



# **CHANGING NATURE OF WORK IN AFRICA**

## **IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION & SKILLS**

**Edward K. Brown**

Senior Director, Research and Advisory Services

# Outline

- 1. Overview of the evolving labor force landscape**
- 2. The Digital Technologies and labor force challenges**
- 3. Transformation and job creation strategies**
- 4. Education systems and challenges in Sub Saharan Africa; primary, secondary and TVET**
- 5. Recommendations and Key Questions**

# CURRENT SITUATION

- **The World's youngest region: one fifth of the global population under 25 resides in SSA.**
- **Working age population in SSA to reach 600 million by 2030 with a youth (18-24) share of 37%--bigger than China.**
- **High and rising unemployment rates; youths particularly vulnerable.**
- **Youth unemployment 10.9%, nearly double that of adults (5.6%).**



# CURRENT SITUATION

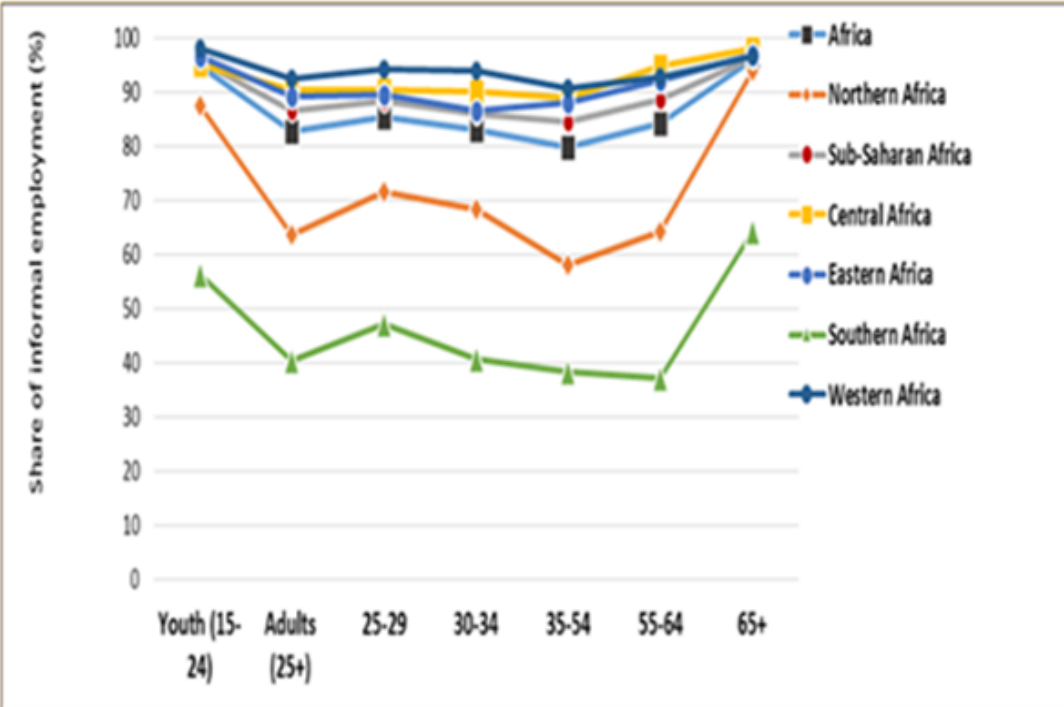
- **Little evidence of structural change in employment--Over 80% of workforce in informal sector --traditional agriculture or urban informal economic activities.**
- **The unemployed no longer the uneducated man or woman but a secondary or tertiary school graduate.**
- **Issues with employment growth, working poor, vulnerable employment, underemployment and productivity growth.**



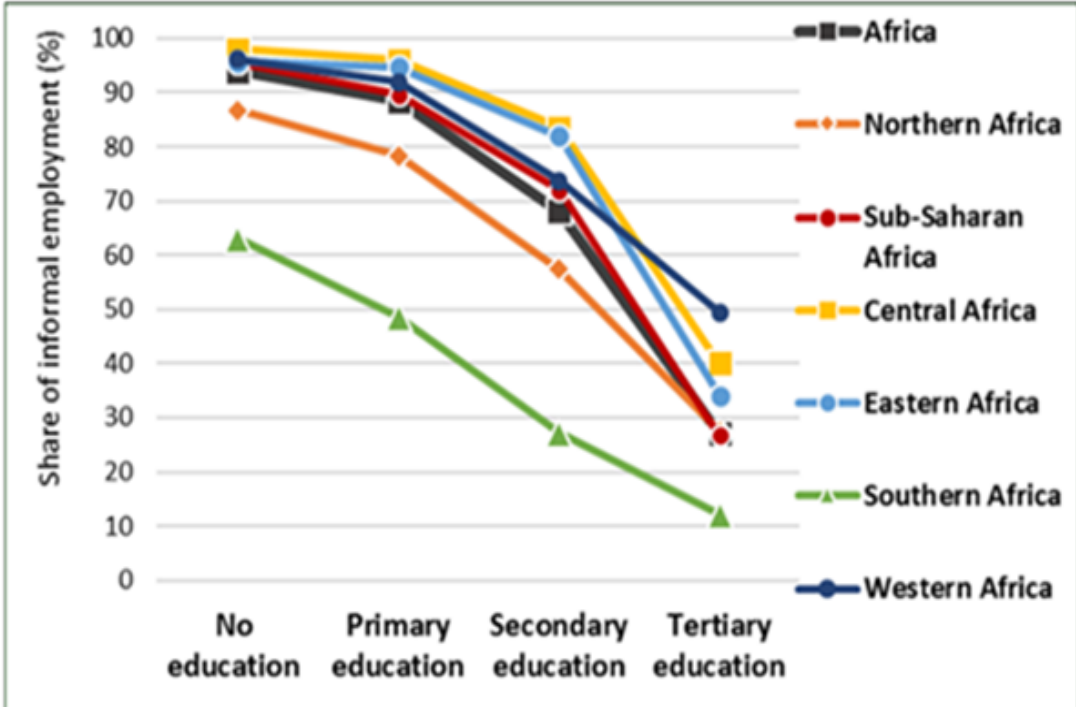
# AFRICA'S EVOLVING LABOR FORCE LANDSCAPE

Informality declines with age and education

Informal employment by age group and region



Informal employment by education level and region



# AFRICA'S EVOLVING LABOR FORCE LANDSCAPE

**Unemployment highest for upper secondary & post secondary education**

Unemployment rate, by education in selected countries			
	Basic	Intermediate <sup>1</sup>	Advanced
Ghana (2015)	4.8	15.2	5.9
Burkina Faso (2014)	8.4	11.2	16.6
Senegal (2015)	6.5	11.6	14.3
Rwanda (2014)	1.2	12.4	13.0
Sierra Leone (2014)	6.1	9.4	11.9
Uganda (2012)	6.2	20.0	14.6
Tanzania (2014)	6.5	4.0	8.5

# EVOLVING LABOR FORCE LANDSCAPE: GENDER

- **About 90% of women are in informal employment**
- **Gender differences often more pronounced in countries with high level of youth unemployment**
- **Women disproportionately represented amongst working poor and unemployed**
- **Lower labor force participation rate for women than men**



# WHAT DOES THE FUTURE OF WORK LOOK LIKE?

## Globalized

- Flux of transient workers across borders
- Online work without borders
- Always connected and networked
- Multicultural
- Diverse

## Exponential

- Data driven and digital
- Augmented by machines
- Cheaper, faster, smaller
- Greater access of democratized jobs to the masses

## Customized

- More service oriented
- Require strong interpersonal and communication skills
- Less routine
- Personalized

## Changing face of the career concept

- From a 'job as a career' to a 'career of jobs'
- Lifelong learning, anytime, anywhere
- Demise of 'retirement'
- Greater task variety

## Demographic and industry dependent

- Increased value of automation in aging societies
- Growth in labor-intensive sectors for young demographics
- Focus on countries' comparative advantage



# CONCERNS ABOUT JOBS IN AFRICA

- Demise of existing labor-intensive industries.
- Balancing between growth stimulating (new jobs, higher productivity) vs growth dampening (redundancy, increase in equality, greater uncertainty).
- Overall employment elasticity generally on the decline and different industries have varying employment elasticities.
- Displacement into the gig economy.
- Weakening bargaining position for workers (especially for unskilled workers).



# But concerns somewhat exaggerated --WB

- First, manufacturing sector-labeled “old Sector in Developed economies, remains small and largely not automated;
- Second, threats to jobs not uniform across income groups
- Third, Adoption of worker-enhancing digital technologies is expanding job opportunities SSA.
  - Digital technologies can boost productivity & output of low-skilled, low-education workers across all sectors-incl. Agric, and services
  - Faster internet –late 2000s and early 2010s increased probability of job by about 3.1-13.2%
  - Job impacts on unskilled and lower-educated workers more positive than in higher income countries,



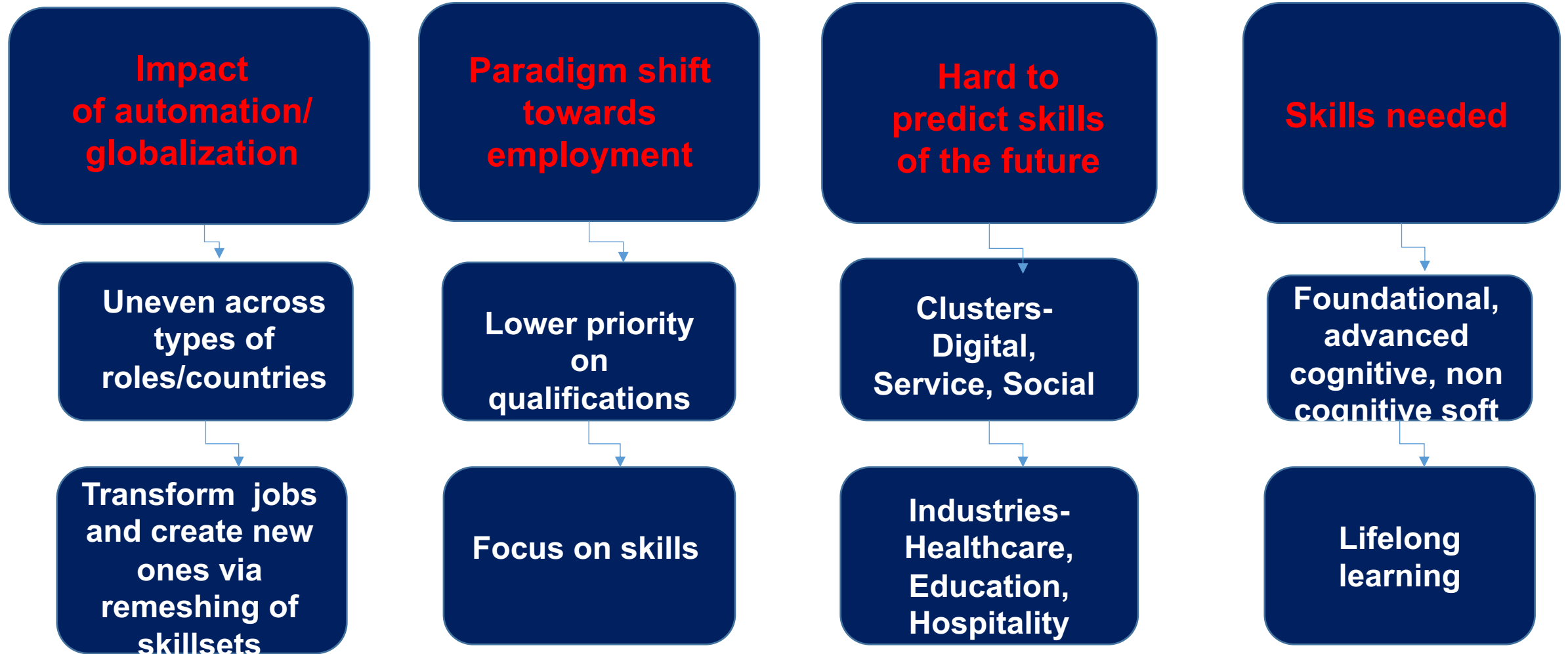
# Labor Force Challenges and the Fourth Industrial Revolution

*To create decent jobs inline with future 4IR expectations, there needs to be policies and strategies that increase productivity, labor absorption and enable reallocation of labor from traditional to modern jobs and sectors.*

## Five potential pathways to decent jobs

- Agriculture driven transformation
- Tourism
- The creative industries
- Exports-oriented manufacturing
- A modernized service sector

# About Skills For Future Work



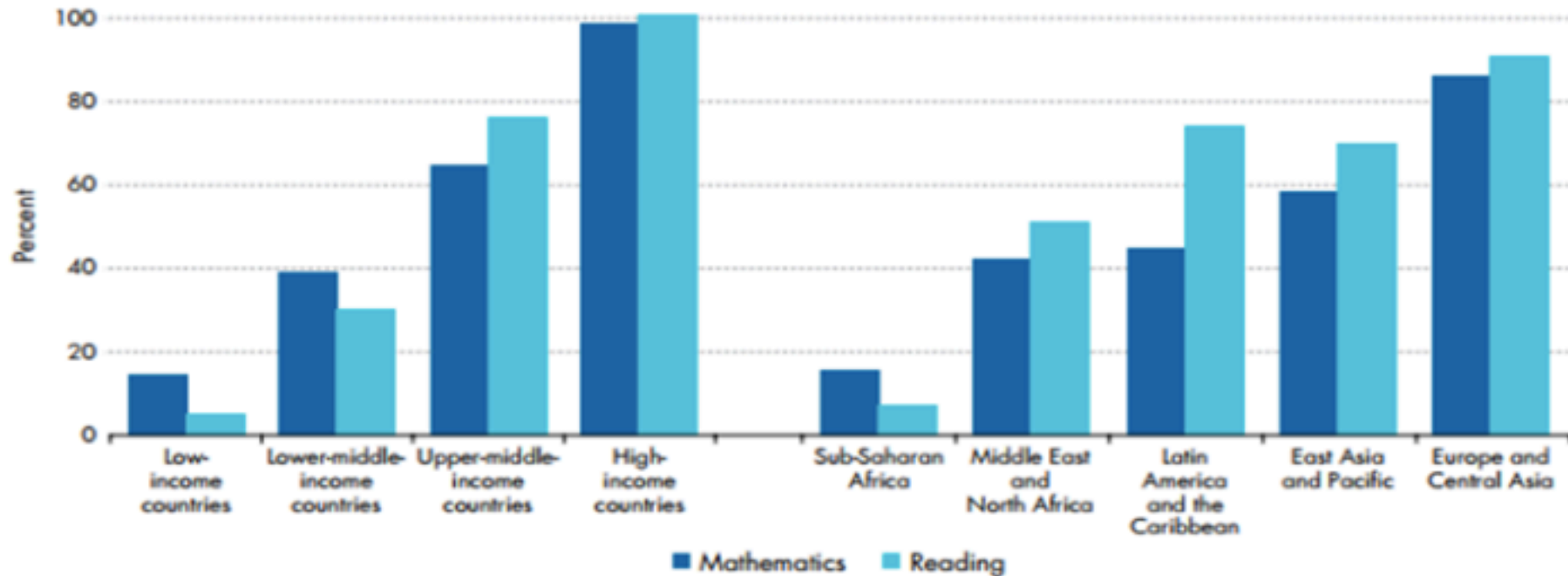
# EDUCATION AND SKILLS IN AFRICA

- PRIMARY
- SECONDARY
- SKILLS

# PRIMARY EDUCATION

Educational attainment in Africa is low compared to other parts of the world

Median percentage of students in late primary school who score above a minimum proficiency level on a learning assessment, by income group and region



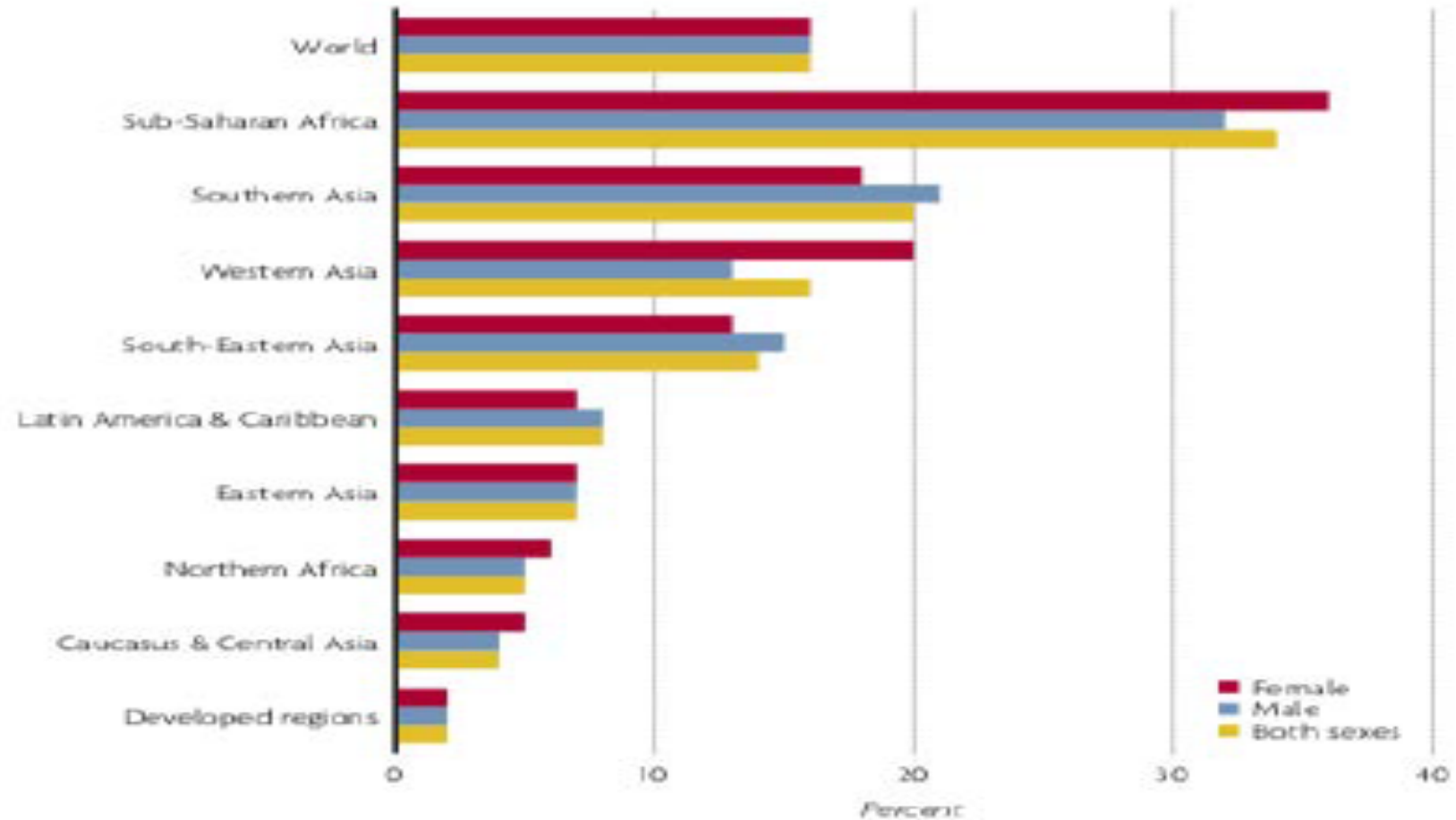
# SECONDARY EDUCATION

- **Only 8% of SSA countries will achieve universal lower secondary education by 2030 (UNESCO)**
- **About 30% of Lower Secondary School age children in this phase**
- **A large share of Secondary School students fail to gain foundational skills**
- **Low STEM participation at upper secondary is driven in part by low attainment in STEM related subjects at lower secondary.**



# SECONDARY EDUCATION

Lower secondary school out-of-school rates are higher in Sub-Saharan Africa than in other regions, and higher for girls than boys, 2014



Note: Sex-disaggregated data are for 2013 for developed regions and for 2010 for Caucasus and Central Asia.



# Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

- **The quality & relevance of most TVET in SSA is low**
  - **Trainers lack industry & practical experience; have poor pedagogical training**
  - **Private sector engagement needed in design & delivery to improve quality and relevance**
- **TVET expensive to deliver; gov't looking to private sector to fund the cost through taxes and levies.**

# Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

- **TVET should begin after lower secondary education when students have gained foundational skills.**
- **TVET systems need reform to ensure teachers' skills are modern and aligned with industry needs.**
- **Secondary education and TVET should be complementary and flexible.**

# Current Challenges

- **A large share of secondary school students fail to gain the good foundational skills needed for skills progression.**
- **Low quality of TVET across Africa—integrating general TVET into upper secondary is a trend**
- **Need for private sector engagement in the design and delivery of TVET to improve quality**
- **Need to increase STEM participation**



# Some Key Recommendations

- **Preparing people for the future of work doesn't require a whole new curriculum but we have to strengthen pedagogy. But in some countries curricular still need to be updated**
- **Recognize secondary school as a pathway to world of work; This will call for other changes:**
  - **Assessment systems**
  - **Training teachers to work with students differently to prepare for world of work**
  - **Secondary education should focus on acquisition of basic competencies and foundational skills, especially at lower secondary.**
- **STEM and foundational skills, critical thinking must be taught as early as possible, starting in primary.**

# Some Key Recommendations

- **Must recognize the gendered nature of the economy and labor market**
- **Teachers need to be trained in and provide gender-sensitive pedagogy to keep girls in schools**
- **Need more focus on entrepreneurship as part of the soft skills being recommended**
- **Training and professionalization of teachers is a major bottleneck.**  
Teachers must be trained by people who have been teachers themselves
- **Big picture story is (differential) massive expansion of secondary over the next 30 years—how to provide support to ministries to enhance the process—must plan five years in advance.**

# **Eight Levers of a robust education system**

- **Expanded access to early-childhood education**
- **Ensuring the future 'readiness' of curricula**
- **Investing in developing and maintaining a professionalized teaching workforce**
- **Early exposure to the workplace and career guidance**
- **Investing in digital fluency and ICT literacy skills**
- **Creating a culture of lifelong learning**
- **Openness to education innovation**



**ACET**

African Center  
for Economic  
Transformation

[www.acetforafrica.org](http://www.acetforafrica.org)



[fb.com/acetforafrica](https://fb.com/acetforafrica)



[@acetforafrica](https://twitter.com/acetforafrica)