



**A webinar by the Thematic Working Group on Rural Youth
Employment of the Global Donor Platform for Rural
Development**

Investing in Youth: The Role of Development Banks

CONCEPT NOTE

Tuesday 15 April 2025, 15:00-16:15 CET

[Zoom registration](#)

1. Background

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO)'s latest [Global Employment Trends for Youth](#) report, the global youth unemployment rate has returned to its pre-COVID rate of 13%. While this is a positive signal, unemployment alone does not capture the full picture of youth well-being and its decline has not been universal. In some developing regions like the Arab States and North Africa, the youth unemployment rates remain well above the global average. In other regions like East Asia, rates continued to rise above those of the pre-COVID period. At the same time, the share of youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) remains high at 20%, signaling that labour market exclusion and missed opportunities for human capital development continue to impact at least one in every five young person. Youth NEET rates are higher in rural areas and among young women.

Boosting international cooperation, public-private partnerships and innovative financing for development will be key to tackle these challenges. Development banks play a critical role in leveraging public and private resources and ensuring that investments prioritize youth well-being. In recent years, institutions such as the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) have ramped up their efforts to create decent employment opportunities for youth, with a particular focus on rural youth.

- The **AfDB's *Jobs for Youth in Africa Strategy (2016-2025)*** has been supporting African countries to scale up responses to the youth unemployment and underemployment crisis. Programmes including the Rural Microenterprise Flagship and ENABLE Youth (Empowering Novel Agri-Business Led Employment) focus on creating job opportunities in agri-food systems for (rural) youth.
- The **IsDB's *Youth Development Strategy (2020-2025)*** focuses on three strategic pillars: Education, Economic Empowerment and Engagement. It features large-scale programmes aimed at improved vocational literacy and access to microfinance.

- **IFAD's 2nd Rural Youth Action Plan**, currently under development, provides a framework for youth-sensitive investments in agriculture and rural development, ensuring dedicated and adequate resources are allocated to youth-targeted activities.

2. Objectives

The youth employment challenge is particularly pressing in developing countries, where demographic pressures are high, wage employment opportunities are scarce and formal job creation is insufficient to give most youth access to decent work. Weak enforcement of labour standards keeps many young people in low quality jobs and as working poor. This webinar will explore how development banks' strategies for youth employment have been translated into concrete actions and measurable impact. Representatives from development banks will share insights on investment design, youth engagement, mechanisms for leveraging public and private resources to maximize impact and lessons learned.

The [Thematic Working Group on Rural Youth Employment](#) (TWG RYE) was established following the 2018 Annual General Assembly of the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development, which was entirely dedicated to empowering rural youth. The TWG RYE brings together donors, development practitioners and youth organizations to share knowledge and promote strategies that create decent employment opportunities and empower youth to contribute to and benefit from sustainable rural livelihoods.

3. Provisional Agenda

15 April 2025 (online event)

15:00 – 15:05 (CET) Welcome and Introduction

(5 min)

- **Ji-Yeun Rim**, TWG RYE Co-Chair (Moderator)

15:05 – 15:15 (CET) Scene setting: Global Employment Trends for Youth

(10 min)

- **Sara Elder**, Head, Employment Analysis and Economic Policies Unit, International Labour Organization (ILO)

15:15 – 15:55 (CET) Insights from Development Banks

(40 min)

- **Edson Mpyisi**, Chief Financial Economist and Coordinator, Enable Youth Program, African Development Bank Group (AfDB)
- **Ousmane Diaby**, Lead Youth Empowerment Specialist, Women & Youth Empowerment, Resilience & Climate Action Department, Islamic Development Bank (IsDB)
- **Rahul Antao**, Technical Specialist, Rural Youth and Social Inclusion, Office of Technical Delivery, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

15:55 – 16:10 (CET) Q&A

(15 min)

16:10 – 16:15 (CET) Wrap-up and Closing

(5 min)

TWG RYE Co-Chairs