



REPORT

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The Future of Education and Skills in Africa OECD

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Overview

Africa faces a transformative future shaped by a rapidly expanding population and workforce. By 2050, the continent's working-age population will exceed 1.5 billion, constituting 25% of the global workforce. This demographic surge brings challenges and opportunities, necessitating significant investment in education, skills, and private sector collaboration to enable sustainable development.

Education and Skills Development

Education remains pivotal in addressing the continent's economic and social challenges. Key trends and strategies include:

1. **Access and Infrastructure:** Despite progress—100 million additional children enrolled since 2015—Africa still has half of the world's out-of-school children. Girls face disproportionate challenges, emphasizing the need for gender-inclusive policies and robust infrastructure development.
2. **Relevance to Market Needs:** The mismatch between educational content and labour market demands hinders economic integration. Curriculum reforms should prioritize foundational, digital, and green skills, alongside soft skills like adaptability and critical thinking.
3. **Teacher Training:** Africa needs 15 million additional qualified teachers to meet sustainable development goals (SDGs). New policies must make teaching an attractive career, addressing recruitment and training gaps.
4. **Private Sector Partnerships:** The private sector can drive innovation and funding, supplying tools, connectivity, and apprenticeship opportunities. Collaboration between governments and private entities is crucial for aligning education with emerging job sectors, particularly in digital and green economies.

The Role of the Private Sector

Private entities are integral to scaling Africa's education and workforce initiatives. Their involvement is multifaceted:

- **Funding:** Private investors can bridge financing gaps in education, particularly in underserved areas. Blended finance models and public-private partnerships (PPPs) enhance resource mobilization.
- **Skill Alignment:** Companies can inform curricula by identifying market-relevant skills, focusing on high-growth areas such as renewable energy, digital technology, and food processing.
- **Job Creation:** Investing in training centres, especially in green and digital skills, can generate significant employment. IT hubs in countries like Togo demonstrate how skill-building can meet economic demands.



Green and Digital Transformations

Africa's future hinges on its ability to lead in green and digital revolutions. Key areas include:

1. **Renewable Energy and Sustainability:** The transition to green economies requires workforce development in sectors like climate resilience, energy, and sustainable agriculture.
2. **Digital Skills:** With 70% of jobs expected to require digital competencies by 2030, Africa must scale up digital education initiatives. Programs like Sayna, which monetize digital skills, showcase the potential for tech-driven job creation.

Case Studies and National Efforts

1. **Togo:** Through its 2025 roadmap, Togo integrates digitalization and industrial infrastructure to boost productivity and growth. Investments in teacher training, educational infrastructure, and market-aligned curricula highlight how national strategies can drive transformation.
2. **Rwanda:** Collaborating with global partners, Rwanda's biotechnology programs exemplify how higher education can address workforce gaps in specialized fields.

Challenges and Solutions

Africa faces systemic barriers, including financing inefficiencies, informal employment, and population mobility. Strategies to overcome these include:

- **Blended Finance Models:** Combining public and private investments ensures sustainable funding.
- **Inclusive Policies:** Addressing disparities in gender and geographic access.
- **Leveraging Regional and Global Partnerships:** Programs like the Africa-Europe package aim to leverage €150 billion in investment to enhance human capital.

Conclusion

Africa stands at a critical juncture where education and skills development will determine its trajectory in global markets. The synergy between governments, private sectors, and international partnerships is vital to creating a workforce ready for emerging challenges and opportunities. By prioritizing foundational, digital, and green skills, Africa can lead in sustainable economic transformation while empowering its burgeoning youth population.