MAURITANIA
Transforming the Jobs Trajectory for Vulnerable Youth

WORLD BANK GROUP
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POLICY NOTE
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This policy note was prepared as part of the World Bank Poverty and Jobs Technical Assistance Program. It aims to provide an initial assessment of youth employment policy and program issues in Mauritania. The note is intended primarily for government and non-state actors involved in developing short- to long-term interventions to facilitate labor market insertion, particularly for vulnerable populations. The note was prepared as a collaboration between the World Bank and the Mauritanian Center for Policy Analysis (CMAP) under the tutelage of the Prime Minister’s Office and in coordination with the Ministry of Employment, Vocational Training, and Information and Communication Technologies (MEFPTIC) and an inter-sectoral working group.

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### ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAGR</td>
<td>Average Annual Growth Rate</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFD</td>
<td>French Development Agency (<em>Agence Française de Développement</em>)</td>
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<td>AfDB</td>
<td>African Development Bank</td>
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<td>ALMP</td>
<td>Active Labor Market Program</td>
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<td>ANAEPEJ</td>
<td>National Youth Employment Promotion Agency (<em>Agence Nationale de la Promotion de l’Emploi des Jeunes</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAPEC</td>
<td>Savings and Loans Institution (<em>Caisse Populaire d’Épargne et de Crédit</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDD</td>
<td>Savings and Development Bank (<em>Caisse des Dépots et de Développement</em>)</td>
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<td>CGTM</td>
<td>General Confederation of Mauritanian Workers (<em>Confédération Générale des Travailleurs Mauritaniens</em>)</td>
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<td>CMAP</td>
<td>Mauritanian Center for Policy Analysis (<em>Centre Mauritanian d’Analyse des Politiques</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNAM</td>
<td>National Health Insurance Fund (<em>Caisse Nationale d’Assurance Maladie</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNSS</td>
<td>National Social Security Fund (<em>Caisse Nationale de Sécurité Sociale</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>EPCV</td>
<td>Ongoing Survey of Household Living Conditions (<em>Enquête Permanente sur les Conditions de Vie des Ménages</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>FSE</td>
<td>Employment Support Fund (<em>Fonds de Soutien à l’Emploi</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<tr>
<td>HCJ</td>
<td>Youth High Council (<em>Haut Conseil de la Jeunesse</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDA</td>
<td>International Development Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDA</td>
<td>International Development Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labor Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>INAP-FTP</td>
<td>National Professional and Technical Training Institute (<em>Institut National de Promotion de la Formation Technique et Professionnelle</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>INS</td>
<td>National Institute of Statistics (<em>Institut National de la Statistique</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>KILM</td>
<td>Key Indicators of the Labor Market</td>
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<td>LFPR</td>
<td>Labor Force Participation Rate</td>
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<td>LMIS</td>
<td>Labor Market Information System</td>
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<tr>
<td>LT</td>
<td>Long Term</td>
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<tr>
<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAPT</td>
<td>Ministry of Public Administration and Labor (<em>Ministère de l’Administration Publique et du Travail</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MEF</td>
<td>Ministry of the Economy and Finance (<em>Ministère de l’Économie et des Finances</em>)</td>
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MEFPTIC  Ministry of Employment, Vocational Training, and Information and Communication Technologies (Ministère de l’Emploi, de la Formation Professionnelle, et des Techniques d’Information et de Communication)

MFI  Microfinance Institution

MIDEC  Ministry of the Interior and Decentralization (Ministère de l’Intérieur et de la Décentralisation)

MJS  Ministry of Youth and Sports (Ministère de la Jeunesse et des Sports)

MRO  Mauritanian Ouguiya

MSME  Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise

MT  Medium Term

NEET  Neither in Education, Employment, or Training

NGO  Non-Governmental Organization

PA-FTP  Professional Technical Training Support Program (Projet d’Appui à la Formation Technique Professionnelle)

PAFEJ  Youth Training and Employment Support Program (Projet d’Appui à la Formation et l’Emploi des Jeunes)

PAFPA  Training and Apprenticeship Support Program (Programme d’Appui à la Formation par Apprentissage)

PIP  Public Investment Program


PPP  Purchasing Power Parity

SCAPP  Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity (Stratégie de Croissance Accélérée et la Prospérité Partagée)

SME  Small and Medium Enterprise

ST  Short term

UNPM  National Mauritanian Employers’ Union (Union Nationale du Patronat Mauritanien)

USD  United States Dollar

UTM  Union of Mauritanian Workers (Union des Travailleurs Mauritaniens)

VT  Vocational Training

**CURRENCY EQUIVALENTS**
(Exchange Rate Effective as of November 23, 2017)
1 MRO = USD 0.003
1 USD = MRO 353.87

**GOVERNMENT FISCAL YEAR**
January 1 – December 31
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Poverty reduction and youth employment remain deeply intertwined in Mauritania. Mauritania’s job-related challenge is characterized by a low-growth macroeconomic context, high reliance on minerals and extractives, and marked poverty and social exclusion. Despite the country being endowed with a wealth of mineral, energy, and marine resources, growth was estimated at only 2.0 percent in 2016. Poverty remains high at 33 percent as of 2014, having decreased from 44.5 percent in 2008. Poverty varies widely across Mauritania’s 13 regions, from 27 percent in urban centers to 53 percent in rural zones. With youth (15–24 year olds) comprising over 40 percent of the population as of 2014, they are particularly vulnerable to high social exclusion. Strengthening youth employment is at the heart of breaking inter-generational poverty and boosting social inclusion in Mauritania.

The main objective of this policy note is to provide an overview of the jobs challenge in Mauritania, with a focus on constraints and opportunities facing youth over the short to long term. To this end, it assesses overarching youth employment trends and gaps and offers recommendations for facilitating their entry into good, productive jobs.

Growth and Jobs: Low Productivity, High Demand for Targeted Skills

While Mauritania’s high reliance on extractives has contributed to modest poverty reduction in the past, this trend has not sufficiently supported job creation, the engine for poverty reduction over the long term. Mauritania’s economy remains highly dependent on extractives, which account for 25 percent of GDP and 82 percent of all exports and generate 23 percent of fiscal revenues. In line with much of Africa, the growth outlook has been tempered due to the recent decline in oil and commodity prices. As a result, Mauritania remains among the most vulnerable countries in Africa due to its reliance on energy exports and terms-of-trade, along with Nigeria, Angola, and nine other economies. Although poverty has declined in Mauritania since 2000 as wages have risen, low productivity and a lack of diversification in the face of climate-related vulnerabilities are expected to slow poverty reduction.

Industry and services have gradually overtaken agriculture in terms of value added to growth since 1995. Between 1995 and 2015, the contribution of agriculture to GDP decreased from 37 percent to just 23 percent, while that of industry increased from 25 percent to 36 percent. Mauritania’s structural transformation has correlated with increases in overall worker productivity, contributing to increased earnings. Industry and services have gradually overtaken agriculture in terms of value added to growth since 1995.

Agriculture continues to dominate half of all employment in Mauritania, followed by services and commerce and trade (industry). This share is similar to that of other countries in the region such as Senegal and Ghana as well as close to the lower middle-income average. By contrast, other resource-rich countries such as Malaysia and Ecuador have managed to diversify their economies such that services now make up a much larger share of employment, in line with other upper middle-income countries. Despite a combined GDP contribution from extractives of nearly 25 percent, within commerce and industry, manufacturing and mining account for relatively few jobs, at 9 percent and 2 percent, respectively.5

In half of Mauritania’s regions, agriculture is by far the largest employer. However, the quality of these jobs remains low, which explains why poverty and unemployment persist in these regions. Agriculture accounts for over 50 percent of employment in seven regions and 25 percent or less in five regions. Self-employment accounts for 84 percent of all employment, and remains highly precarious. Among agricultural enterprises, 61 percent are self-employed, as compared to 47 percent among non-agricultural enterprises, with hardly any cooperatives. However, 61 percent of agricultural employment is considered seasonal or temporary. Nearly one in every five workers (19 percent) receive no remuneration of any kind for their work.

While firms face a host of infrastructure and investment climate-related challenges to doing business, labor costs and regulations are important factors influencing both formal employment rates and informal wages. In addition to corruption, infrastructure-related and problematic access to finance for 50 to 60 percent of all firms, taxes and labor regulations are cited as major constraints on doing business by 50 and 30 percent of all firms, respectively. By contrast, taxes and labor regulations were cited by an average of 30 and 10 percent of firms, respectively, in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Perceptions of the degree to which labor costs affect business, including job creation, vary by sector and firm size. Manufacturers, large enterprises, and exporting firms are nearly twice as likely to perceive labor regulations as a significant barrier to doing business compared to other firms. Demand for job-relevant skills varies by sector. A high share of those working in production are unskilled (53 percent), with the share of firms providing provide training being relatively low (below 50 percent). Firms report a high level of difficulty in finding key skills, particularly practical work experience, a problem reported by 54 percent of all firms. Administrative services, industry, and the information technology (IT) sector report high demand for advanced IT skills, which are difficult to find for 34 percent of all firms. While half of all firms use direct job postings for hiring, almost half (44 percent) rely highly on friends and family networks for recruiting workers.

Youth-related Constraints: Women, Mobility, and Core Competencies

Mauritania’s population is predominantly young and urban, representing both its most valuable and riskiest asset. As of 2014, 40 percent of the population was aged below 14. Projections show a steady annual population growth rate of 2.5 percent and a persistent youth bulge for 15–24 year olds over the coming generation. Overall, the total labor force participation rate (LFPR) in Mauritania stands at only 43.5 percent, lower than elsewhere in the region due mainly to low female participation. As of 2012, the total labor force comprised 717,000 workers, of whom 36 percent were female and 64 percent were male, with the male LFPR being nearly 2.2 times the female LFPR. Female labor force participation is only 28 percent (based on data from the Mauritania Labor Force Survey for 2012), compared to 64 percent for Sub-Saharan Africa. A segmentation of the youth labor market shows that a significant share of Mauritania’s youth is “neither in education, employment, or training” (NEET). NEET is estimated at 39 percent of all youth. NEET is driven mainly by young women dropping out of the labor force. NEET rates among youth are also generally higher in rural areas than in urban areas.

At 16.7 percent, unemployment in Nouakchott, the country’s capital, is considerably higher than the national average (10.1 percent), and among the highest in the country. Only three other regions have higher unemployment rates: Tagant, Nouadhibou, and Inchiri, at 19, 22, and 29 percent, respectively. The greatest share of the unemployed live in Nouakchott (51 percent), followed by Nouadhibou (12 percent), and Brakna (9 percent).

Self-perceived job skills and preferences among youth vary widely by gender and educational level, thus influencing their choices. Job skills and readiness for manual work, entrepreneurship, or public-sector employment show a clear segmentation among youth. Most youth are eager to find work in the public and private sector almost equally, at 62 and 69 percent, respectively. The public sector is generally a less attractive option for employment among youth surveyed, distinguishing Mauritania from some of its regional neighbors. Nearly twice as many young people were “not at all” interested in seeking public sector employment compared to private sector employment (21 versus 12 percent, respectively). Mauritanian youth surveyed were also highly interested in manual work (50 percent), defined as jobs such as vocational trades, construction, and various occupations in the agricultural and services sectors. Interest in manual work is highest among secondary-school-educated youth (71 percent) and males (57 percent, as compared to 47 percent among females. However, given that 65 percent of the sample had a secondary education, the sample is too small to allow for a more detailed comparison by educational level.

Self-reported skills constraints in terms of practical job skills, informal technology (IT), and organizational competencies among youth tend to reflect those perceived by enterprises. Youth surveyed tend to rate their skills level as lowest in terms of practical work experience, project management, and advanced IT skills. These shortcomings are consistent with skills reported by firms as being in short supply. Basic skills and language self-ratings were similar across educational level, while advanced organizational skills tend to be reported among university graduates. Unsurprisingly, university graduates tended to rate some skills higher
than did those with lower levels of education, including basic and advanced IT skills, written communication, organizational skills (client management, problem solving, planning, and teamwork), technical skills, and administrative skills. Entrepreneurship remains an interest among a sizable share of youth, even though only 22 percent report being fully ready to start a business. This finding is consistent with previous analyses, which show that nearly 20 percent of youth in Africa report being self-employed as entrepreneurs.

Overall, most youth in Mauritania suffer from several overarching employment constraints, with additional barriers faced by certain, particularly vulnerable population segments. These constraints include: (i) lagging labor demand due to weak job creation in emerging sectors; (ii) weak outreach, access to services, and information about livelihoods and employment options exacerbated by clientelism in hiring among firms; and (iii) insufficient skills development in terms of practical, job-relevant competencies across sectors. In addition, three particularly vulnerable youth segments face constraints experienced by youth in rural settings, young women, and youth out of school and not working (NEETs). Rural, low-skilled youth are at a disadvantage due to a high risk of school dropout, lack of mobility, and weak diversification. Meanwhile, young women are burdened by an even higher risk of school dropout and lack of mobility in addition to overarching social norms that heavily influence early marriage and exclusion from sectors such as commerce and industry. Finally, NEET youth face added barriers to training opportunities, information and, importantly, networks needed for entrepreneurship or wage employment, whether in the formal or informal sector. Examining how these constraints can be addressed through short- to long-term measures and synergies with demand-side opportunities is key to improving prospects.

Labor Market Programs: A Better Balance between Demand and Supply

Youth employment programs and social dialogue over labor policy are nascent, with programs limited in coverage and catering mainly to urban university and vocational training graduates. Less investment has been allocated to developing sustainable livelihoods over the short to midterm for poorer youth in peri-urban and rural settings. Supply-side programs have dominated in Mauritania and focus mainly on vocational training and, to an extent, on micro-entrepreneurship for university graduates. Limited demand-side programs have focused on boosting enterprise development for SMEs throughout the country, tied to regulatory reforms in the midterm designed to improve the investment climate. Limited institutional support as well as vocational training management exist to strengthen employment coordination across agencies. Public works programs linked to local infrastructure development programs are found throughout nearly half of all municipalities in Mauritania in both urban and rural settings. More broadly, an assessment of labor regulations and their potential impact on job creation will be needed, particularly for certain sectors (i.e., services, commerce, and manufacturing) and populations (i.e., first-time entrants and young women).
Transforming the Youth Employment Trajectory: Toward an Integrated Approach

How can Mauritania accelerate inclusive job creation, particularly for different segments of vulnerable youth? The challenges of diversification, job creation, and poverty reduction are tied to multiple constraints that call for an integrated approach.6,7 Given individual- and market-level constraints, Mauritania’s youth trajectory can be tackled by gradually shifting labor market opportunities from revenue and skills enhancement to formal sector entry as the economy undergoes transformation. Four main areas of interventions should form part of such an integrated approach, including: (i) improving the school-to-work transition and skills; (ii) facilitating inclusive labor market entry; (iii) enhancing the sustainability and quality of jobs; and (iv) promoting job growth. Moving forward, stronger public-private coalitions lie at the heart of youth employment and social inclusion in Mauritania.

Poverty reduction and youth employment remain deeply intertwined in Mauritania. Mauritania’s jobs challenge is characterized by a low-growth macroeconomic context, high reliance on minerals and extractives, and marked poverty and social exclusion. Despite the country being endowed with a wealth of mineral, energy, and marine resources, growth was estimated at only 2.0 percent in 2016.8 Poverty remains high, at 33 percent as of 2014, having decreased from 44.5 percent in 2008.9 Poverty varies widely across Mauritania’s 13 main regions (wilayas), from 27 percent in urban areas to 53 percent in rural zones. As youth (15–24 year olds) comprised over 40 percent of the population as of 2014, they are particularly vulnerable to high social exclusion.

Urbanization has also increased rapidly, with a 10-fold difference within a generation, from 7 percent in 1960 to 60 percent in 2015. However, internal migration has exacerbated poverty in urban areas. Mauritania’s vast desert regions still host large numbers of poorer nomadic groups excluded from the mainstream economy. Low productivity and a lack of diversification in the face of climate-related vulnerabilities are expected to slow poverty reduction. As a result, Mauritania’s national growth and employment strategies emphasize alleviating constraints on growth and job creation as well as connecting the poor to enhanced social assistance and productive livelihoods,10 particularly for youth.

The main objective of this policy note is to provide an overview of the jobs challenge in Mauritania, with a focus on constraints and opportunities facing youth over the short to long term. The note assesses overarching youth employment trends and gaps and makes

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10 The 2016–2030 National Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity (SCAPP), along with its 2018–2030 National Employment Strategy, focuses on key policies designed to stimulate private sector-led growth, including boosting access to credit, infrastructure, and investment in agribusiness, livestock, and fisheries. For the most vulnerable households, the SCAPP approach calls for modernizing the social protection and labor system in order to connect the poor to social assistance and provide pathways to productive livelihoods.
recommendations for facilitating their entry into sustainable, productive jobs. While the note does not provide an exhaustive diagnostic of all dimensions to job creation, it identifies key areas for further analysis. While the note discusses overall trends related to growth, a detailed analysis of the determinants of job creation at the sector and firm level does not fall within its scope. Rather, the note aims to provide an initial assessment of youth employment policy and program issues in Mauritania. It is intended primarily for government and non-state actors involved in developing short- to long-term interventions to facilitate labor market insertion, particularly among vulnerable populations.

The note focuses on the following policy questions:

**Profile of Jobs:** What sectors have contributed most to growth and jobs? How effectively have these jobs contributed to poverty reduction? What are the main labor demands by sectors and firms? What constraints on job creation and hiring do they face at market level?

**Profile of Youth and the Labor Force:** What is the overall labor market context for youth in terms of demographics and participation? What are the main profiles, skills, and preferences of youth? What main constraints on gainful employment do they face?

**Profile of Labor Market Institutions and Programs:** What is the current context for labor market actors, institutions, and programs in Mauritania? What is the current level of spending on the main youth employment programs, and what is their status in terms of coverage and outcomes?

**Typology of Constraints and Opportunities for Boosting Youth Employment:** What are the options for an actionable, integrated, and multi-sectoral approach to addressing key constraints on youth employment over the short to long term?

**Conceptual Framework**

The framework for this assessment focuses on the role of jobs in boosting social inclusion for vulnerable youth within the context of resource-rich countries. The 2013 *World Development Report: Jobs*\(^\text{11}\) examines the demand and supply for labor and the role of jobs as a core tenet of building social cohesion (Figure 1). Incorporating principles of the 2015 *World Development Report: Mind, Society, and Behavior*,\(^\text{12}\) the framework for this assessment includes an assessment of constraints on and opportunities for productive employment. Because policy design and outcomes are influenced by markets (macroeconomic and firm-level factors) and individuals (choices, biases, and competencies), understanding how these factors facilitate or constrain labor force participation and productive employment is critical, particularly for youth from marginalized poor communities and young women. Such an understanding will help identify specific recommendations for improving current policies and designing new ones where needed.


Constraints can broadly be characterized as individual-level or market-level constraints (Table 1). Addressing individual-level constraints involves understanding the profile of the workforce as well as the skills, choices, and social norms that influence decision-making regarding employment. Tackling market-level constraints involves examining the jobs profiles, investment types, public-private coordination, and business regulations that influence job creation.

Policy responses needed to alleviate constraints on job growth fall into three main types. The first comprises policies that focus on fundamentals, or the right macroeconomic and governance foundations. The second type focuses on labor policies, which include labor market institutions, legislation, and related policies such as those pertaining to social security and active labor market programs as well as their nexus with economic policies. Finally, the third type targets priorities, which shape the policy agenda in terms of the most specific and critical development issues over the short to long term, be they certain population groups, regions, economic sectors, or other policy priorities. Depending on how they are designed and interact together, policy packages determine the nature and trajectory of job creation.

Approach

To develop a 360-degree view of Mauritania’s labor market, this note draws on a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis, triangulating key data with various perspectives drawn from in-country stakeholder interviews. Macroeconomic indicators and international comparisons of labor market indicators are primarily drawn from the World Bank’s World Development Indicators and the International Labor Organization’s (ILO) Key Indicators of the Labor Market (KILM). The nationally representative survey used to analyze labor force indicators is the 2012 Mauritania Labor Force and Informal Sector Survey conducted by Mauritania National Statistics Institute (INS) in collaboration with the ILO.\(^{13}\) Poverty indicators are based on the 2008 and 2014 Mauritania Household Living Conditions Surveys (INS).\(^{14}\) The analysis of the business climate and demand for labor among the private sector is based mainly on the 2014 Mauritania Enterprise Survey\(^{15}\) (World Bank). Financial inclusions data are based on the 2014 FinDex Survey for Mauritania\(^{16}\) (World Bank).

In-depth qualitative information on youth employment constraints at the individual and market levels is based on qualitative and semi-quantitative data on the demand and supply sides. The constraints assessment draws on the 2016 Mauritania Rapid Labor Market Diagnostic Survey on Youth Employment Constraints.\(^{17}\) This micro-survey consisted of a

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<th>Category</th>
<th>Types of Constraints</th>
<th>Youth segments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual level</td>
<td>Technical (education, practical skills, job training)</td>
<td>Youth segments</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Financial (resources for job search, mobility or self-employment)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Access (services, information, work experience)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Behavioral (preferences, social norms, and choices related to gender, community, or age)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Market level</td>
<td>Macroeconomic (financial, sectoral, regional)</td>
<td>Firms and sectors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Business climate (business regulations, investment climate)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Labor policies (regulations)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integrative (policies and programs connecting demand and supply sides)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: World Bank staff.

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\(^{13}\) The sample size for the 2012 Mauritania Labor Force and Informal Sector Survey was approximately 9,100 households, including 33,545 individuals over the age of 10.

\(^{14}\) The sample size for both the 2008 and 2014 Mauritania Household Living Conditions Surveys was approximately 14,000 households.

\(^{15}\) The sample size for the 2014 Mauritania Enterprise Survey was 150 firms.

\(^{16}\) The sample size for the 2014 FinDex Survey for Mauritania was 1,000 adults.

\(^{17}\) The sample size for the 2016 Mauritania Rapid Labor Market Diagnostic Survey on Youth Employment Constraints was 126 youth and 40 firms.
qualitative assessment conducted jointly by a public research institute, the Mauritanian Center for Policy Analysis (CMAP), and the World Bank. The micro-survey assesses constraints at the individual and market levels by collecting information on needs, profiles, and preferences not captured in national surveys. It was designed as a quantitative micro-survey using a structured questionnaire and one-on-one interviews with a sample of firms and youth representing various segments. On the firms’ side, sectors represented include commerce, agriculture and fisheries, construction, information technology, services (administration), and extractives, and spanned small, medium, and large enterprises. On the youth side, the sample includes nearly equal proportions of males and females at various educational levels who are largely unemployed, with a sample of employed individuals for benchmarking purposes. While the micro-survey sample size permits the presentation of the results in quantitative format, the results should be interpreted as qualitative findings and may not necessarily be representative at the national level.

The rest of the note is structured as follows. Following Chapter 1 on the context and background, Chapter 2 assesses the profile of job creation in Mauritania and labor demand from the perspective of firms, drawing on sectoral growth trends and firm-level data. Chapter 3 complements this analysis by turning to the labor force, focusing on the profile, needs, and preferences of youth. Chapter 4 examines the extent to which existing youth employment programs address individual- and market-level constraints captured in the preceding chapters within the framework of broader development and poverty-reduction strategies. Finally, Chapter 5 concludes with a discussion of policy options, risks, and opportunities for strengthening youth employment prospects over the short to long term, with a focus on active labor market programs. Additional data discussed throughout the note are included as tables and figures in the Technical Appendix.
PROFILE OF JOBS AND LABOR DEMAND

Growth Trends

While Mauritania’s high reliance on extractives has contributed to modest poverty reduction in the past, growth remains too low to sufficiently contribute to substantive job creation. The pace of GDP growth slowed to 2.0 percent in 2016, down from 5.6 percent in 2014. Extractives account for 25 percent of GDP and 82 percent of all exports, generating 23 percent of fiscal revenues. This leaves Mauritania among the most vulnerable countries in Africa due to its reliance on energy exports and terms-of-trade, along with Nigeria, Angola, and nine other economies. Recent price shocks in the extractive industry, notably for iron ore and copper, have contributed to this slowdown. While the transportation, telecommunications, and construction sectors experienced similar rates (Figure 2), a boost to public investment in infrastructure in Nouakchott and improvements in fisheries and agricultural production in southern rural regions contributed to modest poverty reduction, primarily in rural areas. In line with much of Africa, the growth outlook remains modest due to recent declines in oil and commodity prices.

Industry and services have gradually overtaken agriculture in terms of value added to growth since 1995. Between 1995 and 2015, the contribution of agriculture to GDP decreased from 37 percent to just 23 percent, while that of industry increased from 25 percent to 36 percent (Figure 3). Mauritania’s structural transformation correlated with increases in overall worker productivity, contributing to increased earnings (see Technical Annex). Productivity went from just over PPP$15,000 to nearly PPP$19,000 over the same 10-year period. Sustained improvements in human capital, technology acquisition, and exports contributed to these

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21 See Technical Annex for additional data, tables, and figures to which the note refers throughout.
FIGURE 2  Growth outlook for Mauritania, overall and by sector, 2013–2018


FIGURE 3  Sectoral contribution to GDP and productivity, Mauritania, 1995–2014

Source: World Bank staff calculations, ILO KILM Database.
trends. Similarly, per capita GDP increased from PPP$2,800 to PPP$3,700 as the Mauritanian economy shifted to greater value-added activities and increased worker productivity. By contrast, agricultural productivity has not caught up with that of comparable economies, leaving Mauritania lagging behind Cameroon and Benin as well as countries further afield such as Kyrgyzstan and Honduras. Improving productivity will be vital to improving employment prospects for youth given Mauritania’s high potential and comparative advantage in livestock, fisheries, and links to agri-business and exports.

Moving forward, the Government has recognized the need for a two-pronged approach to boosting growth and poverty reduction. Over the short term, growth is expected to be driven by extractives, infrastructure, and construction. Moreover, 10 percent of all firms are highly optimistic about growth over the near term, driven mainly by the construction sector, followed by agriculture and fisheries and commerce. As part of the Government’s vision, a fiscal consolidation plan for boosting public investment and financial sector reforms for strengthening liquidity and access to finance are envisaged. At the same time, over the long term, strengthening regulatory and land reforms for boosting agricultural productivity, livestock performance, and fisheries will be needed.

Types and Quality of Jobs

Historically, job creation has lagged significantly in Mauritania as more people enter the workforce. An estimated 95,000 jobs were created during 2009–2012 (the most recent three-year period for which data are available), equivalent to nearly 30,000 jobs per year. Yet this flow is hardly sufficient to absorb new entrants to the labor force (up to 25,000 per year) as well as the current stock of the unemployed, estimated at 72,000 as of 2014.

Agriculture dominates half of all jobs in Mauritania, followed by services and finally commerce and trades (industry) (Figure 4). This share is similar to other countries in the region such as Senegal and Ghana as well as close to the lower middle-income average. By contrast, other resource-rich countries such as Malaysia and Ecuador have managed to diversify their economies, where services make up a much larger share of employment, in line with other upper middle-income countries. Despite a combined GDP contribution for extractives of nearly 25 percent, commerce and industry and manufacturing and mining account for relatively few jobs, at 9 percent and 2 percent, respectively.

In half of Mauritania’s regions, agriculture is by far the largest employer. However, the quality of these jobs remains low, which leads to poverty and unemployment persisting in these regions. Agriculture accounts for over 50 percent of employment in seven regions and 25 percent or less in five regions. Agricultural workers comprise nearly 90 percent of the workforce in Gorgol, as compared to only 4 percent in Nouakchott.

22 Preliminary estimates based on Bilan de l’Emploi 2012–2013, CMAP.
FIGURE 4  Distribution of employment by sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Agriculture (%)</th>
<th>Industry (%)</th>
<th>Services (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Ghana</td>
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<td>South Africa</td>
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<td>Ecuador</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper middle income</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


FIGURE 5  Regional distribution of poverty rate


FIGURE 6  Regional distribution of agricultural employment

Most jobs in Mauritania are informal, accounting for 84 percent of all employment (Figure 7). Wage employment, which is largely informal, accounts for 36 percent, domestic help for 6 percent, and undeclared types of employment for 4 percent. Poverty is highest in agricultural employment, followed by self-employed non-agricultural and domestic employ-ment. Poverty is generally concentrated along Mauritania’s southern regions due to low earn-ings among agricultural workers, who are largely self-employed (Figures 5 and 6).

Self-employment remains highly precarious. Of those in agricultural enterprises, 61 percent are self-employed as compared to 47 percent in non-agricultural enterprises, with hardly any cooperatives. However, 61 percent of agricultural employment is considered seasonal or temporary. Nearly one in every five workers (19 percent) receive no remuneration of any kind for their work, which compares with only 6 percent among non-agricultural workers. Meanwhile, one in three agricultural workers (31 percent) receive in-kind remuneration rather than in cash. The precarious nature of this remuneration and the lack of access to markets reduces job quality and productivity.

24 In this note, informal employment is defined based on the 2012 Mauritania Labor Force and Informal Sector Survey, which considers all employment beside salaried public servants and salaried workers as informal, including those working in agricultural enterprises, commerce, and domestic works.
Labor Costs

Labor taxes account for 23 percent of business taxes paid on average, which is relatively high by regional standards. On the one hand, Mauritania’s labor tax rate is in line with other countries in the region, such as Senegal and Mali, as well as other African countries such as Kenya, Côte d’Ivoire, and South Africa (Figure 9). However, Mauritania’s rate is much higher than that found in other emerging economies at higher income levels in Latin America, Eastern Europe, and East Asia. High labor costs have been associated with lagging employment creation in the formal sector for youth, and first-time entrants in particular. Evidence from China, Eastern Europe, and Turkey shows that job creation in the formal sector and contributions to social insurance funds are hampered by a high tax wedge (or high labor costs, which result in low take-home pay), most notably for low-wage earners, who tend to comprise first-time job seekers. Striking the balance between progressive taxes and incentives targeted toward low-wage earners and youth (among others) can offset the potentially negative impact of high labor costs on formal employment in countries such as Mauritania.

Average earnings have been increasingly modestly in Mauritania due mainly to growth in selected sectors such as agriculture and minimum wage increases. Average annual growth rate (AAGR) was 6 percent over 2008–2014. The average real monthly wage in constant 2014 terms increased by nearly 45 percent over the six-year period, going from MRO 44,900 to 65,200 (with the median wage rising from MRO 32,000 to MRO 45,000). The highest AAGR was seen in agriculture and mining, benefiting mainly youth, women, low-skilled workers with a primary education, and rural workers. This growth has been driven mainly by exports, primarily minerals, and oil and fisheries. These trends are also explained by productivity gains (such as the move from crop farming to livestock raising) and growth in mining in terms of both volume and productivity. In addition, a 20 percent increase in the minimum wage in 2011 from MRO 25,000 to MRO 30,000 per month contributed to improving earnings.

While firms face a host of infrastructure and investment climate challenges to doing business, labor costs and regulations are important factors influencing both formal employment rates and informal wages. In addition to corruption, infrastructure, and difficult access to finance in nearly 50 to 60 percent of all firms, taxes and labor regulations are cited as major constraints on doing business by 50 and 30 percent of all firms, respectively (Figure 10). By contrast, taxes and labor regulations were cited by an average of 30 and 10 percent of firms, respectively, in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Perceptions of the degree to which labor costs affect business, including job creation, vary by sector and firm size. Manufacturers, large enterprises, and exporting firms are nearly twice as likely to perceive labor regulations as a significant barrier to doing business compared to other firms. Among Mauritania’s social dialogue partners, including the private sector, the

**FIGURE 9**  Labor tax as a share of total commercial taxes on firms

![Bar chart showing labor tax as a share of total commercial taxes on firms across different regions and countries.](chart)


**FIGURE 10**  Firms’ perceptions of major constraints on operations (percentage of all firms), 2014

![Bar chart displaying firms' perceptions of major constraints on operations across different regions and countries.](chart)

Government, and labor unions, policy reforms impacting fiscal space and informality, such as corporate tax reform and labor contracts, are considered key policy issues.

**Demand for Workforce Skills**

**Demand for job-relevant skills varies by sector in Mauritania.** In general, a high share of workers in production are unskilled (53 percent), and the share of firms offering training is relatively low (less than 50 percent) (Figure 11). Unsurprisingly, manufacturing and medium and large enterprises tend to offer workers training, but generally, most firms do not offer workers any formal skills upgrading. Generally, the greater the share of unskilled workers by type of firm, the more likely skills will be cited as a major constraint, especially in manufacturing, large enterprises, and exporting firms. The demands placed on workers to meet the needs of an increasingly technical industrial economy will only increase moving forward, with an important role for firms to play in steering this direction.

Qualitatively, firms perceive a high level of difficulty in finding jobseekers with the right skills, particularly practical work experience, a constraint reported by 50 percent of firms (Figure 12). Administrative services, industry, and information technology (IT) report high demand for advanced IT skills, which are difficult to find for a third of all firms.

**Recruitment and Retention**

While half of all firms use direct job postings for hiring workers, they tend to rely highly on friends and family networks in nearly equal measure (44 percent) (Figure 13). Overall,
retaining Mauritanian nationals is generally not a significant challenge, with the exception of the construction and agriculture and fisheries sectors, with one in three firms and one in five firms in these sectors reporting difficulty in retaining Mauritanian workers, respectively. These sectors also tend to hire foreign workers in greater numbers than other sectors, particularly migrant workers from neighboring Senegal.
Conclusions

In delivering on the promise of diversification and inclusive job creation for youth and first-time earners, three main market-level constraints emerge in Mauritania. First, lagging productivity impedes growth, particularly in agriculture, which is hampered by a lack of expertise, labor force skills, and integration with trade and secondary agri-business for boosting growth potential. Second, job creation in untapped sectors such as construction, industry, and fisheries has been dampened by weak labor demand as well as clientelist hiring practices. Due to a lack of the practical, job-relevant skills required by these sectors, enterprises face challenges in recruiting and retaining Mauritanian nationals. Third, mismatched labor regulations in terms of contracting restrictions and high labor taxes may be driving firms to remain in the informal sector, thus dampening wages and opportunities for improving job quality. To meet these challenges, the country has taken steps toward improving macroeconomic fundamentals, such as tax and land reforms planned for 2016. However, unaddressed market-level constraints will exacerbate sector- and region-specific challenges, reducing prospects for youth to enter the labor force. Understanding the constraints facing youth and youth employment programs can help pave the way to meeting labor market needs.
PROFILE OF YOUTH IN THE LABOR FORCE

Demographic and Labor Force Trends

Mauritania’s population is predominantly young and urban, representing both its most valuable and riskiest asset. Fully 40 percent of the population was aged below 14 as of 2014 (Figure 14). Projections show a steady annual population growth rate of 2.5 percent as well as a persistent youth bulge for 15–24 year olds over the coming generation. Youth (15–24 year olds) were estimated to comprise 20 percent of the population in 2015 (approximately 1 million), a proportion projected to fall to 18 percent by 2050. Meanwhile, 15–34 year olds comprised 34 percent in 2015 (1.36 million), a figure projected to be 33 percent in 2050. The fertility rate remains high at 4.7 as of 2013, having decreased slightly from 5.1 in 2006. The age dependency ratio is also relatively high at 77 percent as of 2014, having decreased slightly from 81 percent in 2006. Up to 25,000 youth will enter the labor force each year on average through 2050.

Overall, the total labor force participation rate (LFPR) in Mauritania stands at only 43.5 percent, lower than elsewhere in the region due mainly to low female participation. The total labor force comprised 717,000 people as of 2012, of which 36 percent were female and 64 percent were male. Male LFPR is nearly 2.2 times that of female LFPR. Female labor force participation is only 28 percent (based on data from the Mauritania Labor Force Survey for 2012), compared to 64 percent for Sub-Saharan Africa.

In line with population density, a third of Mauritania’s working-age population is found in its capital, Nouakchott, followed by the seven regions in the south. LFPR varies across regions, with Nouakchott among the highest at 45 percent (Figure 15). The rate is highest in Guidimagha at 51 percent and lowest in Trarza at only 24 percent. Inter-regional migration is not particularly common, with only 11 percent tending to migrate to other regions, 80 percent
FIGURE 14  Population projections, Mauritania, 2015 and 2050

Note: Population shown in thousands.

FIGURE 15  Regional distribution of labor force participation


FIGURE 16  Regional distribution of unemployed individuals

of whom tend to go to urban areas (primarily Nouakchott). The main reason for migration among men is to search for work, whereas for women, migration is primarily related to household moves. The average age at time of migration tends to be in the 20–26 range. The concentration of individuals looking for work mirrors population density and labor force participation maps (Figure 16).

A segmentation of the youth labor market shows that a significant share of Mauritania’s youth is neither in education, employment, or training (NEET) (Figure 17). NEETs are estimated at 39 percent of all youth. The NEET rate is mainly driven by young women dropping out of the labor force. NEET rates among youth are also generally higher in rural areas than in urban areas.

Gender differences in labor force participation vary by age. The LFPR among youth (15–24) is estimated to be 15.5 percent. Among adults (25–44), it is 42.6 percent, and among older adults (45–64), it is 56.5 percent. The female-male divide in labor force participation begins to emerge in the 15–19 age bracket, when nearly 1.8 times as many males as females are in the active labor force. The difference widens to 2.2 times in the 20–24 and 25–29 age brackets and 2.3 in the 30–34 age bracket, leveling off until the 50–54 age bracket, when there is a significant drop in female LFPR. In this age bracket, the difference is 2.7 times.

**FIGURE 17** Youth labor market segmentation (15–34 years)

Demographic categories, by poverty level total: 1.359 million

- Youth population in thousands (,000): % of total
- High level of poverty
- Low level of poverty
- Inactive

Starting at 25 years of age, employment among urban youth is lower than among their rural counterparts. The employment rate increases with age, particularly in urban areas, from 36 percent among 20-year-olds to 73 percent among 30-year-olds. Among 25-year-olds, approximately 60 percent of rural youth work, as compared to 45 percent among urban youth. This may be explained by differences in profile and poverty among the rural poor, where the dependency ratio is also higher.

**Education**

Mauritania’s low primary enrollment rate remains a challenge for employment prospects. Primary completion was only 71 percent as of 2013.25 Net enrollment rates were as low as 55 percent as of 2014.29 As a result, at least one in every three Mauritians may lack any formal education, a proportion that is higher still in rural regions (Annex, Figure 55). Among those enrolled in formal primary education, only 33 percent go on to pursue secondary studies, and only 5 percent continue to higher education. Primary education is the highest level attained by 61 percent of those who completed any level of formal education (i.e., who received a certificate or degree). Rural males and females are nearly twice as likely to have attended religious school as their urban counterparts (or 37 percent as compared to 18 percent, respectively, among males, with similar rates among females). Lower school enrollment rates are noticeable in rural regions such as Gorgol and Assaba, particularly among females, starting at the age of 13.

Overall, 6 percent of the labor force completed university education, which is concentrated in Nouakchott. Meanwhile, 18 percent of the labor force completed secondary school. Other cities with high shares of highly-skilled (university level) and semi-skilled (secondary level) labor force include Nouakchott, Inchiri, Tiris-Zemmour, Nouadhibou, Adrar, and Trarza. Apprenticeship is a nascent sector, with limited uptake in Mauritania, representing only 0.15 percent of the labor force as of 2012. In 2010, only 5,000 students enrolled in technical and vocational schools, the equivalent of 1 percent of all NEETs. However, this is beginning to change as vocational centers in agriculture, fisheries, mining, and utilities have recently began increasing enrollment. At least three new centers have emerged since the mid-2000s in vocational trades (such as mechanics and electrics), fisheries, agriculture, and mining, which has helped encourage the employment of Mauritians in these sectors.

The dynamics of school dropout in relation to work vary across geographical settings and incomes. Among young adults (14–34), a higher share of the rural poor is working than is in school, as compared to their urban counterparts. Among females, the share who are working among the bottom 40 percent of the income distribution is strikingly higher in rural areas than in urban areas. These data suggest that poorer females in rural areas are much more likely to drop out of school to work than in urban areas.

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29 2014 Ongoing Survey of Household Conditions (EPCV), INS.
Gender

Females in Mauritania exit the labor market at a very early age due to marriage and childrearing, leading to a particularly low LFPR. Where youth female LFPR in Mauritania was only 18.5 percent in 2012, it is 31.2 percent in Senegal, 40 percent in Côte d’Ivoire, and as high as 68 percent in Togo (Figure 18). Other low-middle income countries in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Southeast Asia, and Latin America also have youth female LFPR rates that are at least twice those of Mauritania.

However, this tendency has been changing slowly in Mauritania. Over the most recent ten-year period for which data are available, the share of females among the employed population has been increasing, from 25 percent in 1993 to 35 percent by 2012.30 In addition, among the bottom 40 percent of the income distribution, female youth in rural regions are more likely to work than are their urban counterparts.

Females also tend drop out of the labor force due to early marriage and child rearing. The majority of the labor force is married (63 percent), and the fertility rate remains high at 4.1 births per woman. Among 16–20 year olds, one in every three women are married, as compared to only 4 percent among men, suggesting that men marry much later. A higher school dropout rate among 12–16 year olds is also found among women. The main reasons reported for school dropout among girls were pregnancy, marriage, and poor school performance. By contrast, the main reason reported among boys was the need to work. While higher dropout

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30 Source: ILO KILM Data.
rates among girls reduce their overall likelihood of being employed later in life, the probability of re-entry into the workforce may be higher from some sectors or occupations than for others.

Females and males are equally as likely to be employed in agriculture, even though commerce absorbs relatively more females than males, while the reverse is true of services (Figure 19). However, females are more likely to be employed in commerce than in services (32 versus 22 percent, respectively). The reverse is true for males, where 22 percent of employment is found in services versus 32 percent in commerce. Similar trends are seen in occupational categories, with females over twice as represented in commerce as males. By contrast, males are three times more likely to be salaried workers than are females, with salaried employment accounting for 7.3 percent of male workers versus 2.6 percent of female workers.

In urban areas, wage self-employment is split nearly 50–50 between the private and public sectors. Among the working population, 30 percent are wage employees, of whom nearly half (47 percent) are in the public sector (state-owned enterprises and public administration). Young adults (below the age of 20) are primarily employed in non-agricultural enterprises, particularly in manual services, as domestic helpers, and in and small or micro commerce. Queuing among university graduates is high. Having a university degree does not reduce the likelihood of being unemployed among young adults (14–35 years), but does so among the older cohort (35–64 years).
In rural areas, agriculture is the main source of livelihoods, accounting for 60 percent of all employment, particularly among youth and those with no or limited education. Among rural youth (15–24), it accounts for 75 percent of all employment. All else being equal, the most significant determinant of employment by sector is educational attainment, where primary formal schooling reduces the likelihood of working in agriculture and increases the likelihood of being a wage employee (formal or informal). By contrast, pursuing a religious education increases the likelihood of working in agriculture. By income group, among the bottom 20 percent of the working population, 80 percent are employed in agriculture in rural regions, as compared with less than 40 percent among the richest 20 percent.

Low female labor force participation and the preponderance of agricultural work among the rural poor emerge among the determinants of employment by sector. Women are twice as likely to be inactive as men regardless of educational level or geography. Having a young dependent (less than 14 years old) decreases the likelihood of being inactive and increases the likelihood of working in agriculture, particularly among men. While most of the enrolled population attends general-education, non-religious schools (73 percent), a sizable share, particularly in rural regions, attends faith-based schools (27 percent), with the latter group being also more likely to be employed in the agriculture sector, controlling for other factors. There is no difference in enrollment rates by gender as females are just as likely to attend religious school as males in rural settings, which may be a matter of supply, social factors, or high mobility unique to rural regions.

Unemployment

Unemployment in Nouakchott is considerably higher than the national average (10.1 percent) at 16.7 percent, among the highest in the country. Only three other regions have higher unemployment rates than Nouakchott: Tagant, Nouadhibou, and Inchiri, at 19, 22, and 28.8 percent, respectively. The greatest share of the unemployed live in Nouakchott (51 percent), followed by Nouadhibou (12 percent) and Brakna (9 percent).

Unemployment emerges earlier in urban areas than in rural regions. In rural regions, this trend is likely explained by 15–19 year olds school dropping out of school and going to work. While the share of unemployed youth is high in both settings, it is far higher in urban areas, largely replaced by work in rural areas. The share of NEETs in general appears consistent, while school enrolment seems to account for some of the fall in employment in urban areas among 20–24 year olds. The share of unemployed reaches approximately 10 percent among 15–19 year olds in urban regions, whereas this share becomes apparent by age 20–24 in rural regions. School enrolment is also higher among urban youth ages 20–24, which could be explained by either socioeconomic reasons for dropping out or a lack of adequate supply in rural areas.

Although the unemployment rate is higher for females than for males overall, the difference is highest for the 24–33 age bracket, a common child-rearing age. Unemployment among females stood at 12.6 percent, or nearly 30 percent higher than that for males, or 8.6 percent as of 2012 (Figure 20). Long-term unemployment is the norm rather than the exception, with
60 percent of the unemployed having been unemployed for at least three years. Striking differences in unemployment by gender emerge across age groups, changing the trajectory of employment outcomes early on. Among the 24–33 age bracket, unemployment is nearly twice as high among females than among males, or 20 percent versus 12 percent, respectively. Unemployment rates are generally twice as high in the 14–33 age group as among those aged 34 or older.

Unemployment rates increase with educational level until secondary school, when they begin to decrease for the overall population but continue to increase for youth. Among 14–25 year olds, the unemployment rate is highest for those with a university degree, or 50.7 percent, which is nearly entirely driven by low employment levels among females with a university degree. Among this group, the unemployment rate is nearly 98 percent, meaning that nearly all females 14–25 years of age do not work. This trend shows exceptionally delayed entry into the labor force among highly educated females.

However, university graduates make up only 7 percent of the unemployed, or 5,300 out of 72,000. Most of Mauritania’s labor force did not attend university, and 93 percent of the unemployed only attained secondary school qualifications or less (Figure 21). While 30 percent of the unemployed hold secondary school qualifications, 35 percent completed primary school, and 28 percent have no school qualifications (of which 13 percent are literate and 15 percent are illiterate). The share of youth in the unemployed population varies widely by region, suggesting that youth employment opportunities depend heavily on regional factors. Among the unemployed in different regions, while nearly 31 percent of the unemployed are youth in Nouakchott, the number rises to nearly 60 percent in Assaba.

Job Skills and Preferences

Self-perceived job skills and preferences among youth vary widely by gender and education level, thus influencing their choices. Qualitatively, self-perceptions of job skills and readiness for manual work, entrepreneurship, and public-sector employment show a clear segmentation among youth. While 6 percent of youth included in the qualitative micro-survey were aged 15–20 and 94 percent were aged 22–35, 14 percent were long-term unemployed. In terms of educational background, the distribution of unemployed youth is as follows: 12 percent with a religious schooling background, 11 percent with a primary education, 8 percent with a secondary education, 16 percent with a university education; the distribution of employed youth is as follows: 19 percent with a secondary education, and 19 percent with a university education. While it is difficult to ascertain from the data whether wage employees were employed formally or informally, the sizable share of self-employed workers reaffirms that informality is high in Mauritania, consistent with broader labor survey data.

Most youth are highly dependent on their families for housing, with one-third reporting receiving financial support from that source. While dependency is expected since 30 percent in the sample are under the level is relatively high, with 65 percent dependent on their families for accommodation (living at home). Qualitative data show that youth depend on informal work, mainly for consumption and subsistence.
The majority of youth are nearly as eager to find work in the public sector as in the private sector, or nearly two in every three youth. The public sector is generally a less attractive option for employment in Mauritania among youth surveyed, distinguishing the country from some of its regional neighbors. Nearly twice as many young jobseekers were “not at all” interested in seeking public sector employment compared to private sector employment (one in five versus one in ten, respectively).

Mauritanian youth surveyed were also highly interested in manual work (50 percent). Manual work was defined as jobs such as vocational trades, construction, and various occupations in the agricultural and service sectors. Interest in manual work is highest among secondary
school educated youth (two in every three), but nearly equal among males and females in the micro-survey (nearly half). However, given that nearly two-thirds of the sample did not attain an education higher than secondary, the sample is too small to make a more detailed comparison by educational level.

**Self-reported skills constraints on practical job skills, IT, and organizational competencies among youth tend to reflect those perceived by enterprises (Figure 22).** Youth surveyed tend to rate their level of skills lowest for practical work experience, project management, and advanced IT skills. These shortcomings are consistent with skills reported to be in short supply by firms. Yet youth are not necessarily seeking to improve the same skills as those sought by firms. Gender does not appear to influence how youth perceive their skills, although the sample size is too small to control for multiple factors such as educational level, age, and income level. While they recognize the need to improve their IT and language skills (as reported by nearly 80 percent of youth), only half are likely to put effort into doing so despite the high priority placed on these skills by employers.

**Across educational level, basic skills and language self-ratings were similar while more advanced organizational skills tend to be reported among university graduates.** Unsurprisingly, university graduates tended to rate some skills higher than did those with lower levels of education, such as basic and advanced IT skills, written communication, organizational skills (client management, problem solving, planning, and team work), and technical skills and administrative skills. Females tended to provide higher self-ratings than males for advanced IT, client management, foreign languages, strategic management, and administration. In contrast, males tended to rate themselves more highly than females on problem solving.

Entrepreneurship remains an interest among a sizable share of youth, although only one in five perceive being “fully” ready to start a business (Figure 23). This finding is consistent with previous analyses, which show that among youth in Africa as a whole, nearly one in five youth report being self-employed as entrepreneurs. Similarly, one in five youth report a “high” level of office or project management experience. These results are in line with other findings suggesting that Mauritanian youth lack basic entrepreneurship skills as well as access to finance. Mauritanian youth are also less financially literate as a result of low financial inclusion, with only 12 percent reporting having an account at a financial institution, compared to 26 percent in Ghana and 48 percent in Kenya (Figure 24).

**FIGURE 23** Entrepreneurship willingness among youth by gender (percentage), qualitative findings

![Graph showing entrepreneurship willingness by gender](image)


**FIGURE 24** Financial inclusion among youth

![Graph showing financial inclusion among youth](image)

Conclusions

Most youth in Mauritania face several overarching employment constraints, with additional barriers faced by three particularly vulnerable segments of youth. Overarching employment constraints include: (i) lagging labor demand due to weak job creation in emerging sectors; (ii) weak outreach, access to services, and information about livelihoods and employment options exacerbated by clientelism in hiring among firms; and (iii) insufficient skills development in terms of practical job-relevant competencies across sectors. However, three particularly vulnerable youth segments face additional constraints, namely: (i) youth in rural settings; (ii) young females; and (iii) youth out of school and not working (NEETs). Low-skilled rural youth are at a particular disadvantage due to a high risk of school dropout, lack of mobility, and weak diversification. Young females are burdened by an even higher risk of school dropout and lack of mobility, in addition to overarching social norms that heavily influence early marriage and exclusion from some sectors such as commerce and industry. Finally, NEET youth face added barriers to training opportunities, information and, importantly, networks needed for entrepreneurship or wage employment, whether in the formal or informal sector. Examining how these constraints can be addressed through short- to long-term measures and synergies with demand-side opportunities is key to improving their prospects.
LANDSCAPE OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

Mapping Key Labor Market Actors

With a new vision for employment as part of the SCAPP and National Employment Strategy (2018–2030), Mauritania’s success at creating jobs for youth will depend heavily on improving synergies between demand- and supply-side actors. Labor market institutions, policies, and programs, including active labor market programs (ALMP), labor regulations, and linkages to social protection platforms all play a critical role. The Government’s former five-year National Employment Strategy 2009–2013 focused largely on enhancing and improving institutional coordination of labor force supply-side interventions. The forthcoming National Employment Strategy 2018–2030 focuses on operationalizing how to coordinate and monitor programs using a common platform.

Labor market institutions and related initiatives involve stakeholders representing an array of policy, sectors, and firms (demand-side) as well as households and workers (supply-side) (Figure 25). The key actors are described below.

National development and public investment strategies supporting the SCAPP are managed by the Ministry of the Economy and Finance (MEF), including the national Public Investment Program (PIP), which has helped create direct employment opportunities in infrastructure and construction. Similar investment and entrepreneurship opportunities are funded by an autonomous national investment fund, the Savings and Development Bank (CDD). The MEF also oversees the national decentralization program (PNIDDLE), which aims to enhance local services and citizen participation in planning for local infrastructure and livelihoods.
National employment strategies, including job services, active labor market programs, and vocational training are overseen by the Ministry of Employment, Vocational Training, and Information and Communication Technologies (MEFPTIC).

Labor legislation and social dialogue for private and public-sector employment are overseen by the Ministry of Public Administration and Labor (MAPT).

National social protection strategies, including social insurance, social safety net programs, and social registry identification systems are managed jointly by the MEF and Tadamoun, the national social promotion agency responsible for non-contributory cash and in-kind support to the poorest households.

Youth Employment Expenditure

Youth employment programs in Mauritania span multiple, relatively small-scale programs that mainly address supply-side training constraints. Youth employment programs comprise 14 main initiatives managed by various agencies (Table 2). A total of 60 percent of these programs target urban centers and generally range from USD0.3 to USD3 million per year.
TABLE 2  
Mapping of main youth employment programs in Mauritania

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ministry</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Regions</th>
<th>Annual budget* (USD m)</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Type**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Employment—employment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Self-employment (ANAPEJ)</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>CAPECS, business leaders, Job Assignment Agency, CDD, Ministry of Agriculture, French Development Agency (AFD)</td>
<td>Supply-side/Enterprises (micro)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Competency Development (ANAPEJ)</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Supply-side/Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Job seeker placement and orientation</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>Supply-side/Job search</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Employment—vocational training</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Professional qualifications</td>
<td>Nationwide</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Supply-side/VT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Support for Madrassa-leavers</td>
<td>Nouakchott, Atar, Kaedi, Aleg</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>US Embassy</td>
<td>Supply-side/VT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Training and Apprenticeship Support Program (PAFPA)</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>European Union, AFD</td>
<td>Supply-side/VT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Youth Training and Employment Support Program (PAFEJ)</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>European Union, ILO, AFDB, CDD</td>
<td>Institutional (policy/VT capacity-building)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Professional Technical Training Support Program (PA-FTP)</td>
<td>Nouakchott, Bogué, Nema, Kaédi, Tijikja, Atar</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>IDA</td>
<td>Supply-side/VT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Vocational training support program (AFD—C2D3)</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>AFD</td>
<td>Supply-side/VT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>German-Mauritanian financial cooperation—technical and vocational training sector</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Supply-side/VT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Employment Support Fund (FSE)</td>
<td>Nationwide</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>Ministry of the Economy and Finance (MEF), Ministry of the Interior and Decentralization (MIDEC)</td>
<td>Demand + Supply-side/Enterprises (SMES)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Youth and Sports</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship Promotion Campaign</td>
<td>Nationwide</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>Supply-side/Entrepreneurship (micro)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>First job training</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Supply-side/Wage subsidies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of the Economy and Finance</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>National Integrated Decentralization, Local Development, and Employment (PNIDDLE)</td>
<td>Nationwide</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>World Bank, European Union</td>
<td>Others (local services)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL 26.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: World Bank staff; CMAP. Notes: *Estimated annual expenditure for 2013–2015. **Types include institutional (policy/capacity); demand-side (growth, enterprises, and entrepreneurship development (SME/direct employment); and supply-side (Entrepreneurship – micro/Job search/Skills/VT).
Overall, programs address supply-side, demand-side, and institutional and policy support, totaling USD27 million in annual expenditure in 2015 (Figure 26). While the definitions of supply- and demand-side programs can overlap, a stylized depiction of programs provides an overview of the outcome of this spending. On average, most initiatives reach 300–900 youth, with vocational training higher at 5,700 youth, and public works estimates unknown but estimated to be similar to vocational training coverage.

In terms of relative spending, supply-side interventions dominate, and by global standards, Mauritania is underinvesting in job creation designed to absorb youth. Supply-side initiatives total 39 percent of all spending. These programs address mainly individual-level constraints in terms of vocational training, skills development, unemployment registration, financing for micro-entrepreneurship, and job coaching and placement services. The bulk is devoted to vocational training. Demand-side initiatives comprise 14 percent of all expenditure. These initiatives focus on enterprise growth and development, including youth-oriented initiatives for small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Institutional and policy initiatives support strengthening governance and capacity building (2 percent of all expenditure). Globally, supply-side programs tend to comprise 50 percent of all investment, followed by demand-side at 29 percent of all investment. In this respect, Mauritania appears to be under-investing in the job creation and entrepreneurship needed to absorb trainees. Other programs supporting labor-intensive public works for local development comprise 44 percent of expenditure.

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Active Labor Market Programs

The main ALMPs\textsuperscript{32} and entrepreneurship programs are managed by the Ministry of Employment, Vocational Training, and Information and Communication Technologies (MEFPTIC), including its dedicated job placement agency, the National Youth Employment Promotion Agency (ANAPEJ). Activities funded by these programs largely comprise vocational and skills training as well as limited financing for micro-entrepreneurship. Selected programs funded by external donors provide support to a limited number of beneficiaries and include training supported by the African Development Bank (AfDB) and basic job skills training and job search support in a limited number of urban centers (supported by the European Union).

Policy and capacity building support remains nascent. Assistance to the Ministry of Employment aims to develop a labor market information system (LMIS) and introduce greater coordination for beneficiary identification and placement across ministries and non-state actors.

Employment services are mainly managed by ANAPEJ, including a limited number of centers located primarily in urban areas. The main target beneficiaries include unemployed graduates, unskilled youth, pensioners, persons with disabilities, and women. ANAPEJ focuses on six main areas, as follows: (i) facilitating self-employment through micro-enterprises, with limited support to tying technical training to self-employment for vocational trades and for female entrepreneurship; (ii) job seeker registration, with limited support for intermediation and internships; (iii) limited training courses for vocational trades; (iv) job services and placement in five urban locations (Ayoun, Nouadhibou, Kaedi, Kiffa, and Selibabi); (v) awareness-raising and communication (with limited implementation); and (vi) monitoring and evaluation of programs and projects (with limited implementation).

Social Funds for Employment

While Mauritania lacks a national social fund, a public investment banking institution exists, which finances an employment fund. The Savings and Development Bank (CDD) is an autonomous public institution attached to the Prime Minister’s Office and charged with an investment and microfinance mandate. The CDD manages an annual budget of MRO 94 billion and comprises 13 antenna agencies located throughout urban and rural regions. As part of this budget, the Employment Support Fund (FSE) finances income-generating activities for unemployed graduates, poorer populations in rural regions, and SMEs that qualify for public credits, which benefit from public guarantees. Over the period 2012–2016, the FSE disbursed nearly MRO 5.3 billion, making this a significant source of youth employment financing.

\textsuperscript{32} ALMPs include job skills development, employment services, internships, and entrepreneurship promotion.
Vocational Training

Vocational training is overseen by the Ministry of Employment, which recently benefited from increased investment in infrastructure capacity and the quality of trainers. The system’s capacity is estimated to have increased by nearly 30 percent over 2011–2014, from an enrollment of approximately 4,200 to 5,700. Over the mid-term, the Ministry aims to increase enrollment to 18,000 over five years and to introduce short-term qualification schemes for 35,000 additional beneficiaries over the same period.

General youth advocacy is mainly overseen by the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MJS), which also offers a small number of youth employment programs. These programs support entrepreneurship and internships for primarily university graduates. A national public-private commission for youth, the Youth High Council (HCJ), plays an important role in representing the civic, social, and employment aspirations of youth in political and private forums. A selected number of civil youth groups exist, comprising mainly university graduate associations.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Jobs Interventions

Overall, comprehensive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of youth employment programs is lacking and will need strengthening in Mauritania, although limited program-specific assessments are prepared on a case-by-case basis. Qualitative feedback from youth about employment support programs show that there is a need for greater emphasis on hiring opportunities and more timely as well as more transparent access to information about job openings (Table 3). Regarding the private sector, half of youth were mainly concerned with establishing more transparent, clearer recruiting systems, followed by one in four respondents being interested in work experience or on-the-job internships (Figure 27). While these results were similar, regarding expectations from the Government, one in ten youth also highlighted the need for more investment funds to be made available for supporting job creation (Figure 28).

Social Protection Systems

Mauritania’s emerging social protection system has begun to offer the poorest households modest income support and services. Contributory social security coverage is limited to 3 percent and mainly covers workers in the public sector and, to a lesser extent, the private sector.33 Pensions schemes are largely pay-as-you-go (PAYG) defined-benefits regimes.34 Mauritania has two pension funds: the Retirement Fund (Caisse de Retraite) for civil servants and the military, and the National Social Security Fund (CNSS) for private sector workers, who also benefit

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34 Recent pension expenditures are unavailable for Mauritania. As of 2007, total spending on pensions was estimated at 1% of GDP, based on World Bank (2012), *Pensions in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Washington, DC.
In response to recent droughts, Mauritania established emergency instruments and programs in 2010–2011 and began the shift toward an integrated national social safety net system in 2015. During 2008–2013, safety net spending reached 5.4 percent of GDP, including fuel subsidies (or approximately 20 percent of public expenditure). The largest safety net program was the EMEL Program, which primarily offers emergency in-kind food distribution through a targeted network of subsidized food (80 percent of expenditure) and a livestock program for the pastoral population. Mauritania has in place multiple donor-funded school meals, nutrition, and small-scale programs for specific groups, but these programs have not received additional investment since 2008 and constitute a small share of safety net support.

With the adoption of a new National Social Protection Strategy in 2014, Mauritania has begun establishing the building blocks of an integrated social protection system. Managed
by the Tadamoun National Agency for the Fight Against Slavery, Social Exclusion, and Poverty under the tutelage of the Presidency, implementation of the strategy in terms of a targeted monetary safety net system started in 2015. The initial phase of development focused on instituting institutional and service delivery instruments designed to support community-based targeting methods and identification of the poor as well as more efficient delivery of benefits, notably cash transfers and human capital-enhancing investments. Importantly, the development of a national social registry has begun registering the poorest households in a gradual approach, with a view to having a single platform for targeting other benefits and services to potential beneficiaries, including active labor market programs for youth.

Labor Policy Dialogue

Policy reform dialogue on labor regulations and social security (social dialogue) is at an early stage, involving employers, workers in the formal and, to an extent, informal sector and the Government. Key issues have included collective wage bargaining, contracting reforms, and labor costs (minimum wage and social security options). Sector and private enterprises are represented by the National Mauritanian Employers’ Union (UNPM), representing nearly 11 sectors. Key sectoral federations include those for Agriculture, Livestock, Commerce, Services, and Industry. The UNPM and its sectoral federations also advocates promoting employment through workforce development alongside evolving market needs, nascent job fairs, dialogue with training centers, and incentivizing hiring and youth employment.

Unions in Mauritania are active and constitute important stakeholders in outreach to informal workers and informal workers. They are represented mainly by national inter-sectoral bodies such as the Confederation of Mauritanian Workers (CGTM) and the Union of Mauritanian Workers (UTM) as well as 26 sector-specific unions representing public and private sector workers. Labor unions are actively engaged in collective bargaining and social dialogue, although dialogue has been recently dominated by public sector unions, with less of a voice for informal sector workers.

Labor regulations and social security policies have started to come under scrutiny, particularly for first-time job seekers and youth. In Mauritania, the current maximum length of a single fixed-term contract is 24 months (Article 17 of the Labor Code, 2004), including renewals. While there are provisions for maternity benefits, there are limited social security benefits provided in the private sector due to weak enforcement of contributions and tax collection. No unemployment provisions are available. Although incentives for firms to hire workers younger than 25 years have been developed, little is known to date about their uptake or effectiveness. Mauritania has been evaluating options for reforming labor regulations within the framework of a nascent tripartite social dialogue between the Government, the private sector, and labor unions. A draft social dialogue law for the creation of a new commission on collective bargaining has been under preparation since 2015.
Conclusions

Overall, youth employment programs and social dialogue on labor policy are nascent, with programs limited in coverage and catering mainly to urban university and vocational training graduates. Less investment has been allocated to developing sustainable livelihoods over the short to midterm for poorer youth in peri-urban and rural settings. Supply-side programs in Mauritania focus mainly on vocational training and, to an extent, on micro-entrepreneurship for university graduates. Demand-side programs have focused on boosting enterprise development for SMEs throughout Mauritania, tied to regulatory reforms in the midterm to improve the investment climate. Limited institutional support exists to strengthen employment coordination across agencies as well as vocational training management. Public works programs linked to local infrastructure development programs supported by PNIDDLE are in place in nearly half of all municipalities in Mauritania in urban and rural settings. More broadly, an assessment of labor regulations and potential impacts on job creation will be needed, particularly for certain sectors (i.e., services, commerce, and manufacturing) and populations (i.e., first-time entrants and young women).

38 The Government’s PNIDDLE program on local governance and infrastructure development targets an estimated 100 municipalities out of 216 in total throughout Mauritania.
POLICY IMPLICATIONS: TRANSFORMING THE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT TRAJECTORY

Typology of Youth Employment Challenges and Constraints

Endowed with mineral resources, a geostrategic location connecting Europe and North and West Africa, and a young population, Mauritania could readily improve job prospects for its youth. To keep up with the increasing flow of young entrants into the labor force per year (up to 25,000 youth), a comprehensive plan designed to address constraints and opportunities for job creators and job seekers is vital. For youth, the plight of the under-employed and the working poor is central to Mauritania’s poverty reduction agenda. The increasing stock of unemployed and underemployed youth will be exacerbated by new entrants due to the impending youth bulge. As urbanization increases, semi-skilled youth and poorer females risk facing higher social exclusion.

Although overcoming low-growth will be imperative for Mauritania to boosting job quality and job creation, this will be insufficient on its own. Productivity remains highly stunted in key sectors such as agriculture and related value chains, and growth in commerce, services, and manufacturing remains modest, at best, with the exception of extractive industries. Insufficient investment in high-value added sectors, practices, and regions have weakened productivity and earnings. Weak access to finance among youth and small firms hinders scaling up. Barriers to growth on the demand side have particularly impacted opportunities for an increasingly young population, NEET youth, females, and the rural poor.
While a detailed analysis of growth and productivity for specific sectors, products, firm, or regions falls outside the scope of this policy note, three overarching objectives for Mauritania’s jobs agenda emerge. First, boosting productivity and earnings for the self-employed will be critical to maintaining and improving resilience. Second, expanding job creation in untapped, higher value-added sectors and practices in terms of technology and know-how will enhance job quality and growth alike. Among broader market-level constraints, the current lack of job-relevant skills in the labor force will impinge on this agenda, as will limited entrepreneurship capacity. Third, strengthening opportunities for formal wage employment will be needed for equity of opportunity and stability within the labor market. Creating fiscal space for labor costs will play an important role.

Among the different profiles of youth, three key groups face particularly high vulnerability and exclusion from the job market (Table 4).

First, low- and semi-skilled underemployed youth (20–34 years) in rural areas are among the working poor in the informal sector. Already active in the labor market, they would benefit most from skills upgrade, access to finance, and access to exports, which would help boost productivity, reduce underemployment, and improve working conditions.

Second, unemployed low- and semi-skilled females face high constraints on entering the labor market, particularly due to social norms. Females face high rates of early secondary school dropout and exclusion from commerce and industry, where earnings potential is currently higher than in agriculture. Low- and semi-skilled poorer youth in rural regions have less information and services available to enter sectors such as commerce and industry or to improve their agricultural earnings.

Third, NEET youth make up the bulk of youth excluded from the labor market due to multiple constraints. Secondary-educated and Madrassa-trained youth (less than one year since leaving secondary school) make up the bulk of NEET youth and represent an important segment for breaking intergenerational poverty. A combination of immediate social protection income support and vocational skills development would facilitate access to self-employment and apprenticeships for wage employment.

From Constraints to Opportunities

How can Mauritania accelerate inclusive job creation, particularly for different segments of vulnerable youth? The challenges of macro-fiscal stability, diversification, job creation, and poverty reduction are tied to multiple constraints that call for an integrated approach. Given individual- and market-level constraints, Mauritania’s youth trajectory can be tackled by gradually shifting labor market opportunities from revenue and skills enhancement to formal sector entry as the economy undergoes transformation. An integrated approach to tying the demand

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and supply sides is needed to shift this trajectory, linking firms and sectors needed to absorb youth, different profiles of youth seeking to enter or improve existing employment, and labor market policies and programs designed to facilitate those transitions. This integrated approach should include four main areas of intervention: (i) improving the school-to-work transition and skills; (ii) facilitating inclusive labor market entry; (iii) enhancing the sustainability and quality of jobs; and (iv) promoting job growth.

### Improving the School-to-Work Transition through Demand-Driven Skills

The majority of Mauritania’s recognized skills programs are publicly designed and publicly provided, with sectors and firms not directly involved. As discussed above, in 2015, a majority of the expenditure on youth employment programs was devoted to vocational training and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Type of constraint</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>NEET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual level</td>
<td>Technical</td>
<td>Low general/technical skills</td>
<td>Drop-out</td>
<td>High drop-out</td>
<td>Drop-out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of practical first-time job</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>High dependency</td>
<td>High poverty</td>
<td>High dependency</td>
<td>High exclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Low financial inclusion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Lack of job services</td>
<td>Lack of services</td>
<td>Lack of adapted services</td>
<td>High exclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of targeting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Behavioral</td>
<td>Social norms and preferences</td>
<td>Drop-out, mobility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market level</td>
<td>Macroeconomic</td>
<td>Lagging rural/secondary urban growth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Low agricultural productivity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Weak diversification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Business climate</td>
<td>Weak infrastructure and access to finance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Restrictive business regulations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Clientelist hiring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Labor policies</td>
<td>High informality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High labor costs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mismatched contracting regulations (renewal)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integrative</td>
<td>Lack of integrated job creation initiatives involving public-private partnerships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: World Bank staff.
basic skills development. As a result, youth access to revamped technical and vocational programs has increased significantly in recent years. Yet, the quality of these programs and relevance to the labor market remains unclear. Most firms continue to demand job-relevant practical experience, more practical technical cognitive skills, and organizational and behavioral non-cognitive skills. Based on feedback from firms, the relevance of current skills training models may not be sufficiently responding to the most pressing needs expressed by firms. Mauritania’s existing vocational training centers, comprising eleven main centers, provide an opportunity to introduce demand-driven mechanisms such as results-based funding to target and modify skill sets needed as markets evolve.

Providing incentives through contracts with private firms and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to train and certify core competencies would be an important part of solving the puzzle of upgrading young adults’ skills for gainful employment. Emerging public-private programs such as that managed by the National Professional and Technical Training Institute (INAP-FTP) provide a promising model that offers an effective approach to contracting short-term skills programs that connect graduates to job opportunities directly (Box 1). Similar approaches using performance-based contracting can be adopted and scaled-up to reach excluded populations in a more systematic way for a variety of labor market skills needs.

**BOX 1 SPOTLIGHT**

Outcomes from innovative partnerships for continuing education and job placement in Mauritania

Since 2011, Mauritania has been introducing reforms aimed at boosting the relevance of vocational and technical training to the labor market. Through the Technical and Vocational Training Project, the National Professional and Technical Training Institute (INAP-FTP) has modernized contracting with public and private vocational training centers and has introduced public-private partnerships in the delivery and design of apprenticeship and continuing education programs. To date, the program has helped over 12,800 youth gain certified training, of whom 34 percent were women. Based on a tracer survey of graduates, 70 percent of all trainees found jobs within six months after program exit as of 2016, exceeding an original program target of 64 percent. Of all employed graduates, nearly 37 percent were female. One of several important new features of the INAP-FTP program has been a greater focus on demand-driven continuing education through partnerships with local NGOs. The INAP-FTP program provides a basis for future results-based contracting in the delivery and design of job training and placement programs, particularly in remote regions.

Source: World Bank staff.

such as apprenticeships, continuing education, technological support, and financial literacy education.

**Human capital-related deficits among youth related to skills and job-relevant experience are only part of a broader deficit within the educational system.** While a detailed analysis of the educational sector is beyond the scope of this note, key areas for reassessing current investment and implementation curriculum models include: (i) basic and secondary education; (ii) ad-hoc skills certification programs and vocational training; and (iii) tertiary education. Workforce training reforms are needed to deliver the kind of practical, job-relevant skills demanded by the labor market.

**Facilitating Inclusive Labor Market Entry through Employment Systems**

**Improving Mauritania’s underlying employment systems and coordinating mechanisms for targeting, outreach, and intermediation would help connect jobs to the most vulnerable youth, particularly those lacking information or mobility.** Labor market outreach in Mauritania would need to address two particularly important challenges: institutional capacity limitations, and social limitations due to gender norms. At the institutional level, Mauritania’s public employment offices managed by ANAPEJ number only four and focus mainly on a small minority of relatively mid- to-highly skilled job seekers in larger urban centers. Financial, human, and technical resources remain highly constrained, and the lack of outreach in secondary regions and among more vulnerable populations is considerable. To tackle these challenges, the most rapid, cost-effective approach to improving labor market intermediation and outreach is through public-public and public-private coordination rather than further increasing top-heavy, centralized agencies. Mauritania has a broad network of municipal centers and CDD regional offices located in eleven of its twelve regions, which each provide potential outlets that can offer selected or more comprehensive intermediation and outreach services, depending on need.

Targeting, job-readiness counseling, and intermediation support can be strengthened by directly involving firms and local providers in remote regions in implementation, including cooperatives and NGOs. Expanding financial support through seed funding and access to digital financial services can help alleviate barriers faced by young females and rural populations. Importantly, the social safety net system and social identification systems can help expand beneficiary listing for employment services, particularly through digital platforms. Behavioral constraints that hinder women’s labor mobility can also be alleviated through digital instruments and by adapting the delivery of services to social norms, where possible.

At the social norms level, approach to overcoming gender barriers in terms of expectations and roles will be critical. While family reasons account for 50 percent of labor market drop-out (marriage and motherhood), as discussed above, preferences on the part of employers and female job-seekers alike can be informed through awareness-raising and education about similar countries that have managed to transform traditional roles (Box 2). Opportunities such as mobile technology innovations and improved, adapted transportation can boost labor mobility for women who face especially high barriers in Mauritania’s peripheral towns.
Enhancing the Sustainability and Quality of Jobs through Better Labor Policies

Strengthening opportunities for formal wage employment entails a two-pronged approach: enhancing job creation incentives for short-term impacts, and reforming labor regulations to improve jobs over the mid- to long term. Over the short term, reducing labor market friction for first-time entrants can be supported by a combination of fiscal incentives and improved job placement services for mid- to high-skilled youth, especially in sectors such as commerce and

Source: World Bank staff.

services. Building networks among the self-employed and scaling up smaller micro-enterprises through technical and financial support can facilitate the transition. In addition, strengthening financing and quality of on-the-job training for youth from poorer backgrounds can facilitate the school-to-work transition.

**Over the long term, restructuring labor regulations to improve prospects for the 84 percent of the workforce who work informally will be critical.** Key issues remain the structure and terms of employment contracts and social security policies adapted to facilitate a gradual transition from precarious jobs to working conditions and incentives adapted to a modern, inclusive economy. As of 2017, Mauritania has taken steps to propose reforms for its Labor Code and Social Security Code as well as collective bargaining agreements that date from 1974. Within the framework of a nascent social dialogue, the country also aims to provide new workers with informal and occasional workers in some sectors such as transportation with formal wage contracts and extend social security benefits, including health insurance. Alongside these reforms is a renewed emphasis on strengthening job inspection with a view to improving enforcement of labor regulations as well as reduce child labor, which persists in Mauritania. Optimizing labor regulations and social security will become increasingly relevant as Mauritania looks to expand good job growth.

**Promoting Job Growth by Stimulating the Business Climate**

In terms of expanding job creation in untapped sectors, the diversification and self-employment agenda will remain critical over the mid- to long term. Self-employment and micro-enterprises in agriculture, livestock, and commerce make up the vast majority of jobs among the poorest households in Mauritania. Yet they have not reached the scale or the productivity levels needed to maximize incomes and facilitate entry for first-time earners. Individual-level constraints play a major role in limiting earnings potential among the working poor, as do market-level constraints in terms of a lack of market networks and integrative policies. Market-level constraints play a dominant role, building on individual-level constraints pertaining to productivity and earnings. Targeted incentives, skills upgrades, and improved access to markets through business intelligence and services in high value-added, untapped sectors would set youth off to a better start.

**Tackling multiple constraints simultaneously would unlock potential in emerging sectors such as value-added tradable services, new agricultural and livestock sectors, and agri-business.** For example, new approaches to tackling multiple constraints simultaneously in untapped potential in Mauritania’s major port city of Nouadhibou has had the dual effect of stimulating growth while expanding entrepreneurship opportunities for vulnerable women (Box 3). At the same time, these sectors need a significant boost in financing and technology to scale up opportunities. Developing incentives for improving the quality of jobs through labor regulations can also facilitate labor market entry, particularly for first-time entrants among young females and rural communities. Future jobs diagnostic work can be used to identify specific opportunities for youth populations most likely to benefit from job creation in different sectors, practices, or products.
Spurring Jobs through Firm Growth and Entrepreneurship Eco-Systems in Mauritania

Developing Mauritania’s nascent business climate and technical capacity in order to radically expand the growth of private micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) is central to its jobs challenge if it is to absorb greater masses of youth throughout its vast territory. Specifically, over the short term, supporting entrepreneurship interventions, including boosting technical know-how and access to markets through early mergers between vocational and tertiary education centers and high-value added sectors and value chains, is critical. Over the midterm, Mauritania will need to deepen reforms to stimulate the investment climate and access to finance for MSMEs. Over the long-term, Mauritania would benefit from a comprehensive plan to enhance alternative financing mechanisms for MSMEs and improving competition in key sectors such as telecommunications, which would have a positive impact on price and quality of services, which is necessary for MSMEs and entrepreneurs to grow. Overall, addressing numerous market failures in developing high potential value chains and supporting entrepreneurship will be key.

Mauritania has started a new program designed to address some of these market failures in the fisheries value chain, particularly obstacles facing women. Women entrepreneurs tend to face high barriers to entry and growth in the industry and suffer from limited access to markets and credit, low capacity, and physical isolation. The Nouadhibou Eco-Seafood Cluster Project aims to help address some of the challenges facing women fish sellers in Mauritania and to strengthen private sector growth and job creation. Launched in March 2016, the project aims to support the development of a seafood cluster in Nouadhibou that promotes the sustainable management of fisheries and generates value for local communities. The project helps reinforce Nouadhibou’s port infrastructure and expand its onshore fish processing activities. In addition, targeted training will be implemented to help women build on their existing skills, including in processing, handling of goods, business management, and marketing. The aim is to help women increase their ability to organize, formalize, and grow their businesses.

### TABLE 5  Overview of the jobs agenda in Mauritania over the short to long term

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area*</th>
<th>Specific opportunities for Mauritania</th>
<th>Time horizon**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Improving the school-to-work transition by reorienting skills | Tailor the school curriculum, teaching, and investment toward labor demand  
Target drop-outs through pre-screening (including social registry) and social norms outreach, particularly for women  
Provide targeted income support for vulnerable households to reduce financial school attendance constraints through the Tadamoun Tekavoul social safety net program | MT |
| Facilitating inclusive labor market entry by modernizing employment systems | Operationalize the National Jobs Platform and systems for coordinating regional, inter-agency, and public-private partnerships for targeting and monitoring job growth in key sectors, including agri-business, livestock, services, trade, and technology  
Harmonize and develop a coherent national framework for targeting, implementation, and sectoral orientation of youth employment programs | ST |
| Integration | Enhance the private sector’s role in implementing and certifying vocational training and skills programs in Mauritania’s four major training centers and with local NGOs  
Adapt continuing training programs to the needs of the most vulnerable with local providers in western and southern regions (cooperatives, firms, NGOs) | MT |
| Technical and professional skills and experience | Strengthen income support to the poor for job searches, labor mobility, and training through partnerships, including ANAPEJ, CDD, and Tadamoun  
Increase targeted entrepreneurship seed funding and apprenticeship through partnership between ANAPEJ, CDD, and the four main vocational training centers  
Expand financial inclusion and literacy alongside NGOs, the vocational training centers, ANAPEJ, CDD, and Tadamoun | ST |
| Financial | Integrate skills and livelihoods training modules into social safety net system through Tadamoun  
Expand social identification systems through Tadamoun, ANAPEJ, CDD  
Increase public-private partnerships for intermediation services under the Ministry of Employment, Tadamoun, trade federations, NGOs, or other providers | ST |
| Access | Facilitate mobile support for labor for women and rural youth, and develop awareness through ANAPEJ and Tadamoun and contracting with local NGOs and service providers | MT |
| Enhancing the sustainability and quality of jobs by aligning labor incentives | Develop flexible social security and savings schemes for the working poor, including through digital approaches and financial education  
Modernize labor regulations, including contracting, as part of social dialogue | LT |
| Labor policies | Improve macro-fiscal and financial sector management, including public investment management  
Strengthen investment in secondary towns | LT |
| Macroeconomic | Transform nascent investment climate and enhance incentives for SME development in high value-added sectors | LT |

Toward an Integrated Model for Youth Employment

An integrated approach to youth employment program tailored to Mauritania’s context can help address constraints collectively. An integrated model should aim to: (i) focus interventions on the highest value-added sectors and skills needs; (ii) target and profile different youth segments most likely to benefit from different types of support; and (iii) implement the best-adapted package of support to each segment, such as employment and social services, financial support, training, and follow-up. Support also spans social protection interventions that provide social identification, incomes, and other social support needed to address behavioral or social constraints. To strengthen the effectiveness of youth interventions, public-private arrangements for implementing programs with financing tied to results and performance have been shown to improve outcomes. Such an integrated coordinated approach means ensuring that financing, services and outcomes are monitored routinely, adjusted, and adapted as they are implemented in real-time.

Conclusions: Equal Opportunity, Stronger Coalitions

Moving forward, at the heart of youth employment and social inclusion in Mauritania lies stronger public-private coalitions. As in other resource-rich low-income countries, the political economy of diversification and wealth distribution is complex due to clientelism, weak governance, and a lack of transparency in public financial management. Public services, infrastructure and diversification suffer, making it difficult to create broad opportunities for young adults from diverse backgrounds to enter the labor market, prosper, and break out of poverty. While youth employment programs cannot address all of the constraints facing youth and firms, they can alleviate important barriers to connecting to skills development, networks, and access to livelihood opportunities in emerging sectors. Greater collaboration and transparency between public social services, sectors, and financial institutions can pave the way for a well-functioning labor market. For Mauritania’s next generation, stronger coalitions will mean substantive, sustainable, and socially inclusive jobs, thus transforming the trajectory for youth.
Chapter 1

Mauritania Rapid Labor Market Diagnostic Survey: Sample Descriptions of Firms and Youth Included in Micro-survey

FIGURE 29  Profile of surveyed firms, by sector (percentage), qualitative micro-survey

FIGURE 30  Profile of surveyed firms, by size (percentage), qualitative micro-survey

FIGURE 31  Age distribution of youth surveyed (percentage), qualitative micro-survey


FIGURE 32  Profile of surveyed youth, by educational level, qualitative micro-survey


FIGURE 33  Profile of surveyed youth, by educational level and gender, qualitative micro-survey


FIGURE 34  Occupational status of youth, by gender, qualitative micro-survey

**FIGURE 35** Occupational status of youth, by educational level, qualitative micro-survey


**FIGURE 36** Occupational status of youth, by city sampled, qualitative micro-survey

FIGURE 37  Sectoral contribution to GDP and per capita GDP, Mauritania, 1995–2014

Source: World Bank staff calculations, ILO KLM Database.

FIGURE 38  Agricultural productivity and per capita GDP

Source: World Development Indicators, World Bank.
FIGURE 39  Firms’ perspective on growth over next 6 months, qualitative findings


FIGURE 40  Distribution of employment, by sector and region

FIGURE 41  Types of self-employment in agricultural and non-agriculture sectors

![Types of self-employment in agricultural and non-agriculture sectors](image1)


FIGURE 42  Types of self-employment remuneration among agricultural and non-agricultural sectors

![Types of self-employment remuneration among agricultural and non-agricultural sectors](image2)


FIGURE 43  Change in average monthly earnings by sector, 2008–2014

![Change in average monthly earnings by sector, 2008–2014](image3)


Firms’ perspectives on labor regulations; workforce skills

FIGURE 44  Firms’ perspectives on labor regulations, by type of firm

![Firms’ perspectives on labor regulations, by type of firm](image4)

Figure 45: Workforce skills considered “very difficult” to find among firms, by sector, qualitative findings.

Chapter 3

Labor Market and Youth Indicators

TABLE 6 Key labor market indicators, 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population of working age ('000)</td>
<td>728</td>
<td>920</td>
<td>1,647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce ('000)</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed population ('000)</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job market participation rate (%)</td>
<td>62.8</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>43.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio of employed to total population (%)</td>
<td>57.4</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>39.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of employed working for family enterprise (%)</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>66.2</td>
<td>63.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed ('000)</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>72.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate (%)</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth unemployment below age 25 ('000)</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth unemployment (%)</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of unemployed youth with no education or training (NEETs) in total youth population (%)</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>52.1</td>
<td>39.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIGURE 47** Youth labor market segmentation, sub-categories (15–34 year olds)

- **Inactive Labor Force**: 67% of 1.36 million youth population.
  - In School: 42% (382,704)
  - NEET: 58% (528,496)

- **Active Labor Force**: 33% of 448,800.
  - Unemployed: 17% (76,396)
  - Employed: 77% (345,576)
  - Study + Employed: 6% (26,928)

- **Agriculture**: 28% (141,686)
- **Non-agriculture enterprise**: 31% (107,128)
- **Wage employment**: 36% (38,566)
- **Private sector**: 64% (68,561)


**FIGURE 48** Labor force participation rate, by region

**FIGURE 49** Labor force participation rate, by age group (percentage)

![Graph showing labor force participation rate, by age group (percentage)](image1)


**FIGURE 50** Labor force structure, by educational attainment and age

![Graph showing labor force structure, by educational attainment and age](image2)


**FIGURE 51** Distribution of employment, by sector and gender

![Graph showing distribution of employment, by sector and gender](image3)

### TABLE 7  
**Labor force migration indicators**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Men, urban</th>
<th>Women, urban</th>
<th>Men, rural</th>
<th>Women, rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Migrated</strong> %</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average age of migrants</strong></td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Origin</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other country %</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other region %</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same region %</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Principal reasons for migrating</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow / join family %</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pursuing studies %</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job search %</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posting %</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others %</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### TABLE 8  
**Main reason for school dropout among the labor force (percentage)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Men, urban</th>
<th>Men, rural</th>
<th>Women, urban</th>
<th>Women, rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial difficulties</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preference for work or apprenticeship</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnancy, marriage</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability, illness</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School failure</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools too remote</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studies completed</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### TABLE 9  
**Educational background, by age, gender, and geographical setting (percentage)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education type</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>6–10</th>
<th>11–15</th>
<th>16–20</th>
<th>Men, urban</th>
<th>Men, rural</th>
<th>Women, urban</th>
<th>Women, rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Koranic &amp; Madrassa</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeship</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIGURE 52** Occupational status among youth (14–34 years), by income quintile (percentage)


**FIGURE 53** Occupational status among adults (35–64 years), by income quintile (percentage)

FIGURE 54  Share of individuals enrolled, national average, and regional averages (five regions)

![Graph showing share of individuals enrolled, national average, and regional averages (five regions).]


FIGURE 55  Enrollment rate (general non-religious schooling), by gender and setting

![Graph showing enrollment rate (general non-religious schooling), by gender and setting.]

FIGURE 56  Employment, by sector and income quintile (14–64 year olds)

Source: 2012 Mauritania Labor Force and Informal Sector Survey. Note: 1 = poorest 20 percent of income distribution; 5 = richest 20 percent of income distribution.

FIGURE 57  Employment, by sector and educational level (14–64 years)

FIGURE 58  Occupational status among males by age (percentage)


FIGURE 59  Occupational status among females, by age (percentage)

FIGURE 60  Unemployment rate, by age and region


FIGURE 61  Distribution of unemployed population, by region (percentage)

**FIGURE 62**  Unemployment rate, by age and educational level (percentage)

![Unemployment rate graph](image)


**FIGURE 63**  Unemployment rate by gender and educational level (percentage)

![Unemployment rate by gender graph](image)


**Youth Perceptions of Work and Skills**

**FIGURE 64**  Interest in manual work among youth, qualitative findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Youth</th>
<th>Basic</th>
<th>Primary/ lower secondary</th>
<th>Higher secondary</th>
<th>Vocational</th>
<th>Tertiary</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIGURE 65  Share of youth reporting interest in improving various skills, qualitative findings

MAURITANIA
Transforming the Jobs Trajectory for Vulnerable Youth

POLICY NOTE

WORLD BANK GROUP