



pep
partnership for
economic
policy

PEP in Africa

Promoting policies for inclusive growth
and sustainable development

Africa on the move....

After many years of stagnation, African economies have started registering rapid and sustained growth during the past decade.

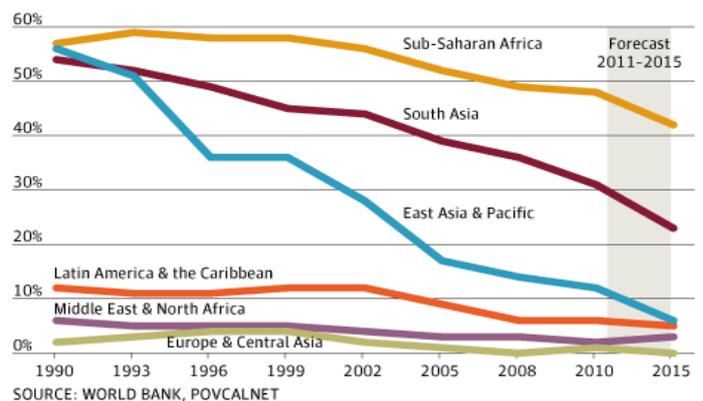
The average real GDP growth rate was 4% in 2013 and is projected to expand to 4.7% in 2014 (compared to 5.1% average for all developing regions). About 25% of countries in the region have achieved growth rates of 7% or higher in 2014, and several African countries are currently amongst the fastest growing countries in the world^{1,2}. This has created a high degree of enthusiasm and assurance for Africa in overcoming poverty and attaining major development goals.

Growth has however been variable across the different countries and regions. It has been highest in West Africa, followed by Eastern and Central Africa and Southern Africa, while it has declined in North Africa over the past few years, due to political and civil unrest. Performance has been high in resource rich, oil- and mineral-exporting countries, although many oil-importing countries have also made substantial progress.

The slowdown after 2008 was mainly due to weakened global demand following the financial and debt crisis in the euro area, sluggish growth in

Poverty rates

Population living on \$1.25 per day



some emerging economies, and political instability and civil unrest in major commodity-producing countries (especially in Central and North Africa).

Africa's recent growth has been driven by commodity production and exports. As well, telecommunications, access to infrastructures, markets and financial services in countries such as Ghana, Kenya and Nigeria have really improved. Growth in Africa continued to benefit from relatively high commodity prices, increased trade and investment ties with emerging economies, greater domestic demand underpinned by new, urbanizing consumers with rising incomes, public spending on infrastructure and improved economic governance and management¹.





Critical challenges remain...

While Africa has made significant progress in reducing poverty and meeting the MDGs, growth has not been as powerful in reducing poverty as it could have been because of the high levels of inequality. Although real GDP growth has been robust, in per capita terms, Africa still lags behind other developing regions, such as East Asia and the Pacific and the Latin America and Caribbean countries.

In 2010, 414 million people were living in extreme poverty in sub-Saharan Africa. According to the World Bank, those living on \$1.25-a-day accounted for 48.5% of the population in that region in 2010³. Many countries are on track but still far from meeting global development goals: serious development challenges remain in many countries - especially in terms of translating economic growth into decent job opportunities, as well as minimizing income, gender and spatial inequalities⁴.

Moreover, rural-urban migration and the growing youth unemployment challenge continue to undermine progress and threaten peace and security in many parts of Africa. In 1980, only 28%

of Africans lived in cities. Today, 40% of the continent's one billion people live in cities. By 2030, this share is projected to rise to 50%. Also, 11 million youth are expected to enter Africa's labor market each year over the next decade⁵.

Political instability is as well a permanent threat to economic activity in several countries including, Tunisia, Egypt, Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and South Sudan.

A priority must be given by the governments to the implementation of appropriate economic policies for youth employment and investment in education and health. These trends also make inclusive growth, as a means for eradicating poverty and promoting shared prosperity, an important policy objective in Africa. Significant reduction in poverty and eradicating extreme poverty by 2030 will require inclusive growth, i.e. to ensure that the poor contribute to and benefit from the growth process. Such growth also needs to be rich in job creation, and contribute to strengthening resilience of livelihoods in facing market and climatic shocks.

1. UN- ECA (2014). Economic Report on Africa. United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
2. AfDB (2013). African Development Report 2012. African Development Bank, Tunis, Tunisia
3. World Bank (2011). World Development Indicators database. <http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/world-development-indicators>.
4. ECA, AUC, AfDB and UNDP (2013). MDG Report 2013, Assessing Progress in Africa towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
5. World Bank (2009). Youth and Employment in Africa – The Potential, the Problem, the Promise. World Bank, Washington, DC.

The **Partnership for Economic Policy (PEP)** is a non-profit international organization that links researchers and institutions globally to enhance capacity for development policy analysis in developing countries. As a hub of expertise, knowledge and innovation in the field of economic and development policy analysis in developing countries, PEP research in Africa contributes to the continent's development strategy and priorities.



PEP in Africa and in the world

The core mission of PEP is to inform relevant development policy debates and decision-making based on reliable scientific evidence, while enhancing the capacity of local researchers in developing countries to produce such evidence. Since its creation in 2002, PEP has contributed to building the scientific expertise of more than 600 local analysts in 54 different countries in the developing world, through the support of nearly 200 research projects related to a variety of poverty and socioeconomic issues. **Nearly half (90) of these projects were implemented in Africa, involving more than 330 local researchers based in 24 different countries.**

Leveraging partnerships

The program-level priorities of PEP activities in the region are defined by the developmental aspirations and objectives of African countries themselves; these priorities are strongly aligned with and contribute to the strategic objectives of leading African institutions, including the African Union Commission, AU-NEPAD, African Development Bank, UN-Economic Commission for Africa and other regional and sub-regional organizations.

Addressing a broad range of issues and challenges

The success of PEP activities in developing regions is mainly due to the effectiveness of its unique and manifold research "Grant Plus" support program. In addition to research funding, resources and various technical tools, this program provides young African researchers with training and ongoing scientific support/mentoring in the conduct of rigorous and high quality analysis projects (see page 4).

The 90 projects supported by PEP in Africa between 2002 and 2013 address a great variety of country-specific and policy-relevant issues that contribute to the continent's development strategy and priorities for meeting the MDGs.

The MDG areas covered by PEP research in Africa include:

- Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger – MDG 1
- Achieving universal primary education – MDG 2
- Promoting gender equality and empowering women – MDG 3
- Reducing child mortality – MDG 4
- Improving maternal health – MDG 5

More than **70 PEP research papers** – as well as numerous policy briefs and international peer-reviewed journal articles – related to these development challenges have been published and widely disseminated to policymakers, researchers, stakeholders and development partners across Africa.

MDG 1, in particular, has been the focus of a great number of PEP-supported projects in Africa. PEP now looks to expand significantly into supporting development policy in areas related to the sustainable development goals in the post-2015 policy agenda.



Building and promoting African expertise

International mentoring program

Researchers funded by PEP benefit from a unique research mentoring and capacity building program. This program includes ongoing distance training/assistance provided by PEP resource persons (international experts) over a period of 12 to 36 months, as well as a 3-4 weeks study visit with/at an international institution, chosen by the beneficiaries.

Since 2002, over **330 African researchers** have benefited from the PEP mentoring program, and **40** of them (45% of PEP projects supported in Africa) have conducted study visits in various prestigious institutions around the world, e.g., Laval University (Canada), the University of Michigan (USA), IFPRI (Washington DC, USA), GREQAM (Marseille, France), etc.

Intensive training programs

The PEP Schools are intensive programs that offer advanced and accelerated training in the most updated concepts, tools and methodologies in development economics and policy research. The courses – offered either in English or French – are tailored for researchers, practitioners and/or students who wish to conduct rigorous scientific analysis on wider issues related to micro- and/or macro-economic development policies in developing countries. Since 2008, over a **dozen PEP schools** have been held in seven different countries in Africa.

Linking research evidence with action, through...

policy dialogue, engagement and influence

In order to ensure policy relevance, responsiveness and impact of research initiatives, PEP dedicates significant resources to support local researchers in their consultation and interactions with policy makers, as well as in the implementation of targeted and effective dissemination strategies.

Moreover, researchers are provided with a series of complementary grants to organize or

participate in various dissemination activities (national policy conferences, international conference presentations, publications, etc.)

In addition to ensuring dissemination of their research findings to inform policy, these activities contribute to increasing the researchers' exposure, and thus building their reputation as experts in the field, at the national and international levels.

PEP international conferences

Moreover, as a means to communicate and debate research results and related policy solutions more widely, PEP and its partners have organized a number of international conferences in the Africa region. Since 2002, **7 international conferences** have been organized in Africa in collaboration with international and regional development partners.

The most recent example is the international conference on **Youth and Employment in Sub-Saharan Africa (YESSA)**, which was held in Dakar (Senegal), in January 2014, and co-organized by the PEP Africa Office and the International Development Research Center (IDRC) of Canada. The objective of this particular, and very successful, event was to provide a platform for reflection and experience sharing, in order to assess knowledge gaps, and revisit current practices and strategies for youth employment in Africa. The conference brought together national, regional and multilateral policy actors, African researchers and think tanks, as well as key relevant stakeholders.



PEP national policy conferences

To encourage the dissemination of research results and their influence on policies at the local and/or national level, PEP also provides financial and logistical support for local researchers to organize national policy conferences. The objective is to provide a platform to discuss and promote research findings and ensuing policy recommendation with an audience of local/national policy makers and stakeholders. As of March 2014, over **20 PEP national policy conferences** have been held across countries in Africa.



These events often receive wide media coverage, which also ensures the dissemination of the results to the general public.

Contribution of PEP research to policy making and advisory in Africa

In recent years, many cases have been reported where the research evidence and recommendations ensued from PEP projects - conducted by teams of local researchers - in African countries were used to inform policy formulation and dialogue at the national level. Below are some examples of PEP research contributions in informing development policies in Africa:

	Policy research/findings	Main impact
Cameroon	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distributional impacts of public spending in health services and education, and overall access to and quality of health services• Elaboration of a national plan for sanitary development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More efficient and targeted health services to the poorest• Adoption of a multidimensional approach and poverty indicators in national household surveys
Chad	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Impact of public spending in health and education, with welfare and distributional effects across different groups and regions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Providing evidence and new expertise to inform government's decision while defining priorities in the context of the National Poverty Reduction Strategy initiated in 2003
Senegal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evidence of significant positive impact of a school-feeding program on schooling and student performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expansion of the program duration and geographic coverage
Egypt	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evidence that the Ishraq program had large impacts on girls' literacy, education and work, gender roles, reproductive health knowledge, and participation in decision-making processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scaling-up of the Ishraq program to help adolescent girls acquire the literacy and life skills needed to become empowered citizens.• Increased support for adolescent girls on education, marriage and livelihood opportunities
Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evidence that extrapolating results from a locally-based NGO program to national government is not a valid option and that free primary education policies may not directly benefit the needy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Better government strategy and design of more effective and inclusive education policies to improve human capital and achieve universal primary education
Uganda	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessment of the effectiveness of different types of "community-based monitoring systems" to improve the quality of primary schools in the country	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helped the government in finding ways to improve management of primary schools in Uganda

The impact of PEP initiatives is also reflected in the large number of PEP-supported African researchers who have been recruited by national institutions/government agencies, regional or international organizations, to contribute to the formulation and/or evaluation of policies and programs in Africa. According to a 2012 survey, 54% of research teams supported by PEP report that at least one of their team members had been offered such promotion/position as a result of their PEP experience.

PEP research in Africa supports national and continental institutions – such as the African Union Commission, UN-ECA, AfDB, ECOWAS, COMESA, WAEMU, FARA, AGRA and others – in meeting their development objectives related food security, poverty, inclusive growth, gender equality, education, health, youth employment and other dimensions of sustainable development, as well as economic and social integration in the region.

Supporting partners and promoting policies for African development

In recent years, a growing number of donors and international agencies have used the expertise of PEP in evaluating programs, evaluate policy options and build local capacity for the analysis of socio-economic issues in Africa. Some examples include:

UN-DESA Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2010)

The PEP Africa office was mandated to produce a rigorous assessment of the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in Senegal.

International Food Policy Research Institute, IFPRI (since 2012)

PEP has been supporting the African Growth Development Policy Modeling Consortium (AGRODEP) in training and policy analysis for the promotion of leadership of African experts in the study of strategic development issues.

UNICEF (since 2009)

PEP has been providing technical support to UNICEF, through a series of projects and collaboration, to produce reliable data/evidence in support of policy initiatives in favour of child well-being in Africa

- 2009-11: Analysis of the impact of the global financial crisis and policy responses on children in Central and West Africa
- 2012-13: Situational analyses of children's well-being in Uganda and Burkina Faso
- 2012-13: Impact of fiscal policy and public spending on children in Burkina Faso
- 2013+: A long-term partnership agreement with UNICEF to support implementation of social policy reforms in the Middle East and North Africa and Central Africa.

AusAID-IDRC-IFPRI (2009-11)

Monitoring and analyzing the impacts of the global financial crisis on poverty and appropriate policy responses in developing countries - involving a total of 17 case studies in Africa, Asia and Latin America (including South Africa, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania and Zambia).

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and UNICEF (2011-13)

Evaluating the welfare impacts of an innovative program to improve sanitation practices in rural Mali; a project led by CEDLAS (Argentina-based research center) and in collaboration with local authorities.

UNDP (2010-2013)

Strengthening local capacities for "poverty and social impact analysis" (PSIA) in sub-Saharan Africa; the program included training activities and support of research projects in various countries, e.g., Benin, Togo, Lesotho, Uganda, Namibia and Niger.

IDRC-UK Aid (2012-2016)

Program for research and capacity building on Policy Analysis on Growth and Employment (PAGE) in developing countries (PAGE) – with competitive grants to support several projects in Africa and other regions. About 50% of the projects supported under the PAGE program to date (2014) are in Africa.