

# Empirical review of youth employment policies (YEPs) and their impact in Senegal.

## Policy Paper



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## Empirical review of youth employment policies (YEPs) and their impact in Senegal

The Partnership for Economic Policy is partnering with the Mastercard Foundation for a three-year initiative on “**What Works for Youth Employment in Africa**”. The initiative aims to provide evidence that can drive policy reform to increase youth employment in 10 African countries: Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa and Uganda. The initiative aligns with the Mastercard Foundation’s Young Africa Works strategy that seeks to enable 30 million young Africans, particularly young women, to access dignified and fulfilling work by 2030. Teams of local researchers and policy stakeholders are carrying out gender-aware policy and impact reviews in each country. The resulting analysis and findings will build a body of knowledge on youth employment policy in Africa, and will be stored in a new online knowledge repository.

This policy paper was developed as part of the project supported in Senegal. For more information, please visit: [www.pep-net.org/programs/youth-employment](http://www.pep-net.org/programs/youth-employment)

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## 1. Policy context analysis

Senegal is one of the youngest countries in the world. The median age is just 18, and young people aged 15 to 35 account for 34% of the population – or 5.6 million people (ANSD, 2020).<sup>1</sup> While this demographic trend provides a unique opportunity for development, it also poses a major challenge in terms of youth employment.

National statistics reveal that youth are particularly vulnerable to unemployment. The unemployment rate in 2019 was higher for youth aged 15 to 24 (19.8%) and 25 to 34 (18.2%) than for adults aged 35 to 44 (13%). Young people aged 15 to 34 represent 58.2% of the working-age population, but also the majority (62.3%) of people who are unemployed (ANSD, 2022).

In addition to their lack of employment, young people also face precarious working conditions. There are only around 30,000 formal jobs for the approximately 300,000 young people who enter the labour market each year. Limited opportunities for formal employment opportunities push most of them into the informal sector, which accounts for nearly 90% of youth employment (World Bank, 2018; CFYE, 2021).

The low level of qualifications and skills of young people is also a problem, and has a considerable impact on their employment opportunities. According to the 2014 PSE (*Plan Sénégal Emergent*/Emerging Senegal Plan), almost 46% of young people looking for their first job have no education, while 24% have not completed secondary education. In addition, 36.2% of youth are not in employment, education or training (NEET). This ranks Senegal among the 19 countries where the NEET rate among young people exceeds 35%. Under these conditions, young people will find it more difficult to enter the labour market or get a job in the formal sector (MEPC, 2021).

Senegal has implemented several strategies since the 2000s to address youth employment issues. Our study reviews the main employment policies implemented by the Government to facilitate the integration of young people into the labour market, with a particular focus on the following four policies:

- **ANPEJ** (*Agence Nationale pour la Promotion de l'Emploi des Jeunes*/ National Agency for the Promotion of Youth Employment)
- **PRODAC** : *Programme des Domaines Agricoles Communautaires* (Community Agricultural Domains Programme)
- **DER-FJ** : *Délégation Générale à l'Entrepreneuriat Rapide des Jeunes et des Femmes* (General Delegation for Rapid Entrepreneurship of Youth and Women)
- **PSE/J** : *Programme Sénégalais pour l'Entrepreneuriat des Jeunes* (Senegalese Programme for Youth Entrepreneurship).

**ANPEJ** is the result of the Government's will to rationalize and optimize the structures involved in the promotion of youth employment. It was created by Decree No. 2014-26 of 9 January 2014 to ensure the implementation of the Government's policy to promote youth

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<sup>1</sup> According to the definition of youth adopted by the African Union, youth are those between the ages of 15 and 35. See African Union (2006), The African Union African Youth Charter.

employment. ANPEJ aims to promote youth employment by facilitating young people's access to employment, project financing and support for project implementation.

**PRODAC** was created in 2014 to create mass employment for young people in the agricultural sector. PRODAC aims to support agricultural entrepreneurship, ensure conditions that enable young people to develop profitable agricultural enterprises, and insert young graduates into agricultural and related professions, with an emphasis on sustainable jobs.

**DER-FJ** was launched by the Government in 2017, with an initial annual budget of 30 billion CFA, to support and boost entrepreneurship (the main occupation of the Senegalese population). It aims to create one million jobs by 2024, primarily for women and people aged 18 to 40, by supporting their entrepreneurship in all labour-intensive value chains (MEPC, 2021). It focuses on five priority sectors (agriculture, fisheries and livestock; crafts; the digital economy and ICT; transport logistics; tourism and cultural industries) with an emphasis on innovation. An estimated 121 billion CFA will be granted to the DER/FJ between 2021 and 2023 for nano-credits to support 228,000 beneficiaries, including young people and women. Between 2018 and 2020, the DER-FJ mobilized financing of about 60 billion CFA, including 26 billion CFA in co-financing and guarantees from partner financial institutions. It also mobilized 72 billion CFA from donors such as the African Development Bank, the French Development Agency, the Khalifa Fund, the US African Development Foundation, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

The **PSE-J** was created in 2016 to create a new generation of young leaders and entrepreneurs through training, technical and financial support, advice and services – a contribution to the Emerging Senegal Plan. The programme goes beyond training to accompany young entrepreneurs in the implementation of their projects. It trains young business creators, promotes their professional integration, links them to businesses, and is creating a pool of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The programme targets young Senegalese entrepreneurs anywhere in the world who have relevant projects or project ideas, as well as young entrepreneurs who are seeking to expand, students, unemployed graduates and more.

These structures may not have reduced youth unemployment significantly, but they have achieved results in terms of the number of jobs created, entrepreneurs supported, young people integrated into the labour market, businesses created and projects funded.

Projects supported by the **ANPEJ**, for example, include the project for the promotion of youth entrepreneurship in rural areas (PAJER), the programme for the creation of micro-enterprises (PAME) and the programme for the informal sector (PASI). According to ANPEJ, 5,124 young people were registered on the platform in 2020; 2,377 young people were trained, 124 projects were financed; 5 operational programmes and projects were carried out; and 569 young people were placed in companies.

Looking ahead, **PRODAC** aims to develop 30,000 hectares of land; create 300,000 jobs for young people between 2012 and 2024; create 2,000 viable groups of agricultural entrepreneurs and set up an incubation programme for young people. However, PRODAC

has only four functional "Community Agricultural Domains" (DAC in French acronym)<sup>2</sup> in the country's ten domains (in the Sedhiou, Louga, Diourbel and Kédougou regions) and has not yet produced results commensurate with its objectives. In terms of results actually achieved, 35,393 jobs were created in these DACs between 2014 and 2018 (RAC, 2017, p. 117).

The activities of the **DER-FJ** had generated several results by December 2020, including 106,209 loans granted at the national level; the formalization of 2,452 SMEs and their support with non-financial services; and support for 110 digital start-ups. From a gender perspective, it is worth noting that 75% of the direct beneficiaries are women.

Finally, since 2015, **PSE-J** has trained more than 3000 young graduates, enabled the creation of more than 500 enterprises, and achieved an insertion rate for young people into the labour market of over 80%.

These key outcomes are highlighted in Table 1.

**Table 1. Key structures and outcomes**

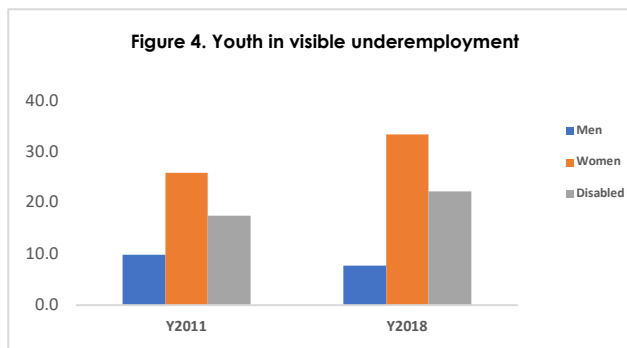
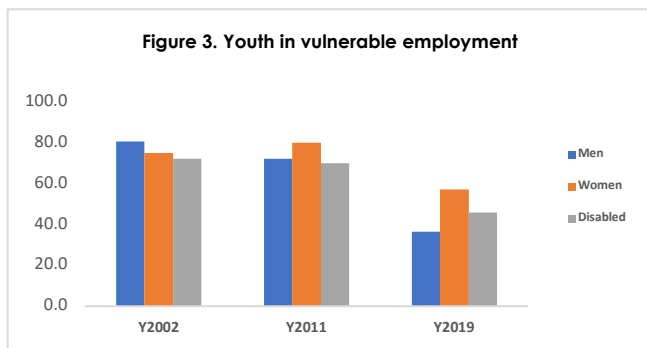
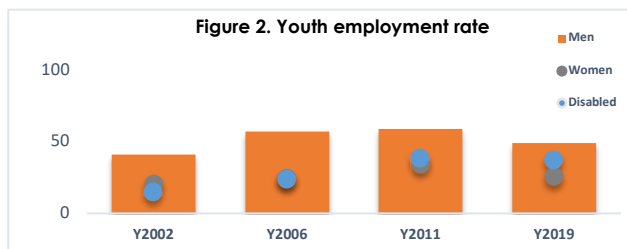
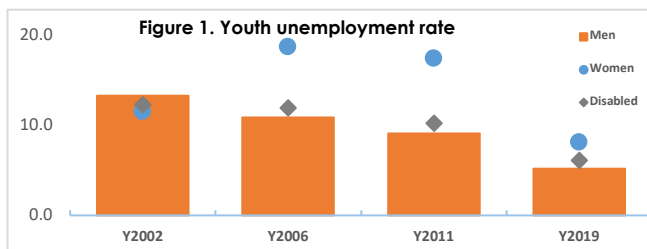
<b>Structure</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
National Agency for the Promotion of Youth Employment ( <b>ANPEJ</b> )	Over 16,000 young people integrated into the labour market
Community Agricultural Estates Programme ( <b>PRODAC</b> )	Over 35,000 jobs created across the four DACs
General Delegation for Rapid Entrepreneurship of Women and Young People ( <b>DER/FJ</b> )	Over 106,000 direct beneficiaries
Senegalese Programme for Youth Entrepreneurship ( <b>PSE-J</b> )	More than 500 enterprises created, and 80% of beneficiaries inserted into the labour market

## 2. Description of policy options

Senegal has implemented several programmes to promote youth employment in recent decades, and particularly since 2000. These have created many jobs and lifted thousands of young people out of unemployment. But this is only part of the story. Data from the household surveys conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics (ANSD 2002, 2006, 2011, 2019) show that youth labour market outcomes are still lagging behind. Low rates of youth employment are compounded by the large share of youth who work in low-quality jobs with little or no social security coverage. Prospects tend to be worse for young women and youth with disabilities, who are more likely than young men to be underemployed and working in vulnerable conditions (see Figures 1 to 4).

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<sup>2</sup> These are generally large farms with many facilities, including housing for farmers and their employees. Some of these facilities, such as cultural or religious institutions, are not strictly related to agriculture, but allow the farms themselves to be self-sufficient communities.



Source: ANSD 2002, 2006, 2011, 2019.

The findings of our study provide additional insights into the employment trends already described. Most youth express a desire to work, but employment opportunities are limited and it often takes connections or politics to get internships or jobs. Youth also tend to be over-exploited and sometimes face extortion. The situation is even more difficult for vulnerable youth, particularly those with disabilities, who maintain that most of the difficulties they face in the job market relate to the non-implementation of Senegal's Social Orientation Law.

The findings also highlight several obstacles to the functioning of public employment programmes. Youth are not familiar with these programmes and their implementation reveals several management shortcomings. For example, public employment programmes are sometimes used to co-opt a political clientele, and there is no follow-up on the funding that has been allocated.

Lack of coordination is also a real problem: programmes are fragmented and poorly coordinated, which makes them less effective. There is no structure recognized by all stakeholders as being responsible for coordinating, monitoring, and evaluating interventions, not even the Ministry of Employment, Vocational Training, Apprenticeship, and Integration (MEFPAI), or the Ministry of Youth.

Senegal's current approach is based on the establishment of autonomous public employment programmes. This approach has its merits, but has not addressed the lack of coordination and harmonization across, and has no major impact on youth unemployment. Indeed, the approach means that each programme develops its own intervention plan, without necessarily considering the economic structure and context or national development priorities.

For some public employment programmes, therefore, counting the number of projects supported has started to take precedence over the logic of a coordinated intervention that is oriented towards Senegal's national economic policy. The approach also implies that the projects supported are linked to various sectors, which poses a problem for follow-up.

In this context, it is important to consider alternative policy options that would allow for better harmonization and coordination of interventions, as well as greater efficiency.

Our study has explored two policy options.

- **Option 1: A national employment strategy within the framework of competitive sectors or value chains development strategies**

This option seems to be promoted today by Senegal's National Industrial Policy, which has been validated, and by the National Private Sector Development Strategy (SNDSP), also recently validated. This would provide an anchoring framework for the national youth employment policy, allowing it to align to Senegal's national policy of emergence and development. As a result, the projects financed in one sector would be better monitored within that sector.

Today, Senegal promotes the development of 21 competitive sectors, including the leather and skin sector, the tourism sector, the rice sector, the horticulture sector, the textile and clothing sector, and the pharmaceutical industry sector. Each sector must be built according to the determinants of its competitiveness. On this basis, it is possible to determine, for example, current and future needs for human capital to ensure the development of each sector and, therefore, the integration of young people over time.

Rwanda provides an illustrative example. Rather than opting for a national development policy, it has mobilized a competitive sector development policy that has largely addressed the issue of youth employment.

- **Option 2: Integrating the national employment promotion strategy into a development strategy for the priority sectors selected in Senegal's second Priority Action Plan (PAP 2A)**

This Option goes in the same direction, but would be affirmed in a sectoral development policy. It would allow the integration of the national employment promotion strategy into a development strategy for the priority sectors selected in the Adjusted and Accelerated Priority Action Plan (PAP 2A). PAP 2A focuses on 10 priority sectors: food sovereignty (composed of agriculture, livestock, fisheries and aquaculture); health sovereignty; pharmaceutical sovereignty; the promotion of industrial platforms; digital transformation; tourism and air transport; urban planning and housing; and social protection.

Such an option is similar to China's experience in its development strategy. This was initially based on agricultural development, then expanded into industrial development, and then evolved to encompass services and high technology.

This policy option integrates youth employment in a transversal manner, combining a demographic policy with an education and training policy to enhance youth employability.

## Methodology

To assess and compare the two options, we have used the following criteria.

- **Equity:** this assesses whether or not the two options could benefit young men, young women, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups in the same way.
- **Efficacy:** this allows us to assess whether or not the objectives set at the outset have been achieved, i.e. whether the adoption of option 1 or 2 improves the situation of young people in the labour market. We compare the objectives set with the results achieved. If a gap is identified, it should be analyzed.
- **Acceptability:** this makes it possible to assess whether or not the two options can be accepted by the various stakeholders. Only when they are accepted and approved can they be implemented effectively.
- **Feasibility:** this assesses whether and under what conditions it is possible to implement the two options proposed in this document.

Our study compared the pre-defined policy options using a multi-criteria approach, based on qualitative data obtained from key informant interviews with different types of stakeholders. Those interviewed have a vested interest in youth employment and can influence (or are influenced by) the outcomes of the relevant decision-making processes. We identified and selected 11 participants from the 83 stakeholders who took part in the first round of interviews. Once interview candidates were identified, we contacted them by phone and sent information about the methodology to those who agreed to participate. After a week, we contacted them again to provide further information when requested and to arrange a time and place for the interview. All contacted stakeholders were guaranteed individual anonymity. However, not everyone accepted the invitation.

In all, 11 interviews were conducted: 5 with programme managers, 3 with youth leaders, 2 with labour inspectors and 1 with a civil society representative. Individual appraisals were conducted with each of these participants. Seven participants were interviewed face-to-face, and the remaining four were interviewed by phone as a result of scheduling constraints. Each interview lasted approximately 1 hour and had two parts: an introduction to the key principles of the exercise, to ensure that its nature was clear to participants; and the selection of criteria, as well as the scoring and weighting procedures.

### *Selection of criteria*

During the appraisal exercise, the stakeholders were asked to evaluate the two pre-defined policy options according to their own criteria. To facilitate the assessment, a preliminary list of criteria was elaborated, and four were selected: equity, efficacy, acceptability and feasibility. There was no limit on the number and type of criteria stakeholders could choose. In addition to the selected criteria, stakeholders were also able to identify entirely new criteria to capture further aspects of the issue.

### *Weighting*

Once the criteria had been established, participants were invited to assign weights to the selected criteria to reflect their relative importance. A simple rating system was adopted in



this appraisal exercise. A 3-point scale was used to rank the various criteria, where 3 indicated very important criteria, while 1 indicated criteria of moderate importance.

### Scoring

Participants were then asked to evaluate the performance of the two pre-defined policy options based on their chosen criteria. The appraisal exercise was conducted on a 9-point scale, with -4 being the most severe negative impact and +4 being the most significant positive impact, and 0 as the neutral value (no impact of any significance). In this context, participants were asked to determine the scores based on their experience and knowledge in the field of youth employment.

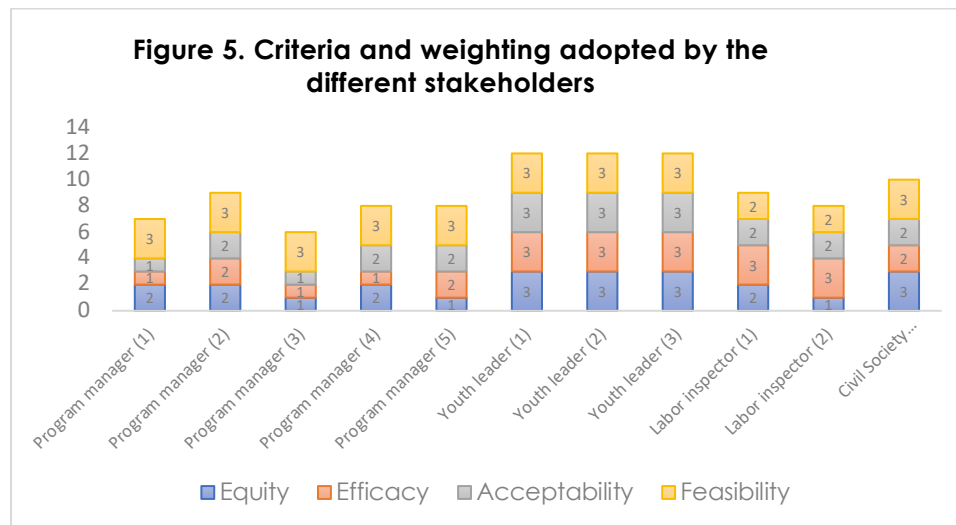
### Final aggregation

The overall performance scores of the two pre-defined policy options were calculated using a simple weighted sum model based on the different criteria, scoring and weighting procedures used by the participants.

## 3. Evaluation of policy options

### Weights

As a result of the different interests and priorities of the various interviewees, the weighting they allocated across the selected criteria varied greatly. With the exception of the three youth leaders, who regarded all criteria as being of equal importance, all other stakeholders assigned different weights to the chosen criteria. As illustrated in Figure 5, the programme managers gave the highest weights to political feasibility, while the two labour inspectors assigned the highest importance to efficacy. The civil society representative appeared to give more attention to equity and feasibility. Interestingly, no criteria were assigned the same weight by all stakeholders.



Source: Authors' analysis.

## Scores

Performance scores also demonstrated clear differences in stakeholder opinions. Overall, there was no consensus on whether the two policy options performed similarly on any of the criteria.

According to Programme Manager 2, the Option 2 will perform well on all selected criteria and will be particularly important for job creation, while Option 1 may require significant prior investment in capacity building and vocational training to facilitate the integration of youth in these sectors. This view was shared by Labour Inspector 1, who also emphasized the high potential for employment in the targeted sectors and the critical role of the private sector in relation to Option 1.

Option 1 was also seen by the civil society representative as an option that integrates the private sector perfectly but that would require significant investments in infrastructures. Both youth leaders (2 and 3) and the other programme managers (1, 3, 4, 5) assigned relatively high scores to the performance of Option 2 on equity, efficacy and feasibility. However, both Youth Leader 1 and Labour Inspector 2 ascribed positive scores to the Option 1 and low scores to Option 2. In fact, both expressed concerns about the performance of the second option against the majority of selected criteria, arguing that its implementation would result in a lack of coordination and harmonization due to the involvement of several ministries. The result may be that each ministry might wish to develop its own work plan without aligning its actions with a single reference point.

That said, stakeholders rarely applied extreme values for the performance scores (i.e., +4 or -4) because of the lack of specific data and information regarding the future performance of the two policy options.

## Final rankings

Our analyses of the two pre-defined policy options were conducted using a linear multi-criteria model. Ultimately, the viewpoints of different stakeholders regarding the number and types of criteria, the weighting of these criteria, and the performance scores resulted in very different rankings for the two policy options. Table 2 illustrates the final option rankings that were produced by each participant. We determined the overall ranking by calculating the arithmetic mean of the overall performance of each policy option from the perspective of the different participants.

Overall, Option 2 was preferred. In the appraisal exercise, this option emerged as the preferred policy option for the Civil Society Representative, Labour Inspector 2, youth leaders 2 and 3, and all five programme managers.

The overall ratings assigned to Option 1 by these stakeholders were much lower, and in some cases negative. In contrast, Youth Leader 1 and Labour Inspector 2 clearly preferred the first option. Among the participants, Programme Manager 5 presented the most critical views regarding Option 1.

**Table 2. Final option rankings produced by the various stakeholders**

Stakeholders	Options		Preferred option
	Option 1*	Option 2**	
Programme Manager 1	-1.14	+2.57	2
Programme Manager 2	+1.44	+2.11	2
Programme Manager 3	-0.50	+2.83	2
Programme Manager 4	-0.37	+2.50	2
Programme Manager 5	-1.87	+2.50	2
Youth Leader 1	+2.25	-1.25	1
Youth Leader 2	+1.50	+2.75	2
Youth Leader 3	+1.75	+2.75	2
Labour Inspector 1	+0.44	2.00	2
Labour Inspector 2	+1.75	-1.12	1
Civil society representative	-0.10	+1.50	2
<b>Overall performance</b>	<b>0.47</b>	<b>1.74</b>	<b>2</b>

Note:

\*Option 1: Elaboration of a National Youth Employment Strategy within the framework of competitive sectors or value chains development strategy

\*\*Option 2: Elaboration of a National Youth Employment Strategy through the development of the 10 priority sectors identified in the PAP 2A.

That said, this appraisal exercise had a number of limitations. According to some participants, there was not enough data and information to assign meaningful and realistic scores to the policy options. In this context, we acknowledge that numeric scales may be unable to fully represent every issue and aspect associated with these options. Because of their professional commitments, stakeholders had limited time to undertake the exercise, and it was not possible to organize joint interactions or discussions. It could be argued, therefore, that a more robust evaluation process (involving a larger number of stakeholders, the possibility of iterating the process several times, and discussions among stakeholders) would deepen the evaluation and, as a result, provide critical information about the two policy options.

We have supplemented the assessment of the two policy options with additional information from other related interventions that affect youth employment directly.

For example, the persistent employment challenges and the political will to find durable solutions had led the Government of Senegal to develop a New National Employment Policy (NPNE 2017-2020), which aimed to create at least 320,000 jobs over the 2017-2020 period. The NPNE was designed around six strategies:

- Generating jobs on a massive scale through the Emerging Senegal Plan, the major projects of the Head of State and in the traditional economic sectors

- Implementing specific public programmes for the creation of decent jobs
- Implementing local employment programmes
- Enhancing the training-employment relationship
- Enhancing labour market organization and social dialogue
- Strengthening the capacities of the Ministry in charge of employment.

The NPNE was accompanied by the implementation of the Operational Action Plan for Youth Employment (PAOJ 2018-2022), designed to address youth employment specifically. The PAOJ aims to create a mass of modern jobs for young people through the involvement of the private sector, especially SMEs.

It is puzzling, therefore, that almost every key informant interviewed claim to be unaware of the existence of the NPNE and PAOJ. This indicates that most programme managers and representatives of beneficiaries were not involved in the elaboration of Senegal's national employment policy or the operational action plan for youth employment. This finding is quite surprising.

In addition, the NPNE and PAOJ are still not viewed as the general reference and coordination framework for youth employment. By definition, the general reference framework refers to a unified system for the design, coordination and monitoring of all public employment programmes.

According to our key informants, however, there does not appear to be one single reference framework for youth employment promotion in Senegal. In fact, one key finding that has emerged from the interviews is the lack of a universally recognized national framework for all interventions designed to support youth employment. Nevertheless, Senegal has ratified the C122 Employment Policy Convention, which stipulates in Article 1 that *“with a view to stimulating economic growth and development, raising levels of living, meeting manpower requirements and overcoming unemployment and underemployment, each Member shall declare and pursue, as a major goal, an active policy designed to promote full, productive and freely chosen employment.”*

The NPNE (2017–2020) was developed and technically validated to comply with this Convention. However, according to our key informants, it has not yet been politically validated, which is crucial to making it a reference for all youth employment interventions. Several key informants felt that this lack of political validation stems from a development process that was not inclusive and that did not involve the majority of stakeholders who would be responsible for its implementation. The same is true for the PAOJ (2018-2022). According to our key informants, the PAOJ has suffered from some institutional instability as a result of changes in ministerial tutelage. This has delayed its political validation as a reference framework.

Based on the findings of our appraisal exercise and the shortcomings in the implementation of the PAOJ and NPNE, we believe that the elaboration of a National Youth Employment Strategy through the development of the 10 priority sectors identified in the PAP 2A should be promoted as the general reference and coordination framework for youth employment in Senegal.

## 4. Recommendations and next steps

Our study has aimed to investigate how young people in Senegal can be best supported to respond to labour market challenges and opportunities, with a special focus on youth employment policies, their limitations and possible alternative policy options to complement those that already exist.

Enormous efforts have been made by policymakers to address youth employment, and policies have lifted thousands of young people out of unemployment. However, several obstacles still have a negative impact on the performance of these policies.

In this context, two alternative policy options were proposed for the better harmonization and coordination of interventions, as well as greater efficiency. These are the development of competitive value chains and the development of the 10 priority sectors identified in the PAP 2A. We used a multi-criteria approach to compare the two policy options, based on interviews with different types of stakeholders. As a result of this exercise, the second policy option was the preferred option.

To make this policy option sustainable over time, it is crucial to:

- Design participatory and inclusive employment programmes that include youth in programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- Engage youth leaders to reach out to young people, as they are aware of their aspirations, living conditions and challenges.
- Support youth-led organizations in their advocacy, participatory planning and accountability efforts.
- Establish inclusive dialogue with the private sector to discuss key bottlenecks and imperatives for scalable solutions for youth employment.
- Strengthen technical and vocational education training (TVET) programmes by reorienting the curricula towards professions that are considered essential to the development of the 10 priority sectors identified in the PAP 2A.
- Improve the coordination and management of youth employment initiatives by opening one-stop shops dedicated to youth employment, as is the case with the employment and entrepreneurship centres, and, above all,
- Implement a youth employment information and management system.

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