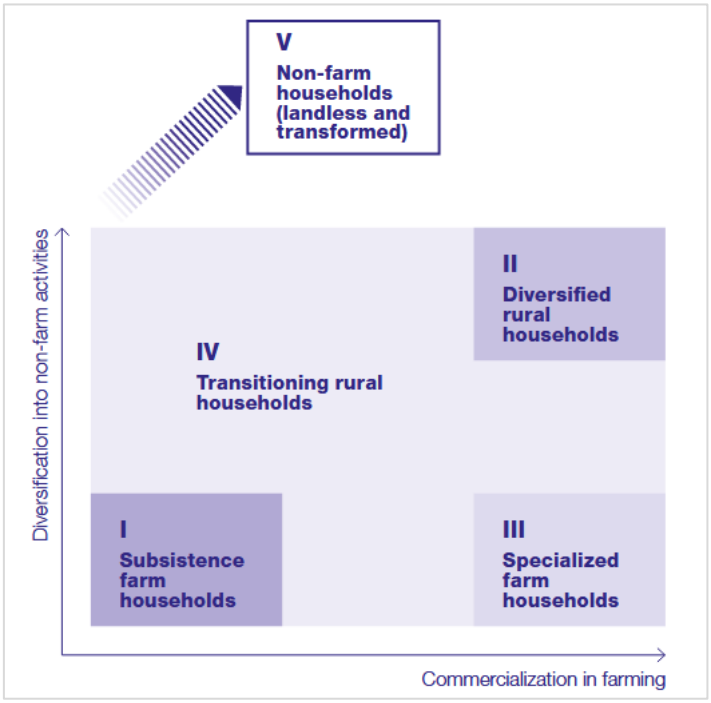
Level 3: Categorization of rural households

In addition to a country's level of structural and rural transformation, and the rural opportunity space, the opportunities faced by rural youth are also determined by the varying degrees of **agricultural commercialization** and **diversification into non-farm activities** attained by the household. Figure 2.3 is a graphical depiction of the different types of households. *Subsistence farm households* (household type I in the figure) have low levels of diversification and commercialization in farming, whereas *diversified rural households* (household type II) have high levels of diversification and commercialization. *Specialized farm households* specialize in commercialized agriculture (type III) without diversification, moving right along the horizontal axis, while *transformed non-farm households* (household type V) transition completely to non-farm activities, moving upwards along the vertical axis. *Transitioning rural households* (household type IV) are partially diversified, moving away from subsistence farming (type I) without arriving at a specialization (III and V) or full diversification (II). Diversified rural households and fully transformed nonfarm households (types II and V) have the lowest poverty rates; they also have the largest share of youth with a secondary education, thus providing them better opportunities.

Together, the combination of country transformation level, the rural opportunity space and household type help identify key challenges and opportunities faced by rural youth in a broader context of demographic transition, climate change and a rapid digital transition. **Effective investment and policy for rural youth will therefore involve a mix of broader rural development and youth-specific approaches, depending on different contexts.**

For low ST-low RT countries (all WAEMU countries except Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal), the IFAD (2019) framework points to four policy and investment priorities: i) reducing fertility, which largely concerns young women, ii) increasing the level of agricultural productivity, iii) investments in physical infrastructure, roads in particular, and iv) expanded private sector driven access to mobile connectivity. For countries with low ST-high RT (Côte d'Ivoire), the same four priorities hold, but this group of countries may additionally have the fiscal space for some youth-specific interventions. Finally, high ST-low RT countries (Senegal) have more space for youth specific interventions.

Figure 2.3: Household transformation categories



Source: Creating Opportunities for Rural Youth. 2019 Rural Development Report. IFAD (2019)

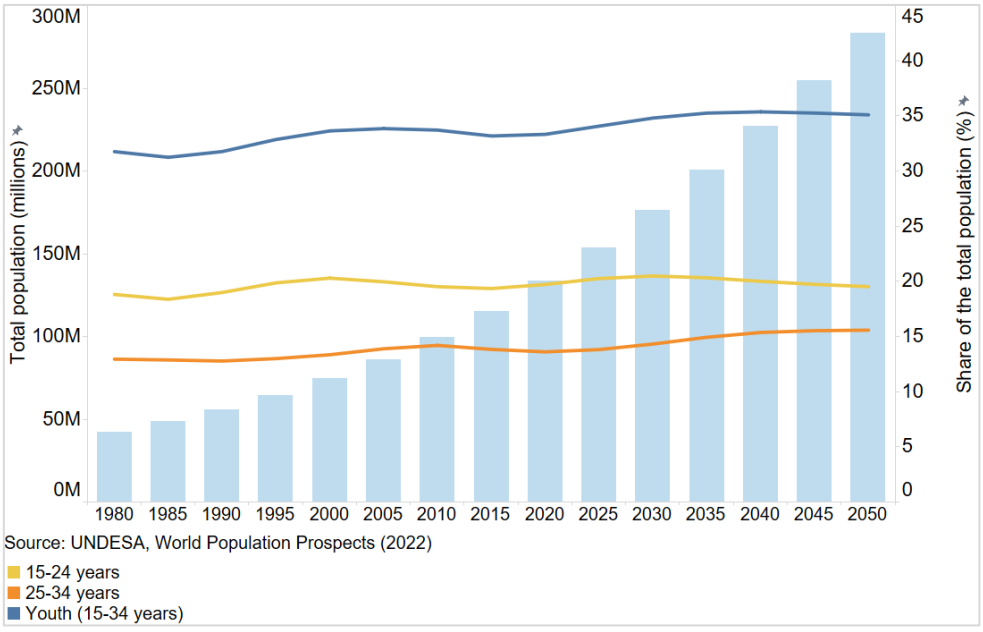
3. The West African Economic and Monetary Union: an overview

This section presents an overview of the socio-demographic, geographic, economic, and agricultural context of the WAEMU. It serves as a foundation for our analysis, highlighting the challenges and opportunities that these factors present in relation to the employment prospects of rural youth.

3.1. Demographic context – a young population

Figure 3.1 depicts the evolution of the WAEMU population from 1980 to 2050, and the share of youth in the population. As of 2023, the zone had a total estimated population of 145.3 million, and is projected to grow to 283.1 million by 2050 (UNDESA, 2022). Amongst the member states, Côte d'Ivoire and Niger are the two most highly populated. As seen in Figure 3.1, youth have consistently composed about a third of the population, with small increases in this share overtime. Youth aged 15-24 occupy a larger share than youth ages 25-34, representing a fifth of the total population. **A large majority of the WAEMU population is rural**—on average, 59.4% of the WAEMU population, which is nearly 86.3 million people, live in rural areas. Country-wise population characteristics are summarized in Table 3.1. Niger and Burkina Faso have the highest rural concentration in the zone (82.9% and 67.4% respectively). **Poverty rates are also high in the zone**, with almost a quarter of the population living in extreme poverty (WDI, 2021).[5] Notably, Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire have the lowest poverty rates at almost 10%, while half of Niger's population, an estimated 51%, is considered to be extremely poor.

Figure 3.1: Total WAEMU population and share of youth (1980-2050)



[5] This figure is based on the World Bank's new international poverty line, set at $2.15/day (2017 PPPs). Revised in September 2022, this replaces the previous $1.90/day global poverty line. https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/factsheet/2022/05/02/fact-sheet-an-adjustment-to-global-poverty-lines#2

The WAEMU population is also a very young one—the median age in member countries ranges from 15.3 years in Niger to 19.1 in Senegal (UNDESA, 2024). **With an average fertility rate of 5.1 children per woman, the zone has a large and growing population of youth**. Niger and Mali have the highest rates of fertility, at 6.6 and 5.9 children per woman respectively (WDI, 2022). This is in line with the population trends of the continent—Africa is in the midst of a rapid population growth, with a very young population, driven by a fall in death rates and a slow pace of decline in the birth rate. **Sub-Saharan Africa, WAEMU included, has a pyramid-shaped population structure**; that is, a broad base representing children and youth and a narrow top. This is in contrast to other regions, where the population is more evenly distributed between age groups[6] (Filmer & Fox, 2014, IFAD, 2019). This population base is even larger for rural areas—Africa's share in the world's rural youth is set to increase from 20% in 2015 to 37% by 2050 (IFAD, 2019). This 'youth bulge' represents an important source of the current and future labour force, that could be a driver of development in the WAEMU economies. However, capitalising on this population advantage is subject to the ability of countries to deliver on adequate education, training and employment for this population, as well as the physical and digital infrastructure to facilitate access to markets and information.

Table 3.1: Socioeconomic indicators by country

Country	Income group	Population (millions)	Life expectancy (years)	Fertility rate	Rural population (% of population)	Extreme poverty (% of population)
Benin	Lower middle income	13.71	59.95	4.90	49.90	12.70
Burkina Faso	Low income	23.25	59.77	4.67	67.48	25.30
Côte d'Ivoire	Lower middle income	28.87	58.92	4.34	46.85	9.70
Guinea-Bissau	Low income	2.15	59.86	3.93	54.53	26.00
Mali	Low income	23.29	59.42	5.87	53.81	20.80
Niger	Low income	27.20	62.08	6.75	82.95	50.60
Senegal	Lower middle income	17.76	67.91	4.31	50.42	9.90
Togo	Low income	9.05	61.59	4.20	55.51	26.60
WAEMU		**145.30**	**61.10**	**5.12**	**59.40**	**23.12**

Source: World Development Indicators (WDI), World Bank

3.2. Geographic landscape

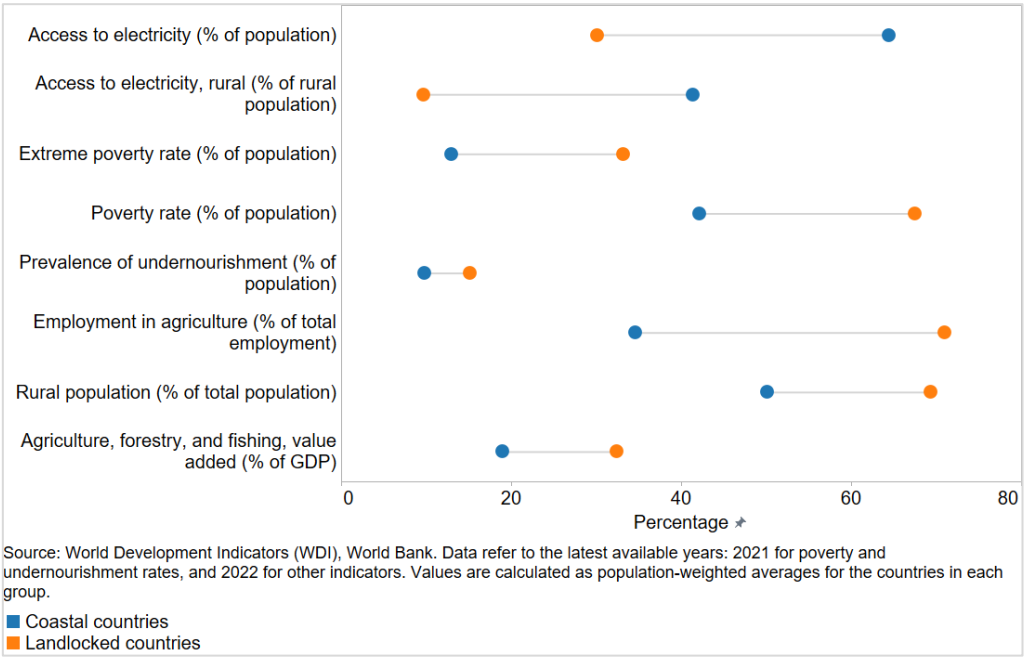
The WAEMU consists of eight member countries—Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo—spanning a total surface area of 3.5 million square kms (WDI, 2021). Large parts of the region are in the Sahel belt, a semi-arid region with the Sahara Desert to the north and the tropical savannahs to the south. The landlocked states of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, the zone also known as the central Sahel, face distinct challenges that are linked closely to their geography, which bears heavily on their social and economic development. The result is a clear development gap between the three inland countries of the WAEMU and its five coastal counterparts. This gap is multi-

[6] Figures A.1 and A.2 in the Appendix depict the population pyramids for the WAEMU and for different regions.

dimensional, encompassing disparities in income, structural transformation, infrastructure, and vulnerability to climate and security risks.

Figure 3.2 illustrates the disparities between these two groups of countries, based on a selection of development and structural transformation indicators. The blue and orange dots represent the averages of each indicator, calculated for coastal and landlocked countries respectively, weighted by the population of the countries in each group. In coastal countries, 65% of the population has access to electricity, while in the landlocked three the rate is half that at 30%. A similar difference is observed in rural areas, where only 10% of the rural population in landlocked Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger have electricity. The rates of poverty and undernourishment are similarly higher in the landlocked countries compared to their coastal counterparts. Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger also have a lower level of rural transformation, with 71% of the population employed in agriculture compared to 35% in the coastal WAEMU countries. Coastal countries similarly draw a smaller share of their GDP from agriculture and have a smaller rural population (50%, compared to 69% in the landlocked states). Severe inequalities in development also exist within the countries, especially for the central Sahel, between the littoral and hinterland areas.

Figure 3.2: Development gap between landlocked and coastal WAEMU countries



3.2.1.Climate change and conflict: overlapping crises

The WAEMU has been experiencing rising temperatures and frequent climate-related disasters (Sever, 2024). Since the 2000s, the region has averaged seven climate-related disasters per year, up from just two per year before 2000, with two-thirds of these affecting more than 10,000 people. Consequently, WAEMU countries are at a high risk of humanitarian crises due to climate change (Sever, 2024). In the central Sahel, the effects of climate change are most severe—temperatures are rising 1.5 times faster than the rest of the world, and long-term water scarcity and desertification are on the rise (IRC, 2023).

At the same time, the WAEMU region has also been grappling with escalating security challenges, particularly in the Sahel. Violent conflicts disrupt agricultural and pastoral activities, displace populations and further intensify poverty and food insecurity. Box 1 delves further into how climate change has been changing land use patterns in the Sahel, driving an increase in conflicts between farmers and herders competing over land and water resources in the region. The effects of climate change and conflicts amplify each other, creating a compounded crisis (IRC, 2023). Research by Diallo & Tapsoba (2022) found that weather-related climate shocks increase the likelihood of domestic intercommunal conflicts by up to 38%, with a magnified effect in countries with income inequality and a higher proportion of young males.

Box 1: Climate change and agro-pastoral conflicts in the Sahel

Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Senegal are home to a large population of nomadic and semi-nomadic pastoralists. Livestock production is a cornerstone of the economy in these countries, contributing over 25% of the GDP in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger. The sector also generates substantial revenue through value-added processes in the coastal countries of West Africa. Transhumance, or the seasonal migration of herders and their livestock during the long dry season (8-9 months) is fundamental to the pastoralist way of life in the Sahel.

Pastoralists have historically followed established transhumance routes and corridors, accessing land and water through agreements with local communities. However, rapid population growth has led to an increase in cultivated land, reducing land available for grazing. Climate change further exacerbates the situation, causing longer dry periods, water scarcity and desertification. Just in Niger between 100,000 to 120,000 hectares of arable land is lost annually (IRC, 2023).

These drastic changes in land use patterns in recent years have led to an upward trend in violent conflicts between farmers and herders and amongst herders, driven primarily by competition over land and water resources. Compounding these challenges is the ongoing security crisis in the region. The presence of rebel groups and armed militia has intensified farmer-herder conflicts (with firearm use) and led to a rise in attacks on both groups, causing several fatalities and creating a large displaced population of farmers and herders.

These conflicts have profound implications for the region, threatening stability and taking a heavy toll on the population. Disrupted livelihoods are pushing rural youth to migrate to urban areas or abroad, while they risk also being recruited into armed groups. As the population increases and the effects of climate change continue to intensify, natural resources are expected to become even scarcer, further aggravating these conflicts. Addressing these issues is crucial for the future of rural employment and stability in the WAEMU. There is an urgent need for national and regional policies addressing regulation of land use and management of natural resources allowing both groups to co-exist peacefully.

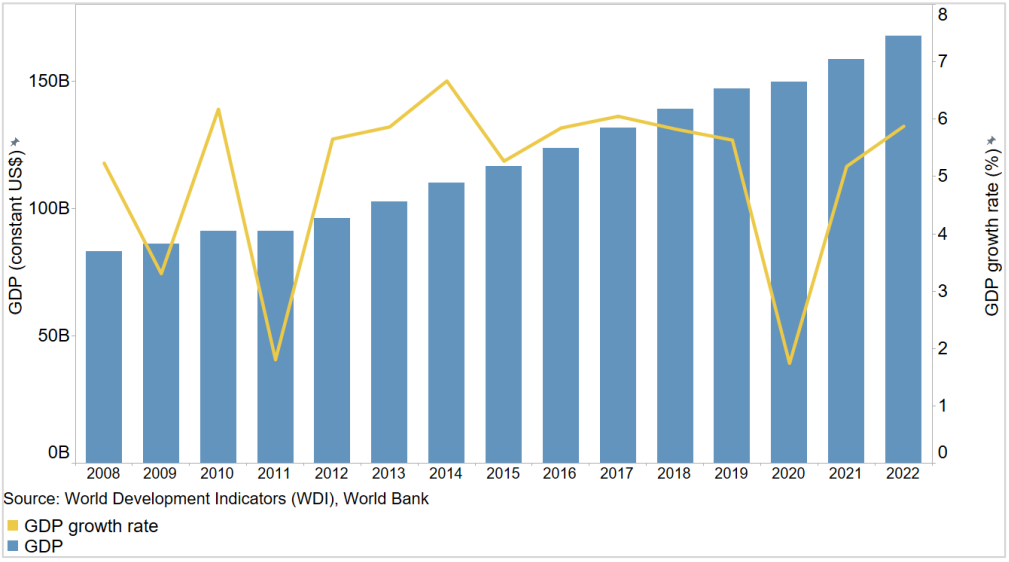
Source: FAO Pastoralist Knowledge Hub | West and Central Africa, UNOWAS. (2018). Pastoralism and Security in West Africa and the Sahel. United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS).

This double crisis therefore poses a significant challenge to economic and employment prospects in the WAEMU. WAEMU's large youth population can be an advantage, acting as a driver of growth by increasing the available workforce, boosting productivity and fostering innovation (Jimenez & Murthi, 2006). On the other hand, without opportunities to productively contribute to society, they could also be a cheap source of manpower to be recruited into armed groups (Diallo & Tapsoba, 2022).

3.3. The WAEMU economy

The WAEMU is a steadily growing economy, with a GDP of 167.57 billion USD in 2022. Figure 3.3 plots the total GDP and growth rate of the zone over a 15-year period—the GDP doubled in size since 2008 (WDI, World Bank). During the same period, GDP per capita has also grown steadily in the WAEMU, from US$ 886 in 2008 to US$ 1186.3 in 2022. However, important differences remain between countries. Within the bloc, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and Benin are the three largest economies by GDP per capita, while Niger, despite being the second most populous, is the smallest (See Figure 3.4). The Covid-19-related drop in the 2020 growth rate aside, the region has seen a reduced volatility in the growth rate since 2015. Despite the negative economic shocks from recent global crises—particularly the severe effects of the Ukraine-Russia conflict, the WAEMU economy had an average annual growth rate of 5.2% over the 2021-2023 period. The average growth rate for Sub-Saharan Africa as well as the West and Central Africa region during this period was 3.7%, indicating that the WAEMU economy is doing better than the regional average (WDI, World Bank). According to the *Rapport semestriel d'exécution de la surveillance multilatérale,* the zone is projected to grow further at 7.5% in 2024 (UEMOA, 2023).

Figure 3.3: Total GDP and growth rate—WAEMU (2008-2022)



This growth is not evenly distributed across sectors. Annual fluctuations notwithstanding, five-year average (2018-2022) growth rates by sector indicate that the industrial sector is the fastest growing in the WAEMU (5.4%), followed by the services (4.9%) and agricultural sectors (4.5%). The industrial sector has also seen a gradual increase in its share of employment, accounting for 12.5% of total employment in the WAEMU in 2022. In Senegal, Benin, and Togo, over 20% of jobs are in industry (ILO). Kruse et al. (2023) find that the industrialization in the region is characterised by unregistered firms, that seem to absorb workers, but without a corresponding growth in output. The services sector, which is the second largest employer in the WAEMU, makes up 34.48% of total employment. While the industrial and service sectors expand, the agricultural sector remains central as an employer in the WAEMU. The role of the agricultural sector is further discussed in the next section.

Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger also face an ongoing security crisis, disrupting economic activity and straining public finances. The negative impact of the crisis on the growth of these economies has been muted so far, likely because the conflict events have been concentrated in areas of low economic activity (IMF, 2021). However, the security situation has exacerbated existing fragilities and continues to be a major challenge to the lives and livelihoods of the population.

3.4. Agricultural sector and the rural economy

Agriculture plays an important role in the WAEMU economy, both for national production (GDP) and as a source of employment. Figure 3.4 plots the share of agriculture in the GDP of WAEMU country economies, compared with GDP per capita and income level. **Agriculture, forestry and fishing activities contributed on average to 25.7% of the GDP of the WAEMU (WDI, 2022).** The production of WAEMU's four priority food sectors—rice, maize, cotton, meat and poultry—was valued at an estimated 9.99 billion USD in 2022, i.e., nearly 6% of GDP. Niger, Mali and Guinea-Bissau have the largest agriculture-to-GDP ratios, drawing over 30% of their GDP from the sector. The share of agriculture to GDP in the zone has been relatively stable in the past two decades, with small increases in most countries. Burkina Faso and Guinea-Bissau are two exceptions, with a downward trend overtime and a 6% drop in the agriculture-to-GDP ratio in 2022 compared to 2000.

Figure 3.5 plots the share of agriculture in total employment in the WAEMU member states in 2022, using data from the ILO. Although the share of employment in agriculture has been falling over time, at 53.03%, **the agricultural sector continues to be the largest employer in the WAEMU, providing jobs to over half the population**. The three central Sahelian countries of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger stand out as largely agrarian economies in terms of employment. Burkina Faso stands out here; it has the highest share of agricultural employment in the zone (74.02%), while the sector's contribution to GDP is relatively low. In rural areas, even as share of industry and service sectors in rural employment has been increasing between 2005 and 2019, in 2019, 63.3% of total rural employment still came from agriculture[7].

[7] ILO modelled estimates – to be read with caution. Sector-wise employment estimates for rural and urban areas separately are updated less frequently than national estimates. As such, national and rural employment estimates are based on different data and are not always found to be consistent. In particular, the estimates for the share of agricultural employment are notably different at the national and rural level in Burkina Faso.

Figure 3.4: GDP per capita and share of agriculture in GDP (%)—2022

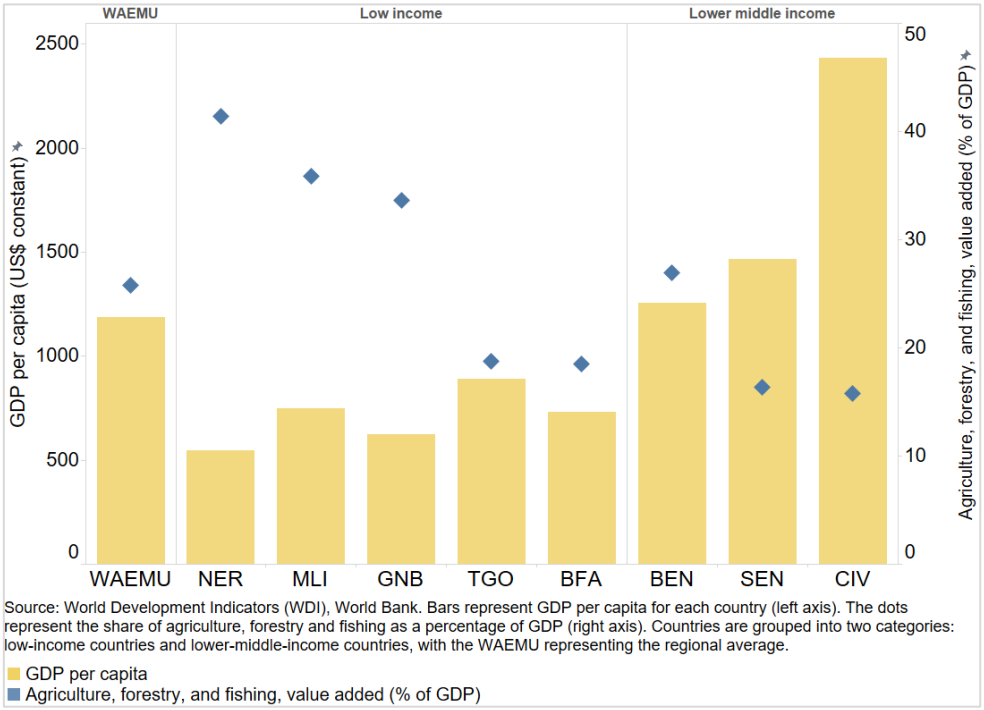
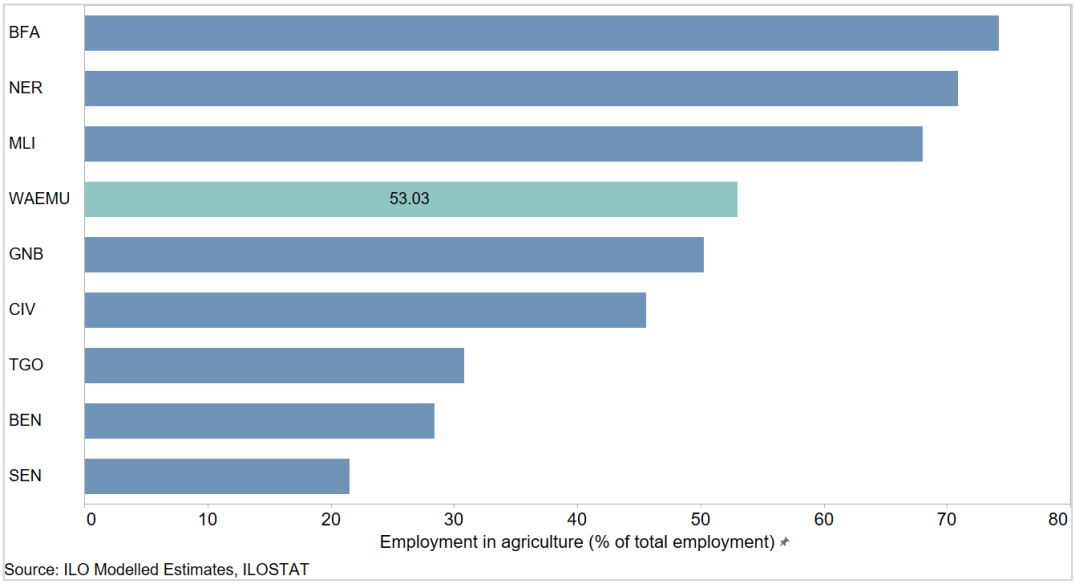


Figure 3.5: Share of employment in agriculture (% of total employment)—2022



Agriculture in the WAEMU is characterised by low productivity; it is predominantly rainfed - only 5% of cultivated land is irrigated and adoption of technology remains low (UEMOA, 2024b, Suri & Udry, 2022). Climate change is further estimated to lead to a 30-40% loss in agricultural productivity in member countries (Sever, 2024). Despite these challenges, agriculture holds significant potential to contribute to youth employment and to the rural and structural transformation of the region. However, tapping into this potential hinges on the implementation of effective policies that can address key constraints in the sector. Section 5 of this report will delve further into these barriers, particularly as they concern youth employed in agriculture.

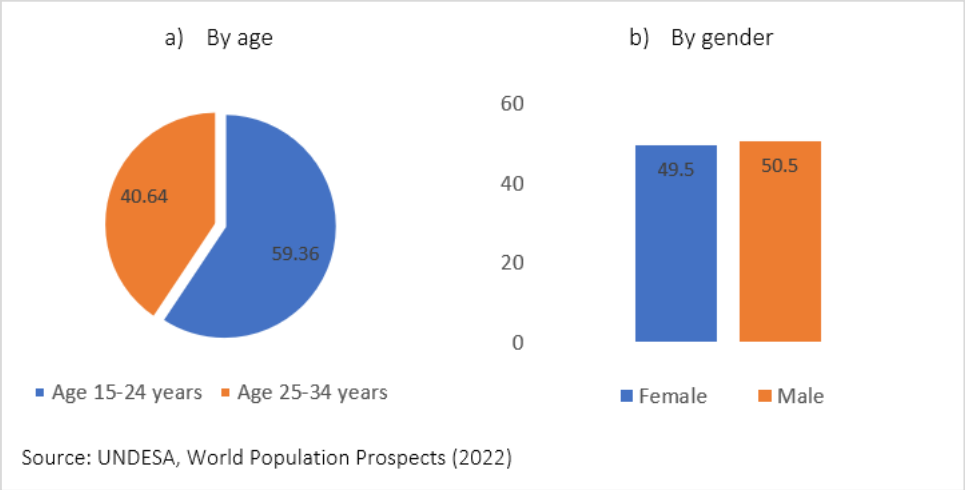
4. Profile of youth in the WAEMU

In addition to the national and local context, a young person's employment opportunities and economic prospects are shaped by several key factors, including the quality and level of their education, their location (urban or rural), family situation, and digital connectivity. Each of these are foundational pillars with knock-on effects that together determine the opportunities available to them. For the labour market and employment policies to effectively address youth employment, it is crucial to first have a thorough understanding of the characteristics of young people in the WAEMU. This section looks at the social, educational, and employment profile of young people within the WAEMU region.

4.1. Demographics, marital/family status and education

Youth, defined in this report as individuals between the ages of 15 to 34 years[8] comprise a third of the total population in the WAEMU, and nearly two thirds of the working age population (persons aged 15-64). From population estimates, that is equivalent to nearly 49 million youth in 2023. This figure will grow rapidly in the coming years; **by 2030 the WAEMU is projected to have 61.34 million youth, and by 2050, the youth population is projected to double to 99.34 million (UNDESA, 2022)**. Figure 4.1 shows the distribution of youth in the WAEMU by age (a) and gender (b). The young WAEMU population is 50.5% male – 49.5%, and youth aged 15-24 constitute a majority of the youth population at 60%, versus 40% of youth ages 25-34.

Figure 4.1: Distribution of youth in the WAEMU



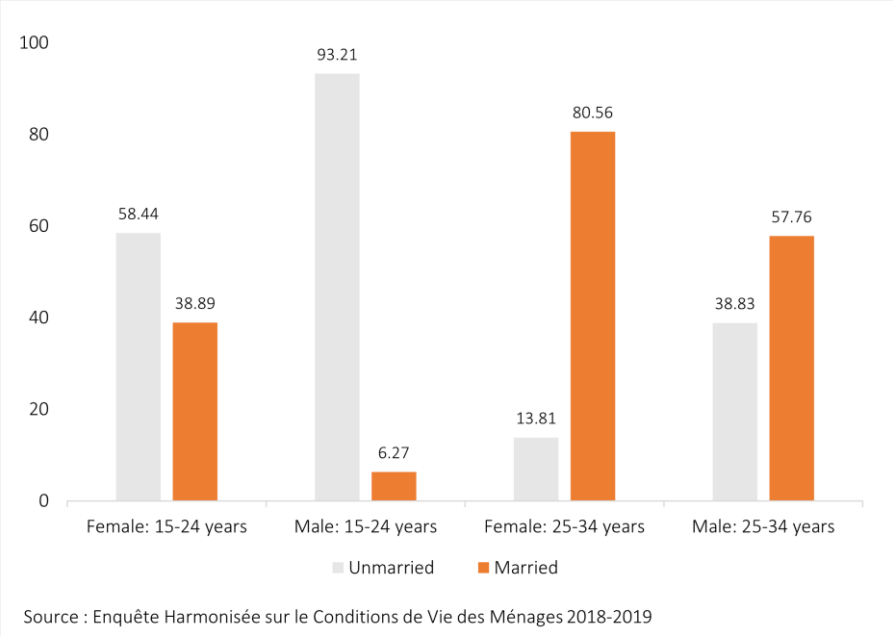
Marriage is an important social milestone for both men and women, marking a transition to adulthood and economic independence, and often a separation from parental households.[9] Based on traditional gender norms, for women, this represents childbearing and care responsibilities, while for men, it means financial responsibility to provide for the household. Marital status and the age of marriage therefore directly affect the education and employment opportunities that youth, especially women,

[8] Depending on the statistics presented, some sections focus more narrowly on youth aged 15 to 25 years.
[9] In the EHCVM 2018-19, 13.6% of youth are household heads. Of these, 72.7% of youth household heads are married.

are able to pursue. Analysis by the ILO and UN Women found that globally, female labour force participation is lowest for women living with a partner and children and highest for women living alone. For men, the pattern is the opposite (Gammarano, 2020b).

In the WAEMU, young women are more likely to be married and on average, marry at a younger age than men. The rate of marriage is also higher in rural areas. Figure 4.2 breaks down rates of marriage by gender and age group, using data from the EHCVM 2018-19. Overall, 43.6% of youth are married, with a notable difference by gender: 57.5% of young women are married, compared to 26.9% of men. Unsurprisingly, a larger share of 25–34-year-olds are married, compared to 15–24-year-olds. Even so, the share of 15–24-year-old girls and women who are married is relatively high—38.9% are married compared to 6.27% of men in the same age group. Marital status also differs by age groups and rural-urban location, while the gender difference persists in both cases.[10] Similarly, a larger share of rural youth are married compared to their urban counterparts. The age of first marriage among youth also varies by gender. On average, a young woman in the WAEMU marries at age 19 and a man at age 24.

Figure 4.2: Marital status of youth by age and gender

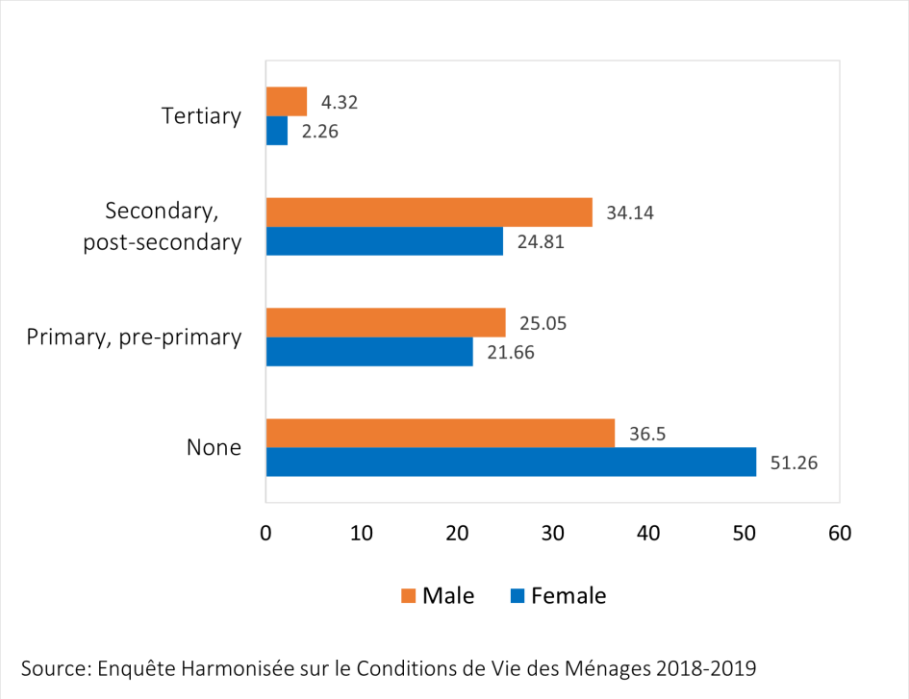


Another important factor that affects the employment and earning capacity of youth is their level and quality of education, especially for entry into formal employment. Figure 4.3 presents data from the EHCVM 2018-19 on the educational attainment of youth in the WAEMU. **45% of youth in the WAEMU –51.3% of young women and 36.5% of young men—have had no education.** That is an estimated 22.1 million youth in 2023. By age, 36% of youth aged 15-24 and 56.13% of those aged 25-34 have no education. A further breakdown of youth education by gender, age group and rural-urban location can be found in Table 4.1.[11] Educational attainment does appear to have improved for the younger

[10] For a breakdown by gender and urban-rural areas, refer to figure A.3 in the Appendix.
[11] For a breakdown of education level by country and rural-urban location, refer to tables A.1 and A.2 in the Appendix.

generation, for both men and women. 36.7% of youth aged 15-24 acquired at least a secondary education compared to 18.9% for older youth aged 25-34. Inequalities in educational attainment also remain based on location. Particularly for post-primary education, which is at 18.8% for rural areas in contrast to a much higher 41.5% in urban areas. Rural women seem to have the biggest disadvantage in education, while urban men have the highest rates of secondary and tertiary education.

Figure 4.3: Level of education by gender



Source: Enquête Harmonisée sur le Conditions de Vie des Ménages 2018-2019

Table 4.1: Level of education by gender, age and urban/rural location

	Female: 15-24 years	Male: 15-24 years	Female: 25-34 years	Male: 25-34 years	Female-Rural	Male-Rural	Female-Urban	Male-Urban	**Total**
None	40.78	30.58	64.2	45.32	64.78	47.61	34.56	23.39	**44.56**
Primary, pre-primary	24.52	26.93	18.14	22.24	20.71	26.77	22.84	23.02	**23.2**
Secondary, post-secondary	33.17	40.55	14.5	24.59	14.17	24.41	37.96	45.62	**29.05**
Tertiary	1.53	1.94	3.16	7.86	0.34	1.22	4.64	7.97	**3.19**

Source: Enquête Harmonisée sur le Conditions de Vie des Ménages 2018-2019. Values in percentages by column.

Findings from the ERI-ESI survey 2017-18 similarly indicate a trend of educational mobility for youth in the zone. Over 60% of youth aged 15-34 had completed an equal or greater number of years of education than their father. The average number of additional years of education completed by youth was 5.2 years for youth ages 15-24 and 3.7 years for youth ages 25-34 (AFRISTAT & UEMOA, 2019). Burkina Faso, Benin and Togo are found to have made the most progress on this front, for both age groups. **Overall, while gains in education are clear in the younger generation of youth, significant urban-rural and gender disparities remain.**

Beyond formal educational attainment, it is useful to consider literacy, including digital literacy[12] as a foundational tool for lifelong learning and economic, social and political participation. Even for jobs traditionally seen as low-skill, **a lack of basic literacy and numeracy skills[13] directly impedes access to and the effective use of information and technology, and efficacy of any later vocational and job training.** UNESCO's strategy for youth and adult literacy conceptualizes literacy as a continuum of learning, defining it as the *"ability to read and write, to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials including on-line, as well as the ability to solve problems in an increasingly technological and information rich environment"* (UNESCO, 2023). In the WAEMU, 83.5% of youth with no education and 18.2% of those with a pre-primary or primary level of education are not literate (EHCVM, 2018-19). Adult literacy programs could be a potential solution to address literacy in youth, although evidence on their effectiveness remains relatively scarce. Box 2 delves further into the evidence on adult literacy programs.

The educated unemployment paradox

An education not only enables individuals to develop their skills, but is also seen as a pathway to obtain employment and improve earning capacity. In many low- and middle-income countries however, a counterintuitive outcome is observed—despite their relative scarcity, skilled individuals with advanced education face higher unemployment rates than their less educated counterparts. An ILO analysis of 156 countries found this to be the case in 70% of lower middle-income countries and 82% of low-income countries. One explanation for this is the fact that compared to high income countries, a large share of employment in low and middle-income countries (LMICs) tends to be in the informal sector and there is a smaller supply of employment to be found in the formal, wage sector (Gammarano, 2020a,d).

Girsberger & Méango (2022) study this phenomenon of educated unemployment, which also occurs in the WAEMU countries. Estimating a model of a frictional labour market for workers in the WAEMU, the authors find that public sector distortions explain a large part of the unemployment of educated individuals. That is, the prospect of higher wages and stable employment in the public sector (where a large share of the formal wage employment is concentrated) can drive up the reservation wage[14] of educated workers, increasing unemployment among the highly educated workers.

But this is not the whole story – Gammarano (2020d) also finds that even though educated individuals may face harsher conditions of unemployment, upon finding employment, workers with advanced

[12] The ability to access, manage, understand, integrate, communicate, evaluate and create information safely and appropriately through digital technologies for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship. It includes competences that are variously referred to as computer literacy, ICT literacy, information literacy and media literacy (UNESCO, 2018).
[13] The ability to read, write and understand simple mathematical concepts.
[14] The minimum wage that a worker searching for a job is willing to accept, and below which, a worker will not accept an offer. The reservation wage is determined by current wages, benefits offered and by beliefs about other wage offers available in the future.

education face lower rates of informality and are less likely to be in time-related underemployment[15] and are more likely to better paid. So, in terms of employment quality and working conditions, highly educated workers have a bigger premium.

The WAEMU economy, similar to other developing countries, has a large informal sector and a significant portion of salaried employment is found in the public sector. Educated unemployment tends to be concentrated in urban areas where most salaried wage employment is concentrated. It therefore has a smaller direct impact for rural employment, and yet it is bound to have important implications for the educational and occupational choices of rural youth, as well as their decisions pertaining to rural-to-urban migration, especially for education.

Box 2: The evidence on adult literacy skills and learning programmes

Compared to educational investments for children, the evidence base on adult education is relatively scarce. Adult literacy programs are particularly relevant for rural youth in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, where educational attainment remains low in rural areas and there are a large number of adults and youth unable to read or write. Barriers to education for adults include high opportunity costs, uncertainty about returns to education and physiologically, reduced brain plasticity in adults.

What are the expected outcomes of adult literacy programs? In addition to learning benefits, adult education could lead to better employment opportunities and improved technological adoption. It could also improve mental health, and have positive spillover effects across generations and for the community. Evidence from an RCT learning program in Niger showed that two years after the program, adults with better learning outcomes saw no impacts on incomes, but they saved more, had more durable assets and improved food security. Reviewing the existing literature on the impact of adult literacy programs, Aker and co-authors (2024) make the following recommendations for program design:

- Learning material and curriculum should be designed to meet the neurocognitive needs of adults—emphasize the fundamentals to consolidate literacy skills and focus on practice and repetition.
- Focus on skills that are directly useful to adult's everyday lives (reading signs, text messages, etc.) so the utility of learning becomes clear to the learners.
- Address key opportunity costs to improve participation. This could involve monetary compensation, childcare services or flexible timings to better accommodate programme participants.

Source: Aker, J. C., Sawyer, M., & Berry, J. (2024). Making sense of the shapes: What do we know about literacy learning in adulthood? Economics of Education Review

[15] When workers work fewer hours than they are willing and able to work. This is further discussed in the next section on youth and labour market outcomes.

4.2. Youth and the labour market

This section examines how youth in the WAEMU interact with the labour market using key indicators such as the labour force participation rate (LFPR) of youth,[16] along with rates of unemployment, underemployment and the share of youth not in employment, education or training (NEET). Globally, the youth (ages 15-24) unemployment rate fell to 13% in 2023, reflecting a recovery in the labour market after the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the share of NEET youth (ages 15-24)—20.4% in 2023 globally—continues to be a cause for concern, particularly in low-income countries where the transition to employment remains challenging for youth (ILO, 2024).

The labour force is the share of the working age population actively engaged in the labour market (i.e., the share of the population that is in employment or unemployed but looking for employment).[17] The WAEMU has an estimated total labour force of 49.2 million people (ILO, 2022). The ILO estimates a youth labour force participation rate (LFPR) for the 15-24 age group. **An average of 44.4% of youth, 50.5% of men and 38% of women, aged 15-24 actively participate in the labour market in the WAEMU.** This is at par with the 44.2% average youth LFPR for Sub-Saharan Africa (46.2% for men, 42.2% for women), and higher than the 32.9% average for West Africa (36% for men, 29.8% for women). Labour force participation rates for youth aged 15-24 typically tend to be lower than the rest of the working age population, since this demographic is more likely to be in education or training.

Labour force participation also varies by gender, with women generally having a lower rate of participation in paid employment than men. It is worth noting however that while patterns of female labour force participation tend to vary significantly across different regions in the world, **sub-Saharan Africa has the highest female LFPR after Europe and North America, with a relatively small gender gap in participation** (ILO, UN Women, 2020). Figure 4.4 depicts the LFPR for youth (ages 15-24) by gender and country for the WAEMU. Within the WAEMU, Niger has the highest rates of labour force participation for both men and women. This is true of the labour force participation of youth (here ages 15-24), as well as the overall working age population (15-64 years).[18] Senegal on the other hand records the lowest youth female LFPR; this is also true for the overall female LFPR in Senegal.

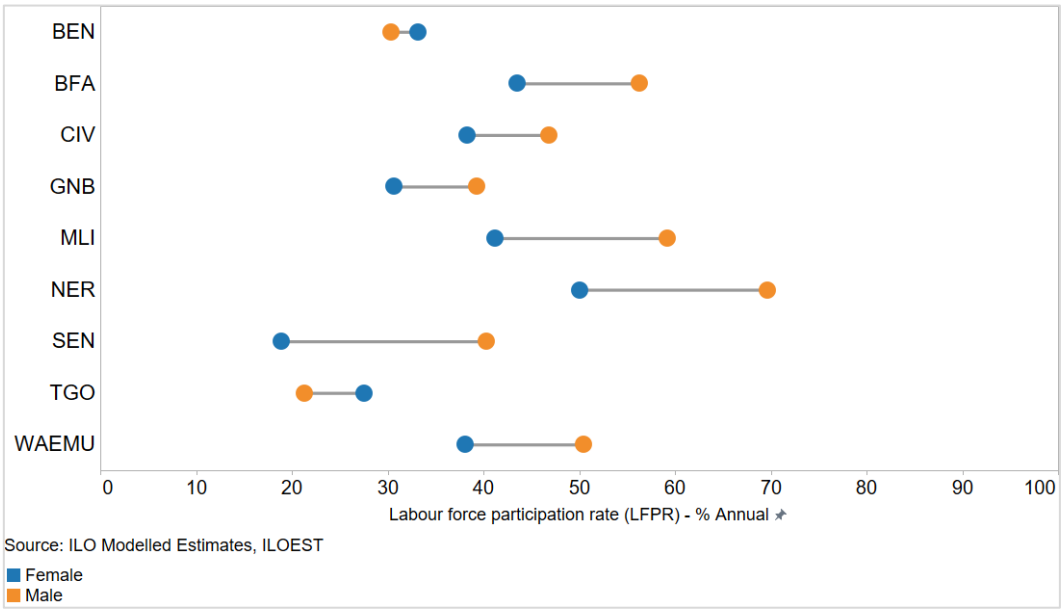
Reviewing trends in rural employment in Africa, Christiaensen & Maertens (2022) conclude that **the narrative of a big youth unemployment problem in Africa is a misconception**—the youth employment rate on the continent (61%) is higher than in Asia (39%) and Latin America (48%). In most countries, the unemployment rate is low, while underemployment is more of a problem for rural youth. The unemployment rate, calculated as a percentage of the labour force, is projected to be 2.5% in 2024 in the WAEMU, significantly lower than the projected 5.8% average for Sub-Saharan Africa. **The youth unemployment rate (for youth aged 15-24) is projected to be 4% in 2024 in the WAEMU, again substantially lower compared to the projected 8.9% for Sub-Saharan Africa and 5% for Western Africa** (ILO Modelled Estimates, 2024).

[16] This section more than others in the report focuses more narrowly on youth ages 15-24 since many labour indicators are computed for this age group instead of for ages 15-34.

[17] The labour force participation rate provides an indication of the size and composition of the supply of labour available to engage in production in the economy, relative to the working-age population. It is useful to observe how different segments of the population engage with the labour market and to identify barriers to entry (based on sex, education, rural-urban areas, etc.). The unemployment rate in contrast measures the inability of the economy to generate employment for those actively seeking work, reflecting the efficiency of the labour market in absorbing the labour force. However, the unemployment rate does not capture the exclusion of people from the labour market—e.g. people who wish to work but are not looking for work because they believe no jobs are available (discouraged workers). The LFPR can account for such dynamics, offering a broader perspective on the labour market and economic inclusion of the population.

[18] For country-wise overall LFPRs of the working age population (ages 15-64), refer to the Appendix; graph A.4.

Figure 4.4: Labour force participation rate of youth (15-24 years)



Results from the *l'Enquête Régionale Intégrée sur l'Emploi et le Secteur Informel (ERI-ESI)* 2017-18 survey conducted in the WAEMU show an unemployment rate of 6.1% for youth aged 15-34 years, while the rate for the 35+ age group is 2.2%. Niger and Guinea-Bissau were found to have the highest rates of youth unemployment at 12.2% and 10.5% respectively. Unemployment rates are higher for those with higher education levels and in urban areas, in particular in the capital cities in the WAEMU (AFRISTAT & UEMOA, 2019). **Unemployment is higher in urban areas but underemployment is higher in rural areas. Both employment and underemployment are higher for youth (aged 15-34), and for women compared to men.**

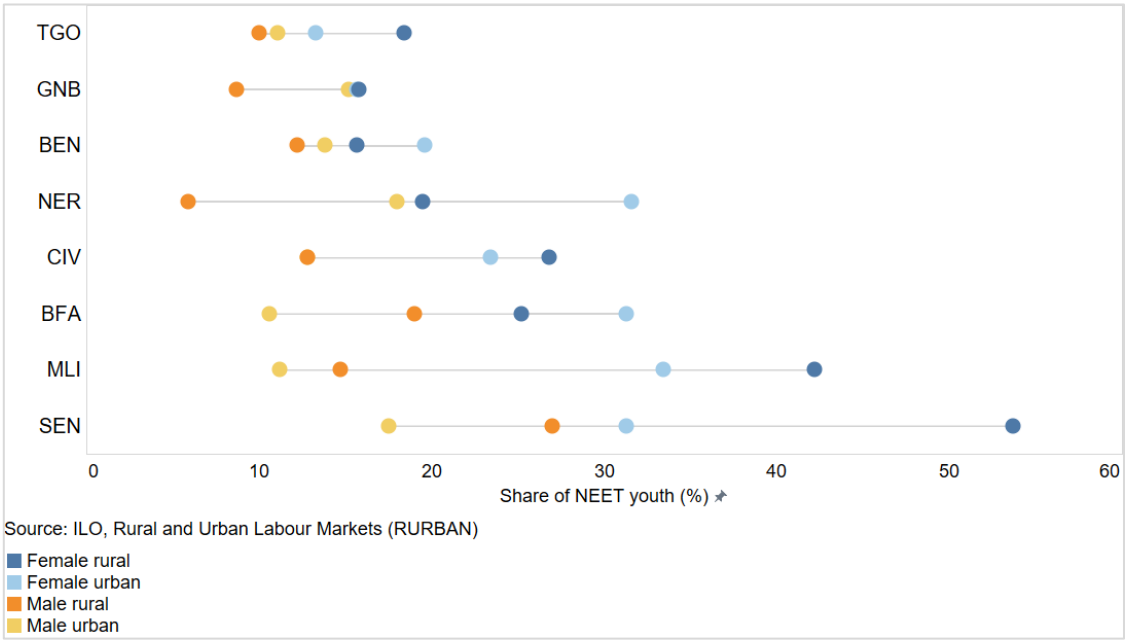
Unemployment rates hide a larger issue of underemployment and a scarcity of decent work. The labour market in the WAEMU, as is the case for many low- and middle-income countries, is characterised by a large informal sector. **This often implies uncertain, irregular work, both in self-employment and wage labour, so that many individuals are constantly in search of alternative or supplementary sources of work.** Agricultural labour demands for instance are seasonal, with peaks in the sowing and harvest periods and fewer opportunities in the dry season. Employment in the informal sector also places workers outside the scope of a country's labour legislation and increases precarity of jobs (Gammarano, 2020d). Results from the ERI-ESI 2017-18 survey indicate that 71.2% of non-agricultural employment is in the informal sector, with women facing higher rates of informality in all countries except Senegal (AFRISTAT & UEMOA, 2019).

An alternative to measure labour underutilisation is to include time-related underemployment, which is the share of people who are willing and able to work additional hours. The combined rate of time-related underemployment and unemployment for the overall population (15 years and above) is estimated at 15.6%, and is higher for women (17.3%) than for men (14.4%). Within the zone, this rate is highest for Niger (29.8%), Burkina Faso (19.2%), and Mali (18.4%). For youth in WAEMU, the combined unemployment-underemployment rate is higher than the overall population, at 18.1% for youth ages 15-34, 19.3% for the 15-24 age group and 17.5% for the 25-34 age group (AFRISTAT & UEMOA, 2019).

Overall, a high combined rate of underemployment and unemployment point to a trend of labour underutilization and a scarcity in productive employment opportunities supplied by the labour market.

In addition to these indicators, it is also useful to look at the share of youth not in employment, education or training (NEET). **NEET includes not just unemployed youth but also those who are outside of the labour force, pointing to broader challenges faced by youth to transition from school to work** (Karkee & O'Higgins, 2023). The ILO estimates NEET rates for youth ages 15-24. **For the WAEMU, share of youth NEET was at 26.8% in 2019—that is, one in every three women and one in five men in the WAEMU between the ages of 15 and 24.** Figure 4.5 shows the share of youth (ages 15-24) who are NEET in the WAEMU disaggregated by country, gender and rural-urban location. The large share of inactive young women, both in rural and urban areas is clear to see. Analysis by the ILO highlights the same issue —that the largest share are often rural women. This corresponds to what we know about the unpaid care work carried out disproportionately by women, especially in rural areas where a lack of access to piped water and electricity means a significant additional time spent by women fetching water and gathering firewood (ILO, 2019).

Figure 4.5: Youth not in employment, education or training (NEET)—% Annual



4.3. Access to phones and internet

Mobile phones are the primary method of internet access for most people in Africa, and evidence from Africa points to the importance of mobile broadband for individual and household welfare. **Internet access can reduce transaction costs for job seekers, create more jobs and increase productivity** (World Bank, GSMA, 2020). A young population with mobile and digital access is therefore more resourceful, and is better placed to productively contribute to the economy.[19] A growing body of research confirms

[19] The digitalization-employment nexus will be addressed in a next report.

this—starting in the late 2000s, the arrival of fast internet in Sub-Saharan Africa increased the probability of employment by at least 3.1%, and employment inequality falls, with large positive impacts for unskilled and low-education workers. The probability of holding a skilled job also increased by 1.4 to 4.4% (Hjort & Poulsen, 2019, Choi et al., 2020). In Nigeria, households with mobile broadband coverage saw an increase in labour force participation and in wage/salaried employment (Bahia et al. 2024), while in Tanzania, 3G coverage is found to increase labour force participation and facilitate a transition out of on-farm employment, although effects vary by age, gender and skills (Bahia et al., 2021).

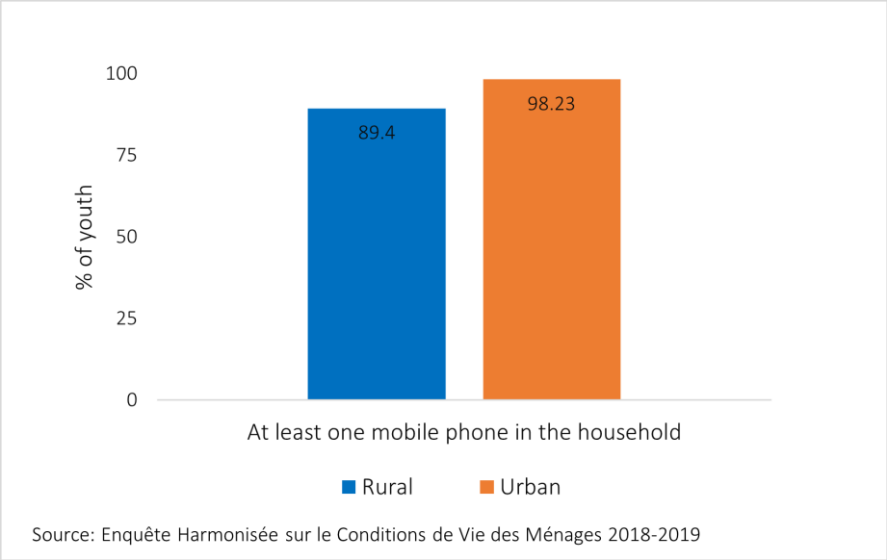
Mobile internet coverage is also found to increase household consumption and reduce poverty by fostering labour market access and entrepreneurship in Nigeria, Senegal and Tanzania. These effects are heterogenous across groups, and the literature finds mixed results on who benefits the most. Masaki et al (2020) and Bahia et al. (2021) find larger effects for urban households in Senegal and Tanzania respectively, while in Nigeria, effects were larger for poor rural households (Bahia et al., 2024). In the WAEMU, Cariolle & Carroll (2024a) show that mobile connectivity increases the share of household members earning off-farm and on-farm incomes by 9% and 6% respectively, supporting the idea that mobile connectivity increases the relative share of household members engaged in off-farm revenue generating activities. Data also support the hypothesis that connectivity contributed to an increase in non-agricultural entrepreneurship. Both effects are found to be stronger for rural households.

Mobile phones have become ubiquitous in Africa in the past decade, yet the region continues to lag behind in terms of internet penetration. The urban-rural digital gap is also wider in Africa, with an estimated 57% of urban dwellers using the internet in comparison to only 23% of their rural counterparts (ITU, 2023). As we see below, the WAEMU follows regional trends.[20]

Figure 4.6 shows the proportion of youth living in households with mobile phones (EHCVM 2018-19); 89.4% of rural youth have at least one phone in the household. In contrast, internet use is much lower. Figure 4.7 shows the internet access of youth, disaggregated by area, age group and gender.[21] Overall, only 21.8% of youth have internet access. This internet access is highly concentrated in urban areas; only 8.9% of rural youth (ages 15-34) in the WAEMU have access to the internet. On average, older youth (ages 25-34) are found to be better connected. Senegal is further ahead of other member states in terms of rural internet access for rural youth, with the rate of access at 22.4%; Côte d'Ivoire, which is second, has an access rate of 9%.

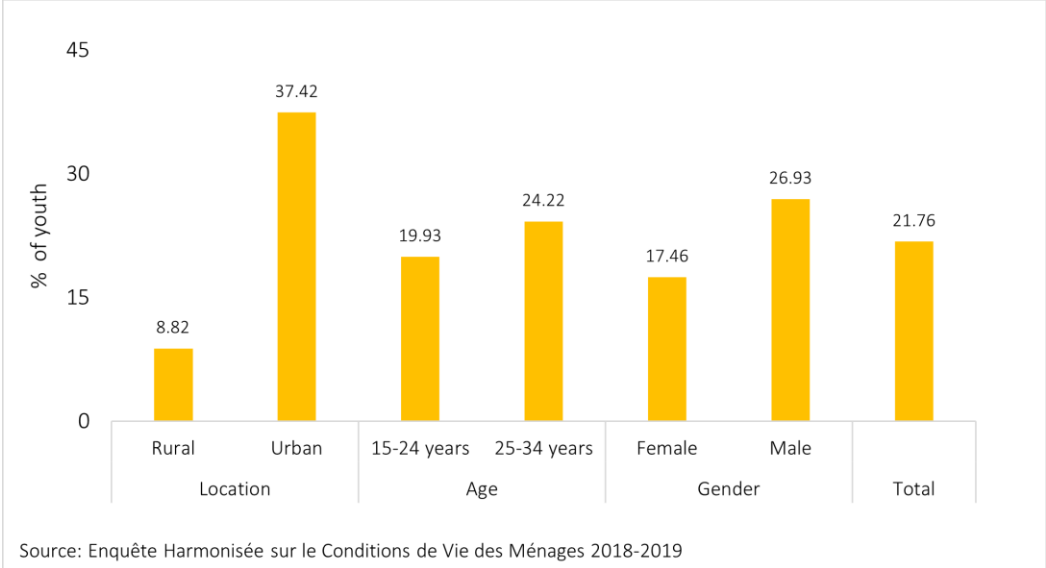
[20] The issue of the digital divide in the WAEMU has been extensively addressed in a former report (Cariolle & Carroll, 2024b).
[21] For a breakdown of internet access by country and rural-urban location, refer to tables A.3 and A.4 in the Appendix.

Figure 4.6: Youth access to mobile phones



Source: Enquête Harmonisée sur le Conditions de Vie des Ménages 2018-2019

Figure 4.7: Youth access to internet



Source: Enquête Harmonisée sur le Conditions de Vie des Ménages 2018-2019

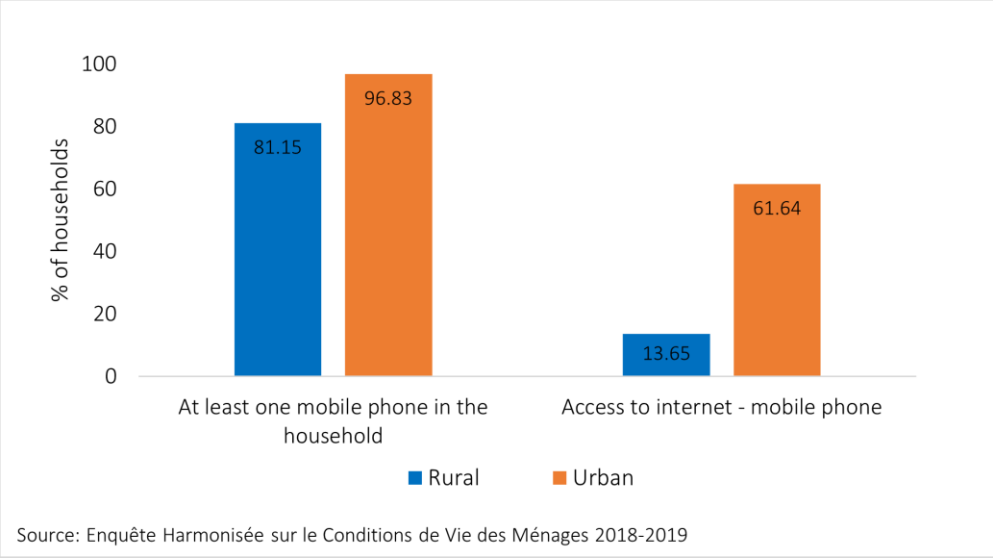
Highly correlated with internet penetration is digital gender parity. **Women form an increasing share of the global offline population**—in Africa, three in ten women use the internet compared to four in ten men (ITU, 2023). This gap is also clearly visible for WAEMU in the EHCVM 2018-19 and augmented by urban-rural differences, so **that 94.2% of young rural women in the zone have no internet access.**

Are *young households*[22] better connected through mobiles and internet access? Young households comprise around 27% of households surveyed in the EHCVM 2018-19, and a majority of young

[22] Household head is a youth between the ages of 15-34.

households—61%—are based in rural areas. Figure 4.8 illustrates the connectivity of young rural and urban households. Around 81% of young rural households have at least one mobile phone and around 14% have internet access through mobiles. The urban-rural gap is particularly stark for internet access, with nearly 62% of young urban households that access the internet by phone. **Overall, mobile phone and internet access of young households closely resembles that of non-young households**[23].

Figure 4.8: Access to mobile phones and internet—young households



Source: Enquête Harmonisée sur le Conditions de Vie des Ménages 2018-2019

4.4. Migration and youth mobility

Understanding the factors that drive youth migration—whether permanent or temporary—can help in designing policies for employment, infrastructure and social protection to respond to the needs of mobile youth. Migration patterns have important effects for the earning potential of individuals, the welfare of their households, as well as broader effects on labour markets, and the development of sending and receiving areas. In West Africa, most of the migration is intra-regional. Burkina Faso and Mali are two main sending countries and Côte d'Ivoire is a major destination country for migrants. Among migrants interviewed in the region, job search, family and study were the main stated reasons for migrating (Fargues et al., 2020).

Research on the subject points to positive selection into migration, contradictory to the perception of forced or need based migration for employment. In an analysis of 99 countries, Clemens & Mendola (2024) find that across regions, the share of people who wish, plan and prepare to migrate (highly correlated with actual migration) increases as income increases. Selection into migration is also positive for higher levels of education. Similarly, Girsberger (2020) develops a life-cycle model for developing countries and finds that migration to urban areas increases with education. The returns to rural migrants are particularly high, but are offset by the costs of migration and the investment in education required.

[23] Data on mobile and internet access for all households can be found in the Annex, figure A.5.

Results from the ERI-ESI (2017-18) survey allow us to observe some migration trends in the WAEMU. Firstly, youth form the bulk of migrants in the WAEMU. Based on the survey results, **79.1% of the migrant population in the WAEMU were youth between the ages of 15 and 34.** Overall, 20.6% of the population (ages 15+) in the zone had emigrated, comprising 16.5% internal migration and 4.2% international migration. In line with the literature on migration and education, **rates of internal migration increased with the level of education attainment**. Confirming the regional nature of migration in the zone, **43.7% of international migration was found to be to another WAEMU country**. Migration is also found to be highly gendered—only 12.3% of WAEMU emigrants were women.

Migration can also be temporary, and this poses a particular challenge for data collection as such migrants are likely to be missed in censuses and administrative records (Fargues et al., 2020). It nonetheless forms an important and complex part of the geography of employment of youth in the region. Reasons for temporary migration in the region include i) transhumance (see Box 1), ii) artisanal mining—provides unemployed rural youth an alternative to agriculture without migrating to urban centres and iii) seasonal migration of those in agricultural employment—migration in the off-season to urban areas or other rural areas might be necessary to complement incomes.[24]

What are the impacts of migration? Permanent migration can change the demographic and skill composition of origin and destination locations (de Brauw, 2019). For instance, considering migration of rural youth, if migrants are mostly men or high skilled individuals, in the medium to long term this might imply a rural labour force that is more female or low-skilled. The effects of migration are likely to vary in different contexts, depending on the size of the migrant population, as well as the characteristics of the sending and receiving locations. However, a lack of consistent data on migration makes it difficult to gauge migration trends, their effects and the appropriate policy response. On the other hand, both temporary and permanent migration tend to have welfare-enhancing effects for the youth who migrate and their families in sending locations. As such, **policies that facilitate migration, particularly for rural youth are likely to contribute to improving the welfare of rural populations** (de Brauw, 2019, IFAD, 2019).

[24] This list is not exhaustive and primarily refers to voluntary migration. It should be noted that some segments of the population are involuntarily displaced due to climate change or conflict, either internally or across borders. This is a separate topic that is not addressed here.

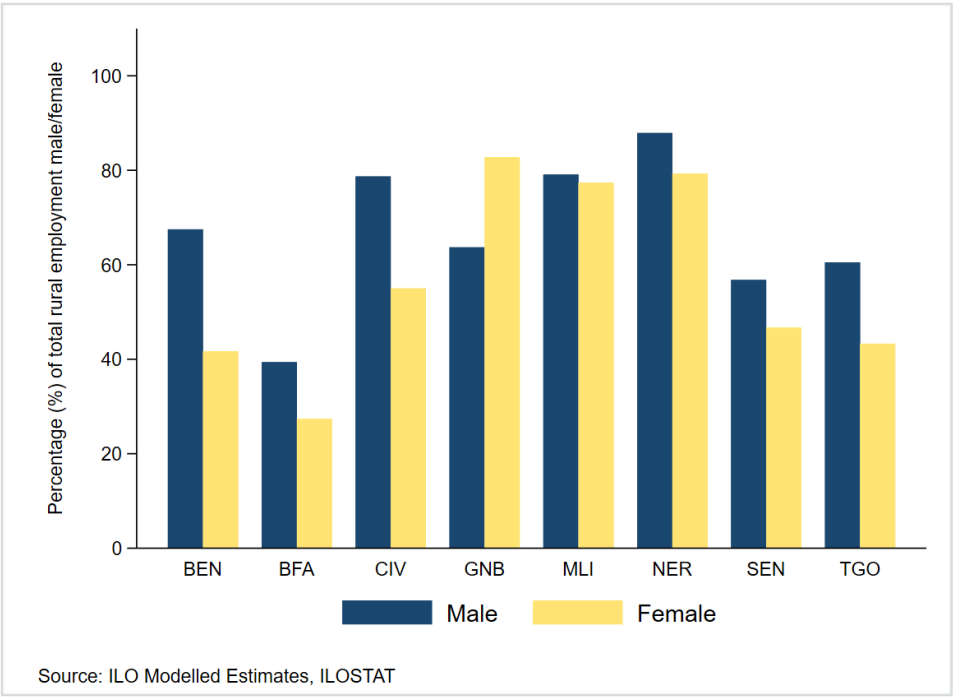
5. Youth and rural employment

This section examines the different forms of work and employment that engage rural youth in the WAEMU. The first section focuses on employment in agriculture and the main barriers to productive employment in the sector. The second section discusses employment in the non-farm economy; specifically, employment in the household enterprise and artisanal mining sectors, and finally, section three delves into the unpaid care work of rural youth and its linkages to employment.

5.1. Youth employment in agriculture

Christiaensen & Maertens (2022) point to two notable trends in agricultural employment in Western Africa, a region with a mix of low- and lower-middle-income countries. The first is a noticeable movement out of agricultural employment, and the second, is that female rural workers are leaving the sector more rapidly than men, but staying for the most part in self-employment. Consistent with regional trends, estimates by the ILO suggest that rural employment in agriculture in the WAEMU has fallen from 81.6% in 2005 to 63.3% in 2019. Figure 5.1 compares rural employment in agriculture by gender,[25] as a share of men's and women's total rural employment. The share of agriculture in rural employment is lower for women than for men in all countries except Guinea-Bissau, with the largest gender difference in Benin, Côte d'Ivoire and Togo.

Figure 5.1: Rural employment in agriculture by gender (2019)



[25] ILO modelled estimates – to be read with caution.

Even as the share of agriculture in total rural employment falls overtime, **agriculture does and will continue to employ a large portion of the rural workforce, including rural youth in the WAEMU**. Data on rural youth from the EHCVM (2018-19) surveys confirm this; for rural youth ages 15-34 who were active[26], 75% stated agriculture[27] as their primary sector of activity. Between countries, this varied from 54% in Benin to nearly 88% in Burkina Faso.[28] Younger people are more likely to work in agriculture—80% of active rural youth ages 15-24 were engaged in agriculture, compared to 71% in the 25-34 age group.[29] Overall, employment in agriculture is marginally lower for women—74% of active rural young women and 76% of active rural young men work in agriculture. However, this does not hold for every country—the share of active rural young women in agriculture is higher than the share of men in Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, Niger and Senegal.[30] Box 6 on women's employment (all women, not just youth) in the WAEMU at the end of section 5 presents a brief overview of results from the most recent EHCVM 2021-22 data. Here we see clearly that the services sector is the largest employer of women, while for men it is the agricultural sector.

Agriculture and agricultural technology

Local environmental and economic conditions, which can be very heterogenous, makes it so that the most appropriate choice of agricultural technology can vary significantly in different contexts. There is no single binding constraint to explain low agricultural productivity in the region, but rather several interlinked constraints that bind different farmers (Suri & Udry, 2022, Suri et al., 2024). For example, difficulties in accessing financial services and agricultural markets can explain low levels of investment in agriculture, preventing farmers from acquiring high-quality seeds or fertilizers for their farms. Similarly, a lack of training and/or information on yields can prevent farmers from using the right farming techniques and inputs to optimize their yields. Not to mention that the right inputs and techniques can vary considerably across time and location. Together, these constraints mean that farmers are unable to improve their productivity. Lifting these constraints, which are the same ones faced by youth in agriculture, require packages of interventions that address this multiplicity of constraints, and is likely the best way to improve technological adoption that will boost agricultural productivity. A more productive agricultural sector is also likely to free up labour to move to non-agricultural sectors, leading to a better allocation of labour between sectors to improve livelihoods and drive rural transformation.

Agriculture and labour productivity

Despite being the primary sector of employment, labour productivity in agriculture tends to be significantly lower than in other sectors. However, recent evidence from Africa suggests that **when expressed as per hour worked instead of per worker, that gap in labour productivity between agriculture and non-agricultural sectors falls significantly** (Christiaensen & Maertens, 2022). McCullough (2018) compares labour productivity between agricultural and non-agricultural sectors using LSMS-ISA data from four African countries.[31] The study finds labour in the non-agricultural sector to be 1.4 times more productive than in the agricultural sector when taken as output per hour worked, compared to 3.4 times more when taken as annual output per worker. Annually, a worker in agriculture worked 700 hours, in contrast to their non-agricultural counterparts, who worked 1850 hours—**so the gap in productivity**

[26] Employed or working as family workers in the past 12 months.
[27] Includes agriculture, livestock husbandry and fishing.
[28] See Table A.5 in the Appendix.
[29] For country-wise data for each age group, see tables A.6 and A.7 in the Appendix.
[30] For country-wise data for each gender, see tables A.8 and A.9 in the Appendix.
[31] Ethiopia, Malawi, Tanzania and Uganda.

between the sectors comes from a difference in levels of employment. This corresponds with the seasonal nature of rainfed agriculture in the region, making employment in agriculture a seasonal activity, and agricultural workers underemployed or seasonally unemployed.

Youth aspirations and impressions of agriculture

So, we know from the data that a majority of rural youth in the zone will continue to work in agriculture, whether or not it the profession of their choice. But what do young people think of employment in the sector, it is something they aspire to do? Literature on the subject has often highlighted the low desirability of agriculture for youth, that it is not considered a 'good job' or seen as low status, raising concerns of a large exodus from the sector and emphasizing the need to change perceptions of agriculture. Firstly, the evidence does not support the narrative on the exit of youth from agriculture—a majority of rural youth continue to be employed in agriculture. Christiaensen & Maertens (2022) find that a trend of agricultural abandonment fuelling rural youth unemployment is found in Northern and Southern Africa, but not in the West Africa region. Secondly, Mueller (2021) cautions against an overemphasis on the 'urban myth' of the inherent unattractiveness of agriculture as a profession for rural youth and the need for pro-agriculture messaging to retain participation. Given the subsistence nature of most agriculture in the region and the inability of agriculture to enable upward mobility and a move out of poverty, the aversion to agriculture is rational based on an accurate assessment of the lack of economic opportunity that is offers.

Barriers to agricultural employment

The following sections delve into the key constraints holding back young people, as identified in the literature on youth in agriculture—access to land, access to markets, access to credit and financial services, and access to education and skills (Adesugba & Mavrotas, 2016, FAO, CTA &IFAD, 2014, Filmer & Fox, 2014). These constraints overlap largely with the broader literature on the constraints to the adoption of agricultural technology and to agricultural productivity, but are likely amplified and more limiting for youth. Addressing these constraints on land, skills, capital and technology will be essential in order to facilitate agricultural production that is viable and profitable, and therefore attractive to youth.

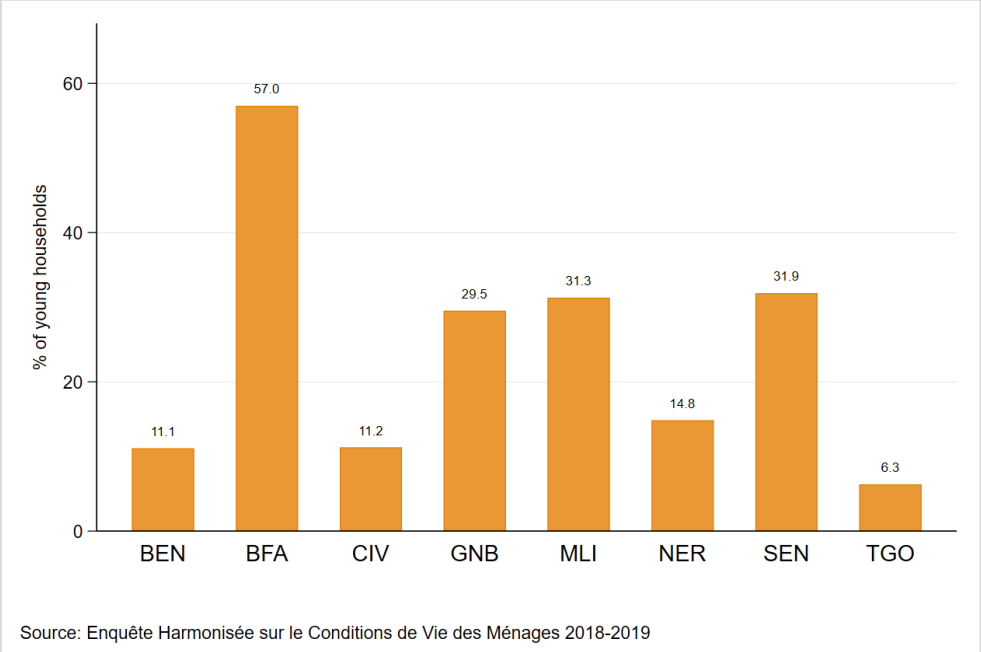
5.1.1. Access to land

Access to land is one of the primary barriers for entry into agriculture, especially for youth. Traditional land tenure practices and poorly defined property rights make land acquisition – for purchase or lease, an expensive and uncertain process. Land is then most commonly acquired through inheritance[32]. As a result, it is common for most youth to start out as family workers on the family farm and eventually cultivate a part of the family land—with varying arrangements for collective or individual management of agricultural plots. However, in the absence of pensions and other forms of social protection in old age, it is common for older family members to retain legal ownership of farms even if they are allotted to young farmers to manage, likely with older family members also having a say in the farming decision making (Filmer & Fox, 2014, Narayanan, 2024).

[32] It is worth noting here that while traditional land practices inhibit commercialization of land, they also guarantee some land for most people in rural Africa, acting as an important form of social protection (Suri & Udry, 2022).

Land access relates directly to investments made in productive agricultural technologies—**uncertainty about land access can lead to lower levels of investments, since many benefits are accrued in the long term**, and farmers are not confident that they will benefit from the returns on their investment. Improvements in property rights are thus generally found to increase investments (Suri, Udry, 2022). The EHCVM 2018-19 collect data on all plots of land cultivated by households, with information on ownership, management, input and labour use for each plot. At a household level, we look at land management—individual or collective, to intuit land access for young households, assuming that collectively managed land is a negative indicator for individual access to land. Figure 5.2 depicts the share of young rural households in the WAEMU that have no individually managed plots. This share ranges from 6% in Togo to as high as 57% in Burkina Faso. Across countries, the share of rural households without any individually managed land is slightly higher for young households compared non-young households, but overall, both follow the same pattern.[33]

Figure 5.2: Young rural households without individually managed plots



Source: Enquête Harmonisée sur le Conditions de Vie des Ménages 2018-2019

Figure 5.3 looks at the total area of land cultivated by young rural households, and the average share of this total area that is managed individually versus collectively.[34] Data point once again to constrained land access in particular in Burkina Faso, where nearly two-thirds of land cultivated by young rural households in collectively managed. Land access appears similarly constrained in Senegal, Mali and Guinea-Bissau where over a third of the land cultivated by the average young rural household is collectively managed. On average for the WAEMU, 93% of plots cultivated by young people[35] aged 15-34 are either owned or are free loans (presumably from the family), with a minority share of lease or sharecropping arrangements. 73% of plots cultivated by youth were acquired through inheritance and

[33] See figure A.6 in the Appendix for all households (young + non-young) with collective only plots.
[34] See figure A.7 in the Appendix for all households (young + non-young).
[35] Data identifying the individual cultivating the plot is available for 72% of all rural plots. Of these, 26.4% of plots are cultivated by rural youth.

only 5% were purchased. For plots owned and cultivated by youth, there were also no legal documents available to prove rightful ownership for 93% of the plots.[36]

Figure 5.3: Management method of plots of young households

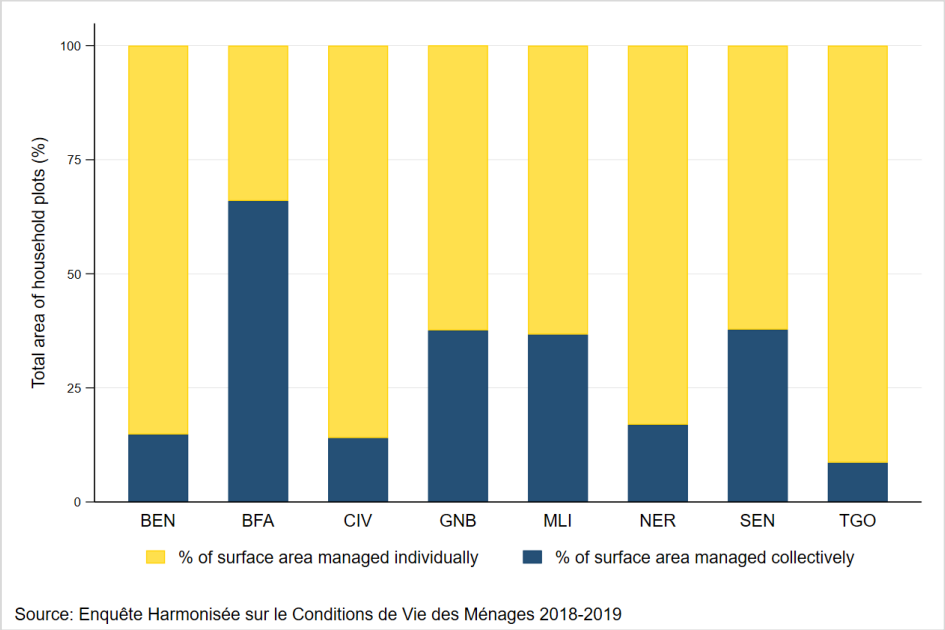


Figure 5.4 depicts the share of irrigated land for an average young rural household; this includes irrigation from own well, canal or creeks.[37] Young households in Senegal, Mali and Côte d'Ivoire have the highest rates of irrigation. The share of irrigated land is comparable for young and non-young households in all countries except Senegal, where the share of irrigated land for an average young household is 13.2% compared to the 7.9% for an average rural household.[38]

The literature reviewed documents two broad types of effects of reforms that enable securing land rights—i) effects on investments in agricultural technology and agricultural productivity, and ii) effects on labour use. Box 3 reviews some of the literature on land reform interventions and their impact. A broad consensus emerges across countries on the latter—**securing land rights leads to a reallocation of labour off the farm, reducing labour absorption of agriculture without affecting agricultural productivity.**

[36] See Tables A.10-A.12 in the Appendix for a breakdown by country.
[37] Benin is excluded here due to data discrepancies.
[38] Figure A.8 in the Appendix for the equivalent for all rural households.

Box 3: The evidence on land reforms

Sadoulet & de Janvry (2022) discuss their experiences of land reforms from Chile and Mexico, which showed how land transfers to individuals have direct and significant effects on the labour market, even if the effect can be non-linear.

- In Chile, land assigned to smallholders increased wage employment on commercial farms. Smallholder farmers previously stuck in the hacienda system of rent in labour services, sold the land assigned to them by the state, leading to the growth of bigger commercial farms. This freed rural labour from family farms and increased wage employment on commercial farms.
- In Mexico, securing property rights of agricultural workers and tenants through land certificates liberated family workers – who were staying put to securitize land access— allowing them to engage in other income generating activities and to migrate.

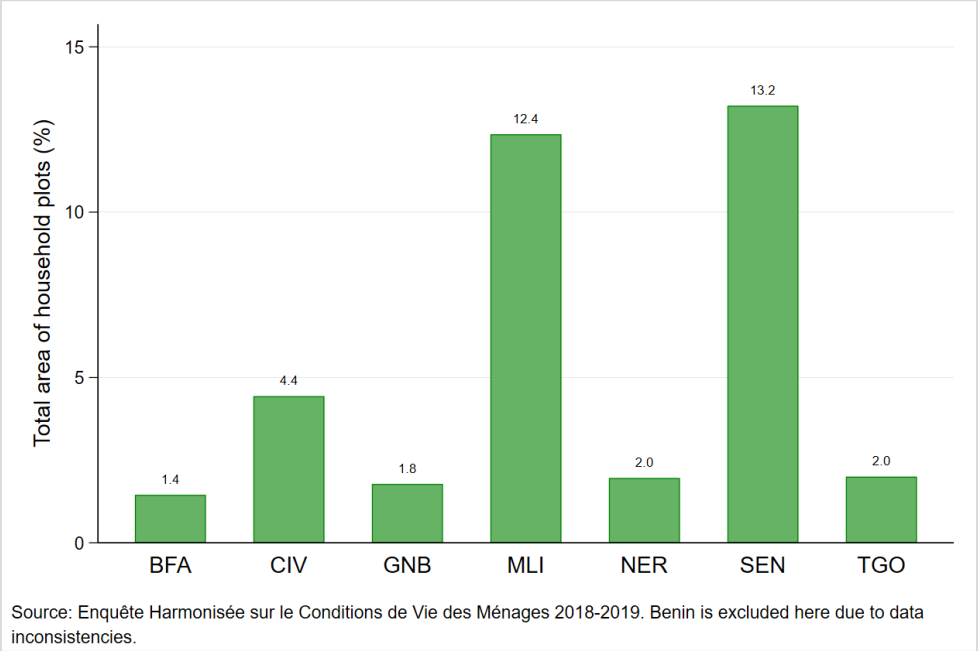
Evidence from the World Bank's Africa Gender Innovation Lab (2020) points to the same result— securing land rights drives important shifts in labour into off-farm and non-farm employment, while impact on agricultural investments vary in different contexts. Impact evaluations on land formalization programs provide insights into the effects of access to land, in particular for women.

- In Benin, the *Plans Fonciers Ruraux* (PFR) program involved a community demarcation of land for individuals, and certificates for documenting the agreed boundaries. The program was found to increase long-terms investments in cash crops, increase in tree planting and increased likelihood of land fallowing.[39] Long term effects of the PFR program include an increased likelihood that of widowed women households retaining their land and a shift in inheritance planning to include daughters and wives.
- Evaluations of the country-wide Land Tenure Regularization program in Rwanda and the Land Titling program pilot in Ghana found that the programs have the effect of reducing agricultural labour, without affecting agricultural productivity, and increased off-farm employment.
- In Uganda, educational videos and/or conditional land title subsidies were found to be effective nudges to increase co-titling of women, i.e., including wives as co-owners in the land registration process.

Source: de Janvry & Sadoulet (2022). Agriculture for Development: Analytics and Action. Annual Review of Resource Economics, World Bank. (2020). Top Policy Lessons in Women's Property Rights [Policy brief]. Gender Innovation Lab, World Bank.

[39] The land fallowing result was found for female headed households. It is a practice that improves soil fertility.

Figure 5.4: Share of irrigated plots of young rural households



Source: Enquête Harmonisée sur le Conditions de Vie des Ménages 2018-2019. Benin is excluded here due to data inconsistencies.

5.1.2. Access to financial services

Access to the right financial services can incite young farmers to use better inputs and invest in other agricultural technologies for higher returns. **Three main types of financial services are relevant for youth in agriculture—access to credit** to cover input costs pre-harvest, **banking services** for payments and transactions and **agricultural insurance services** to manage the risks of operating in a highly uncertain and climate-vulnerable setting. The remoteness of many rural areas and the high-risk nature of agriculture means makes it too expensive for commercial banks to cater to rural populations.

Consequently, various actors—governments, NGOs, international organisations—have stepped in to provide financial services, notably through microfinance. The impacts of microfinance, microcredit in particular have been evaluated in various low- and middle-income country settings in the past two decades. The evidence suggests that microfinance is a very heterogeneous field. And while traditional models of microcredit have not led to transformational changes in outcomes for borrowers, microcredit is still valued for its provision of liquidity and the opportunity to accumulate a lumpsum. The question of designing more tailored or flexible microcredit solutions is still relatively new, and finding the optimal, scalable solutions for different contexts will likely remain an important challenge in the future (Cai et al., 2023).

The growth of digital technologies has allowed for provision for financial services in rural areas where traditional banks have failed, in the form of mobile banking services and mobile money.[40] This is especially true in Sub-Saharan Africa, home to more than half of the mobile money services in the World (Choi et al., 2020). The literature on mobile money indicates that it has been very successful in some countries, where it is found to have important income smoothing effects, reducing vulnerability to

[40] Mobile money platforms are distinct from both microfinance and mobile banking services, as the former is provided by telecommunications companies and usually outside of the formal banking system. Mobile money is therefore linked to a phone number, not a bank account, providing so-called "first-generation" digital financial services (Aker & Carroll, 2022; Cai et al., 2023, Suri et al., 2023).

shocks. However, even as mobile money services expand in several countries, its use is still relatively limited to long distance person-to-person (P2P) transactions (Suri et al., 2023). The wider use of mobile-based, second-generation digital financial services—such as payments for utilities, receipt of wages, savings, insurance, and loan repayments—offers significant, yet untapped potential for enhancing the financial inclusion of rural populations (Aker & Carroll, 2022; Aker & Cariolle, 2023).

While a lack of financial inclusion concerns all farmers, young farmers can be more vulnerable; it is more likely that they have neither the initial capital for farming costs nor the necessary collateral assets to access credit. **Young farmers access formal sources of finance at disproportionately lower rates than their older counterparts** as financial institutions often perceive youth as a riskier demographic to lend to given their lack of assets and experience (Fox & Filmer, 2014, FAO, CTA & IFAD, 2014, Adesugba & Mavrotas, 2016). Consultations with young farmers indicate that youth often rely on friends and family to finance input costs, alternatively seeking out money lenders and other informal sources of finance that can charge very high interest rates (MIJARC, FAO & IFAD, 2012).

The EHCVM 2018-19 data provide a snapshot of young people's access to financial institutions and services in the WAEMU. Based on individual-level data, 1% of rural youth reported having a bank account, compared to 7% of their urban counterparts. Mobile banking services are more widespread than traditional banking, but remain quite limited—**10% of rural youth have a mobile banking account, compared to 24% of urban youth.**[41] There are significant differences in rates of access between countries; rural youth in Côte d'Ivoire (28%) and Benin (16%) are most likely to have a mobile banking account, while those in Guinea-Bissau (1%) and Niger (0.05%) are least likely to have one. Stark differences are similarly observed between age groups and genders.

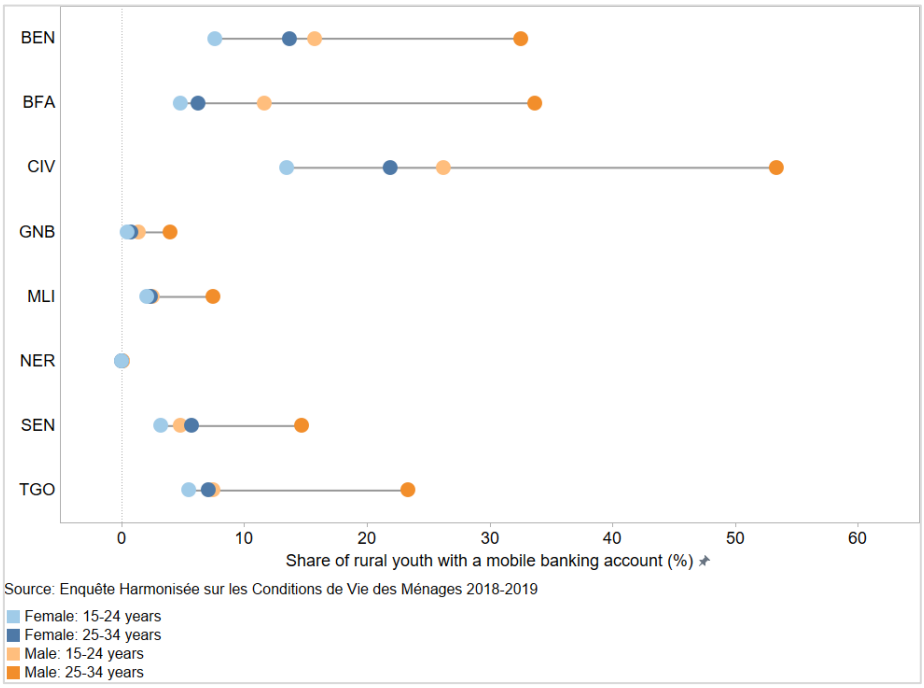
Figure 5.5 shows the share of rural youth with a mobile banking account, disaggregated by gender and age groups of 15-24 and 25-34. Older youth and men are more likely to have a mobile banking account, with gender being a more constraining factor than age—in all countries except Senegal, a higher share young men aged 15-24 have an account than young women in both the 15-24 and 25-34 age groups. Overall Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Benin have the highest shares of rural youth with a mobile banking account, while in Niger, it is almost non-existent. Less than 5% of rural youth in the WAEMU reported having an existing loan and of them, nearly half were obtained from another household. A *'tontine'* association was the second most common source of credit. For rural youth who needed a loan four main reasons they did not ask for one were, in order, i) not being sure they could repay the loan, ii) not fulfilling the conditions for a loan, iii) not knowing how to ask for a loan, and iv) an absence of credit institutions.

5.1.1. Access to agricultural markets

Access to agricultural markets refers to the ability to access agricultural inputs and services and supply/sell agricultural produce to buyers. Markets can also prompt farmers to adapt their production practices to meet the quantity/quality requirements of consumers (FAO, CTA & IFAD, 2014, van Schalkwyk et al., 2012). Better access to markets can therefore improve farmers' incomes and working conditions, and reduce poverty.

[41] See Tables A.12 and A.13 in the Appendix.

Figure 5.5: Rural youth and mobile banking



The increasing population, urbanisation and increasing incomes in the WAEMU region is set to increase demand for food products that meet various quality standards. A large share of this demand is currently met through imports from international food markets, but the integration of rural and urban markets can provide an incentive to farmers to increase technological adoption, to comply with quality standards and to increase productivity in agriculture, thereby expanding opportunities for them (Suri et al., 2024).

Access to markets depends first and foremost on **physical access to markets**—proximity to local markets or urban centres, means and costs of transport and time required to get to markets (Aker, 2010; Aker & Cariolle, 2023); all of which affect overall transaction costs. In the EHVCM (2018-19) data for the WAEMU—individuals are asked about their intent to sell their produce and the difficulties faced in the sale of crops. **Distance from roads and road quality were the second and third most-cited difficulties, after low prices, highlighting the need for developing physical infrastructure to facilitate access to markets**.

On the other hand, given the rapid expansion of the mobile and internet infrastructure network in the region, **access to market information (prices of commodities and inputs, agricultural wages, etc.) is no longer conditional on physical access to the market. Market information is increasingly available via mobile phone and the internet.** In the WAEMU, as many as 89% of rural youth (15-34 years) had at least one phone in the household, while 9% reported having internet access. An increasing trend of digitization in the region offers the opportunity to transform the agri-food system by reducing information asymmetry, reducing transactions costs, thereby facilitating better access to markets (Aker, 2011, Christiaensen & Maertens, 2022). For instance, for farmers in Niger, mobile phones reduced market information search costs by 50%, while for traders, each year of mobile network coverage increases their average number of target markets by 5% (Aker, 2010; Tack & Aker, 2014; Aker & Cariolle,

2023). This was because price information could be found through a phone call, or through centralised agricultural information dissemination platforms, instead of physically visiting the nearest market.

For young farmers, **improved physical access to markets and information on market conditions can lead to an increase in their revenues and margins**. The extent to which young farmers participate in agricultural markets and realise these improved outcomes will also depend on their knowledge on the functioning of markets, business and entrepreneurial skills, and their ability to meet the quality requirements of the market. Additionally, **developing the physical and digital infrastructure to improve markets also has the potential to create new off-farm jobs in the agricultural value chain**—intermediaries, marker information agents, etc. For these jobs, youth without access to land and capital but with certain skills and knowledge may have a decisive advantage (FAO, CTA & IFAD, 2014; Masaki et al., 2020; Bahia et al., 2021, 2024).

5.1.2. Access to agricultural extension and skills

To the extent that young farmers can access agricultural technology and information, their **ability to effectively use these in agricultural decision-making and improve agricultural livelihoods depends on their literacy and numeracy skills.**[42] Better educated farmers are more likely to adopt better inputs and technology, to better use these inputs and adapt in response to markets changes or climate shocks (Filmer & Fox, 2014, Schultz, 1988).

As discussed in section 4, educational attainment in youth has been improving, but rural youth continue to access education at lower rates than their urban counterparts, and a sizeable share of rural youth still have no schooling at all. Based on the EHCVM data, 64% of active rural youth engaged in agriculture[43] in the zone had no education, and another 23% had a primary level of education. **62% of active rural youth in agriculture were not literate (EHCVM, 2018-19). As mobile and internet access become important for the provision of information and services for agriculture, basic digital literacy skills will be equally important for young farmers.**

As the WAEMU develops and modernizes its agricultural sector, the demand for advanced agricultural knowledge and technical skills will increase. **Relevant vocational training and agricultural extension services can provide crucial capacity development for young farmers, and additionally train youth for off-farm jobs in the agricultural value chain** (machinery operation, processing, extension agents, etc.). Young rural women in particular tend to be excluded from training and extension programmes due to constraints on their time and mobility, as well as lower basic educational attainment (FAO, CTA & IFAD, 2014). Bandiera et al. (2022) point out that evaluations of vocational training programmes find modest effects on employment and incomes[44]. One explanation for this low efficiency is positive: labour markets, particularly in urban areas, already function relatively well in terms of matching employers and employees (McKenzie, 2017). Similarly, subsidies for apprenticeship programs are found to have limited effects on employment, pointing to firms' reluctance to take on trainees when the benefits of such training can be reaped by other companies. **The ability of individuals to benefit from such training will nonetheless be subject to their basic literacy and numeracy skills.** In several African countries, attempts

[42] The ability to read, write and understand simple mathematical concepts.
[43] Includes agriculture, livestock husbandry and fishing.
[44] McKenzie (2017) examines the effectiveness of labour market policies through a review of nine studies, and finds that vocational training enables fewer than three out of 100 participants to get a job they would not otherwise have secured.

at provision of vocational agricultural training have failed, precisely because individuals do not have the basic education to use the advanced knowledge and skills that such training may provide (Filmer & Fox, 2014).

Like with access to market information and financial services, the proliferation of mobile phones has opened up the space for the provision of information and agricultural extension services through phones, via text messages, phone calls, USSD interfaces, or interactive voice services. However, the literature on the impact of extension and information programs indicates that effects on technology adoption and yields have been modest. A lack of digital literacy and trust were identified as the main constraints to the adoption of digital extension services (Carroll, 2024, Abate et al. 2023, Christiaensen & Maertens, 2022, Dzanku et al., 2021).

Finally, tertiary agricultural education systems are part of the ecosystem of the national and regional agri-food sector—contributing to among others, the development of agricultural extension systems, agricultural research and development, and generating knowledge that informs the work of governments and civil society (World Bank, 2019). Strengthening of the higher education system in agriculture in the WAEMU will therefore play a role in the agricultural development and rural transformation of the region. Evidence from countries in Asia and Latin America highlight the importance of creating partnerships between universities and local farming communities for productive and local knowledge sharing, ensuring that skills of agricultural professionals respond to labour market needs and also paving the way for apprenticeships and on-the-job learning opportunities for young graduates (FAO, CTA & IFAD, 2014).

Policy implications

This section reviews the main barriers for rural youth to employment in agriculture, each closely linked with the adoption of agricultural technology, and therefore a constraint to agricultural productivity. The barriers discussed here are structural, and are not unique to rural youth. The ability of youth to productively participate in agriculture therefore depends on if the sector can be economically viable. From a policy perspective, this calls for a prioritization of broad rural development policies to address the constraints to agricultural productivity. As highlighted earlier, the agricultural context in the region is highly heterogenous, and the solution is likely to be a combination of policy interventions.

To begin with, reforms to improve access to land rights make it possible to increase investments in agricultural technology and shift labour allocation to off-farm activities. Investments in physical and digital infrastructure that improve access to markets and financial services are similarly important to improve returns from agriculture. Finally, the education and skills level of farmers and other agricultural agents is crucial to ensuring that resources and information are used optimally. To begin with, a focus on the basic and digital literacy of rural youth is paramount; we have seen that rural youth in the WAEMU are severely lagging behind here. Next, investments in vocational training, agricultural extension services and general capacity development in the sector are necessary. In the long term, the sector will also benefit from the reform of the tertiary agricultural education system, ensuring that the skills gap is addressed through tailored, up-to-date curricula, a research and development agenda that supports agricultural innovation and institutional partnerships to facilitate on-the-job learning.

Key messages - Youth employment in agriculture

- The WAEMU is seeing a gradual decline in agricultural employment, but 75% of young people in rural areas continue to work primarily in agriculture. The share of women in agricultural employment is generally lower than that of men.
- Productivity in agriculture is lower than in other sectors; however, the productivity gap narrows considerably when measured per hour worked rather than per worker.
- Agricultural technology can be highly sensitive to local environmental conditions, which are often highly heterogeneous. The mismatch between technology and its environment, combined with constraints such as access to land, financial services, markets, education and training, limits its impact and explains why agricultural productivity remains relatively low.
- Uncertainty over access to land and lack of access to financial services such as credit, savings and insurance lead to lower levels of investment in agricultural technology. Access to markets and market information can also have significant positive effects on farm incomes.
- Rural youth in the WAEMU lag far behind in education and literacy, which has a negative impact on their ability to benefit from vocational training and to make effective use of information and technology to improve productivity.
- Most of the constraints linked to employment in agriculture concern everyone and are not always specific to youth. Rural development policies are needed to tackle structural constraints and improve agricultural productivity.
- Policies should focus on securing property rights through land reforms; improving physical and digital infrastructure to facilitate access to markets and financial services; and investing in literacy, digital skills and agricultural training for rural youth in the WAEMU.

5.2. Non-farm rural employment

While agriculture[45] continues to employ a majority of rural youth, non-agricultural employment has increased over the years. Figure 5.6 plots the evolution of rural employment by sector in the WAEMU between 2005 to 2019. The share of non-agricultural employment in rural areas has increased over time in all WAEMU countries. In 2019, industry and services together accounted for 36.7% of rural jobs, compared to 18.4% in 2005 (ILOEST).[46] The seasonal nature of agricultural employment in rain-

[45] Here referring to on-farm agricultural activity.

[46] ILO modelled estimates—to be read with caution. Sector-wise employment estimates for rural and urban areas are updated less frequently than national estimates. As such, national and rural employment estimates are based on different data and are not always found to be consistent. In particular, the estimates for the share of agricultural employment are notably different at the national and rural level in Burkina Faso. For more information on ILOEST, see here: https://ilostat.ilo.org/methods/concepts-and-definitions/ilo-modelled-estimates/

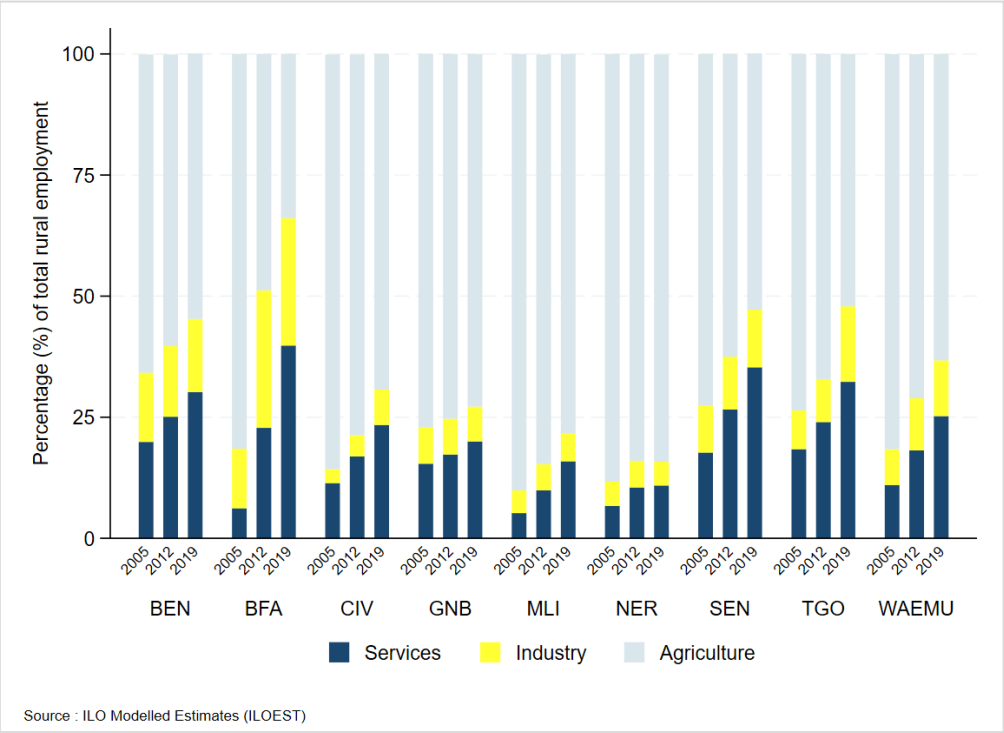
dependent agriculture implies higher rates of inactivity and a surplus of labour during the dry season in rural areas. For many agricultural households, it is common to have a secondary occupation or to migrate temporarily during the agricultural off-season in search of alternative employment and sources of income.

Moreover, the WAEMU, and particularly the central Sahel states of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger will continue to face the increasingly severe effects of climate change in the coming decades. Being highly vulnerable to climate shocks, agriculture could experience further drops in productivity, consequently compromising its ability to provide a source of employment and livelihood. In this context, **livelihood diversification—moving out of agriculture or undertaking a combination of agricultural and non-agricultural employment—will be crucial for youth as an adaptation strategy in the face of climate change.** The impacts of mobile connectivity on household welfare were previously discussed in Section 4. These welfare-enhancing effects are often driven by the livelihood diversification effects of mobile connectivity. In different contexts, mobile connectivity increased labour force participation, wage and off-farm employment, and also increased non-agricultural entrepreneurship, which in turn led to an increase in consumption, and reduced self-consumption in households. In West Africa, the effects are found to be stronger in rural areas (Bahia et al., 2024, Cariolle & Carroll, 2024a).

Moreover, complementary non-agricultural sources of income can enable productive investments in a household's agricultural activity. Evidence from Niger shows that off-farm self-employment increases investment in agricultural inputs, pointing to a move out of agriculture that better serves agricultural development in the region (Dedehouanou et al., 2018). Non-farm employment in Africa remains highly informal, albeit to a lesser extent than agricultural employment. In the WAEMU, the share of formal employment in the non-agricultural sector was 10.4% (compared to 3.5% in agriculture), 14.3 for men and 6% for women[47] (AFRISTAT & UEMOA, 2019). In this section, we investigate two important sources of non-agricultural employment for the rural population and rural youth in the region—i) non-farm household enterprises and ii) artisanal and small-scale mining; in particular, gold mining.

[47] Data from the ESI-ERI survey 2017-18.

Figure 5.6: Evolution of non-agricultural rural employment



5.2.1. Non-farm household enterprises (HEs)

A household enterprise (HE) is an informal, unincorporated, non-farm business owned by a household. It includes self-employed individuals and family members who work in the business.[48] Most commonly, a household enterprise involves self-employment,[49] so new enterprises are the main drivers of increasing employment in the HE sector (Filmer & Fox, 2014). The literature on the non-farm rural economy increasingly points to the importance of household enterprises as a source of employment and income for rural households.

In most low- and middle-income African countries, the household enterprise sector has and will continue to generate the majority of non-farm jobs (Filmer & Fox, 2014). HEs have similarly played an important role in countries in Asia and Latin America. As Fox & Sohnesen (2012) point out, this is not due to a policy failure, but given Africa's population structure and the relatively small formal wage sector, the supply of wage employment (even if it is a fast growing one) simply cannot keep up with the demand for non-farm employment from a labour force that is expanding at a faster pace.

The household enterprise sector will especially be important for youth with a low level of education (lower than secondary), since it is much harder for them to be absorbed by the wage employment sector. Some education and literacy are nonetheless required to succeed in the sector, as HEs owned by individuals with at least a primary level education do better than those with no education (Filmer & Fox, 2014). Even if they remain small, HEs are a viable economic opportunity. Fox & Sohnesen (2012) find that **controlling for level of education, household enterprises have the same marginal effect on**

[48] Employees from outside the family are not counted in HE sector employment, they are considered wage workers. This is not common though—Fox & Sohensen, (2012) find that less that 10% of HEs hired a non-family member.
[49] Only 11% of HE employment consisted of family workers (Fox & Sohensen, 2012).

household consumption as wage income, recommending the HE sector as ideally suited to individuals with a primary education who do not wish to work in agriculture.

What do we know about the landscape of household enterprises in Africa? Fox & Sohnesen (2012) use nationally representative data from eight African countries,[50] studying non-farm entrepreneurship in Sub-Sharan Africa. 40% of households stated HEs as an income source, and rural HEs were more likely to be seasonal compared to urban HEs, with heterogeneity across countries. Nagler & Naudé (2017) find similar results using LSMS-ISA data from six countries in sub-Saharan Africa.[51] They find that 42% of rural households operated at least one household enterprise, that contributed between 8 to 36% to the average household income. Households were found to largely operate HEs in sectors with low barriers to entry such as trade and sales, and that required low starting costs. These HEs primarily exited the market due to idiosyncratic shocks or lack of profits. Most HEs were operated based on necessity—in response to shocks or agricultural seasonality, while a small share of HEs were opportunity focused. The latter were found to be more productive.

While women actively participate in HEs, there is a segregation in the types of HEs operated by men and women. Women are overrepresented in activities such as sewing and catering while men are more likely to operate a HE in construction or repairs. These 'feminine' HE activities tend to be lower paying than men's, with the result that overall, women earn less than men from household enterprises. The reasons for the gender segregated distribution of HE activity range from social norms, differential time and monetary constraints, as well as different information and expectations between men and women regarding types of HE activities (Filmer & Fox, 2014, Fox & Sohnesen, 2012).

The main barriers identified for young people to enter in HEs are access to credit or finances and lack of training and skills. For this reason, HEs are most often operated by individuals in the 25-40 age group; youth under 25 less likely to operate HEs. Additionally, there is a lack of information on opportunities in the HE sector (Filmer & Fox, 2014). Access to credit, or capital to start a HE is generally, for youth and older individuals alike, one of the main roadblocks to starting out in the sector. Most HEs are financed through own savings or through help from a family member. Fox & Sohnesen (2012) found that only 1.3% of HEs used microfinance services for start-up costs.

A lack of skills is another major challenge. Even as the present generation of African youth have a higher level of education than their preceding cohorts, running a HE can require a broad range of skills—not only basic literacy but also business skills and activity-specific technical skills (construction, sewing, etc.). Apprenticeships can respond to this demand and provide youth with essential skills with which to start their own non-farm enterprises. However, apprenticeships can often provide specific, non-transferable technical skills that restricts moving between activities. Moreover, apprentices receive low pay, or can even be unpaid, meaning that youth graduating out of apprenticeships very often have no savings or starting capital with which to launch their own HEs (Filmer & Fox, 2014).

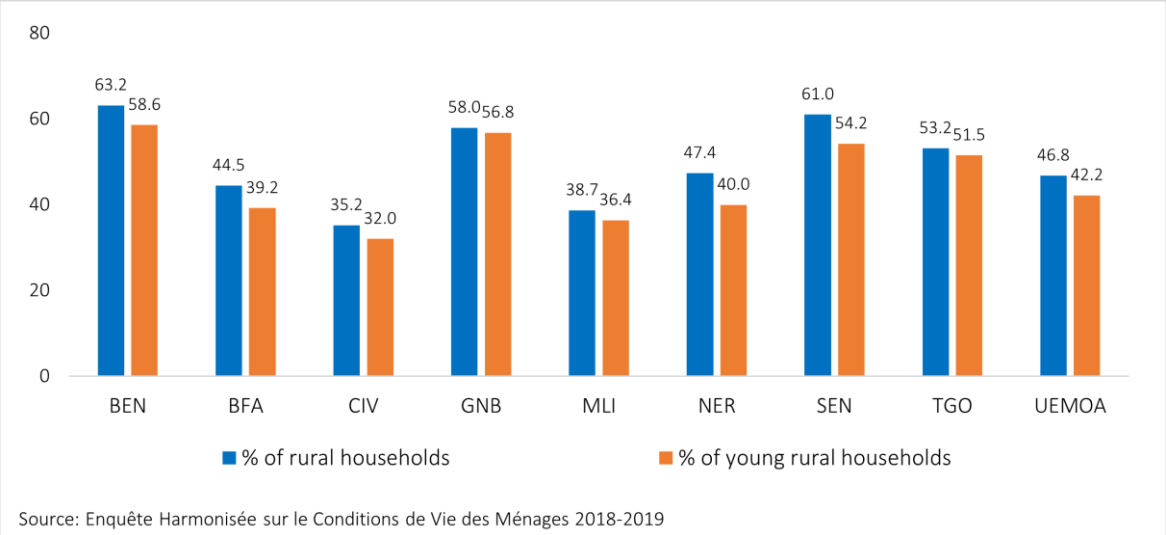
Non-farm household enterprises in the WAEMU

Data from the EHCVM 2018-19 allow us to observe the prevalence of non-agricultural/non-farm household enterprises[52] operated by households in the WAEMU. On average, a larger share of urban

[50] Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Republic of Congo (urban only), Ghana, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda.
[51] Ethiopia, Malawi, Niger, Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda.
[52] The terms household enterprises (HEs), most often used in the literature and non-agricultural enterprises (NAEs), the term in the EHCVM questionnaires, are used here interchangeably.

households, around 60.1% have non-agricultural enterprises (NAEs) compared to rural households at 46.7%. We focus here on rural households and NAEs in the zone. Figure 5.7 shows by country, the proportion of rural households with NAEs and likewise the share of young and old households. Between 35% of rural households in Côte d'Ivoire and 63% in Benin reported having at least one non-agricultural enterprise in the WAEMU. Benin and Senegal have the largest share of rural households with NAEs (see Figure 5.7). Even at the lowest end**, at least a third of all rural households in the WAEMU countries operate at least one NAE during the year**. Young households, which make up 27% of all rural households, have a lower incidence of NAEs compared to non-young households in every country. Overall, the characteristics of NAEs operated by young and non-young households are similar.

Figure 5.7: Rural households running a non-agricultural enterprise



Source: Enquête Harmonisée sur le Conditions de Vie des Ménages 2018-2019

The most common types of non-agricultural enterprises were business/trading enterprises,[53] followed by enterprises selling cooked food and drinks, in both rural and urban areas.[54] The clientele of rural NAEs consists for the most part of individuals and households (87%), followed by a small share of the public sector (7%) and small commercial enterprises (5%). As for the main problems faced by rural NAEs, high levels of competition and a lack of clientele are most commonly cited as issues. This is consistent with findings from Nagler & Naude (2017) that household enterprises operate in sectors with a low cost of entry. Other problems cited were a lack of access to credit, difficulty sourcing raw materials and a lack of suitable premises to operate. Once again, the results correspond with findings from the literature on credit constraints being a barrier to entry for household enterprises. In the WAEMU, 79% of rural NAEs were self-financed, and another 13% were financed with help from a parent. The most common location for rural NAEs is at home—**44% of all rural HEs in the WAEMU operate out of their residences, and another 16% have a fixed post on a public street.** A mere 7% of rural HEs operate from an office or a workshop.

[53] Survey question – « *A-t-il possédé, à domicile ou ailleurs, une entreprise de commerce (boutique, vente de matériaux de construction, de matériel informatique, de cartes téléphoniques, de cigarettes au bord de la route, vente de produits agricoles et d'élevage frais, etc.) ?* »
[54] Survey question – « *A fait des beignets ; griller de la viande de boeuf, de mouton, ou de poulet ; fabriquer des jus de fruits (gingembre, bissap) ; fabriquer de la bière de maïs ou de mil, fabriquer du pain ou des gâteaux pour revendre ?* »

Policy implications

In this section, we have discussed the important role of household enterprises as a source of non-farm employment, particularly in rural areas and in low-resource settings. Most household enterprises are limited to an individual in self-employment, sometimes include family workers and rarely have a potential for generating employment by hiring workers. HEs also tend to have low productivity, can be seasonal or part-time and have high rates of failure. Despite this, HEs are commonly used for subsistence purposes and they can serve an important income smoothing function for households. Self-employment in household enterprises is particularly relevant for rural youth in the 25–34-year age group, those with low levels of education, and those facing exclusion from wage employment.

The non-farm household enterprise is often looked over in public policy. The informal nature of household enterprises creates a bias against them, and governments tend to focus on the development of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) instead (Filmer & Fox, 2014). **However, as the largest non-farm employer in the region, the HE sector needs to be seriously considered as a livelihood and development strategy for rural youth in the WAEMU, and policy action should address how the state can better support the sector.** The main barriers facing rural NAEs in the WAEMU are high competition and a shortage of clientele, limited access to credit, raw materials and a premises to operate. In that light, **policies aiming to improve market access and financial inclusion of rural populations can contribute to the productivity and sustainability of rural household enterprises**. Another avenue of policy intervention is a targeted approach to **supporting high potential household enterprises**. The growth of such enterprises can have important employment generating effects as well as overall positive spillover effects for the local economy (Nagler & Naudé, 2017, Bandiera et al., 2022).

5.2.2. Artisanal and small-scale mining

Artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) is the informal sector of small-scale mining by individuals and small groups of people. The ASM sector is increasingly attracting rural youth and women. Globally**, an estimated 44.75 million people across 80 countries are primarily employed in ASM**. Including indirect employment (related industries that support the sector), at least 134 million people work in ASM around the world[55] (World Bank, 2020). Recent literature on ASM in Africa estimates (conservatively) the ASM workforce to be about 54 million strong (IGF, 2017). The ASM sector makes up a substantial part of the world mineral supply. Annually, ASM supplies 20% of the global gold and diamond production and 80% of global sapphire production. It is also responsible for the extraction of minerals required for the production of electronics like phones and laptops—providing a quarter of the global supply of tantalum and tin (IGF, 2017).

Girard et al. (2020) study the effects of artisanal gold mining (ASgM) in Africa, the most common form of ASM. They establish a causal link between artisanal mining and tropical deforestation and vegetation degradation around local mining sites. At the same time, ASM is found to have positive economic effects, increasing household wealth locally, as reflected by greater night-time light emissions. The authors also find that droughts magnify the effects of ASgM, pointing to the **use of gold mining as a livelihood diversification strategy when agricultural incomes are adversely affected from shocks**. This

[55] There is an important gap in data on the subject, so 134m is likely to be an underestimate.

causes a vicious cycle—ASM causes deforestation, accelerating climate shocks such as droughts and in turn, climate shocks hurt agricultural activity and incomes, pushing people further to pursue ASM.

Research by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in twelve artisanal gold mining sites in Mali and Burkina Faso highlights the development effects of the activity on the local economy. Gold rushes in the Sahel have become an important form of intraregional migration, affecting not only local environments in the country but also miner's lives in rural areas. The artisanal gold extractive industry generated an estimated 417 million USD in Burkina Faso in 2017 (Boukaré, 2020a). Artisanal mining is increasingly recognized as a solution to youth unemployment in rural areas, as an alternative to agriculture and rural-to-urban migration. Young, rural men (under 35) with low levels of education and women (of all ages) make up the majority of the artisanal mining workforce (Boukaré, 2020a). This trend is likely due to the fact that the sector requires few skills, giving these population groups easier access to employment compared to other sectors. The sector thus absorbs low-education, low-skilled labour, largely rural youth, working on sites with basic tools and techniques (IGF, 2017). In addition to mining roles though, as the sectors grows and more small scale formal ASM enterprises show up, the sector can also offer a wide range of employment opportunities for higher skill levels. This includes, among others, business and management skills to manage operations and bookkeeping, geosciences, engineering, and sustainability (World Bank, 2020).

Mining as a route to autonomy for West African women

The lack of data, especially sex-disaggregated data make it challenging to measure women's involvement in the sector. The World Bank estimates that globally, nearly 13.4 million women, work in ASM, almost a third of the direct ASM workforce. While regional and country level estimates vary, 40-50% of the African ASM workforce are estimated to be women, while it might be higher in some countries. Work in ASM allows them a means of financial independence, as the sector can be a relatively easy source of employment. In Burkina Faso and Mali, divorced or widowed women travelled alone to gold mining sites, and the work provided a means of empowerment. None the less, discrimination is still rampant in the sector as women were excluded from the most lucrative part of gold mining—climbing down in the pits. Women's role is usually crushing and washing sediments (Boukaré, 2020b). Women and girls are also confronted with limited reproductive and maternal healthcare services around mining sites, and girls in ASM communities face a higher risk of child marriage (World Bank, 2023).

Local economy effects

An interesting consequence of ASM in Burkina Faso and Mali was that following a round of mining related labour migration, a second wave of migration to the mining sites is observed. This second wave includes businesses and services (restaurants, cinemas, bars, etc.) to cater to the miners. The result is a diverse migrant population, with a dynamic, diversified local economy, resembling that of urban centres (Boukaré, 2020b). Despite its significance to the local and global economies, employment in the sector remains largely informal and unregulated; working conditions of miners are precarious, with few safety regulations in practice. Its positive employment and economic effects notwithstanding, the sector also has important negative environmental effects. In addition, the use of mercury in mineral extraction makes it a serious health hazard.

Policy implications

ASM is gaining importance as a source of livelihood, transitioning from seasonal activity to a source of primary employment for many rural youth. The ASM sector is increasingly being recognized for its potential to create direct and indirect jobs for rural youth outside of agriculture, and for its role in stemming migration from rural to urban areas. It can contribute to reducing the share of youth who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), offering a range of opportunities for different skill levels. From a policy lens, **there is a pressing need to improve data collection on the sector, and for broader analyses of the sector's impact on workers, local mining communities and the environment**. Ensuring decent working conditions in the sector will also require **investments in the health and safety of miners, active engagement with ASM companies and associations** to improve working conditions and to match employers with skilled graduates, and an emphasis on addressing the challenges of women's inclusion in the sector (World Bank, 2020).

Key Messages – Non-farm rural employment

- Agriculture remains the main employer of rural youth in the WAEMU, but employment in the non-agricultural sector has increased, indicating a diversification of the rural economy in the area. This shift towards livelihood diversification will be essential as a coping strategy for young people facing agricultural underemployment and the adverse effects of climate change.
- Improved mobile connectivity has positive effects on well-being in the WAEMU, particularly in rural areas. These effects are often due to the positive effects of mobile connectivity on livelihood diversification—increased salaried and non-agricultural employment and non-agricultural entrepreneurship.
- In the absence of formal wage employment, the household enterprise (HE) sector will be the main source of non-agricultural rural employment in the WAEMU. HEs are mainly run by self-employed individuals, and are particularly relevant for rural youth with low levels of education.
- HEs play an important subsistence and income smoothing role for many rural households. A lack of access to credit, appropriate skills and training opportunities hampers young people's ability to create and maintain HEs. Policies that improve market access and financial inclusion can contribute to the productivity and sustainability of rural household enterprises.
- Artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM), particularly gold mining, is becoming another important source of non-agricultural employment, serving as an alternative to agriculture and urban migration. ASM is particularly important for young men and women, as it gives them access to employment and financial independence, despite the problems associated with informality and precarious working conditions.
- The mining and related sectors can be an important source of job creation as they continue to grow. That said, there is an urgent need for better data, more in-depth analysis of the sector's economic, social and environmental impacts, as well as investment and regulation to improve working conditions and limit the sector's negative impact on the environment.

5.3. Unpaid work

Two out of three youth not in education, employment or training (NEET) globally are women. Rural young women in particular form a large share of NEET, and represent a sizeable section of the potential labour force.[56] A large part of this absence has to do with unpaid work that women are responsible for, often leading to time poverty[57] that constraints their opportunities to participate in paid employment. Box 4 explains the concept of care work and its different forms in greater detail. In this report, unpaid work refers to unpaid domestic and care work.[58] It does not focus on volunteer work or unpaid trainee/apprentice work in general.[59] Unpaid care work (UCW) is essential, productive work that has economic value. The ILO estimated that each day, 16.4 billion hours are spent on unpaid care work. Valued at an hourly minimum wage, that equates to 9% of global GDP or about US$ 11 trillion (PPP 2011) (ILO, 2018). Unpaid care work is part of the larger care economy that also includes paid care work,[60] which is vital to the welfare of care recipients (children, sick or disabled individuals, aging family members, etc.). And while unpaid care work (especially personal, relational care) can be very gratifying, a saturation of the capacities of care providers can come at the cost of their health, education and economic opportunities, adversely affecting their overall well-being.

Ky (2018) points out that unpaid work, especially time-consuming in developing countries, has large costs for women in the form of forgone opportunities in education attainment, employment and income-generating activities. Drawing on Amartya Sen's capabilities approach,[61] the author emphasizes how the burden of unpaid work impedes the human development of women, essential for the freedom and well-being of individuals. Promoting the economic empowerment of women is identified as a strategic area of intervention in the WAEMU Gender Strategy 2018-2027. In that pursuit, understanding and addressing unpaid care work is essential to enabling women's economic participation.

This section delves deeper into the nature and magnitude of unpaid care work, its implications employment, and how it relates to rural youth in the WAEMU. Gender norms make it so that women are over-represented in this form of work, which strongly influences how women interact with the labour market—choosing to enter the labour force and staying in it, type of employment, the amount of time they are available for paid work and so on. We consider how better recognizing and valuing this work can not only lead to better care provision for receivers, but also how provision of care can be an important source in the employment for youth in the zone.

[56] Persons not in employment who express interest [in working] but for whom existing conditions limit their active job search or availability (Benes & Walsh, 2018).
[57] A deficit of time for income generating activities (Zacharias, Antonopoulos and Masterson, 2012).
[58] Also known as own-use provision of services—see section 5.3.1 on the 19th ICLS classification of work.
[59] However, a subset of these—volunteer care work and trainee care work—are included in the definition of unpaid care work; see Box 4 and Figure A.14.
[60] See Box 5 for more on jobs in the care sector. The care economy is the sum of all forms of care work.
[61] The capabilities approach framework makes two main claims: i) the freedom to achieve well-being is of primary moral importance, and ii) well-being is to be understood as people's potential and realized capabilities to attain a life of their choice (Robeyns & Byskov, 2023).

Box 4: What is care work?

Care work is of two broad types, i) direct, personal and relational care work (e.g., feeding a baby, nursing a family member) and ii) indirect care activities (e.g., cooking and cleaning).

Unpaid care work is therefore caring for persons or undertaking housework—direct and indirect care, carried out without explicit monetary compensation, by unpaid carers. In most societies, a majority of UCW takes place within households, but it can also include providing community services and help to other households.

Paid care work is performed for pay or profit by care workers. They include personal service workers—nurses, teachers, doctors and personal care workers. Domestic workers, who provide both direct and indirect care in households, are also part of the care workforce.

Unpaid care work in the 19th ICLS Resolution I

Figure A.14 in the Appendix shows the different forms of care work as it relates to the 19th ICLS Resolution I classification of the forms of work. Unpaid care work as defined by the ILO therefore refers to the own-use provision of services, volunteer work in households providing care services for other households and to unpaid trainee care work.

It is worth clarifying here that fetching firewood and water for the household, often understood as part of domestic work, are classified as the own-use production of goods and are therefore excluded from the ILO definition of unpaid care work for statistical consistency.[62] However, these activities are considered to be care-related, since they impact the time spent on the provision of unpaid care work, especially in less developed rural contexts. Better care-related infrastructure, including access to water and energy is therefore an important component of care policies.

Source: Care work and care jobs for the future of decent work, ILO (2018). The Unpaid Care Work and the Labour Market. An analysis of time use data based on the latest World Compilation of Time-use Surveys, Charmes (2019).

5.3.1.The distinction between work and employment

The 19th International Conference on Labour Statistics (ICLS) of the ILO in 2013 adopted Resolution I concerning statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization, expanding the scope of labour statistics to include different forms of work, paid and unpaid. The resolution identifies five mutually exclusive forms of work:

i) *employment work* – includes work for pay or profit,

Work without pay was classified as

ii) *own-use production work* – production of goods and own-use provision of services
iii) *unpaid trainee work*

[62] These activities are considered unpaid work but are not included in the subset of unpaid care work.

iv) *volunteer work* and

v) *other work activities.*[63]

In this report, we focus on a subset of category ii) of the above definition—the provision of services for personal consumption or own-use, synonymous with unpaid domestic and care work. Recognizing the need to collect data on these different forms of work allows for a deeper understanding of the double burden on women (ILOSTAT, 2024).

An important implication of this resolution was the formal inclusion of own-use provision of services—unpaid work carried out by individuals for themselves or their households (household chores, cooking, childcare, care of aging family members, etc.)—in the framework of work and in labour statistics. This facilitates a gender balance in labour statistics on own-use work, as own-use provision of services, carried out primarily by women and children, is now treated the same as own-use production of goods (e.g. agriculture for self-consumption) (Durazo et al., 2021). This facilitates the inclusion of questions on unpaid care work in Labour Force Survey (LFS), allowing for consistent measurement of UCW and the production of comparable statistics across countries. Following this framework, the more recent Living Standards Measurement Surveys (LSMS) of the World Bank, including the EHCVM 2018-19 surveys in the WAEMU, include questions on the different forms of paid and unpaid work carried out by individuals of working age (15-64 years).

5.3.2. How much time is spent on unpaid care work, and by whom?

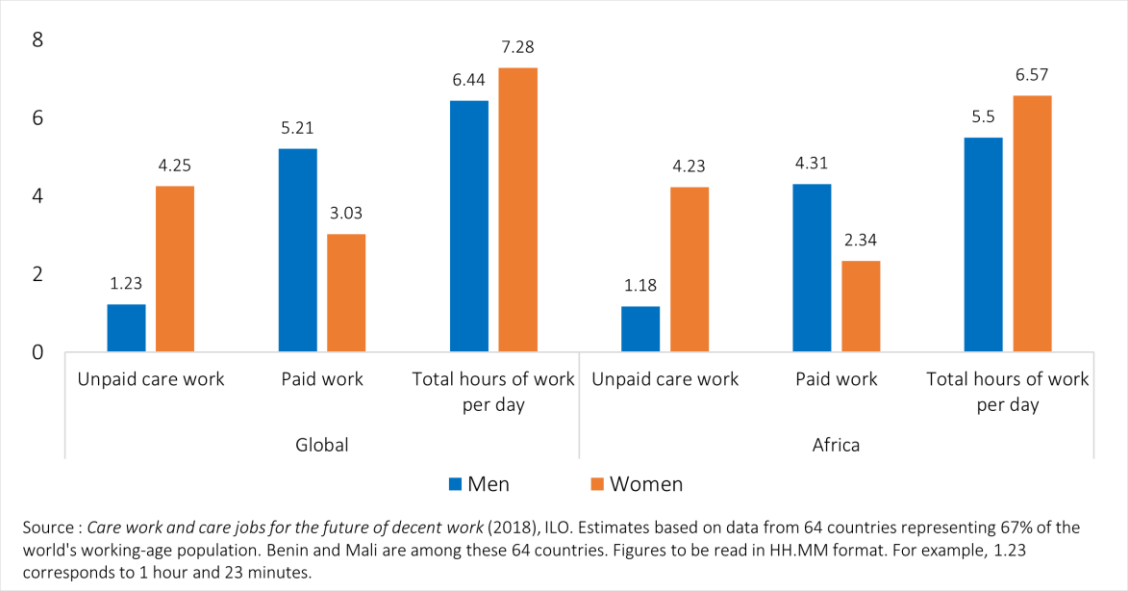
The ILO estimates time spent on unpaid work based on time-use survey data from 64 countries (including Benin and Mali from the WAEMU), representing 66.9% of the world's working age population. The results are clear—women everywhere, not just in developing countries, irrespective of their status in employment, carry out more unpaid care work than men. Women were found to perform 76.2% or three-fourths of all unpaid care work (UCW), in terms of time provided. Figure 5.8 shows the average hours spent daily by men and women on paid and unpaid work, globally and in Africa.[64] **Globally, women spend 3.2 times more on UCW than men. Annually, that is the equivalent of 201 working days[65] for women and 63 working days for men.** The gender inequality in care work varies by region; in Africa the estimate is slightly above the average at 3.4 times. The highest inequality is found in the Arab States (4.7 times) and in Asia and the Pacific (4.1 times). The gender inequality in UCW means that women work fewer hours in paid work and spend more time working overall on a daily basis.

Intensity and time spent on UCW are also closely linked to socioeconomic factors, notably, location, age, education, marital status and the number and age of children. This is the case for both men and women, but effects tend to be larger for women. **Residence in rural areas increases time and physical effort spent on UCW, as basic infrastructure is scarce relative to urban areas.** Similarly, **being married and having children significantly increases time on UCW**. In case of education, effects are opposite for men and women. **A higher level of education reduces women's time on UCW, while for men, time on UCW**

[63] Figure A.9 in the Annex shows the different forms of work as outlined in the Resolution I concerning statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization, and how it relates to the System of National Accounts (SNA) 2008.
[64] Estimates include domestic work (indirect care), caregiving services (direct care) and volunteer work (community care services and help to other households). Volunteer work consists of 5.2% of total time spent on UCW.
[65] Considering an 8-hour working day.

increases.[66] In Africa, men's longer hours on UCW linked to a higher level of education are observed in Benin, Cameroon and Tanzania.

Figure 5.8: Time spent on paid and unpaid work, by gender (global)



Source : *Care work and care jobs for the future of decent work* (2018), ILO. Estimates based on data from 64 countries representing 67% of the world's working-age population. Benin and Mali are among these 64 countries. Figures to be read in HH.MM format. For example, 1.23 corresponds to 1 hour and 23 minutes.

Also worth noting is that the burden of UCW starts at an early age. In Africa, Asia and the Pacific, ILO's work on child labour indicates that **children and adolescents are often unpaid care providers.** An estimated 54 million children aged 5-14 perform excessive hours (21+ hours/week) and nearly seven million of them work extremely long hours (43+ hours/week), very likely affecting their ability to participate constructively in education. Similarly, nearly 35 million adolescents ages 15-17 carried out excessive hours of UCW. Girls and women form at least two thirds of both groups, with the gender gap found to be increasing with age (ILO, 2017). This is in line with Ky's (2013, 2018) findings on the costs of unpaid work, which begin with the loss of educational opportunities, particularly for girls.

5.3.3. Unpaid work by youth in the WAEMU

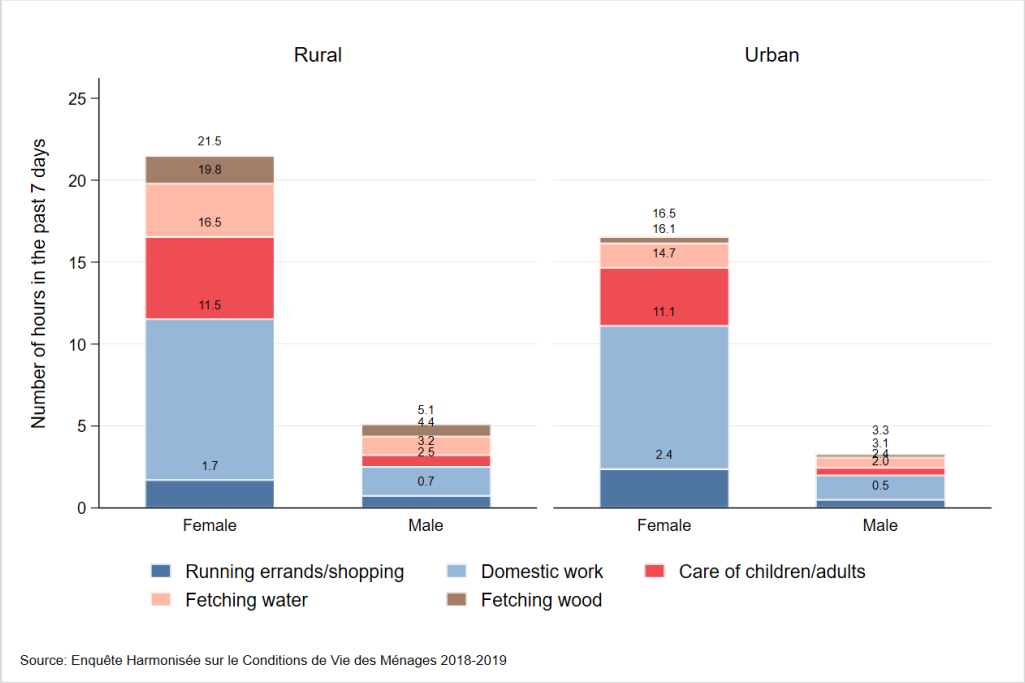
The EHCVM surveys in the WAEMU (2018-19) allows us to observe some of the own-use production work carried out by individuals.[67] Specifically, in the employment and labour section, the survey asks about the number of hours spent by individuals in the past seven days on five types of tasks—doing the errands/shopping, housework, caring for children/adults, fetching water and fetching wood.[68] In addition to the first three tasks that constitute unpaid care work, this section also looks at time spent

[66] Based on available data from 18 countries.
[67] Asking questions about unpaid work is a relatively recent development, and work is still in progress to better measure the time spent on this type of work. It is very likely that this list of questions does not reflect all the unpaid work performed by individuals.
[68] Based on the UCW definition we developed above, here, caring for children and the elderly is categorized as (direct) care work, doing the shopping and housework is domestic work (indirect care). Fetching water and wood are classified as the own-use production of goods. Shopping, housework, fetching water and wood can all be considered domestic work, but it is useful to break down the time spent on specific tasks. Firstly, this allows us to better account for time spent on UCW, as questions about overall time spent on domestic work can lead to under-reporting, either due to poor recall or different interpretations of what constitutes domestic work (Durazo et al., 2021). This also allows us to observe how time spent on certain tasks (notably such as fetching water and wood) can vary, for example between urban and rural areas.

on fetching water and wood, as they are activities that support and directly impact unpaid care work, especially in rural settings. Data from the survey confirms what the existing literature tells us about the gendered nature of unpaid care work.

Figure 5.9 shows the average time spent by young men and women (15-34 years) on these five tasks, classified as own-use production work—henceforth referred to as unpaid work for simplicity. **Rural women spent around 21.5 hours per week on unpaid work, four times more than rural men. In urban households, women spend 16.5 hours a week on these tasks; less than rural women but nonetheless five times the time spent by urban men on these tasks.** The bigger female to male ratio in urban areas may point to the double burden of working women. If we consider the median values (see Figure A.10 in the Annex), over 50% young women in rural areas spend over 13 hours on unpaid work while over 50% of men spend zero. **Women in rural areas spend more time on unpaid work compared to urban women, with the biggest difference coming from time spent fetching wood and water.** Across rural and urban areas, time spent by women on unpaid work is the highest in Niger and the lowest in Côte d'Ivoire.[69]

Figure 5.9: Time spent on unpaid work by rural youth, by gender



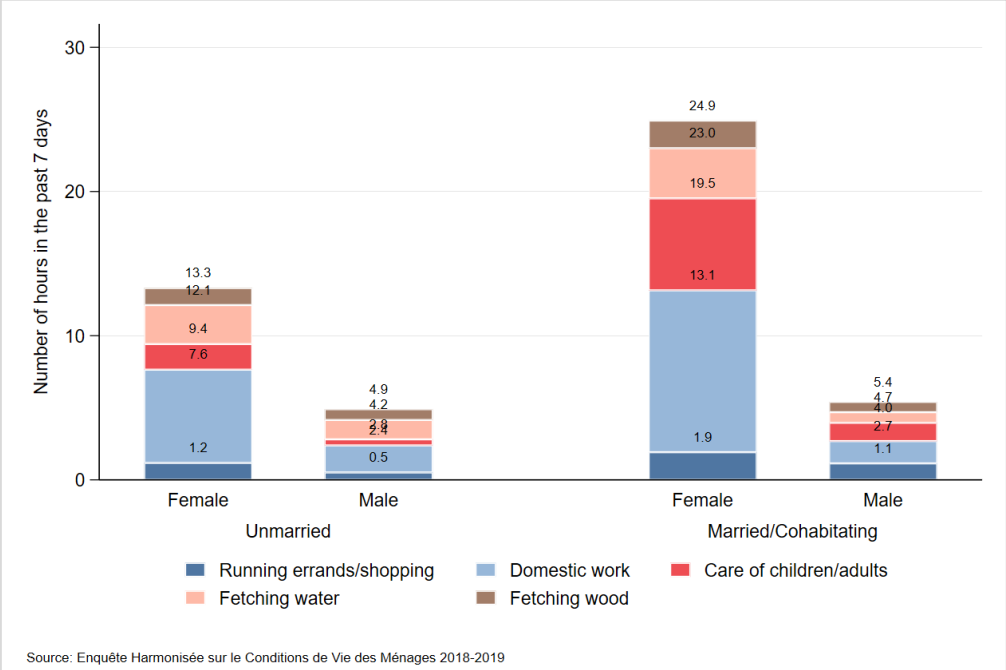
Source: Enquête Harmonisée sur le Conditions de Vie des Ménages 2018-2019

How does time use vary based on marital or cohabitation status,[70] particularly for rural youth? Figure 5.10 shows the average time spent by rural youth (ages 15-34) on unpaid work, disaggregated by gender and single/partnered status of youth.[71] For men, being married or cohabitating with a partner

[69] Figures A.11 and A.12 in the Appendix show the average time spent by men and women on unpaid work, disaggregated by country, for rural and urban areas respectively.
[70] We use civil/marital status as a proxy for living situation—to distinguish youth who share a household with a partner and those who don't.
[71] Single refers to unmarried individuals. A small share of divorced, separated, widowed individuals are not included here. For partnered youth, we do not disaggregate further by couples with and without children. While the EHCVM record the relationship of the individual to the household head, for those who are not household heads, it is not straightforward to identify if an individual has children.

marginally increases the time spent on unpaid work in a week, from 4.9 to 5.4 hours. For women on the other hand, total time spent on unpaid work nearly doubles, from 13.3 to 24.9 hours. Breaking down time use by tasks, compared to single men, **young rural men who are married/co-habiting with a partner see an increase in time spent on errands/shopping and caring for children/adults, and a decrease in the time spent on housework, fetching wood and water**. In contrast, **for young rural women, there is an increase in time spent on all tasks** when they are married or cohabiting with a partner, with particularly large increases in time spent on housework and care of children/adults.

Figure 5.10: Time spent on unpaid work by rural youth, by gender and civil status



Source: Enquête Harmonisée sur le Conditions de Vie des Ménages 2018-2019

5.3.4. Unpaid care work and labour force participation

What does this mean for women's labour force participation (LFP)? Unpaid care work is the primary reason stated by women for being outside the labour force, while for men, it is being in education, sickness or disability. That is an estimated 708 million women (ages 15 and above) outside the labour force (unavailable to work and/or not looking for employment) due to unpaid care responsibilities in 2023, compared to 40 million men who were inactive for the same reason. (ILO, 2024). A recent analysis by the ILO and UN Women looks at the impact of marriage and children on labour force participation (LFP). Analysing four types of households i) lone-person household, ii) couple only iii) couple with children under 6 and iv) extended family household with children under six.[72] Globally, women's labour force participation drops to half across these scenarios, from 82.4 in lone-person households to 41.3% in extended family households. However, there are vast differences by region. While women's LFP is the lowest in Central and Southern Asia and North Africa and Western Asia, **Sub-Saharan Africa has one of the highest LFP rates in the world for women.** Women's LFP in the region is 91.8% in a lone-person

[72] Based on data from 84 countries, for the population aged 25-54.

household (i), 77% for a couple-only household (ii), 79.4% in a couple household with children under 6 (iii), and further to 72.7% in an extended family household (iv). So, women's LFP in Sub-Saharan Africa drops across household types, but stays relatively high. While this is encouraging, without any change in women's share of unpaid domestic work, the impact of marriage and children on women is likely to show up in the form of increased vulnerability to insecure work and penalties on incomes and career advancement (ILO & UN Women, 2020).

Box 5: Care Workers and Care Employment

The global care workforce includes care workers in care sectors (education, health and social work), care workers in non-care sectors and domestic workers (employed by households). It also includes non-care workers in care sectors, as they support the provision of care services.[73] Globally, the care workforce consists of 381 million workers—11.2% of total global employment. By gender, care employment makes up 19.3% to total global female employment, in contrast to 6.6% for men. In Africa, care employment makes up 7.7% to total employment, the lowest across all regions, followed by Asia and the Pacific (8.7%). By gender, the sector consists 10.7% of female employment in Africa and 5.4% of total male employment in the region[74] (ILO, 2018).

The care workforce can be classified into three main sectors, i) health and social work, ii) education and iii) domestic workers. Paid care work tends to be undervalued, seen and low status work, and workers can face a care pay penalty[75] in hourly wages. This is particularly true of domestic workers, operating almost entirely in the informal sector, who face the worst working conditions, with rampant exploitation. Africa has the lowest share of employment (as % of total employment) in health and social work (1.5%) and education (3.3%) across all regions. Insufficient care service provision is closely linked to the employment of domestic workers, which likely explains one third of the care workforce in Africa being domestic workers, indicating a substantial care service deficit in the region.

Source: Care work and care jobs for the future of decent work, ILO (2018)

Policy implications

Time spent on unpaid care work, closely linked to their marital status and household situation, is the main barrier to women's labour force participation. For women in the labour market, their unpaid care responsibilities mean than women are more vulnerable to insecure forms of work. Increasing women's labour force participation, especially for young women in rural WAEMU, will require policy action to alleviate women's time poverty. This includes addressing infrastructure constraints—access to water and electricity as well as reducing their burden of unpaid care and care-related work through care policies, including inclusive working arrangements and leave policies, care-related social protection and better care service provision by the state (ILO, 2018). Finally, the region sees an insufficient provision of

[73] For more details, see figure A.13 in Appendix.
[74] ILO calculations based on labour force and household survey microdata.
[75] Here—a gap in wages that cannot be explained by differences in skills, experience or credentials.

care services (Box 5 discusses trends in Africa's care economy), and **targeted investments in education, health and long-term care** will serve to reduce women's burden of UCW and simultaneously create employment, likely for women, in the rural care economy.

Key messages – Unpaid work

- Two-thirds of the world's young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) are women, with young women in rural areas particularly impacted. Unpaid domestic and care work is a major contributor to this reality, often with significant personal costs, including diminished health, education and economic opportunities.
- In 2013, the ILO broadened the scope of labour statistics by distinguishing between work and employment (paid work). This facilitates better and consistent measurement of unpaid work, carried out in large part by women.
- Time spent on unpaid care work depends on several factors: women in rural areas, those with a partner and/or children, and those with low levels of education spend more time on unpaid care work.
- In the UEMOA region, young rural women devote on average 4 times more time to unpaid (care and care-related) work than young rural men, and 1.3 times more than young urban women. In addition, young rural women who are married or cohabiting with a partner spend almost twice as much time per week on unpaid work than those who are unmarried.
- Unpaid care work, closely linked to family structure, is often the main reason stated by women for not joining the workforce. While labour market participation tends to be relatively high in the region, if the share of women's unpaid work remains unchanged, the impact of marriage and childbearing on women is likely to manifest itself in the form of increased vulnerability to precarious work and a penalty on earning potential.
- Improving the employment prospects of young rural women will require policy action to reduce and redistribute the time they spend in unpaid care and care-related work, through improved infrastructure, social protection and services provided by the state. Targeted investments in education, health and long-term care can also simultaneously generate jobs in the care sector.

Box 6: Women's employment in the WAEMU – results from the EHCVM 2021-22

The continuous monitoring of gender-disaggregated social and economic outcomes of the population is essential in order to track the progress made on providing equal opportunities for men and women. Following the EHCVM 2018-19, a second round of EHCVM surveys were conducted in the WAEMU zone in 2021-22. Below are some key findings from the EHCVM 2021-22 on the gender differences in work and employment outcomes in the WAEMU, with a focus on rural areas.[76]

- **Share of youth (15-24 years) not in employment, education or training (NEET):** In rural areas 58.5% of young women and 46.6% of young men were NEET, nearly twice the share of their urban counterparts (33.5% urban women and 20.4% urban men).
- **Sector of employment:** A major difference between men and women's employment is the distribution by sector. **The services sector is the largest employer of women whereas agriculture is the primary employer for men.** Overall, 46% of women's employment is in the services sector, followed by 36.9% in agriculture and 17.1% in industry. In contrast, a larger share of men—48% are employed in the agricultural sector, 33.9% in services and 18.2% in industry.
- **Non-agricultural enterprises (NAEs):** Women own a greater proportion of non-agricultural enterprises in the WAEMU. In rural areas, 52.6% of NAEs are owned by women and 47.4% by men. **With the exception of Mali and Niger, a majority of NAEs are owned by women in WAEMU countries**, in both rural and urban areas.
- **Unpaid work versus employment:** On average, men and women respectively work 6.9 hours and 5.9 hours daily, including paid employment and domestic unpaid work. The distribution of the type of works however is skewed based on gender. **Women in rural and urban areas in spend 2.5 hours and 2.2 hours daily on unpaid work** respectively in the WAEMU. In contrast, **men spend a half hour daily on unpaid work**, in both rural and urban areas.
- **Child labour (children and adolescents ages 5-17):**[77] A larger of share of girls than boys are found to be engaged in child labour in the zone, with a higher prevalence in rural areas. **In rural WAEMU, 8.7% of girls and 7.8% of boys engage in child labour**, compared to 4.4% of girls and 4% of boys in urban areas.

In addition, women in the WAEMU are more likely than men to work as unpaid family workers in the household. Women in the labour market are also more likely to hold informal jobs and to work part-time[78] in comparison to their male counterparts. Results from the survey show that multidimensional gender gaps persist—in education, employment and access to resources, and are often more pronounced in rural areas.

Source : World Bank, UEMOA (2024) Les femmes et des hommes dans les pays de l'UEMOA : Livret Genre 2024. Strengthening Gender Statistics, World Bank, UEMOA.

[76] Note this refers to men and women's outcomes overall, not youth, unless specified otherwise.
[77] Based on ILO's definition, work that is harmful or dangerous to children, and/or work that interferes with their education, by requiring them to drop out or by working long hours in laborious work.
[78] Less than 40 hours a week.

6. Policy recommendations

This report explores the characteristics of youth in the WAEMU and the different sectors of rural employment to identify the main barriers to employment faced by rural youth. Many of these barriers or constraints are common across sectors—skills and education needs, internet access and digital literacy, access to markets and financial services. Additionally, the report presents a conceptual framework to understand rural youth opportunities in light of the national, rural and household conditions in which they operate. From a policy perspective, it is important to recognize that many constraints faced by rural youth and common to the overall population. The appropriate policy response, in particular in the WAEMU is to focus first on broad rural development policies, and then move on to youth-specific policies when constraints to employment are youth-specific. This section proposes a number of policy recommendations associated with the various barriers to employment identified above. The recommendations are not meant to be prescriptive—the right solutions of policy choice and design will vary for each country, and in different local contexts.

6.1. Youth education, skills and training

As discussed in sections 4 and 5, even as education outcomes continue to improve, a large gap persists in education and literacy across urban and rural areas. A sizeable portion of rural youth—65% of young women and 48% of young men—have no education. A secondary or higher level of education is attained by less a fifth of rural youth in the WAEMU. Rural youth with a below secondary level of education largely overlap with the population lacking in basic literacy and numeracy skills. They constitute a substantial segment of the rural workforce, facing exclusion from formal employment opportunities and a lower earning potential compared to their more educated peers. These foundational skills are crucial not only for learning retention and the effectiveness of any future vocational training but also for the effective use of information and technology. As such, it might be useful to:

- Develop national strategies for youth literacy in the WAEMU member states. This could be part of a broader adult literacy and education strategy, where they already exist. A national strategy should entail a country-specific assessment of needs and the development of a policy framework to improve youth literacy outcomes. Such a strategy should prioritise the inclusion of underserved populations—specifically women, rural youth, and any other groups falling back in education and literacy.
- Invest in alternative education programs to develop basic literacy and numeracy skills in rural youth and adults. In general, the content of these programs should i) account for the neurocognitive needs and abilities of youth and adults, ii) make the utility of learning obvious to participants by focusing on skills directly useful in their day-to-day lives, and iii) better accommodate participants by addressing the main barriers or opportunity costs to participation.[79] This could be in the form of monetary compensation, flexible timings and so on. Programs should also integrate basic digital literacy skills in the curriculum. The precise program design and implementation may vary based on countries and contexts, and will often require some adjustments in their formulation and implementation. Starting with pilot programs can point to program features that drive better

[79] (Aker et al., 2024). Refer to Box 2 in chapter 4.

outcomes, and are cost effective to scale-up. The evaluation of these programs—their impact on learning outcomes as well as welfare and labour market outcomes will be essential for effective policy design.

- Invest in vocational training programs, apprenticeships and sector specific training programs for rural youth. Training programmes that combine technical skills with business, leadership and other soft skills will be important for rural youth. In the emerging context of digitization, incorporating digital skills into training will also be necessary. Such programmes should be implemented with some discretion, as they can be expensive to implement correctly, and often see modest returns for participants. Considering factors such as access to markets, mobile phones, the levels of literacy and development that influence program outcomes is important in the planning and targeting process. Box 7 describes one such program currently underway in Benin.

Box 7: Benin's Azôli program for low education youth

The Azôli program was launched in 2021 by the government of Benin to provide youth between the ages of 15 and 30 with technical training and employment services. This active labour market program is designed especially for vulnerable youth with low education, with the objective to provide employment to 25,000 youth. The program also targets sectors that are of priority to the Benin government—textiles, cashew nut processing and other related activities. Implemented by the National Employment Agency (ANPE), in partnership with the World Bank as part of the Youth Inclusion Project (ProDIJ), the program has various components:

- Internships and apprenticeships in companies
- Technical and vocational training and professional skills certification
- Guaranteed jobs for youth who complete the process successfully
- Cash transfers to cover living expenses
- Free community childcare centres (*ECAE – Espaces Communautaire d'Accueil des Enfants*) for children of the young women participating in the program

Following a partnership with the management company of the Glo-Djigbé Industrial Zone (GDIZ), over 5,000 youth have been trained and recruited in the GDIZ's cashew processing and textile industries.

In addition, the program also supports the technical education, vocational training and apprenticeship systems in the country. This builds on the work of a previous project by the government concluded in 2019—the Benin Youth Employment Project (*PEJ -Projet Emploi des Jeunes)* that supported the apprenticeship system and provided 17,000 youth with business and socio-emotional skills training and a start-up grant.

Source: World Bank

- Strategic alignment of existing policy objectives with skills development and job creation for youth. For instance, the development of agricultural value chains, a key priority for the WAEMU, will entail the creation of specialized technical jobs (agrotechnology, supply chain management, etc.). Integrating these specific skills needs into broader national strategies for skills and youth employment will allow for targeted investments in capacity development in these concerned sectors. This approach aligns with the WAEMU Commission's Strategic Plan 2025-30, specifically Axis 3 which focuses on the promotion of human development and citizenship. Similarly, targeted investments in creating a skilled care workforce (see Box 5 in section 5.3) will serve to reduce women's burden of UCW and simultaneously create employment in the rural care economy.

6.2. Access to land

Access to land in the WAEMU is discussed in section 5 of the report. Improving land rights for rural youth is generally expected to increase investments in agricultural technology and shift surplus labour to off-farm activities. With this in mind, member countries could:

- Implement land reforms to secure land rights for individuals. Programs such as the *Plans Fonciers Ruraux* (PFR) in Benin could be implemented in other WAEMU countries, if such reforms do not already exist. Land reforms should be designed so that they enable women's inclusion in property rights. For instance, incentives or messaging can be effective nudges to increase co-titling of land to include women (See Box 3 in section 5).
- Integrate the monitoring of agricultural investments and rural labour outcomes into the evaluation mechanisms for land reform policies across the WAEMU. The importance of land rights is well recognized in the WAEMU, and the establishment of the *Observatoire régional du foncier rural en Afrique de l'Ouest* (Regional Observatory of Rural Land in West Africa)—ORFAO—as a knowledge hub for the monitoring and evaluation of national land policies marks an essential starting point. Evaluations of pilot programs for land access can help inform program design as reforms are scaled-up to a country level. At the regional level, evaluations can also facilitate knowledge and experience sharing between countries.

6.3. Access to markets

In addition to digital connectivity, physical access to markets can also be improved. In Section 5 we see that distance from roads and road quality are important barriers cited by farmers to selling their produce. Non-agricultural enterprises similarly face constraints sourcing raw materials and finding clients. Improving access to markets can therefore contribute to the welfare of rural populations. To that end, it will be beneficial to continue to:

- Invest in transport infrastructure. This includes investments that reduce the time and costs of access to larger markets, especially road infrastructure that will connect rural areas to the nearest secondary cities, towns and urban centres.
- Invest in basic market infrastructure in urban and semi-urban areas. Complement investments in transportation by developing storage capacities, food transformation centres and marketplaces in

urban centres, to improve logistics and better manage the inflow of goods and people from rural areas.

6.4. Bridging the digital divide

The impact of mobile phones and access to the internet is a recurring theme in the report. Section 4 discusses the emerging evidence from Africa showing the welfare benefits of mobile connectivity for households. For individuals, mobile connectivity is associated with improvements to labour force participation, and labour outcomes in general. Better internet accessibility can partly reduce the negative effect of large cohort sizes and improve the probability that youth find a salaried job (Bandiera et al., 2022). In Section 5 we review how mobile connectivity enables access to market information, agricultural extension services, and financial services. For countries with low levels of transformation in particular, mobile connectivity can bring large employment dividends and holds the greatest potential to support the scaling up of digital innovations in agriculture and related sectors (financial sector, education, health, etc.) (Aker & Cariolle, 2023). As shown in a previous companion report (Cariolle & Carroll, 2024b), mobile phones are ubiquitous but internet access in rural areas still remains limited in the WAEMU—14% of rural youth reported having access to the internet, compared to 62% of their urban counterparts. To bridge this digital divide, the WAEMU states can:

- Develop digital infrastructure so as to expand mobile internet access[80] in rural areas. Reducing the cost of internet services, which are prohibitively high for rural populations, is also crucial to harnessing the potential of digitization. Moreover, digital financial services, notably mobile money can play an important role in financial inclusion of rural populations. The extension and densification of mobile money agent networks, the key human infrastructure of mobile money and banking systems, is essential to accelerate the financial inclusion of rural youth (Aker & Carroll, 2022). This will necessitate investments from both the public and private sectors, while governments have an important role to play in a regulatory capacity.
- Promote digital literacy skills in the rural population. Integrate basic digital literacy skills in national education, skills and employment strategies. In Niger, for example, training in the use of mobile phones was also found to have improved the reading, writing and arithmetic skills of the adults who benefited from it.

6.5. Investing in women's employment

In the WAEMU, young women in rural areas aged 15-24 constitute the largest segment of youth not engaged in education, employment, or training (NEET), surpassing their urban counterparts. Unpaid care work (UCW), encompassing domestic responsibilities and caregiving for family and community members, is a significant barrier first keeping rural women out of education and then out of the labour force. Section 5 (5.3) of the report elaborates on the impacts of unpaid care work on women, highlighting it as a primary deterrent to labour force participation. To ensure the inclusion of rural women, it is important to:

[80] The companion report Cariolle & Carroll (2024b) further addresses the question of policies for digitalization.

- Allocate resources to care policies that recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work. Care policies include leave policies, care services, social protection benefits related to care, family-friendly working arrangements and care-relevant infrastructure. Box 8 describes an ongoing pilot programme by UN Women in Senegal, aiming to reduce unpaid care work for rural women. Lessons from this and similar programs can be used to advocate for and inform care policies at local, national and regional levels in the WAEMU.
- Improve access to healthcare services in rural areas. In particular, better reproductive care and family planning services allow young rural women to have greater autonomy over their fertility choices. The unpaid care work burden of women is closely linked to the number of children women have. Health policies that reduce fertility rates will therefore serve to improve women's participation in the labour market.

Box 8: Rural women and unpaid care work: the 3R programme in Senegal

In rural areas, the lack of basic services and infrastructure increases the time spent by women on unpaid work considerably. A UN Women survey of 400 women farmers in Senegal revealed how their unpaid care duties, including domestic work, caring for family members and community activities, dominated their daily schedules and how income-generating activities had to be planned around these responsibilities. Furthermore, 45% of women were also responsible for the care of a disabled or chronically ill family member.

The *Transformative Approaches to Recognizing, Reducing and Redistributing (3R) Unpaid Care Work in Women's Economic Empowerment* programme, launched by UN Women in Northern Senegal in 2021 has since worked to address these challenges by:

- Supporting 13 municipalities to integrate unpaid care needs into Local Development Plans.
- Tailoring health insurance products to the needs of rural women, allowing 1,000 women to enrol in the national health insurance system, to cover expenses and income loss due to illness in the household.
- Partnering with private actors to design and adapt products and services for rural women, to improve access to health insurance, financial services, productive assets and agricultural inputs.
- Provision of energy-efficient, labour and time saving technologies (millets mills, rice huskers, stoves, etc.) for 5,000 women.
- Setting up of 22 women-run community creches to provide childcare services.

The programme uses a participatory approach, engaging local actors and communities to identify problems and develop solutions. Results and insights from the programme are also used to inform policy dialogue on care policies at the national and regional level, with a view to scale up the pilot project and eventually expand to other countries in the region.

Source: Case Study: A bottom-up approach to care policy and programming: The case of the 3R programme addressing unpaid care needs of rural women in Senegal (UN Women WCARO, 2023).

- Promote gender-inclusive education policies. Education policies that are successful in keeping girls in school longer increase the likelihood that girls and adolescents have the necessary skills and training to be employable as youth and adults in the future. This mix of policies may spur a virtuous circle in the long run since, as women's employment options improve, the relative cost of bearing children is expected to increase.

"No substantive progress can be made in achieving gender equality in the labour force before inequalities in unpaid care work are first tackled through the effective recognition, reduction and redistribution of unpaid care work between women and men, as well as between families and the state." (ILO, 2018).

6.6. Preparing for the informal sector

The informal sector constitutes a significant share of employment across both agricultural and non-agricultural sectors within the WAEMU region, particularly in rural areas. This trend is likely to persist, underscoring the necessity to adapt and provide adequate support to these sectors. Some recommendations:

- Adapt the design of national social protection policies to include informal sector workers.
- Develop trainings and certifications to enable upskilling and formalization of skills for youth employed in informal sectors. For sectors with a significant employment potential such as the Household Enterprise (HE) and Artisanal and Small-scale mining (ASM) sectors, identify and train youth in the skills necessary to be more productive in these sectors. For instance, youth in the household enterprise sector could benefit from training in business and management skills, non-cognitive skills, use of ICT, etc. Miners on the other hand could benefit from investments in Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) trainings.
- Flexible policies for the regulation and formalization of HEs. Policies need to reflect the fluidity and diversity of the activities in these sectors. National registration may not always be necessary or efficient, so a localized governance approach might be appropriate.

6.7. Good practices in development policy management

6.7.1. Coordination across ministries and governments

Rural youth employment is a multidimensional issue requiring coordinated action from different ministries and departments—among others, agriculture, labour, women and gender, education and human capital. This inter-ministerial coordination is crucial for a coherent policy response, minimizing duplications and contradictions in policy responses. A common way to achieve coordination across ministries is through an inter-ministerial committee, preferably one constituted by civil servants (over political appointees) to ensure continuity (OECD, 2016). This is part of a broader whole-of-government approach for the effective design and implementation of policies, consisting of sustaining programs and initiatives across political cycles, coordinating efforts across government bodies and evidence-based policy and program design (World Bank, 2019). At the WAEMU level, this also entails closer coordination across member states, ensuring a cohesive regional response, and also allowing for knowledge-sharing and a leveraging of collective expertise between countries.

6.7.2. Invest in data collection and knowledge generation

Effectively addressing rural youth employment within the WAEMU zone requires a deeper understanding of youth's employment situation, educational background, skill sets, working conditions, and mobility patterns. Moreover, a framework for continuous learning from existing data and programs will allow for evidence-based policy making. To that end, it is important to continue to:

- **Invest in continuous and high-quality data collection that is gender-disaggregated.** Harmonized, nationally representative surveys such as the EHCVM *(Enquête Harmonisée sur le Conditions de Vie des Ménages*) and the ESI-ERI (*l'Enquête Régionale Intégrée sur l'Emploi et le Secteur Informel*) carried out in the WAEMU provide a comprehensive picture of the WAEMU population and their living conditions, which aids in informed policy-making. They also point to a strong capacity of national statistical offices in the zone. Extending these efforts in harmonized data collection to include data on youth migration patterns, artisanal mining and other types of non-farm work will provide crucial insights for employment policies directed at rural youth.
- **Establish a system of monitoring and evaluation to assess the impact of interventions** such as land reform initiatives, labour market programs, and vocational training. This system would not only measure outcomes but also facilitate ongoing learning and improvement in these interventions. Ultimately, this approach ensures that programs are responsive to the actual needs and challenges faced by rural youth. This need for evaluation is recognized in the WAEMU Commission's Reference Manual for the Planning, Implementation and Feedback of Evaluations of UEMOA Commission Interventions, and the operationalisation of this manual will be an important step towards improving the effectiveness of policy interventions.

6.7.3. Mainstreaming gender in policy

The findings from our report clearly indicate that young women and girls face systemic disadvantages compared to their male counterparts across several key indicators: educational attainment, labour market outcomes, digital connectivity, and access to productive assets and services. These disparities are rooted in social norms and traditional gender roles, substantial time spent on unpaid care work, and a cascading effect from limited educational opportunities to restricted employment prospects.

Given these differences**, rural youth employment policies must be tailored to address the unique constraints faced by women**, which differ significantly from those faced by men. These constraints include differences in time availability, resource access, and mobility, which are often overlooked in policy formulation. To avoid the pitfalls of gender-blind policies—which not only fail to address these issues but can exacerbate women's exclusion—it is crucial to adopt a gender-responsive approach from the outset. This includes the systematic collection of gender-disaggregated data and the implementation of policies that actively consider gender-specific dynamics in the labour market.

Recognizing the necessity of gender mainstreaming, the WAEMU Commission's Gender Strategy (2018-2027) and the ongoing efforts of the Commission's Gender Division to integrate gender considerations into public policies through the *Schéma organisationnel Type d'Institutionnalisation du Genre (STIG)* (Organisational Framework for the Institutionalization of Gender) across WAEMU member states are commendable. However, achieving a broader focus on gender across all divisions and ministries—in policy and practice, remains a long-term endeavour, and there is still a long way to go.

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Appendix

Figure A.1: Population pyramid of the WAEMU (2024)

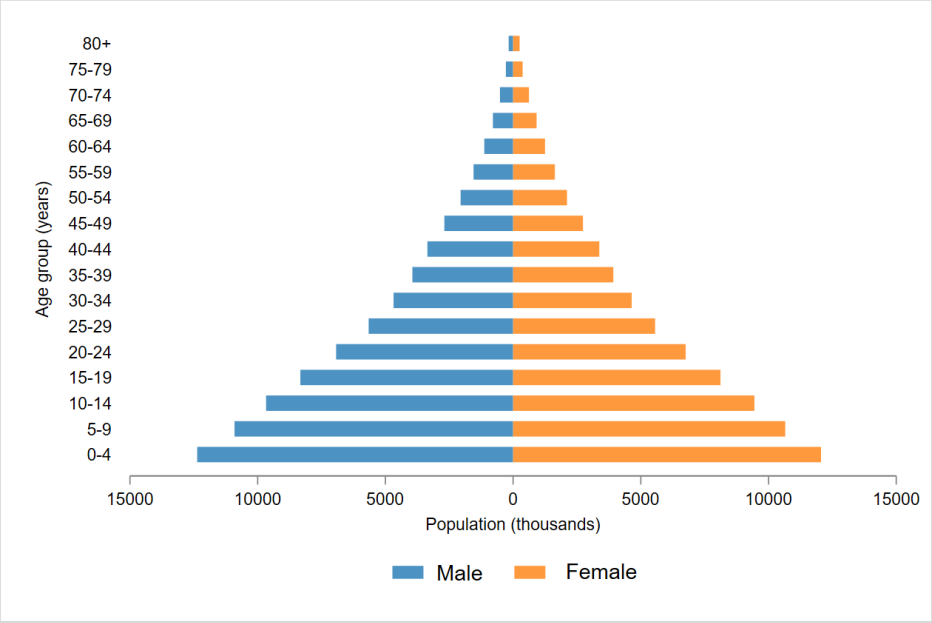


Figure A.2: Population pyramids by region

Table A.1: Level of education of youth (15-34 years) by country, rural

	BEN	BFA	CIV	GNB	MLI	NER	SEN	TGO	Total
No	50.39	63.69	60.90	40.44	69.47	72.89	61.66	29.91	57.07
Primary, Nursery	17.26	15.83	20.30	50.44	25.07	14.39	15.00	26.36	23.43
Secondary, post-secondary	30.58	20.31	18.32	8.75	4.59	12.55	22.50	42.01	18.77
Tertiary	1.77	0.17	0.48	0.37	0.88	0.17	0.84	1.72	0.73
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

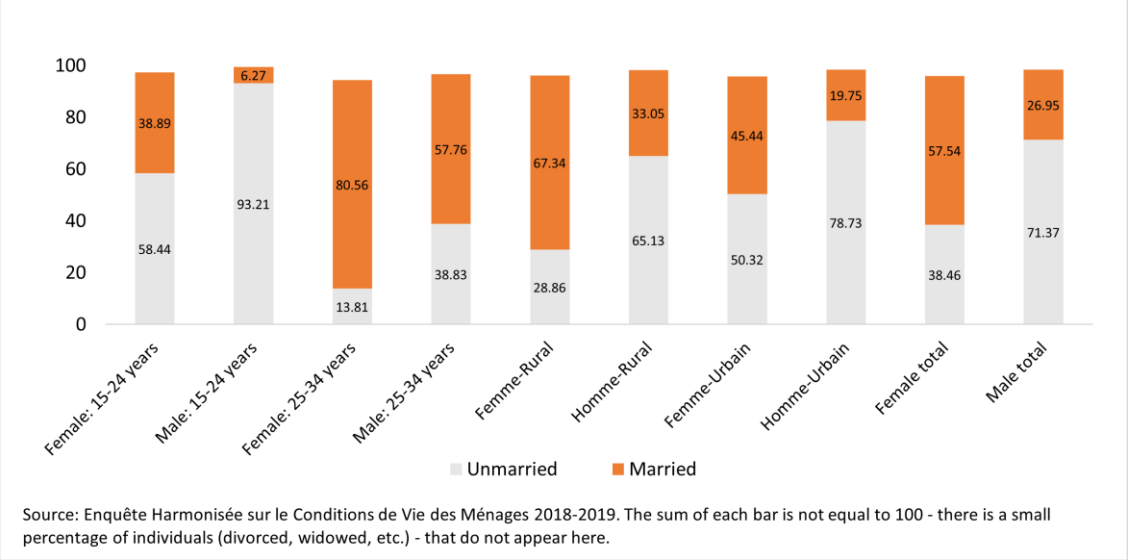
Source: Enquête Harmonisée sur le Conditions de Vie des Ménages 2018-2019. Values in percentages by column.

Table A.2: Level of education of youth (15-34 years) by country, urban

	BEN	BFA	CIV	GNB	MLI	NER	SEN	TGO	Total
No	30.56	27.89	36.30	16.37	36.37	27.95	33.77	9.01	29.42
Primary, Nursery	18.06	17.47	15.76	46.69	33.81	18.62	17.97	17.49	22.92
Secondary, post-secondary	42.51	49.42	44.40	31.93	21.43	48.18	42.68	62.61	41.49
Tertiary	8.87	5.22	3.54	5.02	8.38	5.24	5.57	10.89	6.17
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Enquête Harmonisée sur le Conditions de Vie des Ménages 2018-2019. Values in percentages by column.

Figure A.3: Civil status of youth by age, gender and urban/rural location



Source: Enquête Harmonisée sur le Conditions de Vie des Ménages 2018-2019. The sum of each bar is not equal to 100 - there is a small percentage of individuals (divorced, widowed, etc.) - that do not appear here.

Figure A.4: Labour force participation rate—working age population (15-64 years)

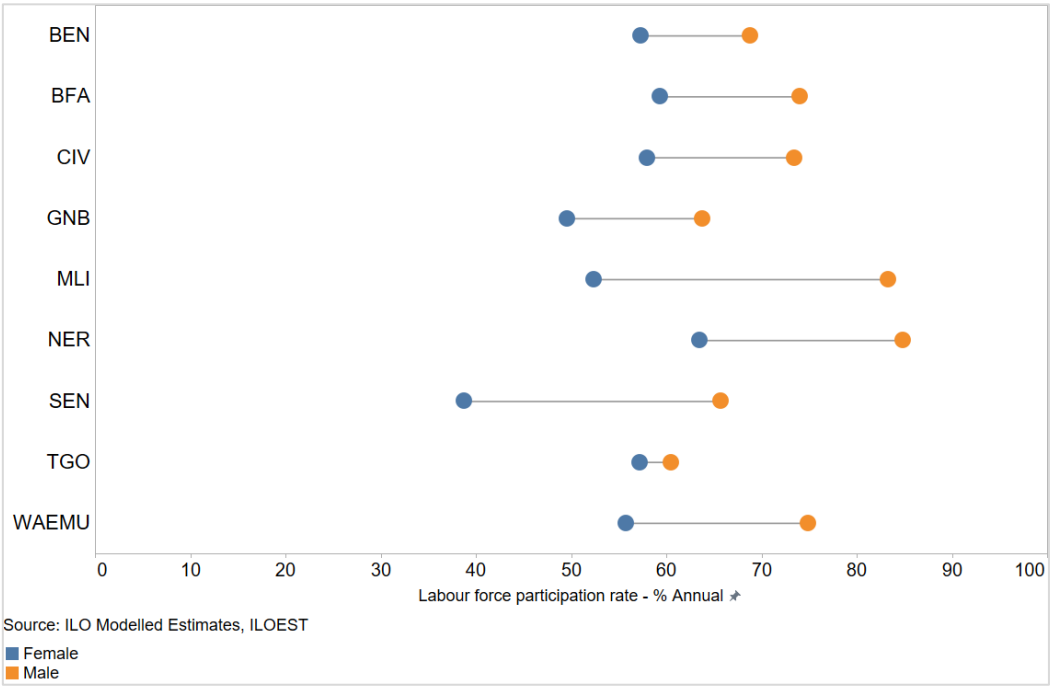


Table A.3: Youth (15-34 years) access to internet by country, rural

Individual with internet access									
	BEN	BFA	CIV	GNB	MLI	NER	SEN	TGO	Total
No	91.66	97.33	91.08	92.95	94.03	96.32	77.62	92.69	91.18
Yes	8.34	2.67	8.92	7.05	5.97	3.68	22.38	7.31	8.82
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

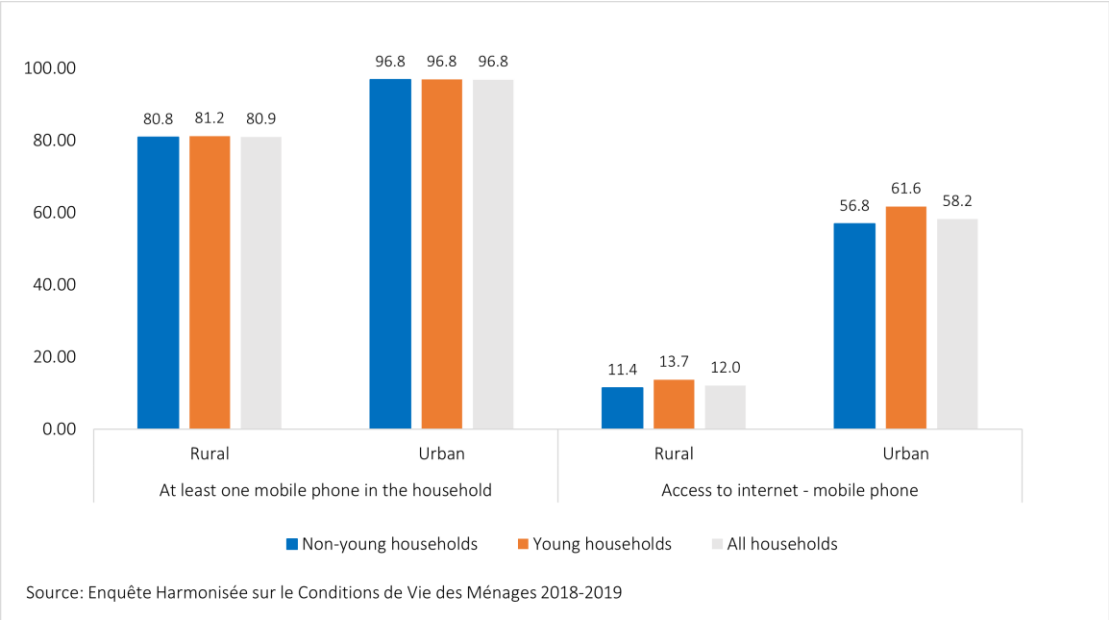
Source: Enquête Harmonisée sur le Conditions de Vie des Ménages 2018-2019. Values in percentages by column.

Table A.4: Youth (15-34 years) access to internet by country, urban

Individual with internet access									
	BEN	BFA	CIV	GNB	MLI	NER	SEN	TGO	Total
No	73.37	71.69	62.35	64.91	63.83	65.16	50.81	57.67	62.58
Yes	26.63	28.31	37.65	35.09	36.17	34.84	49.19	42.33	37.42
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Enquête Harmonisée sur le Conditions de Vie des Ménages 2018-2019. Values in percentages by column.

Figure A.5: Access to mobile phones and internet—young and non-young households



Source: Enquête Harmonisée sur le Conditions de Vie des Ménages 2018-2019

Table A.5: Active rural youth (15-34 years) employed in agriculture, by country

Branch, main job: agriculture, livestock farming, fishing									
	BEN	BFA	CIV	GNB	MLI	NER	SEN	TGO	Total
No	45.83	12.02	22.32	15.92	23.67	14.85	42.94	33.53	24.58
Yes	54.17	87.98	77.68	84.08	76.33	85.15	57.06	66.47	75.42
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Enquête Harmonisée sur le Conditions de Vie des Ménages 2018-2019. Values in percentages by column.

Table A.6: Active rural youth (15-24 years) employed in agriculture, by country

Branch, main job: agriculture, livestock farming, fishing									
	BEN	BFA	CIV	GNB	MLI	NER	SEN	TGO	Total
No	43.19	8.44	20.57	12.30	19.25	10.81	36.14	28.64	20.34
Yes	56.81	91.56	79.43	87.70	80.75	89.19	63.86	71.36	79.66
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Enquête Harmonisée sur le Conditions de Vie des Ménages 2018-2019. Values in percentages by column.

Table A.7: Active rural youth (25-34 years) employed in agriculture, by country

Branch, main job: agriculture, livestock farming, fishing	BEN	BFA	CIV	GNB	MLI	NER	SEN	TGO	Total
No	48.15	16.24	23.68	19.71	28.35	19.65	49.67	37.33	28.73
Yes	51.85	83.76	76.32	80.29	71.65	80.35	50.33	62.67	71.27
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Enquête Harmonisée sur le Conditions de Vie des Ménages 2018-2019. Values in percentages by column.

Table A.8: Active rural youth (15-34 years) employed in agriculture, by country, women

Branch, main job: agriculture, livestock farming, fishing	BEN	BFA	CIV	GNB	MLI	NER	SEN	TGO	Total
No	53.28	11.31	25.17	13.81	27.64	12.92	42.01	37.86	25.64
Yes	46.72	88.69	74.83	86.19	72.36	87.08	57.99	62.14	74.36
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Enquête Harmonisée sur le Conditions de Vie des Ménages 2018-2019. Values in percentages by column.

Table A.9: Active rural youth (15-34 years) employed in agriculture, by country, men

Branch, main job: agriculture, livestock farming, fishing	BEN	BFA	CIV	GNB	MLI	NER	SEN	TGO	Total
No	36.69	12.86	19.81	18.12	21.33	16.92	43.57	28.46	23.56
Yes	63.31	87.14	80.19	81.88	78.67	83.08	56.43	71.54	76.44
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Enquête Harmonisée sur le Conditions de Vie des Ménages 2018-2019. Values in percentages by column.

Figure A.6: Rural households without individually managed plots

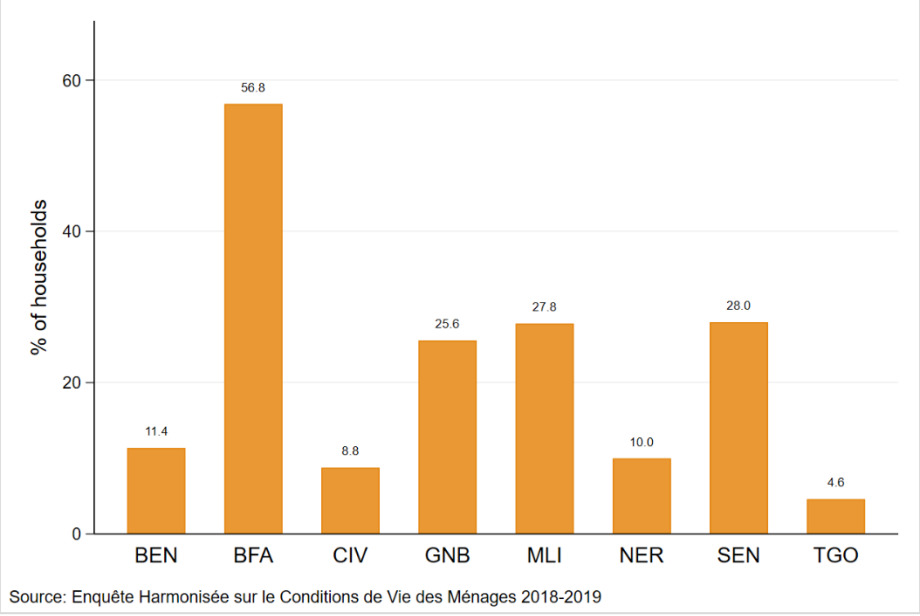


Figure A.7: Management method of plots of rural households

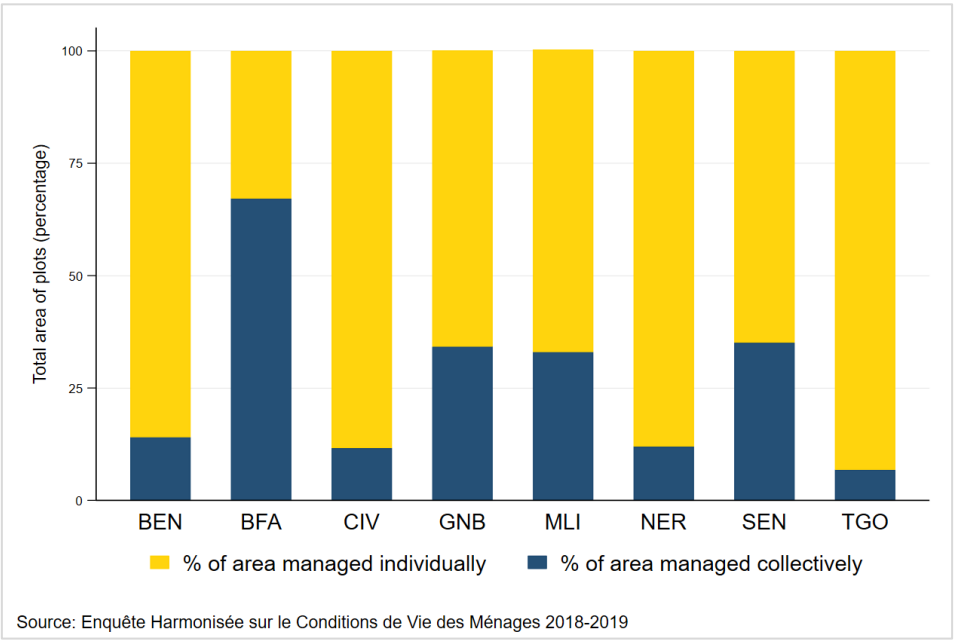


Table A.10: Occupancy status of plots farmed by youth (15-34 years)

16A.10.									
	BEN	BFA	CIV	GNB	MLI	NER	SEN	TGO	Total
Other	0.00	0.83	2.45	1.47	0.16	2.26	4.19	0.84	1.57
Lease (Fermage)	4.81	1.25	1.98	0.21	0.32	1.30	1.52	7.68	2.84
Pledge (Gage)	1.24	0.00	0.48	0.14	0.48	1.50	0.51	0.42	0.60
Sharecropping (Métayage)	2.06	0.42	3.06	0.28	0.00	1.85	1.27	5.77	2.42
Owner	67.17	59.02	81.87	87.42	90.43	74.23	71.07	58.61	73.28
Free loan	24.73	38.49	10.16	10.48	8.61	18.87	21.45	26.68	19.29
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Enquête Harmonisée sur le Conditions de Vie des Ménages 2018-2019. Values in percentages by column.

Table A.11: Method of acquisition of plots farmed by young people (15-34 years)

16A.12.									
	BEN	BFA	CIV	GNB	MLI	NER	SEN	TGO	Total
Purchase	2.86	0.99	11.09	4.64	1.06	6.45	0.71	2.22	5.41
Other	0.00	0.14	1.79	7.35	0.53	1.29	5.54	0.00	2.08
Gift	11.04	23.24	20.27	14.95	16.40	10.50	14.11	6.83	15.07
Inheritance	83.54	57.89	64.51	68.82	78.31	76.61	73.93	87.37	72.79
Marriage	2.56	17.75	2.33	4.24	3.70	5.16	5.71	3.57	4.65
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Enquête Harmonisée sur le Conditions de Vie des Ménages 2018-2019. Values in percentages by column.

Table A.12: Plots farmed by youth (15-34 years)—a legal document to confirm possession

16A.13									
	BEN	BFA	CIV	GNB	MLI	NER	SEN	TGO	Total
None	94.07	96.06	85.10	97.76	96.12	96.87	93.21	97.93	93.13
Other	0.00	0.00	0.16	0.08	0.18	0.00	1.25	0.00	0.14
Lease	0.00	0.14	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.36	0.00	0.04
Sales agreement	2.66	0.00	5.53	0.16	0.35	0.74	0.36	1.51	2.24
Operating permit	1.12	0.00	1.60	0.08	1.06	0.00	3.39	0.40	0.92
Procès-verbal	1.23	0.28	2.53	0.56	2.12	0.18	0.18	0.08	1.14
Land rights	0.92	3.52	5.06	1.36	0.18	2.21	1.25	0.08	2.38
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Enquête Harmonisée sur le Conditions de Vie des Ménages 2018-2019. Values in percentages by column.

Figure A.8: Share of irrigated plots of rural households

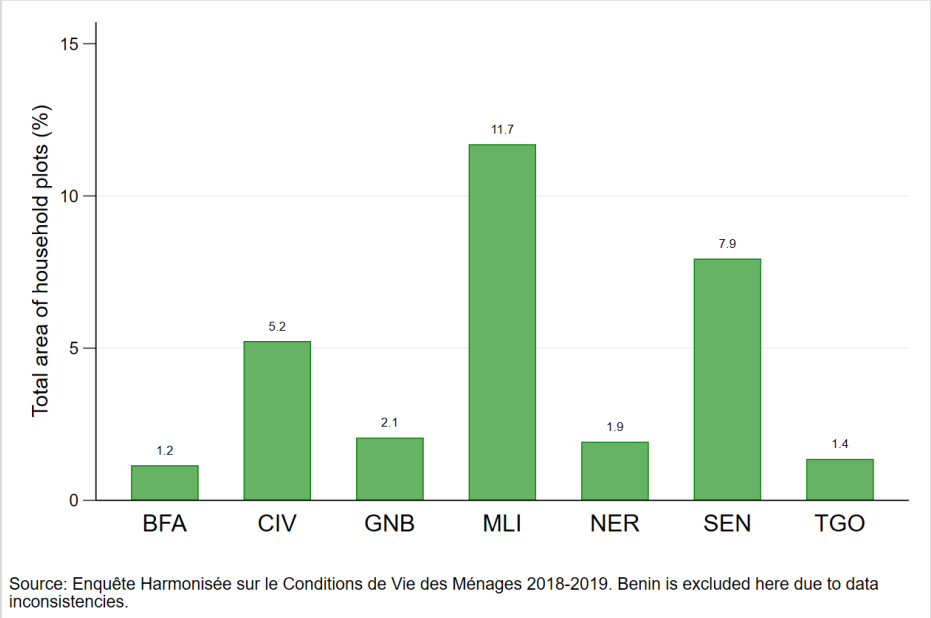


Table A.13: Rural youth with a traditional bank account

	BEN	BFA	CIV	GNB	MLI	NER	SEN	TGO	Total
No	98.01	99.21	98.62	99.05	99.19	99.83	98.43	98.61	98.85
Yes	1.99	0.79	1.38	0.95	0.81	0.17	1.57	1.39	1.15
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Enquête Harmonisée sur le Conditions de Vie des Ménages 2018-2019. Values in percentages by column.

Table A.14: Rural youth with a mobile banking account

	BEN	BFA	CIV	GNB	MLI	NER	SEN	TGO	Total
No	84.07	88.15	71.96	98.53	96.80	99.95	94.03	90.14	89.76
Yes	15.93	11.85	28.04	1.47	3.20	0.05	5.97	9.86	10.24
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Enquête Harmonisée sur le Conditions de Vie des Ménages 2018-2019. Values in percentages by column.

Figure A.9: Forms of work, 19th International Conference on Labour Statistics (ICLS) of the ILO

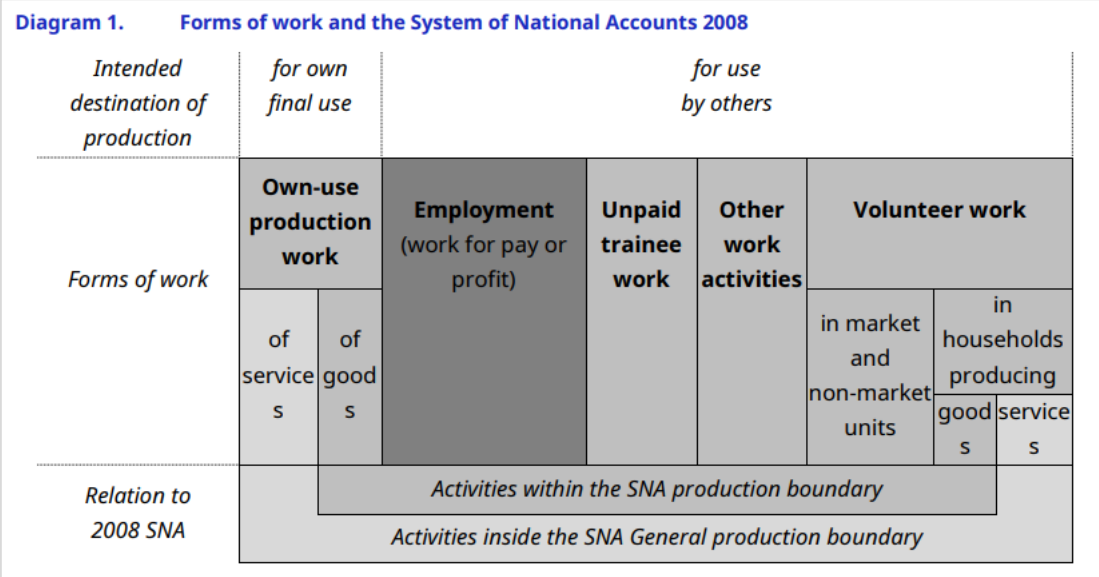


Figure A.10: Median time spent on unpaid work by youth, by gender

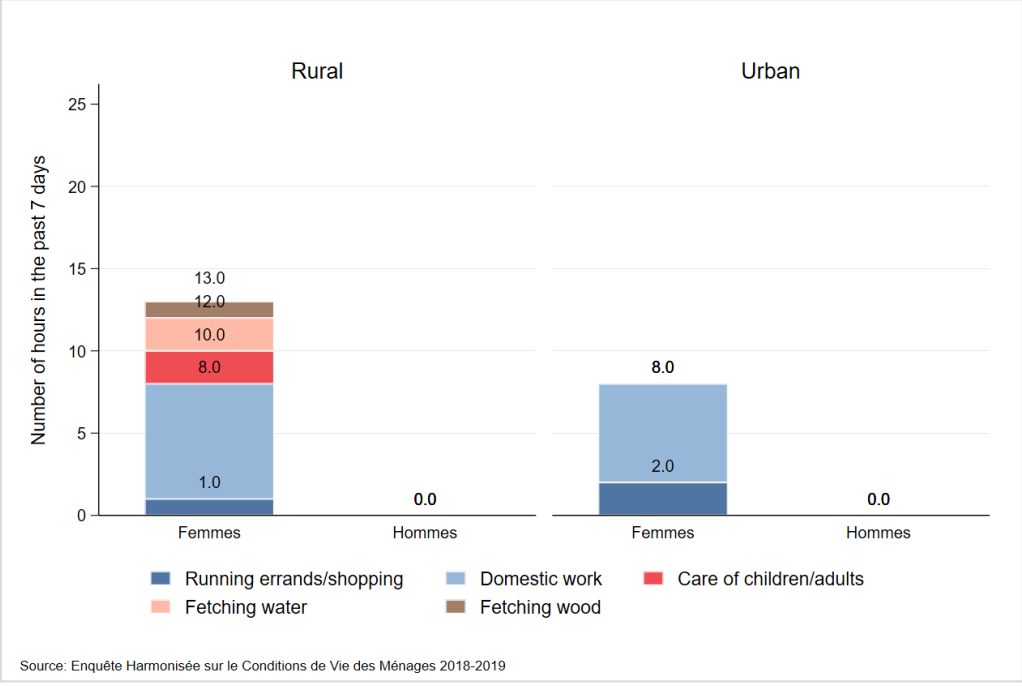
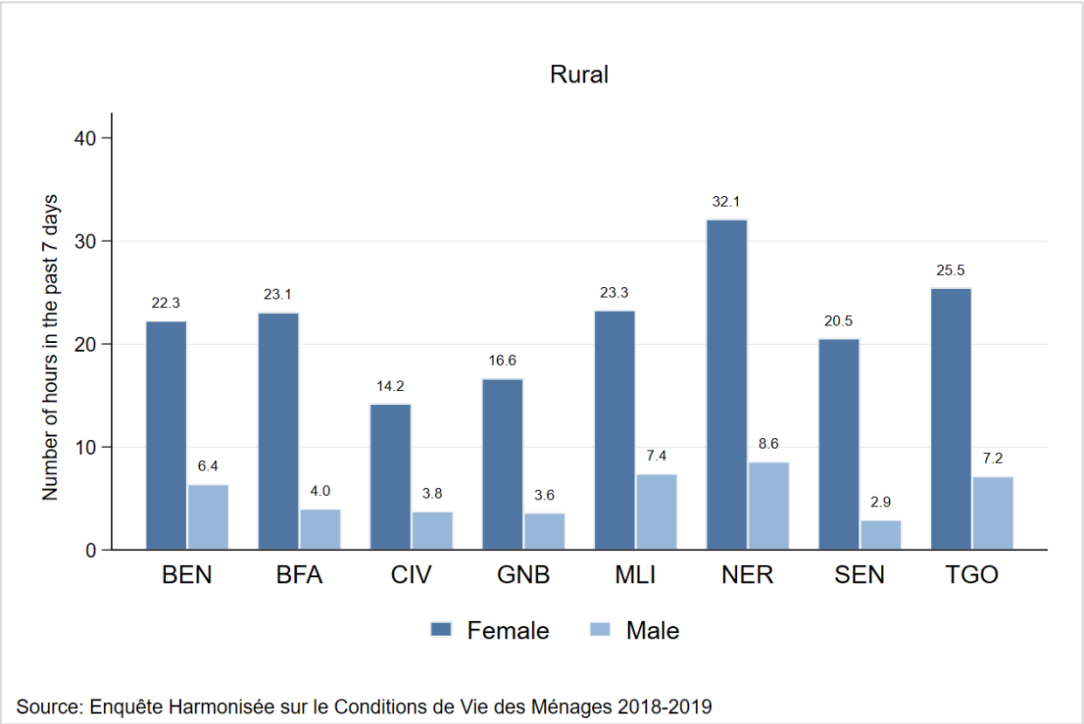
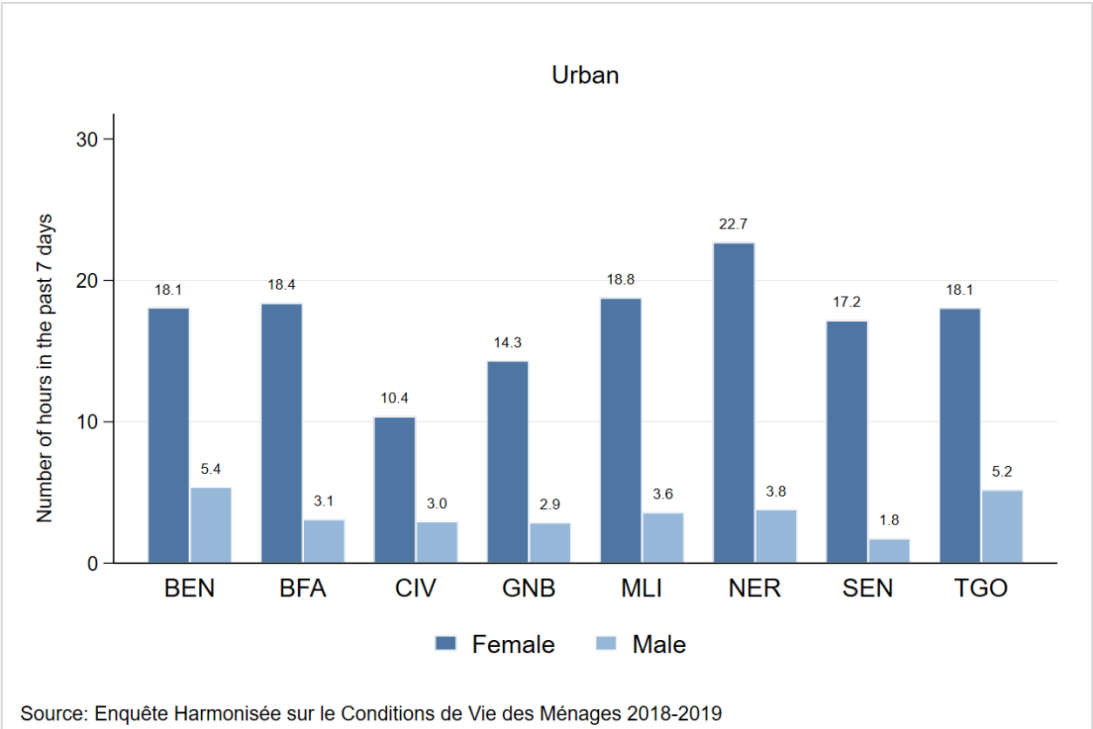


Figure A.11: Average time spent on unpaid work by rural youth, by country



Source: Enquête Harmonisée sur le Conditions de Vie des Ménages 2018-2019

Figure A.12: Average time spent on unpaid work by urban youth, by country



Source: Enquête Harmonisée sur le Conditions de Vie des Ménages 2018-2019

Figure A.13: Definition of the care workforce

This report identifies care workers using both the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO 08 or previous versions)[9] and the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC Revision 4 or previous versions)[10] at the two-digit level. Based on ISCO 08, care workers are those classified under the following care occupations: 22 – Health professionals; 23 – Teaching professionals; 32 – Health associate professionals; and 53 – Personal care workers. There are other care occupations classified under 13 – Production and specialized services managers; 26 – Legal, social and cultural professionals; 34 – Legal, social, cultural and related associate professionals; 51 – Personal service workers; and 91 – Cleaners and helpers. These are captured indirectly by combining ISCO and ISIC codes.

Based on ISIC Revision 4, care sectors are: 85 – Education; 86 – Human health activities; 87 – Residential care activities; and 88 – Social work activities without accommodation. Note that both public and private service providers operating in these sectors are covered by this classification. Combining care occupations with care sectors, it is possible to identify care workers working in care sectors and care workers working in other sectors, as well as non-care workers working in care sectors.

Domestic workers are identified by the ISIC code 97: activities of households as employers of domestic personnel, without differentiating between occupations within this industrial code.[11]

Note: See Appendix A.4.1 for further details.

Sources: ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation (No. 202), 2012; UN, 2008.

Source: Care work and care jobs for the future of decent work, ILO (2018)

Figure A.14: Care work in relation to the 19th ICLS Resolution I

<table>
<tr><td>Intended destination of production</td><td colspan="3">For own final use</td><td colspan="6">For use by others</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Forms of work in the 19th ICLS Resolution I</td><td colspan="3" rowspan="2">Own-use production work</td><td colspan="3" rowspan="2">Employment</td><td rowspan="2">Unpaid trainee work</td><td rowspan="2">Other work activities</td><td colspan="3">Volunteer work</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">in market and non-market units</td><td colspan="2">in households producing</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Of services</td><td>Of goods</td><td colspan="3"></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>Goods</td><td>Services</td></tr>
<tr><td>ICATUS 2016</td><td>4. Unpaid caregiving services for household and family members</td><td>3. Unpaid domestic services for household and family members</td><td>2. Production of goods for own final use</td><td colspan="3">1. Employment and related activities</td><td colspan="2">5. Unpaid volunteer, trainee and other unpaid work</td><td colspan="3"></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>11. Employment in corporations, government and non-profit institutions</td><td>12. Employment in household enterprisesto produce goods</td><td>13. Employment in household and household enterprises to provide services</td><td>53. Unpaid trainee work and related activities</td><td>59. Other unpaid work activities[25]</td><td colspan="3">51. Unpaid direct volunteering for other households
52. Unpaid community- and organization-based volunteering</td></tr>
<tr><td>Type of work</td><td colspan="3">Unpaid work</td><td colspan="3">Work for pay or profit</td><td colspan="5">Unpaid work</td></tr>
<tr><td>Type of care work</td><td colspan="3">Unpaid care work
(as a subset of Unpaid work, comprising care of persons and household work)</td><td colspan="3">“Care employment” to provide care services in care occupations and/or care sectors
(as a subset of Employment)</td><td>Unpaid trainee care work to provide care services in care occupations or care sectors
(as a subset of Unpaid trainee work)</td><td></td><td colspan="3">Volunteer care work
(as a subset of Volunteer work)</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="3"></td><td colspan="3"></td><td></td><td></td><td colspan="2">Unpaid community- and organization-based volunteering to provide care services in care occupations or care sectors</td><td>Unpaid direct volunteering for other households to provide care services akin to unpaid care work</td></tr>
<tr><td>Relation to SNA 2008</td><td colspan="10">Activities within the SNA production boundary
Activities within the SNA general production boundary</td></tr>
</table>

Note: In orange, forms of care work and their relation to the 19th ICLS Resolution I, the International Classification of Time Use Activities (ICATUS) 2016 and the System of National Accounts (SNA) 2008. In yellow, their relation to the general types of work: “Unpaid work” and “Work for pay or profit”. “Unpaid care work” matches the ICLS form of work “Own-use production work of services”. “Care employment”, “Unpaid trainee care work” and “Volunteer care work” are, respectively, subcategories of “Employment”, “Unpaid trainee work” and “Volunteer work”.

Source: Care work and care jobs for the future of decent work, ILO (2018)

“Sur quoi la fondera-t-il l’économie du monde qu’il veut gouverner ? Sera-ce sur le caprice de chaque particulier ? Quelle confusion ! Sera-ce sur la justice ? Il l’ignore.”

Pascal

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www.ferdi.fr
contact@ferdi.fr
+33 (0)4 43 97 64 60