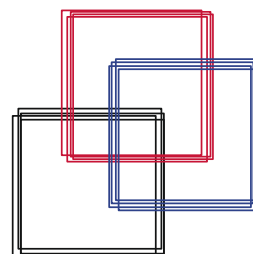


Labour market transitions of young women and men in Liberia

Sajith de Mel, Sara Elder
and Marc Vansteenkiste

October 2013

2013/03
Youth Employment Programme
Employment Policy Department



Work4Youth Publication Series No. 3

Labour market transitions of young women and men in Liberia

Sajith de Mel, Sara Elder and Marc Vansteenkiste

International Labour Office • Geneva

October 2013

Copyright © International Labour Organization 2013
First published 2013

Publications of the International Labour Office enjoy copyright under Protocol 2 of the Universal Copyright Convention. Nevertheless, short excerpts from them may be reproduced without authorization, on condition that the source is indicated. For rights of reproduction or translation, application should be made to the Publications Bureau (Rights and Permissions), International Labour Office, CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland, or by email: pubdroit@ilo.org. The International Labour Office welcomes such applications. Libraries, institutions and other users registered with reproduction rights organizations may make copies in accordance with the licences issued to them for this purpose. Visit www.ifro.org to find the reproduction rights organization in your country.

ILO Cataloguing in Publication Data

de Mel, Sajith; Elder, Sara; Vansteenkiste, Marc

Labour market transitions of young women and men in Liberia / Sajith de Mel, Sara Elder and Marc Vansteenkiste ; International Labour Office. - Geneva: ILO, 2013

Work4Youth publication series ; No.3

International Labour Office

transition from school to work / youth employment / young worker / women workers / men workers / employment creation / data collecting / survey / methodology / Liberia

06.02

Cover design by: Creative Cow

ISSN 2309-6780 (printed version)

ISSN 2309-6799 (web version)

The designations employed in ILO publications, which are in conformity with United Nations practice, and the presentation of material therein do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the International Labour Office concerning the legal status of any country, area or territory or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers.

The responsibility for opinions expressed in signed articles, studies and other contributions rests solely with their authors, and publication does not constitute an endorsement by the International Labour Office of the opinions expressed in them.

Reference to names of firms and commercial products and processes does not imply their endorsement by the International Labour Office, and any failure to mention a particular firm, commercial product or process is not a sign of disapproval.

ILO publications can be obtained through major booksellers or ILO local offices in many countries, or direct from ILO Publications, International Labour Office, CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland. Catalogues or lists of new publications are available free of charge from the above address, or by email: pubvente@ilo.org

Visit our website: www.ilo.org/publns

Preface

Youth is a crucial time of life when young people start realizing their aspirations, assuming their economic independence and finding their place in society. The global jobs crisis has exacerbated the vulnerability of young people in terms of: i) higher unemployment, ii) lower quality of jobs for those who find work, iii) greater labour market inequalities among different groups of young people, iv) longer and more insecure school-to-work transitions, and v) increased detachment from the labour market.

In June 2012, the International Labour Conference of the ILO resolved to take urgent action to tackle the unprecedented youth employment crisis through a multi-pronged approach geared towards pro-employment growth and decent job creation. The resolution “The youth employment crisis: A call for action” contains a set of conclusions that constitute a blueprint for shaping national strategies for youth employment.¹ It calls for increased coherence of policies and action on youth employment across the multilateral system. In parallel, the UN Secretary-General highlighted youth as one of the five generational imperatives to be addressed through the mobilization of all the human, financial and political resources available to the United Nations. As part of this agenda, the United Nations has developed a System-wide Action Plan on Youth, with youth employment as one of the main priorities, to strengthen youth programmes across the UN system.

The ILO supports governments and social partners in designing and implementing integrated employment policy responses. As part of this work, the ILO seeks to enhance the capacity of national and local level institutions to undertake evidence-based analysis that feeds social dialogue and the policy-making process. To assist member States in building a knowledge base on youth employment, the ILO has designed the “school-to-work transition survey” (SWTS) and the “labour demand enterprise survey” (LDES). The current report, which presents the results of the surveys in Liberia, is a product of a partnership between the ILO and The MasterCard Foundation. The “Work4Youth” Project entails collaboration with statistical partners and policy-makers of 28 low- and middle-income countries to undertake the SWTS and assist governments and the social partners in the use of the data for effective policy design and implementation.

It is not an easy time to be a young person in the labour market today. The hope is that with leadership from the UN system, with the commitment of governments, trade unions and employers’ organizations and through the active participation of donors such as The MasterCard Foundation, the international community can provide the effective assistance needed to help young women and men make a good start in the world of work. If we can get this right, it will positively affect young people’s professional and personal success in all future stages of life.

Azita Berar Awad
Director
Employment Policy Department

Sina Chuma-Mkandawire
Country Director
ILO Country Office for the Gambia,
Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone

¹ The full text of the 2012 resolution “The youth employment crisis: A call for action” can be found on the ILO website at: http://www.ilo.org/ilc/ILCSessions/101stSession/texts-adopted/WCMS_185950/lang--en/index.htm.

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Preface	iii
Contents	v
Acknowledgements	xi
1. Introduction and main findings	1
1.1 Overview.....	1
1.2 Main findings.....	2
1.3 Structure of the report.....	5
2. Overview of the labour market and survey methodology	6
2.1 The socio-economic context	6
2.2 The labour market in Liberia	7
2.3 School-to-work transition survey and labour demand enterprise surveys: Objectives and methodology.....	8
2.3.1 Questionnaire development	8
2.3.2 Sample design and data collection process.....	9
3. Characteristics of youth in the SWTS sample.....	10
3.1 Individual characteristics of youth.....	10
3.2 Educational attainment	14
3.3 Current activity status of youth.....	18
3.4 Aspirations and life goals	21
3.5 Characteristics of employed youth	21
3.5.1 General characteristics of the employed.....	21
3.5.2 Status in employment	22
3.5.3 Sector and occupation of working youth.....	26
3.5.4 Hours of work.....	27
3.5.5 Other job quality indicators	28
3.5.6 Security and satisfaction.....	32
3.6 Characteristics of unemployed youth.....	34
3.7 Characteristics of youth outside the labour market (inactive youth)	39
3.8 Current students	39
4. Stages of transition.....	42
4.1 Concepts and definitions.....	42
4.2 Stages of transition by sex, education level, age group and area of residence	44
4.2.1 Youth who have not started transition.....	45
4.2.2 Youth in transition.....	45
4.2.3 Characteristics of a completed transition.....	46
4.3 Transition paths and lengths of transition.....	49

5.	Creating jobs for young people: The employer’s perspective.....	53
5.1	Characteristics of enterprises	53
5.2	Recruitment of workers	55
5.3	Hiring preferences of enterprises	56
5.4	Skills assessment of young workers	58
5.5	Education and training	59
5.6	Labour demand	60
6.	Policy implications.....	63
6.1	Relevant policy framework in Liberia.....	63
6.1.1	Development frameworks	63
6.1.2	Employment framework.....	64
6.1.3	Skills development framework.....	65
6.2	Policy implications	66
	References	71
	Annex I. Definitions of labour market statistics.....	73
	Annex II. Additional statistical tables	75

Tables

1.	Distribution of household population by sex, locality and age group.....	6
2.	Annual GDP growth rate in Liberia, 2008–11	6
3.	Key labour market indicators for working-age population (15+) by area of residence and sex	7
4.	Final sample results.....	10
5.	Youth population by selected characteristics and sex (%).....	11
6.	Access to financial services (%)	13
7.	Completed educational attainment by sex and area of residence (%).....	15
8.	Educational attainment of youth and youth’ parents (%).....	17
9.	Youth population by main economic activity and sex (%)	19
10.	Completed education attainment by current activity status (%).....	20
11.	Primary goal of youth by current activity status (%)	21
12.	Employed youth by status in employment and sex (%)	22
13.	Distribution of workers by status and level of education (%).....	22
14.	Wage and salaried young workers by access to benefits (%).....	23

15.	Average monthly income of young wage and salaried workers and self-employed workers (own-account workers and employers) by sex and educational attainment	24
16.	Self-employed youth by reason for self-employment and funding source by sex (%)	25
17.	ISCO major groups and education levels	30
18.	Youth employment by characteristics of education (%)	30
19.	Shares of overeducated and undereducated young workers by major occupational category (ISCO-88, %)	31
20.	Job satisfaction rates of youth aged 15–29 by level of educational attainment, urban/rural residence, household wealth, regular/irregular/informal employment and overqualification/underqualification (%)	34
21.	Youth unemployment rate and unemployed youth by duration of unemployment and sex (%)	35
22.	Employed and unemployed youth by job search method used to attain current job (%)	36
23.	Minimum monthly wage expectations of unemployed youth by sex (Liberian dollars)	37
24.	Employed and unemployed youth by opinion of main obstacle to finding work (%)	39
25.	Stage of transition by sex, age group, area of residence and level of completed education (%)	44
26.	Sub-categories of youth in transition by sex (%)	46
27.	Indicators on the path of transition for youth who completed their labour market transition.	51
28.	Additional characteristics of youth who transit directly to stable and/or satisfactory employment	52
29.	Type of enterprise by number of employees (%)	54
30.	Main obstacles faced by the enterprise (%)	54
31.	Distribution of recruitment methods to fill vacancies (%)	55
32.	Enterprises by size and main recruitment method (%)	56
33.	Preferred hiring criterion of enterprises by age, sex, marital status, education and occupational class (%)	57
34.	Most important characteristic employers consider in workers by economic sector (%)	58
35.	Employers' perceptions of growth over next 12 months by economic sector (%)	61
36.	Top vacancies likely to expand in the following 2 to 3 years by specific occupation (%)	61
37.	Top ten hard-to-fill vacancies as classified by employers (%)	63
A1.	Household size of youth population by area of residence (%)	75
A2.	Age of first marriage (mean and median) by sex, level of education and area of residence...	75

A3.	Health issues and disabilities in youth population by sex (%).....	75
A4.	Previous residence of youth and reason for moving by sex (%).....	76
A5.	Number of jobs applied to and interviews attended by unemployed youth in previous 12 months (%).....	77
A6.	Current students by preferred place of future employment (%).....	77
A7.	Wage and salaried young workers by type of contract and duration of contract by sex (%)..	77
A8.	Main challenges of self-employed youth (%).....	77
A9.	Employed youth by duration of job search, number of jobs applied to and interviews attended prior to attaining current job by sex (%).....	78
A10.	Enterprises by number of workers trained, type and place of training and training provider (%).....	78
A11.	Enterprises: Most significant consequence of hard-to-fill vacancies (%).....	79

Figures

1.	Household financial situation (%).....	12
2.	Distribution of completed education level of youth by sex (%).....	15
3.	Reasons for never attending school by sex (%).....	16
4.	Youth population by level of completed educational attainment and level of household income (%).....	17
5.	Cross-tabulation of educational attainment of youth and educational attainment of respondents' parents (%).....	18
6.	Distribution of the youth population by more detailed disaggregation of economic activity and by sex (%).....	19
7.	Employed youth by main branch of economic activity and sex (%).....	26
8.	Employed youth by occupation (ISCO-88) and sex (%).....	27
9.	Distribution of youth employment by actual hours worked per week (%).....	27
10.	Indicators measuring quality of youth employment (%).....	29
11.	Employed youth who would like to change their job by reason (%).....	33
12.	Unemployed youth by occupation sought and by sex, and employers' vacancies by occupation (%).....	38
13.	Reasons for inactivity (%).....	39
14.	Preferred field of study of current young students by sex (%).....	41
15.	Top ten growing occupations in Liberia (%).....	41
16.	Youth in transition by sub-category and urban/rural geography, household income level and educational attainment level (%).....	46
17.	Distribution of transition groups (transited and in-transition youth) by sex, urban/rural geography, household income level and educational attainment level (%).....	47

18.	Transited youth by sub-category and sex, urban/rural geography, household income level and educational attainment level (%).....	48
19.	Transited youth by sub-category and total employed youth by major occupation group (ISCO-88, %)	49
20.	Flows to stable and/or satisfactory employment (transited category).....	50
21.	Classification of length of transition of youth who have completed the transition, by sex	51
22.	Share of direct transition to stable employment and satisfactory temporary employment or self-employment (%).....	52
23.	Employers' assessment of youth' skills	59

Boxes

1.	Definition of youth.....	8
2.	Work4Youth: An ILO project in partnership with The MasterCard Foundation.....	9
3.	Difficulties faced in the data collection process.....	10
4.	Challenges of MNEs in Liberia in the agriculture, mining and banking sectors	60
5.	Youth empowerment issues within the Agenda for Transformation through Action	64
6.	Approaches to boost aggregate demand and promote youth employment.....	67

Acknowledgements

The implementation of the 2012 school-to-work transition survey and labour demand enterprise survey in Liberia was a joint effort, with funding from the Youth Employment and Skills Project of the Ministry of Youth and Sports in Liberia and the ILO “Work4Youth” partnership with The MasterCard Foundation. The Youth Employment & Skills Project is managed by Transtec, Brussels.

The authors take this opportunity to thank the Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-information Studies, and specifically Mr Francis Wreh and Mr Joseph Nyan, for facilitating the survey implementation process and the data entry. Other special thanks go to Mr Yves Perardel and Ms Yonca Gurbuzer of the Work4Youth Team for their technical support and valuable inputs during all stages of the survey. We also express our appreciation for the work done by Ms Valentina Barcucci on the policy section, and finally to Ms Susan Divald for research assistance. Sincere thanks also to Ms Laura Brewer, Specialist, Skills for Youth Employment, Employment Policy Department, Mr Dennis Zulu, Chief of Programme, ILO Country Office in Abuja and Mr Diego Rei, Youth Employment Specialist, ILO Regional Office for Africa, for useful comments on the draft, and to Mr Gianni Rosas, Coordinator, Youth Employment Programme, for his continuing support of the Work4Youth Project.

We wish to also acknowledge the officials from the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Labour for their active involvement during different stages of the survey. Finally, the ILO would like to acknowledge the support given by The MasterCard Foundation in allowing the research to move forward, under the scope of the Work4Youth partnership.

1. Introduction and main findings

1.1 Overview

Liberia is a young country. One-third of the population is between the ages of 15 and 35. It is also a country where poverty continues to constrain the number of young people who can stay in education. Far too many young Liberians still face a future of struggling against a precarious existence, earning money through occasional informal employment and being left behind as the country and its growing middle class harvest the benefits of economic development.

Youth unemployment and underemployment represent a major cost to Liberia in economic, political and societal terms. One in every three young persons in the labour force is unemployed in the country. Half of young Liberians are working, but the quality of employment is often low, which does not allow young people and their families to make the most of their economic potential. The high share of labour underutilization means a loss of investment in education and training, a reduced potential tax base, high costs for social assistance and a bottleneck in fuelling the economic transformation of the country. Furthermore, high levels of unemployment and underemployment among young people can be a source of social instability.

To characterize the specific youth employment challenges and support policy-makers in designing adequate policies and programmes to support the transition of young people into employment, the ILO has developed a school-to-work transition survey (SWTS), a household survey of young people aged 15–29 years (15–35 in the case of Liberia). A second survey, the labour demand enterprise survey (LDES), aims to complement the information on the supply side of the labour market with that from enterprises in terms of their demand for labour and assessments of young applicants. The SWTS and LDES, implemented in 2012 with a second round planned for 2014, can serve as principal tools for monitoring the impact of policies and programmes outlined in the National Employment Policy and other national policy instruments. The indicators generated from the survey and analysed in this report aim to present a much more detailed picture of the youth labour market than that usually available from standard surveys, including the labour force survey.

Unemployment among youth is a major concern in Liberia, but it is also important to consider the quality of work made available to the young population. Does the work provide the wages and security necessary to empower young Liberians to move towards self-sufficiency in their pending adulthood? The emphasis on quality of employment in this report should help to answer this question. The report also draws attention to the path and length that young people's transition from school to work takes and draws conclusions on characteristics or experiences that make for a smoother transition.

1.2 Main findings

Too many young people are not benefiting fully from the educational system.

The largest share of youth aged 15-35 in the country has completed education at the secondary level (45.9 per cent of total youth), but there is still 36.5 per cent who finished school at the primary level and 7.9 per cent below the primary level, including those who never attended school.² Nearly half of young females attained only primary education (46.9 per cent) and another third (32.6 per cent) completed their education at the secondary level. Most young males, on the other hand, completed their education at the secondary level (58.1 per cent).

Only 4.7 per cent of young Liberians have completed tertiary education. It is important to bear in mind, however, that one-half (52.6 per cent) of the youth population is still in school and a significant share of current students say they plan to complete tertiary education.

Despite efforts by the Government of Liberia, a large number of youth do not have access to education due to long distances between their homes and schools, poor-quality infrastructure, cultural norms and poverty. Eighty-six (86.4) per cent of the surveyed youth attended school at some point in their life, while the remaining 13.6 per cent have never been to school (6.5 per cent of young males and 19.8 per cent of young women). Economic reasons, such as an inability to afford school fees or the need to earn an income, were given as the main reason for never attending school (51.2 per cent). Among the youth who did go to school, 26.3 per cent left before graduation. Two-thirds (66.2 per cent) of early drop-outs cited economic reasons as the leading cause for leaving school early.

There has been some progress in the area of educational enrolment in Liberia in recent years, at least in the share of the young population that achieved basic education. While 32.4 per cent of respondents' fathers and 59.3 per cent of respondents' mothers had no education at all, the youth share with no schooling was only 7.9 per cent. Perhaps the most striking difference when comparing educational levels across generations is the extremely high levels of fathers with university level education (13.9 per cent) compared to only 4.7 per cent for the current generation of youth, although it is important to bear in mind that many youth have not yet completed their education and those currently studying at the tertiary level are left out of the comparison. The upheaval in the educational system due to conflict in the country shows up quite strongly in these statistics.

Unemployment is high among youth in Liberia and higher unemployment rates among the more educated youth implies the demand for high-skilled youth is not keeping pace with the supply (which is growing each year).

Slightly more than one-quarter (28.3 per cent) of the youth population and one-third (35.0 per cent) of the youth labour force is unemployed.³ Young females have a harder time finding employment in Liberia than young males. There is a gap of 13 percentage points between the unemployment rates of young women (41.3 per cent) and young men (28.3 per cent). A young person in Liberia may be unemployed for a very long period of

² "Youth" or "young Liberians" refer to persons aged between 15 and 35 in this report unless otherwise stated (see box 1).

³ The "relaxed" definition is used, whereby jobless (and available to work) youth do not have to demonstrate an active job search for inclusion in the category.

time. The share of unemployed with duration of unemployment greater than 1 year is 61.3 per cent (63.4 per cent for young men and 60.0 per cent for young women).

The largest share of unemployed youth would like to take up work in an elementary/low-skilled job (33.0 per cent). This matches the needs expressed by employers in terms of future jobs opening. However, there is a clear shortage of young people seeking work as professionals (9.7 per cent of the unemployed), an area that shows a huge growth potential among employers.⁴ It becomes clear that in the higher skills occupations, the supply of available labour is not meeting the demand. Similarly, it looks like there will be a shortage of available jobseekers in areas of skilled agricultural work, clerks and as legislators, senior officials and managers.

Most youth rely on informal networks when searching for jobs.

Youth rely on their friends and family when looking for work. Only one-third of the unemployed youth used more formal methods to find work, including those who registered at employment centres (7.8 per cent), who answered advertisements (13.4 per cent) or took a test (3.7 per cent), or made direct inquiries at places of business (8.5 per cent). The more formal means of looking for work are those that were perceived as less-successful methods by the currently employed.

Half of young Liberians are working, but the quality of employment is often low, which does not allow young people and their families to make the most of their economic potential.

Half of the youth population in Liberia (52.4 per cent) is currently employed, and among the employed, self-employment represents 76.9 per cent, comprising 46.5 per cent young own-account workers, 25.9 per cent young contributing family workers and 4.5 per cent young employers. The self-employed face high levels of job insecurity and do not have access to safety nets to support them during the periods they are unable to work due to sickness or disability.

Many youth take up self-employment involuntarily, either because it is required by the family (13.4 per cent) or because they have been unable to find a wage or salaried job (40.8 per cent). The young self-employed claim their most significant business challenge is insufficient financial resources (69.4 per cent).

Among the few youth who do obtain wage and salaried employment (14.3 per cent of young workers), less than one-fifth have access to the benefits of paid annual leave (14.1 per cent) and only 27.4 per cent claim to have employers who pay into a social security system. Just under one-half (46.0 per cent) of young employees surveyed were engaged without a written contract.

⁴ The International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO), Revision 2008, describes “professional” as persons who “increase the existing stock of knowledge, apply scientific or artistic concepts and theories, teach about the foregoing in a systematic manner, or engage in any combination of these activities. ... Tasks performed by professionals usually include: conducting analysis and research, and developing concepts, theories and operational methods, and advising on or applying existing knowledge related to physical sciences including mathematics, engineering and technology, and to life sciences including the medical and health services, as well as to social sciences and humanities ...” For more information, see website: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/isco/isco08/>.

Poor-quality employment impacts more than half of young workers: nearly eight in ten young workers receive a wage that is below the average of all workers (paid workers and own-account workers), eight in ten are in informal employment, nine in ten are in irregular employment, and six in ten are undereducated for the job they hold. A significant share of young workers (64.6 per cent) would like to change their job.

A large share (47.8 per cent) of young workers in Liberia is undereducated for the work they do. At least eight in ten young professionals and technicians and associate professionals do not hold the level of qualifications that is required for the jobs they do. Undereducation can have a negative impact on the productivity of the worker and the competitiveness of enterprises. It can also create a sense of insecurity for the young worker.

A lack of qualified well-educated youth is creating a bottleneck in the supply of labour in the professional occupations sought by employers.

The “hard-to-fill” vacancies identified by employers are mainly in the area of higher-skilled professionals, including secondary education teachers, business service providers, administrative managers and managing directors. The inability to meet the demand through the national market will result in employers having to import foreign labour.

For professional occupations, there is an expectation on the part of employers for job applicants holding tertiary education (33.9 per cent). This preference is slightly less for production workers (23.8 per cent). The demand for highly-educated youth is clearly much higher than the supply. Work experience is also shown to be a highly-ranked hiring criterion among employers, which serves as a difficulty for young jobseekers that are unlikely to have significant work experience or rather to have experience in areas of self-employment that are not valued by formal enterprises.

Agriculture remains the most important employer in the country, and many youth, especially young women, work in elementary occupations such as domestic workers.

Employment in agriculture takes the largest share (33.5 per cent) of employment by sector among youth, followed by employment in the wholesale and retail trade at 27.1 per cent and employment within private households at 10.8 per cent (with the latter two sectors showing a higher share for young women than men). The dominance of the agricultural sector is also evident in the distribution of young workers by occupation, with one-third (33.0 per cent) of young people working as skilled agricultural or fishery workers. Service workers and shop and market sales workers make up 28.8 per cent of total employment and 18.1 per cent of young workers are engaged in elementary occupations. Young men are much more likely to work at the higher-skilled occupations as professionals (9.4 per cent) and as technicians and associate professionals (4.2 per cent) than young women.

Most youth in Liberia are still in transition in the labour market as they have not yet attained a stable or satisfactory job. Among the youth who completed their transition, many attained their stable or satisfactory job as a first labour market experience, but those who had not done so spent an average of 6 years in transition.

The largest share of the youth population in Liberia (46.8 per cent) remains in transition, meaning they have not yet achieved stable and/or satisfactory employment. Among the youth who have already completed their labour market transition (38.2 per cent of the youth population), only a minority have attained stable employment (16.2 per cent) while the remaining 83.8 per cent are engaged in what they deem to be satisfactory self-employment or temporary employment. Young men who have completed their transition to the labour market have a much higher likelihood to attain stable employment than young women (81.2 and 18.8 per cent, respectively).

The percentage of youth who have not yet started the transition is 14.9 per cent, and among the sub-category, 93.3 per cent are still in school and only 6.7 per cent are currently inactive and not in school with no intention of looking for work. Among the youth “in transition”, a majority are classified as unemployed (60.4 per cent), while 30.4 per cent are in non-satisfactory self-employment or temporary employment and much less (9.2 per cent) are inactive non-students with plans to work.

Regarding the youth who completed the transition but had not moved directly to their status in stable and/or satisfactory employment, the path to transition proved to be extremely long at 69 months, or nearly 6 years. The youth who remain “stuck” in transition are likely to find themselves staying within the category for an extremely long period of time as well. The data show that the youth remaining in transition have already spent, on average, nearly 7 years (82 months) in unemployment, non-satisfactory self-employment or temporary employment, or inactivity.

Education has a significant influence on the young person’s labour market transition.

Education matters in the results on a young person’s labour market transition: 3.6 per cent of youth who completed their transition to stable and/or satisfactory employment had completed education at the tertiary level compared to 1.7 per cent of youth remaining in transition. Looking at the distribution instead by specific level of education, among the youth with completed university-level education, 66.4 per cent had completed their labour market transition while the remaining 33.6 per cent remained in transition. And within the “transited” sub-categories, one-fifth (19.2 per cent) of transited youth in stable employment have a tertiary degree compared to 0.9 per cent of transited youth in satisfactory self- or temporary employment. The transited youth with primary or lower education are three times more likely to have transited to satisfactory self-employment or temporary employment compared to stable employment.

Child labour remains an issue in Liberia.

Slightly more than one-third (37.6 per cent) of adolescents aged 15 to 17 are working. The statistic is not so surprising given that 16.5 per cent of the age group (15–17) are not attending school most likely due to economic factors, and given the startling finding that one-fifth (20.6 per cent) of the directly transited youth had completed their labour market transition before the age of 15.

1.3 Structure of the report

Section 2 sets out the socio-economic and labour market conditions of Liberia and introduces the objectives and the methodology of the survey process. Section 3 presents the results of the SWTS with details on the characteristics of youth and their labour market outcomes. Section 4 introduces the classification of stages of labour market transition and investigates the characteristics that lead to more advantageous labour market outcomes, specifically in the attainment of stable employment. The section also discusses the length of time that young men and women spend in transition and traces the various labour market experiences they have along the way. Section 5 presents the results of the LDES, focusing particularly on what enterprises look for in prospective employees and whether or not the supply of labour as defined by the SWTS is likely to satisfy the demand for labour. Finally, Section 6 outlines the national framework guiding youth employment in Liberia and presents the policy implications that have been drawn from the analyses of the two surveys. Policy implications appear throughout the report for easier reference (see shaded boxes).

2. Overview of the labour market and survey methodology

2.1 The socio-economic context

Liberia covers an area of 111,369 square kilometres in West Africa. English is the official language and over 30 indigenous languages are spoken within the country. The country's 14 years of civil war cost it more than 250,000 lives, devastated the social and cultural fabric of society, destroyed infrastructure and generated widespread poverty and disease. From a pre-conflict middle-income country, Liberia became a post-conflict state in which the majority of the population lives below the poverty line of US\$1 a day.

As of the 2008 national census, Liberia was home to 3,476,608 people.⁵ Table 1 presents the distribution of household population by sex, locality and age group. Liberia has a young population: 42.5 per cent of the population is below the age of 15 and another 32.5 per cent is classified as "young" at 15–34 years of age. Those aged 60 and over make up only 4.6 per cent of the population. This is in part due to the low life expectancy in the country, which is abetted by the lack of quality health-care facilities and the absence of social security in the country. While there is a larger share of children below the age of 15 in rural areas, the share of youth is slightly higher in urban areas at 36.0 per cent, compared to 29.1 per cent in rural areas.

Table 1. Distribution of household population by sex, locality and age group (%)

Age group	National			Urban			Rural		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
0 – 14	42.5	44.3	41.0	40.0	40.0	39.7	45.0	47.9	42.0
15 – 24	18.0	17.5	18.6	21.0	20.9	21.1	15.1	14.3	15.9
25 – 34	14.5	12.9	16.1	15.0	13.7	16.3	14.0	12.2	15.8
35 – 54	18.4	18.2	18.5	18.2	18.7	17.8	18.6	17.8	19.2
55 – 59	2.0	2.2	1.8	2.0	2.3	1.8	1.9	2.1	1.8
60+	4.6	4.9	4.3	3.7	4.1	3.3	5.5	5.7	5.3

Source: LISGIS, LFS (2010).

The economy of Liberia is currently growing at around 7.0 per cent annually. Table 2 indicates the nominal GDP growth rate of Liberia from 2008 to 2011.

Table 2. Annual GDP growth rate in Liberia, 2008–11

	2008	2009	2010	2011
GDP growth rate (%)	8.2	6.7	6.2	7.1

Source: International Monetary Fund.

⁵ See the 2011 LISGIS *Statistical Bulletin* for more information.

Liberia is largely dependent on primary activities. Agriculture takes the lead among primary activities (50.4 per cent) and as contributor to GDP. Rubber, cocoa, coffee and timber are some of the major agricultural products. The second largest contributor towards GDP is tertiary activities, i.e. the services sector (21 per cent).

Liberia is highly dependent on imports such as food, live animals, beverages, tobacco, crude materials, animal and vegetable oils, minerals, lubricants and manufacturing products. These imports put a strain on the country's limited foreign reserves. The negative trade balance has depreciated its currency over time. All imports are partly financed by the limited exports of rubber, logs, cocoa beans and coffee.

2.2 The labour market in Liberia

The main source of recent labour market statistics in Liberia is the Labour Force Survey (LFS) carried out in 2010. This section's analysis is based on the 2010 LFS.⁶ Table 3 presents some key labour market indicators for the working-age population (15 years and over) in Liberia by area of residence and sex. In 2010, the labour force participation rate was 62.8 per cent, the employment-to-population ratio was 60.5 per cent and the unemployment rate was only 3.7 per cent. The labour force participation rate in urban areas at 54.9 per cent is lower than the corresponding rate in rural areas (71.2 per cent). The male labour force participation rate is higher than the female rate (66.1 and 59.9 per cent, respectively), but the unemployment rate of women is higher than that of men (4.1 and 3.4 per cent, respectively). The vulnerable employment rate – the share of own-account workers and contributing family workers in total employment – is high at 77.9 per cent, as is the share of workers engaged in the informal economy (68.0 per cent). (See Annex I for more on definitions of labour market indicators.)

According to the LFS results, half the total working population in Liberia in 2010 was employed in the agricultural sector, including forestry and fishing, and a quarter was employed in wholesale/retail trade. The next largest sectors were manufacturing and education. Over 70 per cent of the rural working population was involved in agriculture, but even in urban areas 15 per cent of workers are engaged in the agricultural sector.

Table 3. Key labour market indicators for working-age population (15+) by area of residence and sex

	Labour force participation rate (%)	Employment-to-population ratio (%)	Unemployment rate (%)	Vulnerable employment rate (%)	Informal employment rate (%)
Liberia	62.8	60.5	3.7	77.9	68.0
Male	66.1	63.8	3.4	68.3	61.3
Female	59.9	57.5	4.1	87.3	74.7
Urban	54.9	52.0	5.5	67.5	59.3
Rural	71.2	69.6	2.3	86.1	75.0

Source: LFS, 2010.

⁶ The Report on the Liberia Labour Force Survey 2010 is available at: http://www.ilo.org/global/statistics-and-databases/WCMS_156366/lang--en/index.htm.

2.3 School-to-work transition survey and labour demand enterprise surveys: Objectives and methodology

Current restrictions in labour market information have led to a situation in which the question of why the school-to-work transitions of young people today are a long and difficult process has not yet been satisfactorily answered. At the same time, the goal of improving the transitions of youth is among the top policy priorities of most countries in the world. In response to this obvious information gap, the ILO has developed a research framework composed of two surveys. A detailed household survey covering young people aged between 15 and 29 is applied at the national level to generate information on the current labour market situation, the history of economic activities and the perceptions and aspirations of youth (the school-to-work transition survey, or SWTS). In the case of Liberia, the survey was administered to a broader age band, following the national definition of youth as 15–35 year-olds (see box 1). This supply-side picture is balanced by a second questionnaire that aims to measure labour demand, particularly for young workers. The labour demand enterprise survey (LDES) investigates the current and expected workforce needs of enterprises, and perspectives of managers on the pool of available young jobseekers and workers. By running two surveys simultaneously, it is possible to shed light on issues such as labour market inefficiencies shown in job search/recruitment methods and mismatches between the skills-base of young labour market entrants and the realities of the labour market itself.⁷

Box 1. Definition of youth

The definition of youth used within the ILO Work4Youth Project is persons aged between 15 and 29. The argument behind expanding the youth definition from the standard 15–24 years is that some young people today stay in education for longer periods and will therefore not have started their transition to the labour market by age 24.

In Liberia, a broader definition for youth is preferred. The population and housing census (2008) defined youth and adolescents as persons aged between 10 and 24. However, the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Youth & Sport in Liberia consider a person aged between 18 and 35 as young. Hence, for the purpose of the survey and this report, the broader 15–35 years definition is maintained. Data and indicators for the 15–29 age grouping will be used in subsequent Work4Youth publications and the online database.⁸

The two surveys were carried out simultaneously in Liberia between 27 August and 10 September 2012. Funding for the surveys came from the Work4Youth partnership between the ILO Youth Employment Programme and The MasterCard Foundation (see box 2) and the Youth Employment & Skills Project of the Ministry of Youth & Sports, managed by Transtec. LISGIS, the Liberian Institute of Statistics and Geo-information Services, implemented the two surveys.

2.3.1 Questionnaire development

The standard ILO SWTS questionnaire for youth and the LDES were adapted to the Liberia country context based on a consultative process among the Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Youth & Sports, LISGIS, the ILO and Transtec. The questionnaires were

⁷ The introduction is based on Work4Youth Project methodological material.

⁸ The online database will be launched shortly. See www.ilo.org/w4y for more information.

drafted and administered in English as this is the language widely understood by Liberians.⁹

Box 2. Work4Youth: An ILO project in partnership with The MasterCard Foundation

The Work4Youth (W4Y) Project is a partnership between the ILO Youth Employment Programme and The MasterCard Foundation. The project has a budget of US\$14.6 million and will run for 5 years to mid-2016. Its aim is to “promot[e] decent work opportunities for young men and women through knowledge and action”. The immediate objective of the partnership is to produce more and better labour market information specific to youth in developing countries, focusing in particular on transition paths to the labour market. The assumption is that governments and social partners in the project’s 28 target countries will be better prepared to design effective policy and programme initiatives once armed with detailed information on:

- what young people expect in terms of transition paths and quality of work;
- what employers expect in terms of young applicants;
- what issues prevent the two sides – supply and demand – from matching; and
- what policies and programmes can have a *real* impact.

Work4Youth target countries:

- **Asia and the Pacific:** Bangladesh, Cambodia, Nepal, Samoa, Viet Nam
- **Eastern Europe and Central Asia:** Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Ukraine
- **Latin America and the Caribbean:** Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Jamaica, Peru
- **Middle East and North Africa:** Egypt, Jordan, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Tunisia
- **Sub-Saharan Africa:** Benin, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Togo, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia

2.3.2 Sample design and data collection process

The national Population and Housing Census (2008) was used to build the sampling frame for the SWTS. A nationally representative sample size was taken, equivalent to 1,920 households across Liberia’s 15 counties (with Monrovia as a separate county). All persons between the ages of 15 and 35 in a household were interviewed using the SWTS questionnaire.

In providing a balanced perspective and to reflect the diversity across urban–rural Liberia, two lists of enumeration areas were prepared. Two-staged cluster sampling was employed in selecting the sample. In the first round, eight enumeration areas were selected for the sample on a random basis for each county. In the second stage, 15 households were selected from each enumeration area on a random sampling basis. As such a total of 1,920 households from 128 areas were selected for interviewing in the 2012 SWTS.

Subsequent to the cleaning of data, the sample of 1,876 respondents was taken for analysis (see table 4). The initial plan had been to reach a minimum of 3,000 young people within the overall framework of 1,920 households, but numerous difficulties in the field resulted in the fairly drastic drop in sample size (see box 3). Issues that impacted the resulting sample size included bad road conditions during the rainy season and an inability to find youth at their household because some had moved to other areas in search of employment or because listed households no longer had eligible youth to interview (an inevitable problem when using a dated household listing).

⁹ Final questionnaires will be available at: www.ilo.org/w4y.

Table 4. Final sample results

	Final sample size	Urban	Rural	Male	Female
School-to-work transition survey	1 876	1 173	703	882	994
Labour demand enterprise survey	459	388	71		

For the LDES, a minimum of 768 enterprises located across Liberia (all counties) were selected for the sample on a random basis. The 2010 official listing of registered businesses from the Ministry of Industry and Commerce was used as the sampling framework. Like the SWTS, the response rate on the LDES is disappointing, with a final sample size of only 459 enterprises out of an original 768 planned. The sample breakdown according to size of enterprise was based on the following ranges:

Employees 4 to 9 = 174 (23 per cent of all enterprises)

Employees 10 to 19 = 107 (14 per cent of all enterprises)

Employees 20+ = 487 (All)-(63 per cent of all enterprises)

Sixteen teams were deployed for collecting data. A team was composed of one supervisor and three enumerators. Two enumerators conducted the household survey for youth while the third conducted the employer's survey. Field data collection continued for 15 days. Subsequent to the completion of the field work, each supervisor was required to collect the completed questionnaires and hand them over to LISGIS. Data was reviewed, coded, cleaned and entered by LISGIS using CSPRO. Data was analysed using STATA.

Box 3. Difficulties faced in the data collection process

Both the youth and the employer surveys in the field were conducted during the rainy season in Liberia. Especially in rural areas where roads did not exist or were in poor condition, the task of data collection encountered severe difficulties due to torrents of rain. In other cases the listed households no longer had eligible respondents or the eligible respondents had moved to other areas in search of employment or for other reasons. With regard to the enterprise survey, some employers refused to respond to the survey while others listed were no longer in business.

3. Characteristics of youth in the SWTS sample

3.1 Individual characteristics of youth

The largest portion of surveyed youth were teenagers between the ages of 15 and 19 (37.0 per cent) followed by 20–24 year-olds (23.9 per cent). This indicates a slight bias towards the younger sub-category of 15–24 year-olds within the overall sample (table 5). There is a nearly equal share of youth aged 25–29 and 30–35 (19.4 and 19.7 per cent, respectively).

The size of the household has a direct impact on the distribution of resources among its members and especially on the education of the children. Liberian people rarely live alone. They are more likely to live with members of their immediate and extended family. Forty-nine (49.2) per cent of the respondents live in houses with five to nine members (table A1). Another 22.7 per cent live in households with ten to 14 members. The size of the households is larger in rural areas. In rural areas, 51.1 per cent of youth live in households with five to nine members and 19.9 per cent live in households with ten to 14

members. For urban areas, 47.7 per cent of youth live in households with five to nine members and 25.1 per cent of youth live in houses with ten to 14 members.

Table 5. Youth population by selected characteristics and sex (%)

Selected characteristics	Total	Male	Female
Age			
15 – 19	37.0	35.4	38.4
20 – 24	23.9	24.9	23.0
25 – 29	19.4	19.1	19.7
30 – 35	19.7	20.6	18.9
Total	100	100	100
Marital status			
Never married	69.6	71.6	67.8
Cohabitation	16.5	16.1	16.8
Married	12.5	10.5	14.4
Separated	1.3	1.8	0.9
Widowed	0.2	0.1	0.2
Total	100	100	100
Area of residence			
Urban	54.6	52.8	56.2
Rural	45.4	47.2	43.8
Total	100	100	100

Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

The largest share of youth in Liberia is single (69.6 per cent). Slightly more than one-quarter (29.0 per cent) of the youth population is either married or cohabitating. Many youth of marriage age opt to live together as a couple until they reach a level of financial security and then enter into legal marriage. Given that the prospects of attaining financial security are relatively low, cohabitation among young couples can occur indefinitely.

In many cases, a married or cohabitating youth is compelled to enter the labour market to support the family. The labour force participation rate of the married/cohabitating youth is 89.9 per cent compared to 76.8 per cent for the single youth population. The need to be economically active is heightened for young parents with children. The survey reveals an overall mean of 2.1 children per youth (among youth with children) in urban areas and a mean of 2.8 children per youth in rural areas.

The median age at first marriage is 20 years for young women and 24 years for young men (table A2). Higher levels of educational attainment correspond to later ages of first marriage. The young person with no education was found to marry at a median age of 20 years. In contrast, the young person who completed secondary or university education married at the median ages of 26 and 25 years, respectively. The SWTS data also show a negative relationship between the level of education and the number of children. Youth with primary-level education or lower had 2.7 children, on average, compared to 2.1 children per youth (with children) with a university degree.

Health

The SWTS looks at the health of young people in relation to eyesight, hearing, walking, and concentration and communication capabilities. Eight (7.6) per cent of the youth population expressed difficulty seeing, 2.9 per cent difficulty hearing, 8.7 per cent difficulty walking, 8.0 per cent difficulty concentrating, 3.2 per cent difficulty taking care of themselves and 3.7 per cent difficulty communicating (table A3). The most common disability reported among the youth was sight-related, limited usage of legs and difficulties hearing. Regarding the causes of their disabilities, 29.5 per cent of youth with a health issue reported it was a result of a disease. Fifteen (14.8) per cent attributed the disability to the war and 19.2 per cent cited other causes.

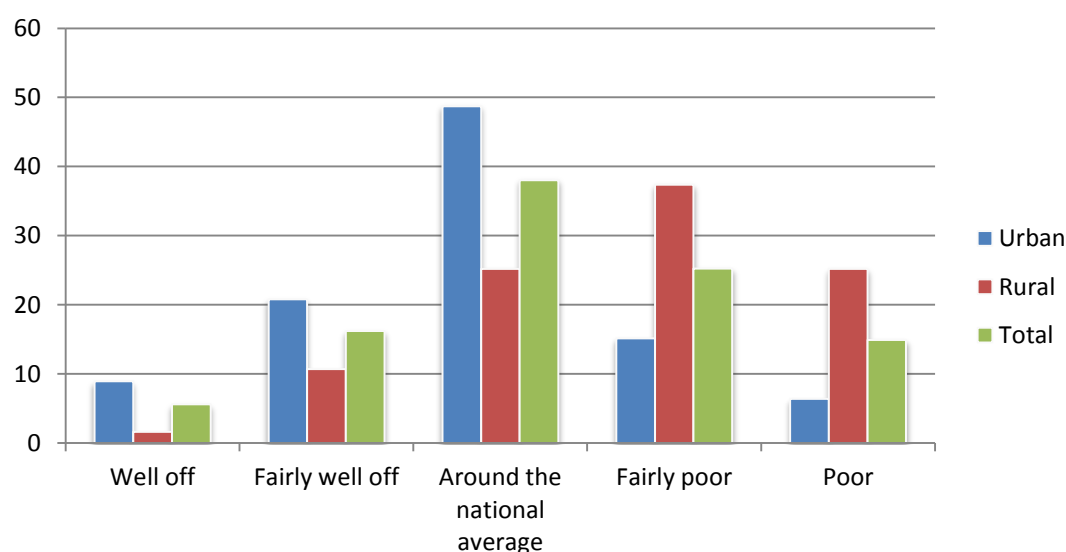
Mobility

To capture the concept of internal migration, the survey asked the respondent whether the young person had always lived in the current locality. Only 8.9 per cent had moved from their original place of residence, demonstrating that Liberian youth are not especially mobile. Of those who had moved from their original location, 35.2 per cent came from a rural area or small town, 55.5 per cent from a large city or metropolitan area and 9.3 per cent from another country (table A4). A large share of youth who had internally migrated did so to accompany their family (48.5 per cent). Slight more than one-quarter (27.8 per cent) had migrated for education, training or employment purposes.

Income level

The survey inquired on the financial well-being of the youth's household as self-perceived. Thirty eight per cent of respondents said their household wealth was around the national average, 40.2 per cent were living in poor or fairly poor households and 21.8 per cent considered their household to be well off or fairly well off. Results show that poverty is more aggravated in rural compared to urban areas. Twenty-five (25.2) per cent of rural households were around the national average while more than half of the rural population (62.5 per cent) were fairly poor or poor (figure 1). On the other hand, 29.7 per cent of youth in urban areas live in households deemed well-off or fairly well-off and 48.7 per cent consider their household to be around the national average. Only 21.6 per cent of household in urban areas were considered poor or fairly poor.

Figure 1. Household financial situation (%)



Note: The categorization of household income level is based on the perception of the young respondent.

Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

Financial inclusion

Very few young people in Liberia make use of formal financial services. Only 5.5 per cent of surveyed youth said they had acquired a business loan, 2.5 per cent had taken a consumption loan and 1.2 had taken an emergency loan or insurance (table 6). What is more common is the use of the informal Susu saving system (29.7 per cent of youth are engaged in the system).¹⁰

Table 6. Access to financial services (%)

Making personal use of financial service	
None	45.0
Business loan	5.5
Consumption loan	2.5
Susu savings	29.7
Emergency loans & insurance	1.2
Remittances/Money transfer services	1.8
Other service	26.2
Main source of financial services	
Banks & insurance companies	4.3
Microfinance institution including cooperatives	2.5
Money transfer operators (money gram, Western Union, etc.)	1.7
Informal financial operators, money lenders, pawn shops	2.5
Friends & relatives	69.3
Other services	34.5
Means of covering unforeseen expenses	
No need to cover them	17.7
Saving	38.6
Loan	6.8
Sacrifice on expenses (food, house, health, education, etc.)	4.9
Work extra hours to earn more income	12.7
Sell assets	5.4
Other services	32.3

Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

¹⁰ Susu is an informal sector credit system in Liberia. Three types of Susu savings are practised: First, the rotational Susu is a system in which businessmen and women organize themselves into a Susu club and agree to pay a certain amount monthly to be given to a member of the club. This process continues until all members of the club get paid. Any member who fails to pay can have his/her business seized and sold to recover the amount due. The second type is a yearly Susu system in which a group of businesspeople and other interested persons contribute and save money monthly. The sum is given out as loans to members and non-members. For loans granted, interest is charged at a lower rate for members and a higher rate for non-members. Finally, the third system is the daily Susu, also known as a “one man” scheme. Here a well-known businessperson may organize a daily Susu to collect from customers their daily savings.

Sixty-nine (69.3) per cent of Liberian youth reported that their family and friends provide their main source of financial services. Only 4.3 per cent cited their main sources as banks and insurance companies, 2.5 per cent had access to microfinance and another 2.5 per cent counted on the financial services of informal operators. On meeting their unforeseen expenses, only 17.7 per cent mentioned that they had none. The remainder of youth made use of their own savings (38.6 per cent), engaged in additional work (12.7 per cent), took a loan (6.8 per cent), sold assets (5.4 per cent) or sacrificed on their expenses (4.9 per cent) (for example, on food).

Extending formal financial services to young people, easing collateral requirements and prohibitive interest rates for youth and raising their awareness of such services could help to lessen the use of more risky informal money lending schemes while addressing young people and aspiring entrepreneurs' needs for secure financial services and products.

3.2 Educational attainment

Education and training increase the potential productivity and employability of young people, opening up new opportunities in different sectors and occupations. Educational enrolment and attainment also have a positive impact on the health of young persons, decisions regarding marriage and childbearing, social capital and quality of life.

Long years of civil unrest had a very negative impact on the education of youth in Liberia. By 2003, older cohorts of youth had achieved an acceptable level of education even in a deteriorating educational environment, but younger cohorts were faced with poor educational facilities, such as destroyed school buildings and unqualified teachers. Among the older cohort of youth in the SWTS sample (25–35 year-olds), 33.5 per cent completed their secondary senior education and 6.0 per cent completed university. The share with no education is 6.3 per cent. Results for the current younger cohorts (aged 15 to 24) are less positive: 10.0 per cent have no education, 27.3 per cent completed secondary senior education and only 2.8 per cent completed university (although some in the age cohort are likely to still be in school so their final level is not yet determined).

For youth who had completed their education, the largest share is those who completed the secondary level (45.9 per cent) (table 7 and figure 2). Another 36.5 per cent completed primary level education and 4.7 per cent completed university education. Only 5.1 per cent engaged in vocational education or training. Nearly half of young females attained only primary level education (46.9 per cent) and another third (32.6 per cent) completed the secondary level. Most young males, on the other hand, had completed education at the secondary level (58.1 per cent). The share of female university graduates is slightly higher than the male share at 5.2 and 4.2 per cent, respectively. Many factors contribute to keeping female youth away from school, but a principal constraint has to do with the traditional view that young women are needed to tend the household.

The presence of large numbers of uneducated youth in rural areas is quite disturbing. Most youth in rural areas completed elementary level schooling (53.5 per cent). Only 12.2 per cent and 2.8 per cent of rural youth managed to complete secondary senior and university education, respectively. For urban youth the picture is different. Most youth completed secondary senior education (48.0 per cent) while another 6.4 per cent completed university. There are fewer schools in rural areas and bad road conditions, poor infrastructure, lack of qualified teachers and poor household financial conditions, which all serve to minimize the number of young attending the few schools that do exist. Christian missionaries have extended schools to rural areas, but many parents still find it difficult to send their children due to high tuition fees.

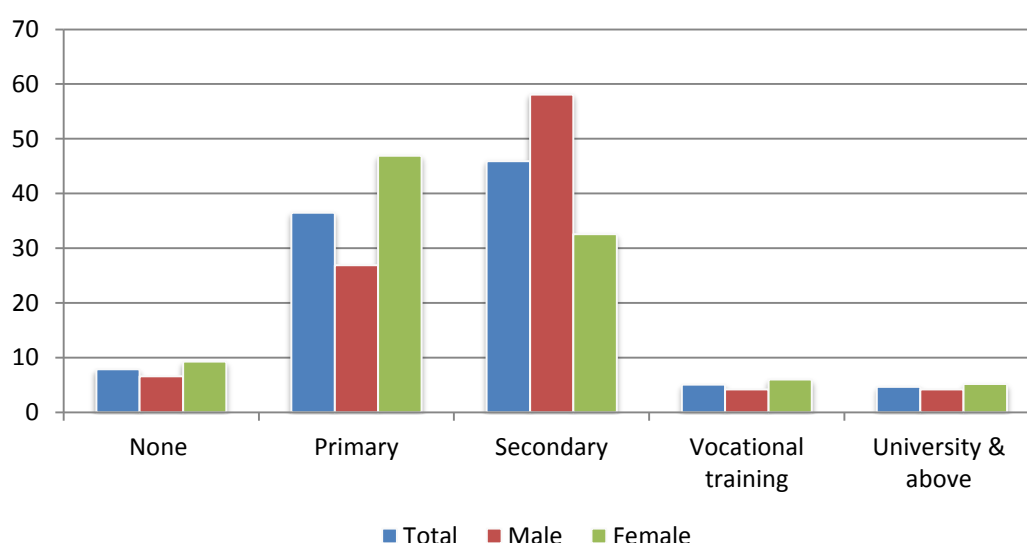
Table 7. Completed educational attainment by sex and area of residence (%)

	Total	Male	Female	Urban	Rural
None	7.9	6.6*	9.3	6.4	9.5*
Primary	36.5	26.9	46.9	21.0	53.5
Secondary	45.9	58.1	32.6	61.0	29.2
Vocational training	5.1*	4.2*	6.0*	5.2*	5.0*
University & above	4.7*	4.2*	5.2*	6.4*	2.8*
Total	100	100	100	100	100

*Low response rates mean these estimates may not be precise.

Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

Figure 2. Distribution of completed education level of youth by sex (%)



Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

Only a small share of Liberian youth (5.1 per cent) participates in vocational education or training. A survey of 300 youth in urban and rural Liberia found that while most view vocational training as a major source for increasing the probability of employment, they remain concerned by the poor quality of trainers, infrastructure and the out-dated curricula of the TVET services.¹¹ Challenges include the enrolment of poorly educated and disadvantaged youth, an uncoordinated, unregulated and fragmented delivery system, limited financing and poor management, a weak monitoring mechanism, obsolete equipment, an out-dated curriculum, low-quality training programmes, dilapidated structures and inadequate staffing.

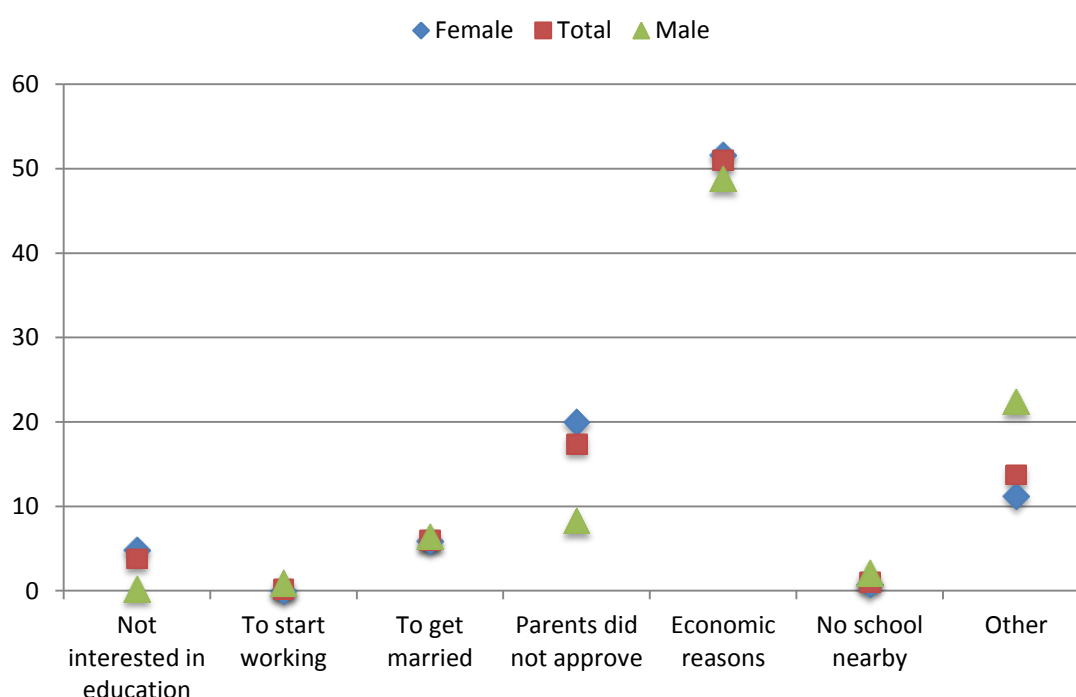
Despite efforts by the Government of Liberia and donor agencies, a large number of youth still do not have access to education due to distances to school, poor-quality infrastructure, cultural norms and poverty. *Eighty-six (86.4) per cent of the surveyed youth*

¹¹ This survey was conducted in 2012 by the World Bank’s “Youth, Employment, Skills (YES) Project” attached to the Ministry of Youth & Sports in Liberia. Quality concerns of the TVET system are confirmed in UNESCO (2011).

attended school at some point in their life, while the remaining 13.6 per cent have never been to school (6.5 per cent of young men and 19.8 per cent of young women). Economic reasons were given as the main explanation for never attending school (51.2 per cent) followed by lack of parental approval (17.4 per cent) and other reasons (13.8 per cent) (figure 3). Among the youth who did go to school, 26.3 per cent left before graduation. Two-thirds (66.2 per cent) of early drop-outs cited economic reasons as the leading cause for leaving school.

Recommendations include expanding investment in education, especially in rural areas, and expanding access to education and training to the most disadvantaged youth excluded by costs, as well as improving the educational quality and addressing the skills mismatch to allow young males and females to better meet the needs of the market.

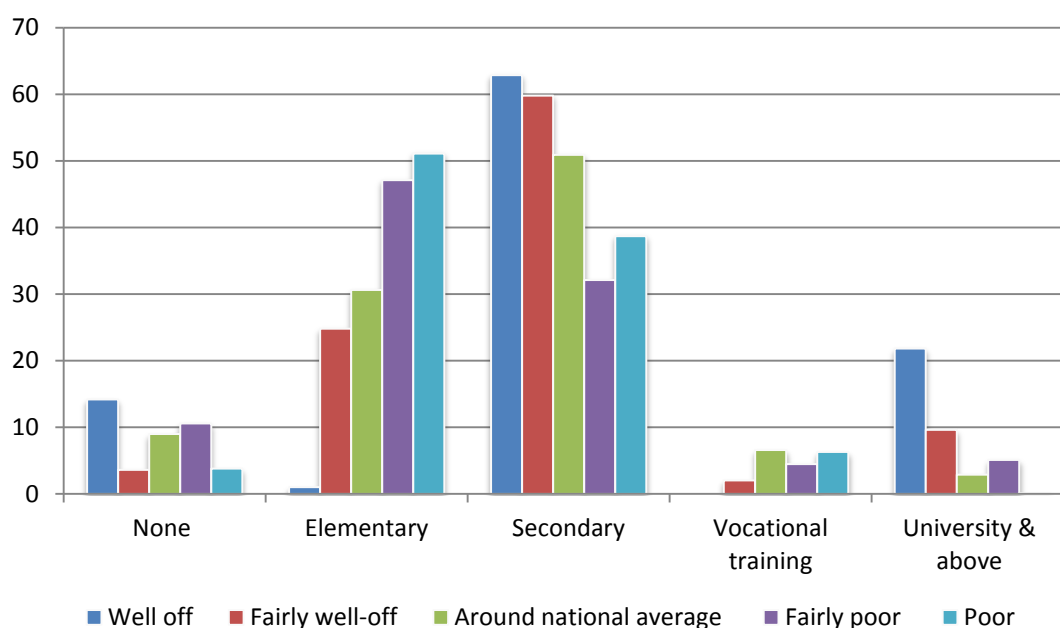
Figure 3. Reasons for never attending school by sex (%)



Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

Poverty bears a significant impact on investments in education. The cost of school fees and associated costs influence the decision to keep children away from school. At the same time, the opportunity cost of sending children to school increases as they grow older and could alternatively earn money to help support the family. *The SWTS results support the premise that youth from poorer financial backgrounds are less educated compared to youth from financially well-off households* (figure 4). Among youth from below-average income households (poor and fairly poor), 38.7 per cent completed secondary level education and less than 1 per cent completed university education. On the other hand, 62.9 per cent of youth from above-average income households (well-off and fairly well-off) completed secondary education and 21.9 per cent completed university education.

Figure 4. Youth population by level of completed educational attainment and level of household income (%)



Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

Parents' education and the impact on the education of their children

There is some evidence of improvement in educational attainment between the current generation of youth and their parents, but only among youth with the lowest levels of education. While 32.4 per cent of respondents' fathers and 59.3 per cent of respondents' mothers had no education at all, the youth share with no schooling was only 7.9 per cent (table 8). Perhaps the most striking difference when comparing educational levels across generations is the high percentage of fathers with university education (13.9 per cent) compared to the percentage for the current generation of youth (only 4.7 per cent). The upheaval in the educational system due to conflict in the country is evident in these statistics.

Table 8. Educational attainment of youth and youth' parents (%)

	Youth	Father	Mother
None	7.9	32.4	59.3
Primary	36.5	9.8	9.8
Secondary	45.9	29.5	15.0
Vocational training	5.1	7.8	3.6
University & above	4.7	13.9	2.5
Do not know		6.6	9.8
Total	100	100	100

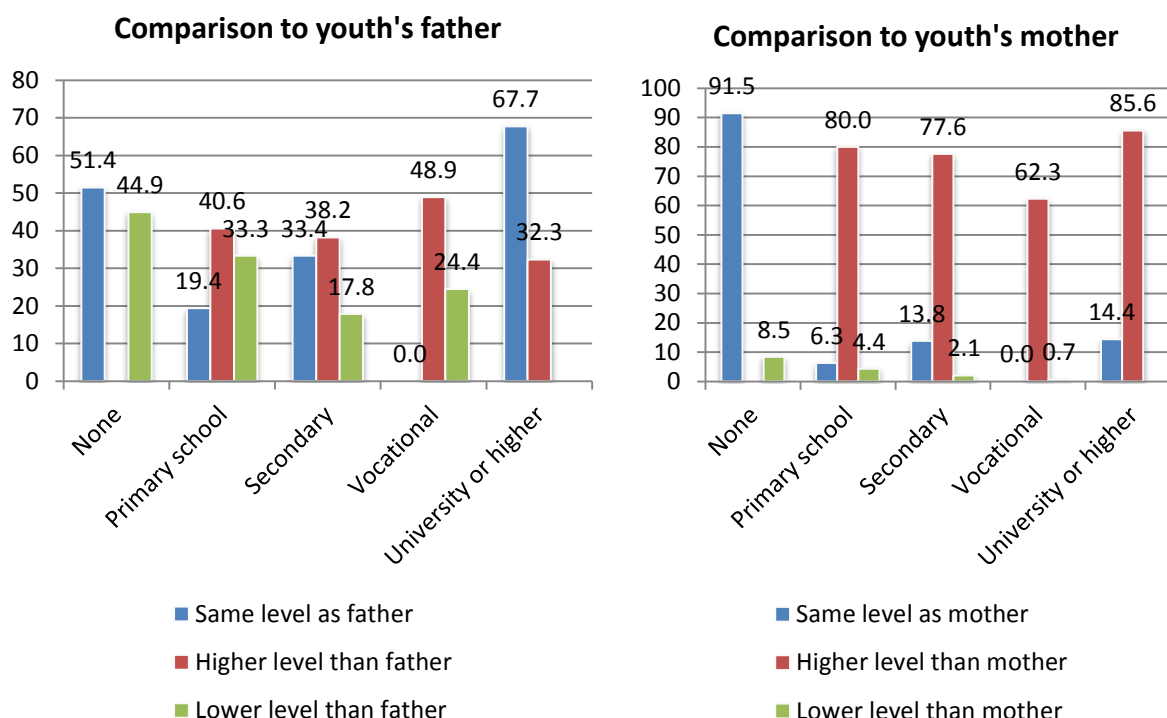
Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

There is a positive correlation between the level of parents' education and that of their children. Educated parents have the ability to influence the academic achievement of their children as they are in a good position to be the second teachers to their children and to encourage them to stay in school (Omolade et al., 2011, p. 243).

Figure 5 shows that 67.7 per cent of youth in Liberia who attained a tertiary degree also have a father with a tertiary degree. Another 32.3 per cent of youth with tertiary education exceeded the education level of their fathers. Sixty (60.0) per cent of young persons with primary level education were educated at the same level or higher than their father. The share is even higher for youth with secondary level education (71.6 per cent). At the same time, there are also signs of degeneration in the educational system across generations, perhaps not surprising given the large share of respondents' fathers shown to have higher education (13.9 per cent, see table 8). Forty-five (44.9) per cent of youth with no education are below the education level of their father, as are 33.3 per cent of youth with primary education, 17.8 per cent of youth with secondary education and 24.4 per cent of youth with vocational education.

Given the very low education level of respondents' mothers, a vast majority of youth have surpassed the level of their mother. In total, only 15.7 per cent of youth finished with an education level below that of their mother.

Figure 5. Cross-tabulation of educational attainment of youth and educational attainment of respondents' parents (%)



Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

3.3 Current activity status of youth

The traditional categorization of current activity status classifies a person as employed, unemployed or economically inactive. The employed and unemployed are added together to get the total labour force (also known as economically active). A high level of labour force participation can be found among Liberian youth. *Fifty-two (52.4) per cent of the youth population is employed and 12.6 per cent is unemployed for a total labour force participation rate of youth of 65.0 per cent* (table 9). The share of young women who are employed and unemployed is 46.8 per cent and 14.4 per cent, respectively. For young men, the share of employed is 58.7 per cent and unemployed is 10.5 per cent.

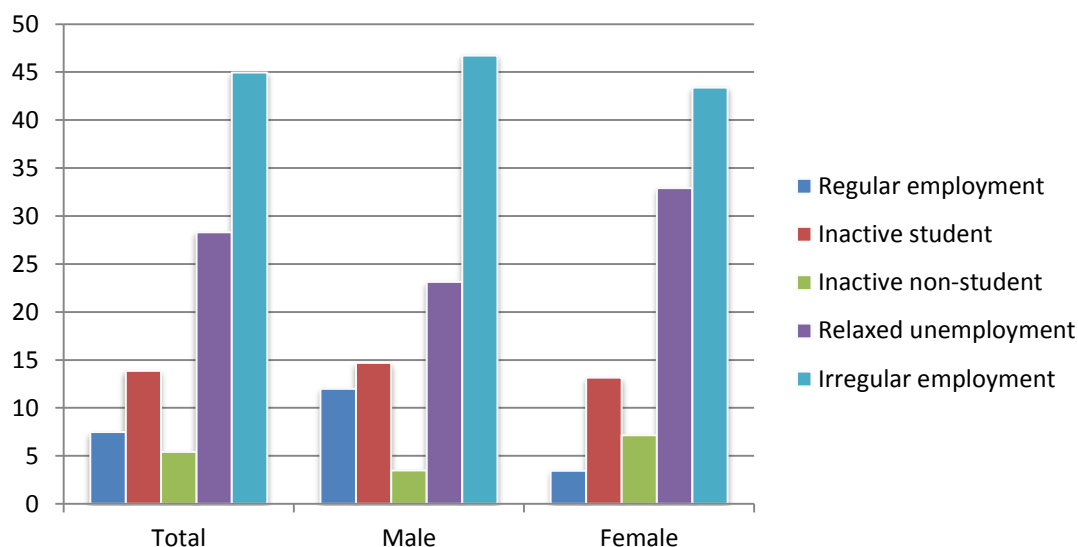
Table 9. Youth population by main economic activity and sex (%)

	Total	Male	Female
Employed	52.4	58.7	46.8
Unemployed	12.6	10.5	14.4
Inactive	35.0	30.8	38.8
Total	100	100	100

Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

In the ILO *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2013*, the argument is made that comparing traditional labour market indicators with a more detailed disaggregation of indicators made available through the SWTS offers a fuller picture of the challenges that youth face in developing economies (ILO, 2013a, chapter 4). Figure 6 shows the results for Liberia. The youth population is broken down into five categories: (a) *regular employment*, defined as wage and salaried workers holding a contract of duration greater than 12 months, plus self-employed youth with employees (employers); (b) *irregular employment*, defined as wage and salaried workers holding a contract of limited duration, i.e. set to terminate prior to 12 months, self-employed youth with no employees (own-account workers) and contributing family workers; (c) *unemployed (relaxed definition)*, defined as persons currently without work and available to take up work in the week prior to the reference period; (d) *inactive non-students*; and (e) *inactive students*. (See Annex I for more on definitions of labour market indicators.)

Figure 6. Distribution of the youth population by more detailed disaggregation of economic activity and by sex (%)



Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

The figure shows that a mere 7.5 per cent of Liberian youth are in regular employment while 13.9 per cent are inactive students, hopefully increasing their human capital for better employment prospects in the future. The remaining categories are less positive in nature: 45.0 per cent of youth are engaged in low-productive, irregular employment, 28.3 per cent are unemployed (relaxed definition) and 5.4 per cent are neither in the labour force nor in education or training (NLFET or inactive non-students). *This*

suggests that instead of an unutilized labour potential of 12.6 per cent (the unemployed based on the strict definition), policy-makers should worry about as much as 78.7 per cent of youth who can be considered to fall within the category of underutilized labour.¹²

The level of education has an impact on the current activity status of youth. *The economically active youth – the employed and unemployed – maintain higher levels of education compared to the inactive.* The largest share of both young workers and young unemployed is those with a secondary degree, but there is a greater concentration in the educational category for the unemployed (49.4 per cent for the employed and 63.4 per cent for the unemployed) (table 10). The lesser educated – with primary level or below – are more likely to be either inactive or employed. As much as 73.5 per cent of the inactive youth finished education at the primary education or lower, compared to 43.5 per cent for the employed and 26.2 per cent for the unemployed. *There is a slightly greater likelihood for youth with a tertiary level education to be unemployed as opposed to employed (5.8 and 3.9 per cent, respectively).*

Table 10. Completed education attainment by current activity status (%)

	Employed	Unemployed	Inactive
None	7.9	7.5	14.8
Primary	35.6	18.7	58.7
Secondary	49.4	63.4	21.0
Vocational school	3.1	4.6	4.8
University & above	3.9	5.8	0.7
Total	100	100	100

Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

Child labour

Child labour remains an issue in Liberia; the SWTS results show that 37.6 per cent of adolescents between the ages of 15 and 17 are working. The statistic is not too surprising given that 16.5 per cent of the age group (15–17) is not attending school, most likely due to economic factors. It is important to note that there is no legal constraint against youth aged 15–17 working, unless they are engaged in hazardous work. Looking at the detailed occupational and sectoral breakdown of adolescents' work, it is not possible to say with certainty what share is engaged in hazardous work, but it is fair to say that at least some of the 23.1 per cent of youth 15–17 engaged in domestic work and 40.3 per cent engaged in subsistence agriculture can be susceptible to dangerous or unhealthy working conditions. Less than 1 per cent of the young workers in the age band were engaged in mining, construction or refuse work.

According to UNICEF, 21 per cent of boys and girls aged 5 to 14 were involved in exploitative child labour during the period 2002-11.¹³ They also find evidence of children internally trafficked for forced domestic servitude, street vending and agricultural labour

¹² The labour underutilization rate is calculated as the sum of the shares of youth in irregular employment, unemployed (relaxed definition) and neither in the labour force nor in education/training (inactive non-students). (See definitions in Annex I.)

¹³ UNICEF, "At a glance: Liberia", http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/liberia_statistics.html.

and sexual exploitation.¹⁴ The mining sector (gold and diamonds) is particularly attractive to children who need to earn fast money instead of attending school. Children as young as 12 years of age are mining for gold instead of being in class with their peers.

3.4 Aspirations and life goals

On ranking their life goals, both young men and women viewed having a good family life (38.1 per cent) and contributing to society (26.4 per cent) as their leading goals (table 11). Secondary goals for youth men and women include success at work (18.6 per cent) and having lots of money (17.0 per cent). Similar rankings were observed when youth were grouped by their current activity status. Those who were economically active (either employed or unemployed) and inactive had a societal-based goal as opposed to a monetary goal.

Table 11. Primary goal of youth by current activity status (%)

	Employed	Unemployed	Inactive	Total
Being successful in work	18.3	16.4	19.7	18.6
Contribute to society	26.0	29.0	25.6	26.4
Have lot of money	17.2	18.2	16.9	17.0
Have a good family life	38.6	36.4	37.8	38.1
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

3.5 Characteristics of employed youth

3.5.1 General characteristics of the employed

The “employed” comprise all persons surveyed who worked for pay, profit or family gain for at least 1 hour in the reference week plus the number of persons who are temporarily absent from their jobs (see Annex I for more detailed definitions). By current activity status, 52.4 per cent of youth are employed (58.7 per cent of young men and 46.8 per cent of young women) (table 9). The distribution of employment by age group is contrary to what one might expect, with the largest percentage of employed found among the youngest age group, 15–19 years (i.e. exactly those who one would expect to be in full-time education). Rather, 27.6 per cent of employed youth are within this age band, compared to 24.0 per cent aged 20 to 24, 23.9 per cent aged 25 to 29, and 24.5 per cent aged 30 to 35. By area of residence, 52.5 per cent of the employed were from urban areas and 47.6 per cent were from rural areas. Most of the employed youth had completed secondary level education (49.4 per cent), followed by those with primary level education (35.6 per cent). Only 3.1 per cent of working youth had completed vocational training and 3.9 per cent had obtained a higher level degree (table 10).

¹⁴ The ILO has recently published a report on ending child labour in domestic work and protecting young workers from abuses in the sector. See ILO (2013c).

3.5.2 Status in employment

The categorization of status in employment is important because the different groups of workers face different economic risks. Wage and salaried workers, or employees, are attached to an institution and generally receive a regular wage. They face relatively low economic risks compared to the self-employed and contributing (unpaid) family workers, but only when engaged on a regular contract with provisions of entitlements. (Subsequent results will show that few Liberian youth meet such criterion.) Table 12 shows a majority of youth are engaged as own-account workers (46.5 per cent), followed by those working as unpaid family members (25.9 per cent). Fourteen (14.3) per cent of Liberian working youth are in wage and salaried employment and 4.5 per cent are classified as employers.

Table 12. Employed youth by status in employment and sex (%)

	Total	Male	Female
Wage & salaried workers (employees)	14.3	22.7	5.1*
Self-employed with employees (employers)	4.5	5.5*	3.5*
Self-employed without employees (own-account worker)	46.5	40.3	53.4
Contributing family workers	25.9	22.0	30.2
Not classifiable by status	8.8	9.6	7.9
Total	100	100	100

*Unreliable due to low response rates.
Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

Own-account workers and contributing family workers together make up a category of “vulnerable employment”. These are the workers who face high levels of job insecurity and who do not have access to safety nets to cover them during the periods they are unable to work due to sickness or disability. *Nearly three in four young workers are classified as “vulnerable” (72.4 per cent), with young women much more likely to engage in vulnerable employment than young men (83.6 and 62.3 per cent, respectively).*

Educational attainment is positively associated with the probability of entering into wage and salaried employment, especially when the number of paid jobs is extremely limited. Table 13 shows the distribution of workers according to their status in employment and level of completed education. The better educated are concentrated among the wage and salaried workers, while the lesser educated go mainly into own-account work. Half (47.5 per cent) of young own-account workers completed education at the secondary level or above, compared to 62.5 per cent of contributing family workers and 88.0 per cent of wage and salaried workers.

Table 13. Distribution of workers by status and level of education (%)

Level of completed education	Wage and salaried workers	Own-account + employers	Contributing family workers
None	4.2*	6.9*	8.2
Primary	6.3*	41.1	29.3
Secondary	70.8	44.9	54.6
University & above	17.2*	2.6*	7.9
Not stated	1.5*	4.5*	0.0

*Unreliable due to low response rates.
Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

Wage and salaried workers (employees)

Youth in paid employment in Liberia are mainly male (83.3 per cent), older cohorts aged 25 to 29 (34.5 per cent) and 30 to 35 years (38.2 per cent), and located in urban areas (81.6 per cent). Less than half (46.1 per cent) of young employees had a written contract (table A7). The remaining 53.9 per cent are engaged based on oral contracts. Slightly more than half of employees with contracts have contracts of unlimited duration (52.0 per cent). Of the remaining 48.0 per cent with a contract of limited duration, three-fourths are engaged in seasonal or daily work (37.8 per cent in seasonal work and 34.9 per cent in occasional daily work). Other reasons for temporary contracts include probationary period (11.9 per cent) and working on specific tasks (7.3 per cent).

Young employees in Liberia are rarely covered by entitlements. Table 14 shows that 83.3 per cent of young workers do not have access to paid annual leave and 69.3 per cent lack paid sick leave. Only 29.2 per cent of young employees are covered with medical insurance by their employer and 27.4 per cent are covered by social security. The lack of benefits means that the majority of young workers can experience radical fluctuations in their daily or monthly incomes if they are unable to work due to an illness or that of a family member. At the same time, if they lose their job, very few young workers have the protection offered by severance pay or social security.

Table 14. Wage and salaried young workers by access to benefits (%)

	Yes	No	Do not know
Transport allowance	38.8	61.0	0.3*
Meal allowance	32.9	66.9	0.3*
Annual paid leave	14.1*	83.3	2.6*
Paid sick leave	27.8	69.3	2.8*
Pension	12.0*	73.9	14.2*
Severance payment	17.7*	75.2	7.2*
Overtime payments	23.3*	72.4	7.2*
Medical insurance	29.2	70.3	0.5*
Bonus	20.8*	75.6	3.7*
Social security	27.4	64.1	8.5*
Educational & training courses	30.1	65.1	4.8*
Occupation safety equipment	24.7	72.8	2.5*
Childcare facilities	8.9*	85.6	5.5*
Maternity/paternity leave	8.2*	85.0	6.8*

*Unreliable due to low response rates.
Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

Earnings are an important indicator of economic well-being. The average monthly earnings of a young male employee surveyed were 7,262 Liberian dollars (LRD) compared to LRD 6,675 for a young female employee (table 15).¹⁵ The level of education and qualifications are an indicator to employers of the productive potential of prospective employees. As such, employees with higher levels of education should fetch higher salaries and vice-versa. In Liberia, *the young surveyed employee who had never been to school received an average of LRD 4,000 per month compared to the young employees with secondary and university education who earned, on average, LRD 6,667 and LRD 10,664 per month, respectively.*

Table 15. Average monthly income of young wage and salaried workers and self-employed workers (own-account workers and employers) by sex and educational attainment

		Wage and salaried workers		Own-account workers and employers	
		Mean monthly wage in LRD	S.D. in LRD	Mean monthly wage in LRD	S.D. in LRD
Total		7 141	4 880	4 764	10 151
Sex	Female	6 675	4 368	4 605	9 238
	Male	7 262	5 043	4 938	11 080
Level of education	None	4 000	0	3 062	5 854
	Primary	5 613	2 949	4 093	9 518
	Secondary	6 667	3 743	7 039	13 236
	Vocational	15 600	19 233	1 218	1 121
	University & above	10 664	2 705	13 500	12 020

S.D. = Standard deviation

Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

Self-employed workers (employers, own-account workers and contributing (unpaid) family workers)

A lack of formal jobs and the large informal economy (confirmed in section 3.5.5) mean self-employment is the only option for many young Liberians. Three-fourths of Liberian youth are engaged in some form of self-employment (4.5 per cent as employers; 46.5 per cent as own-account workers; and 25.9 per cent in unpaid family work).

The largest share of the young employers and own-account workers surveyed took up self-employment because they could not find paid employment (40.8 per cent), thus implying that self-employment is considered a second-best option by many youth (table

¹⁵ The UN official exchange rate in September 2012, around the time of the survey field work, was LRD 73.5 = US\$1, which put the equivalent in US dollars at US\$99 per month for young men and US\$91 per month for young women. The current proposal within the “Decent Work Bill”, under discussion within the Liberian Legislature, is for a minimum wage of US\$6 per day. At the current average monthly wage of LRD 7,141 (US\$97), a young person would work only 16 days before arriving at the average monthly wage if the minimum wage were applied. Most workers are working more than 16 days per month, which hints that the proposed minimum wage is significantly higher than what the average young Liberian currently earns. At US\$6 per day, 25 days per month, the minimum wage would bring a monthly income of US\$150, i.e. the equivalent of what the average young university graduate is currently earning in the country (based on the SWTS results).

16). Liberia's economy is largely agricultural and offers few wage and salaried employment opportunities. Still, some of the young self-employed chose the status for its greater independence (22.2 per cent) and flexibility (10.8 per cent). Another 13.4 per cent became self-employed because it was required by the family. Of the self-employed females, 25.0 per cent took it up because it offers greater independence, while another 11.0 per cent liked the flexibility self-employment brings in terms of working hours. A majority of young contributing family workers were required to join the family business (51.3 per cent).

On the source of funding to start their own business, 34.4 per cent of young employers and own-account workers claimed that no financing was needed. An example is the young person selling mangos or bananas on the street that they have picked from their back garden. Twenty-seven (27.2) per cent relied on their Susu savings (defined in section 3.1), while another 24.9 per cent borrowed money from family and friends. Use of formal modes of finances was almost completely lacking. Yet 69.4 per cent of the young self-employed claimed insufficient financial resources as their main constraint in doing business (table A8).

Measures aiming at improving financial services to young people are likely to stimulate labour demand and generate new employment opportunities for them.

On average, a self-employed youth earned LRD 4,764 per month, which is below the earning average of the wage and salaried youth of LRD 7,141 (table 15). The female self-employed youth earned slightly less than the young male (LRD 4,605 per month for young women and LRD 4,938 for young men).

Table 16. Self-employed youth by reason for self-employment and funding source by sex (%)

	Total	Male	Female
Reason (own-account workers and employers)			
Inability to find wage employment	40.8	45.8	36.3
Greater independence	22.2	19.1	25.0
Flexibility in working hours	10.8	10.7*	11.0*
Can earn higher income compared to wage workers	7.3	7.8*	6.8*
Family decision	13.4	13.9	13.1
Other	5.5	2.7	7.9
	100	100	100
Reason (contributing family workers)			
Inability to find wage employment	14.5	13.9	14.9
Required by the family	51.3	51.5	51.1
Learning the family business	27.0	25.8	27.9
Other	7.3	8.9	6.0
	100	100	100
Funding source (own-account workers and employers)			
Money not needed	34.4	40.8	28.5
Savings (susu)	27.2	34.6	20.5
Money from friends & family	24.9	14.7	34.1
Loans & remittances	4.5	4.7	4.2
Other	8.2	4.1	11.8
	100	100	100

*Unreliable due to low response rates.

Source: SWTS, Liberia 2012

A strong positive relationship was observed in the income earned by the self-employed and the level of education. Comparatively, the average youth with the highest level of education (university) was able to make more than three times the monthly income

from their businesses compared to those with a primary-level education. Interestingly, the self-employed youth with a secondary or tertiary degree is shown to have a higher earning potential than the wage and salaried youth with the same level of education, although it is important to note the very large standard deviation shown among the self-employed youth.

3.5.3 Sector and occupation of working youth

A large share of youth is involved agriculture, forestry and fishery activities (32.5 per cent), followed by wholesale and retail activities (27.1 per cent) and activities of households as employers (10.8 per cent) (figure 7). The latter is a category that includes workers engaged in domestic services for private households (for example, as cleaners, child-minders, chefs or chauffeurs). A larger share of young female workers is engaged as household employees (13.1 per cent) and in the wholesale and retail sector (37.7 per cent) compared to young men. The share of young men, in contrast, is greater than that of young women in the agricultural sector (34.9 per cent) and in mining and quarrying (2.8 per cent).

Local and foreign investments should be encouraged in such economic sectors as manufacturing, electricity-gas-water, transport, education and accommodations towards the goal of economic diversification.

Figure 7. Employed youth by main branch of economic activity and sex (%)

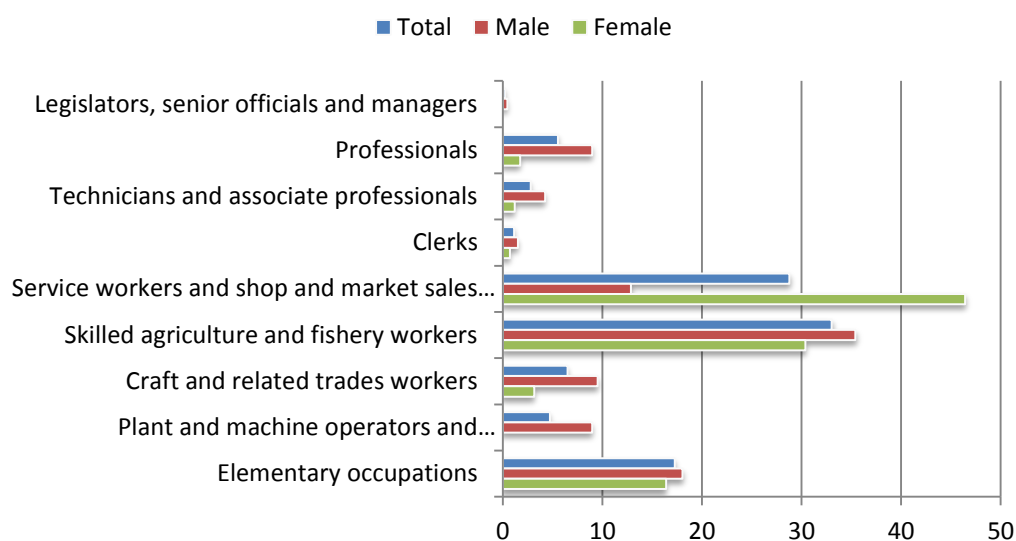


Note: The Others category includes sectors that accounted for less than 5 per cent of the total: electricity-gas-water, construction, transport & storage, accommodation & food services, information & communication, financial and insurance activities, professional & scientific activities, administrative & support services, education, human health & social work activities, arts and entertainment and other services.

Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

Occupations are closely linked to sectors of employment. The dominance of the agricultural sector is also evident in the distribution of young workers by occupation, with one-third (33.0 per cent) of young people working as skilled agricultural or fishery workers (figure 8). Service workers and shop and market sales workers account for 28.8 per cent of total employment and 18.1 per cent of young workers are engaged in elementary occupations. Young women are largely in sales (46.4 per cent), agricultural work (30.4 per cent) and elementary occupations (16.4 per cent), while males are found mainly in agricultural employment (35.4 per cent), elementary occupations (18.1 per cent) and sales occupations (12.9 per cent). *Young men are much more likely to work at the higher-skilled occupations as professionals (9.4 per cent) and as technicians and associate professionals (4.2 per cent) than young women.*

Figure 8. Employed youth by occupation (ISCO-88) and sex (%)

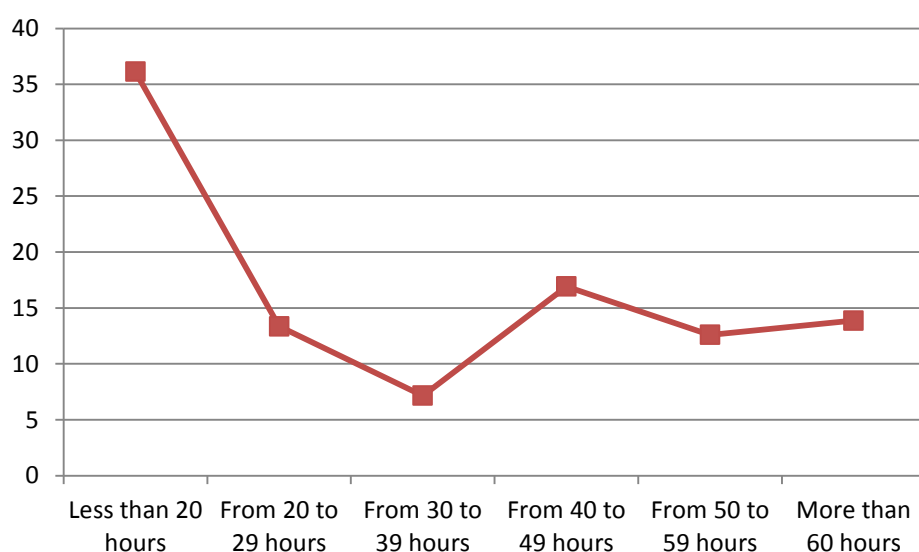


Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

3.5.4 Hours of work

Figure 9 shows the distribution of youth employment by actual hours worked per week. Short working time among Liberian youth is a concern. The incidence of part-time employment is 56.6 per cent compared to 43.4 per cent in full-time employment. Part-time employment is dominated by persons working less than 20 hours per week (36.1 per cent of all working youth). Short working hours can be positive when voluntary, offering young students the opportunity to earn while learning or young parents to combine work with household care. *One-quarter (24.9 per cent) of part-time employed young people state they would like to work more hours and 13.8 per cent of all workers indicate they would like to work a greater number of hours.*

Figure 9. Distribution of youth employment by actual hours worked per week (%)



Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

3.5.5 Other job quality indicators

Figure 10 characterizes the youth labour market in Liberia along a job quality continuum.¹⁶ Within the realm of low-quality employment are the following five indicators:

- the share of own-account workers and paid employees with below-average weekly wages or income¹⁷ (poorly paid);
- the share of overeducated or undereducated workers¹⁸ (qualifications mismatch);
- the share of workers with contract duration of less than 12 months, own-account workers and contributing family workers¹⁹ (irregular employment);
- the share of workers in informal employment²⁰ (informal employment); and
- the share of workers that claim dissatisfaction with their current job (non-satisfactory employment).

The right-hand side of the figure represents the indicators of better quality employment based on above-average wages, qualifications, stability, formality (security), and satisfaction. Unfortunately, *there is more “low-quality” than “quality” employment for youth in Liberia*. Low pay is a significant issue facing youth in the country. As many as 77.3 per cent of employees and own-account workers are taking home less than the average weekly wage. At the same time, nearly nine out of ten young workers (85.8 per cent) are in work classified as irregular. The temporary nature of many contracts and sporadic nature of self-employment are likely to impact on the sense of security and well-being of the youth.

¹⁶ The methodology follows that of ILO, 2013a, figure 16.

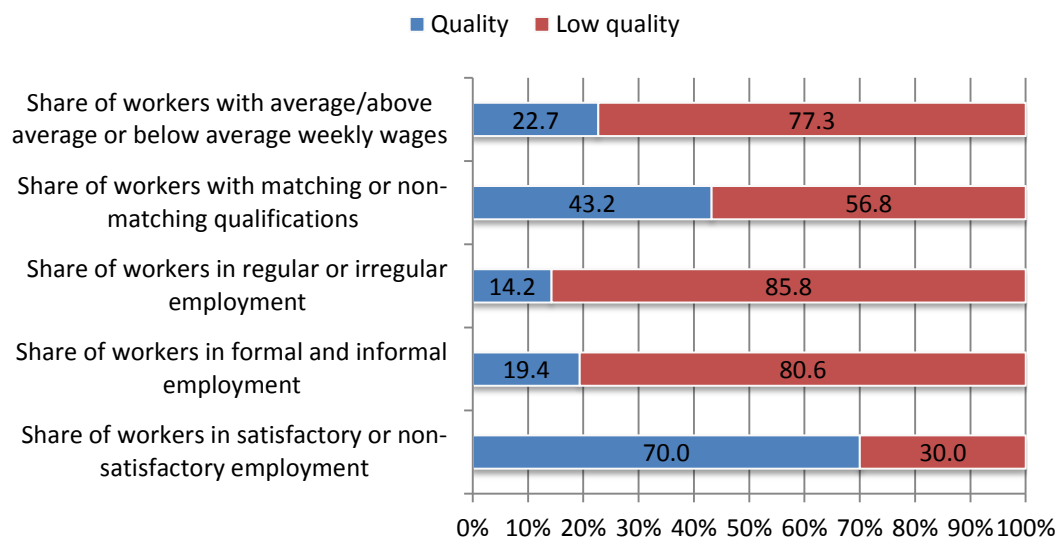
¹⁷ Monthly wages of employees and daily, monthly or other time-specific earnings of own-account workers were converted into weekly rates for comparability. Contributing (unpaid) family workers are excluded from the calculation.

¹⁸ The methodology applied is that of the normative ISCO-based approach described later in this section. Table 17 provides the norms across ISCO and ISCED educational codes.

¹⁹ Persons not classifiable by status in employment are also included in the category of irregular employment.

²⁰ Informal employment is measured according to the guidelines recommended by the 17th International Conference of Labour Statisticians. It includes the following sub-categories of workers: (a) paid employees in “informal jobs”, i.e. jobs without either a social security entitlement, paid annual leave or paid sick leave; (b) paid employees in an unregistered enterprise with size class below five employees; (c) own-account workers in an unregistered enterprise with size class below five employees; (d) employers in an unregistered enterprise with size class below five employees; and (e) contributing family workers.

Figure 10. Indicators measuring quality of youth employment (%)



Note: The indicators are shares in total youth employment (aged 15–29), except for (a) the shares of workers earning below-average, average and above-average wages, which are percentages of employees and own-account workers only, and (b) overeducated and undereducated workers, which are percentages of employed youth with completed education (i.e. excluding currently working students).

Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

Informal employment is also a significant concern. *More than three in four young workers in Liberia are engaged in informal employment (80.6 per cent)*. Informal employment is made up of two sub-categories: workers in the informal (unregistered) sector and paid employees holding informal jobs in the formal sector. The latter category do earn a salary but do not receive the other benefits, such as social security contributions or paid annual or sick leave, that would normally be associated with a formal job. Among Liberian youth in informal employment, many more fall within the category of informal sector employment (77.0 per cent) than in the category of informal job in the formal sector (33.0 per cent). Young women in Liberia have a slightly higher chance of working informally than young men (84.0 and 77.0 per cent, respectively).

Qualifications mismatch

One means of measuring the mismatch between the job that a person does and their level of educational qualification is to apply the normative measure of occupational skills categories from the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO). ISCO-88 includes the following categorization of major occupational groups (first-digit ISCO levels) by level of education in accordance with the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED).²¹ Table 17 reproduces the norms of the ISCO-based educational classification.

Workers in a particular group who have the assigned level of education are considered well-matched. Those who have a higher (lower) level of education are considered over- (under-) educated. For instance, a university graduate working as a clerk (a low-skilled non-manual occupation) is overeducated, while a secondary school graduate working as an engineer (a high-skilled non-manual occupation) is undereducated.

²¹ For more information on this ISCO-based classification and other methods of measuring skills mismatches, see Quintini (2011).

Table 17. ISCO major groups and education levels

ISCO major group	Broad occupation group	Skill level
1: Legislators, senior officials, managers	High-skilled non-manual	Tertiary (ISCED 5-6)
2: Professionals		
3: Technicians & associate professionals		
4: Clerks	Low-skilled non-manual	Secondary (ISCED 3-4)
5: Service workers, shop, market sales workers		
6: Skilled agricultural & fishery workers	Skilled manual	
7: Craft & related trades workers		
8: Plant & machine operators & assemblers		
9: Elementary occupations	Unskilled	Primary (ISCED 1-2)

Source: ILO, 2013a, table 3.

The result for Liberian youth is that a slight majority of young workers are in occupations that they are overeducated or undereducated for (58.3 per cent) compared to workers whose occupations match their level of education (41.7 per cent) (figure 10). Table 18 provides the breakdown: 9.0 per cent of young working Liberians are overeducated and 47.8 per cent are undereducated. The results are, in part, a reflection of the levels of educational attained by youth in the country. With a substantial share of employed youth completing education below the secondary level, it is not overly surprising to find more youth classified as undereducated than as overeducated.

The phenomenon of overeducation tends to take place when an insufficient number of jobs match a certain level of education. The mismatch in supply and demand forces some of the degree holders to take up available work that they are subsequently overqualified for. The consequences are that overeducated youth are likely to earn less than they otherwise could have and are not making the most of their productive potential. Another consequence is the crowding out of youth at the bottom of the educational pyramid. The less-educated youth find themselves at the back of the queue even for those jobs for which they are best qualified.

Table 18. Youth employment by characteristics of education (%)

Overeducated (ISCO-based)	Undereducated (ISCO-based)	Self-perceived overqualified	Self-perceived underqualified	Completed primary or less education	Completed secondary education	Completed tertiary education
9.0	47.8	10.6	42.5	44.4	51.0	4.7

Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

The self-perception of youth regarding the relevance of their education/training qualifications to the current job seems realistic compared to the ISCO-based measures of overeducation and undereducation. A large share of youth (42.5 per cent) claimed “to experience gaps in my knowledge and skills/need additional training” (compared to 45.7 per cent of working youth found to be undereducated for the job that they do based on the objective ISCO measure) while 10.6 per cent of working youth feel overqualified for the job (compared to 9.0 per cent measured as overeducated).

Table 19 looks at the issue of education mismatch by specific occupation. The data support the premise that some highly educated young people in Liberia must “settle” for jobs that they are overeducated for – for example, as clerks or in elementary occupations.

But *by far the bigger challenge is the undereducation of young workers in the country.* Many young people hold positions that do not match their level of education. Professionals (major group 2) have the highest chance of being undereducated (89.7 per cent), but also 80.1 per cent of young technicians and associate professionals (major group 3) are undereducated as are 64.1 per cent of youth in skilled agricultural and fishery work and 50.4 per cent of young service and shop workers. The undereducation of workers can have a negative impact on the productivity of the worker and thus on the output of the enterprise but also, more personally, on the sense of security of the young worker.

Investing in the training of young workers could help them to raise their skills level and thus be more productive at the work they do. This, in turn, brings potential gains to both individual workers in terms of monetary rewards and to the profit line of the companies.

Table 19. Shares of overeducated and undereducated young workers by major occupational category (ISCO-88, %)

Major occupational categories (ISCO-88)	Overeducated	Undereducated
1: Legislators, senior officials, managers	-	-
2: Professionals	0.0	89.7
3: Technicians & associate professionals	0.0	80.1
4: Clerks	53.1	0.0
5: Service workers, shop, market sales workers	0.0	50.4
6: Skilled agricultural & fishery workers	0.0	64.1
7: Craft & related trades workers	0.3	26.5
8: Plant & machine operators & assemblers	0.0	14.4
9: Elementary occupations	64.5	12.7

- = Insignificant

Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

The job search

The largest share of currently employed youth took less than 3 months to acquire their current job (65.5 per cent) (table A9). Still, 25.2 per cent of employed youth had searched for a job for over 1 year. There is overlap in job search methods used by currently employed and unemployed youth. The largest shares of employed youth attained their job through joining an established family business (24.2 per cent) or asking family and friends (23.0 per cent), which also proves to be jobseekers' most common job search tool (table 22). The unemployed, on the other hand, are partly those who do not have the option of joining a family establishment, although they continue to rely heavily on their family and friends when looking for work.

Curiously, *the unemployed youth' more formal means of looking for work – registering at an employment centre (7.8 per cent), placing or answering a job advertisement (13.4 per cent) or participating in an interview (3.7 per cent) – were methods that proved to be almost completely unsuccessful for the currently employed (less than 1 per cent of employed youth obtained their current job through these methods).* Nearly one-third (29.3 per cent) of young workers identified a means of getting themselves set up for self-employment as their job search method (seeking financial assistance, looking for land or equipment, or applying for a permit or license). Adding those who joined the family establishment, it is clear that self-employment still offers the sole path to employment for most young people in Liberia. Responding directly to a job advertisement or inquiring directly at establishments proved successful as a means of finding work for

only 7.3 per cent of employed youth, whereas 21.9 per cent of unemployed youth continue to use these methods to look for work.

Less than 0.1 per cent of youth made use of a centre of employment services to get their current job. In fact, 88.0 per cent of young workers stated they had never made use of employment office services. Public employment services (PES) in Liberia are weak. Some research suggests the lack of use of employment centres by young people is their view that such centres are inefficient in matching workers to jobs. Another hypothesis is that young people think public employment services only arrange short-term placement on large public works programmes.

An assessment of public employment services was carried out in 2012 in Liberia.²² As in many African countries, the report found that PES offices were understaffed and underequipped to offer standard services, such as jobseeker registration, employer registration, counselling and career and educational guidance. Employment services are handled by both the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Youth and Sports, but the link between the two institutions is weak. The National Bureau of Employment is located in Monrovia and there are no current plans to extend to other areas of the country.

Strengthening the capacity of public and private employment services in Liberia might help to raise their attractiveness as a placement tool for jobseeking young men and women.

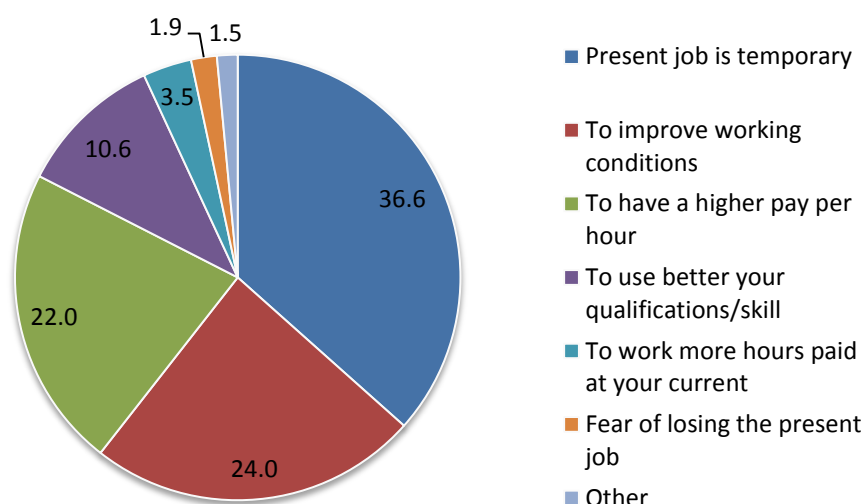
3.5.6 Security and satisfaction

An element that appeared during the examination of job quality indicators (figure 10) is that despite certain indications of poor-quality employment, a majority of the young people of Liberia have expressed satisfaction with their work (including paid and self-employment) (70.1 per cent). There was no obvious difference in job satisfaction based on employment status: 72.8 per cent of self-employed youth claim a level of job satisfaction compared to 63.1 per cent of wage and salaried young workers. The seeming contradiction of young persons working in jobs that bring little in terms of monetary reward and stability who nevertheless claim job satisfaction is a likely reflection of the ability of youth to adapt to realities where few “good” jobs exist and where expectations come with the collective memory of Liberians who know what the realities are on the ground. In the context of a largely informal labour market with sizable unemployment rates, simply having a job can easily outweigh issues of poor job quality.

Issues of job satisfaction can also be indicated by whether or not working youth would like to change jobs. *In Liberia, 64.6 per cent of working youth said they would like to change their job.* The most common reasons for wanting to change work (figure 11) are the temporary nature of the work (36.6 per cent), poor working conditions (24.0 per cent), unsatisfactory pay (22.0 per cent) and qualifications mismatch (10.6 per cent). Of the working youth who stated a desire to change jobs, slightly more than half (52.2 per cent) took action to do so, either by looking for another job or for work in addition to the current job.

²² For more information on public employment services in Africa, see Schulz and Klemmer (1998).

Figure 11. Employed youth who would like to change their job by reason (%)



Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

A slight majority of working youth in Liberia stated they would be able to keep their main job within a period of 12 months from the reference period (55.7 per cent). Another 15.3 per cent indicated they are likely to remain in the current job but were not certain. *The remaining 29.0 per cent of working youth thought they would not be able to keep the same job within 12 months or did not know. Among the youth with uncertainty about their job situation in the following year, 60.3 per cent felt stressed by the uncertainty.*

In the ILO *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2013* an attempt was made to further understand what makes a young person satisfied with employment, even when job quality is low. The report indicates job satisfaction rates calculated according to personal, household and job characteristics, to determine which variables show the strongest correlation to job satisfaction. The information for Liberians between the ages of 15 and 29 is reproduced in table 20. *It reveals that working youth have a higher likelihood of being satisfied with their employment if they live and work in an urban setting rather than a rural setting. An association can also be seen with household wealth, with young persons living in a wealthier household showing a strong correlation with job satisfaction.* Finally, youth who feel underqualified in their work show a greater tendency to be less satisfied with their job than youth who feel overqualified.²³ In contrast, the regularity of the work in terms of contract yields ambiguous results with regard to its impact on job satisfaction, as does the level of completed education.

²³ This is based on a perception question within the SWTS questionnaire rather than on the application of overeducated and undereducated calculations discussed in section 3.5.5. Young respondents were asked if they feel their education/training qualifications are relevant in performing their current job.

Table 20. Job satisfaction rates of youth aged 15–29 by level of educational attainment, urban/rural residence, household wealth, regular/irregular/informal employment and overqualification/underqualification (%)

	Liberia
Completed education at primary level or lower	68.8
Completed education at secondary level or higher	64.6
Urban residence	70.3
Rural residence	66.0
Above-average household wealth	78.2
Below-average household wealth	60.3
In regular employment	69.4
In irregular employment	68.1
In informal employment	68.2
Feel overqualified	49.4
Feel underqualified	63.1

Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

Freedom of association

Employed youth were asked if they are members of a trade union or workers' association. Only 29 per cent of young workers belong to a union or workers' association. Reasons for not belonging to a trade union are mainly a lack of awareness of their existence (35.7 per cent), lack of interest (19.1 per cent) and a negative view towards unions (15.5 per cent). Another 18.4 per cent of working youth stated they were not union members because they had never been asked to join one.

There are clear opportunities for workers' associations to reach out to young people in Liberia, offering them a forum to voice their concerns while strengthening the labour union's numbers in bipartite and tripartite discussion on the quality of jobs in the country.

3.6 Characteristics of unemployed youth

Within the analytical framework of the SWTS, the "relaxed" definition of unemployment is preferred. Unemployment as defined according to international standards requires a person to meet three criteria for inclusion: they (a) did not work in the reference period, (b) were available to take up a job had one been offered in the week prior to the reference period, and (c) actively sought work within the past 30 days (for example, by registering at an employment centre or answering a job advertisement). The difference in the "relaxed" definition of unemployment (also known as "broad unemployment") and the "strict" definition is in the relaxation of the "seeking work" criterion. According to international standards, the seeking work criterion may be relaxed "in situations where the conventional means of seeking work are of limited relevance, where the labour market is largely unorganized or of limited scope, where labour absorption is, at the time, inadequate or where the labour force is largely self-employed".

In most developed economies, a young person must prove that they have actively sought work – by registering at an employment centre or applying for job vacancies, for example – to qualify for unemployment benefits. Very few developing economies offer unemployment benefits to their populations. Young people, therefore, have little motivation to actively seek work when they feel there is none readily available and where

labour markets are highly informal. A person without work is more likely to wait for word-of-mouth informal connections that lead to occasional work than to engage in an active job search. Relaxing the active job search criterion from the unemployment definition can have a significant impact on results in low-income economies that lack social protection, and that is the case in Liberia. The relaxed unemployment rate for youth is double the rate derived from the strict definition (35.0 per cent compared to 19.3 per cent). All subsequent figures in this section refer to relaxed unemployment.

Young women have a harder time finding employment in Liberia than young men and youth with higher levels of education are more likely to be unemployed than those with lower levels. A gap of 13 percentage points (table 21) exists between the unemployment rates of young women (41.3 per cent) compared to young men (28.3 per cent).

Table 21. Youth unemployment rate and unemployed youth by duration of unemployment and sex (%)

	Total	Male	Female
Youth unemployment rate (relaxed definition)	35.0	28.3	41.3
Youth unemployment rate (strict definition)	19.3	15.1	23.5
Share of total unemployed (relaxed) by duration			
Less than 1 year	38.7	36.6	40.0
1 year to less than 2 years	22.8	20.7	24.1
2 years or more	38.5	42.7	35.9

Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

A young person in Liberia may be unemployed for a very long time. The share of unemployed with duration of unemployment greater than 1 year is 61.3 per cent (63.4 per cent for young men and 60.0 per cent for young women). Persistent and high youth unemployment could have adverse longer-term consequences, such as a higher risk of future unemployment, a prolonged period of unstable jobs and potentially depressed income growth (ILO, 2010). At the same time, the longer the unemployment spell, the more likely prospective employers are to carry negative perceptions of the concerned young jobseeker whom they start to see as unemployable.

Of the unemployed youth who did engage in an active job search (remembering that the relaxed definition of unemployed also includes youth who did not engage in job search activity), the most common means of seeking work was to ask family and friends (45.2 per cent) (table 22). Some were taking action to become self-employed: 6.9 per cent seeking financial assistance to start a business, 6.6 per cent looking for materials to set up a business and 0.1 per cent applying for a business license. One-third of the unemployed youth used more formal methods to find work, including those who registered at employment centres (7.8 per cent), who answered advertisements (13.4 per cent), took a test (3.7 per cent) or made direct inquiries at places of business (8.5 per cent).

Formally applying for jobs does not appear to be a common practice in Liberia. Only 21.8 per cent of unemployed youth said that they applied for one to five job vacancies in the previous 12 months, while 2.4 per cent said they applied for more than five vacancies (table A5). The low figures on interviewing and applying to vacancies supports the informality of job search methods in the country. Few jobs are formally advertised; many are filled through word of mouth. At the same time, few unemployed youth bother to actively look for work because they view doing so as a futile exercise.

Table 22. Employed and unemployed youth by job search method used to attain current job (%)

Job search activity	Employed	Unemployed
Registered at an employment centre	0.0	7.8
Placed/answered job advertisement(s)	0.7	13.4
Inquired directly at factories, farms, markets, shops or other workplaces	6.6	8.5
Took a test or interview	0.8	3.7
Asked friends, relatives, acquaintances	23.0	45.2
Waited on the street to be recruited for casual work	0.0	3.1
Sought financial assistance to look for work or start a business	7.4	6.9
Looked for land, building, equipment, machinery to start own business or farm	21.6	6.6
Applied for permit or license to start a business	0.3	0.1
Joined the family establishment	24.2	0.2
Other	15.3	4.6
Total	100	100

Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

Discouraged workers are defined as those who are not working and who have expressed a desire to work but do not seek work for reasons implying that they felt that undertaking a job search would be a futile effort. Slightly over half of the difference between the broadly-defined unemployed and the strictly defined is made up of discouraged youth.²⁴ *In total, discouraged youth made up 8.6 per cent of the youth population in Liberia.* Thirty-seven per cent of discouraged youth did not seek work as they did not know how and where to seek work, 26.4 per cent said they thought no jobs were available in the area of their residence and another 25.7 per cent felt they were too young.

Because the concern is around discouraged youth who are also not studying – this sub-group of the population is considered to be at risk of social exclusion – the non-student segment of the discouraged are analysed further (3.0 per cent of the youth population is discouraged and not in school). The longer a young person remains out of touch with the labour market, the more difficult – and costly – it is to encourage a return to productive employment. There are also a number of important social implications related to exclusion, including susceptibility to anti-social behaviour and juvenile delinquency (Ha, B. et al., 2010).

The SWTS attempts to gauge the relative urgency of job searching among the unemployed jobseekers by determining if jobseekers have a tendency to reject job offers. Most unemployed youth (97.7 per cent) surveyed had never refused a job offer, which is a

²⁴ When applying the standard (strict) framework of labour statistics, the discouraged worker is classified among the inactive. When the active search criterion is relaxed, as with the broad definition, the discouraged are classified among the unemployed. Other persons who are not working, available to work but not actively seeking work (beyond the discouraged) include individuals not seeking work because of illness, disability, pregnancy, education or training leave, personal family responsibilities or because they are waiting for seasonal work.

reflection of the tightness of the job market. The unemployed youth are also asked to indicate the minimum wage below which they would not accept a job. Here the aim is to find out if income expectations are too high and therefore keeping them away from available jobs. It certainly does not seem so. *The minimum income expectations of the unemployed were much lower than the actual incomes of the youth currently working* (table 23). This could mean that the unemployed youth in Liberia has a good understanding of available wages and that unrealistic expectations are not a reason for their unemployed status.

Table 23. Minimum monthly wage expectations of unemployed youth by sex (Liberian dollars)

	Mean	Standard deviation
Female	3 095	3 293
Male	4 626	6 592
Total	3 680	4 871

Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

Figure 12 shows that *the largest share of unemployed would like to work in an elementary occupation²⁵ (33.0 per cent), which matches well with where employers stated their future demand would be (35.1 per cent of employers in the LDES expected future vacancies in area of elementary occupations over the subsequent 12 months*; see section 5). The second most sought after occupational areas – service workers and shop and market sales workers (26.1 per cent) – will have to compete for the few vacancies expected by employers in this area. The same can be said for the young jobseekers looking for work in industry as plant and machine operators (sought after mainly by young males). Employers are showing very weak labour demand in these areas.

At the opposite extreme, *there is a clear shortage of young people seeking work as professionals (9.7 per cent of the unemployed), an area that shows a huge growth potential among employers*. It becomes clear that in the higher skills occupations, the supply of available labour is not meeting the demand. Similarly, it looks like there will be a shortage of available jobseekers in areas of skilled agricultural work, clerks and as legislators, senior officials and managers.

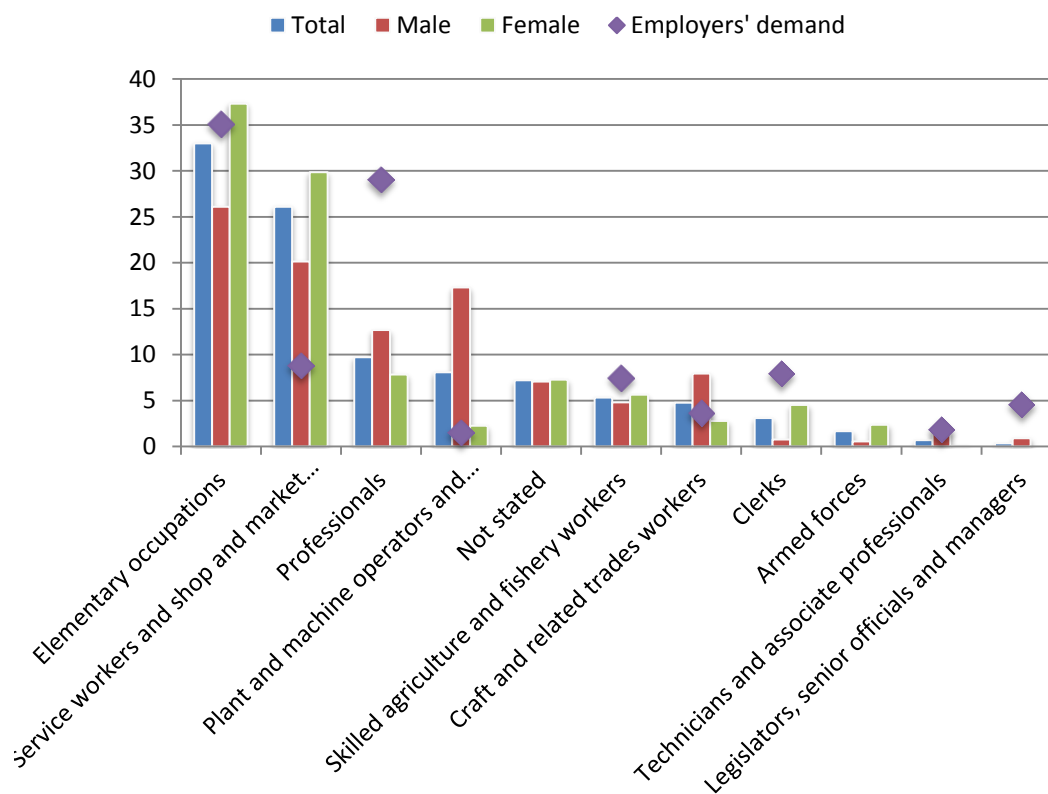
Regarding the type of establishment that the young unemployed would prefer to work in, *there is a large and unrealistic preference for employment in the public sector (41.5 per cent)*.²⁶ The public sector is unlikely to see any significant expansion of employment in coming years. However, the security and benefits of the public sector still make it a preferred employer for the current generation of youth. Only 17.6 per cent of young

²⁵ The International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) describes elementary occupations as those that “require the knowledge and experience necessary to perform mostly simple and routine tasks, involving the use of hand-held tools and in some cases considerable physical effort, and, with few exceptions, only limited personal initiative or judgement. The main tasks consist of selling goods in streets, door-keeping and property watching, as well as cleaning, washing, pressing, and working as labourers in the fields of mining, agriculture and fishing, construction and manufacturing.”

²⁶ Likewise, as much as 63.4 per cent of young students in Liberia professed a hope for attaining work in the government sector, which presumably would provide them with an element of job security (table A6). The high expectation for public sector work is understandable given the desire for stable employment especially among those who have invested longer term in their education, but it is not realistic given the absorption capacity of the government.

Liberians were interested in getting a job with the private sector despite the potential for higher earnings there. Another 24.3 per cent of the unemployed youth preferred to start their own business and 10.7 per cent wanted to work for the non-governmental sector.

Figure 12. Unemployed youth by occupation sought and by sex, and employers' vacancies by occupation (%)



Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

Both young workers and unemployed were asked to identify what they saw as the main obstacle to finding work in Liberia. Table 24 presents the results. The lack of available jobs in the economy is seen as a main obstacle by youth in both categories but more so for the unemployed than employed youth (32.9 and 15.1 per cent, respectively). Another obstacle relates to not knowing how or where to look for work (cited by 19.7 per cent of the employed and 21.1 per cent of the unemployed).

Career guidance within education and training institutions could help to guide young people towards occupations that are in demand, and improving the labour market information services of employment service agencies could help to overcome information gaps.

Supply-side issues were also cited, with both groups pointing to an insufficiency of their education or training or to their lack of work experience (32.8 and 28.1 per cent in total for the employed and unemployed youth, respectively). The results of the LDES validate the supply-side constraints, where employers were asked to identify the characteristics that they favour when making hiring decisions. On their preferences for the educational level of the applicant, a majority of employers did expect the applicant to have a secondary or tertiary degree (33.8 per cent expect tertiary degree for professional posts and 23.9 per cent for elementary posts; 46.7 per cent of employers expect a secondary degree or vocational training for professional posts and 37.0 per cent for elementary posts). The outcomes confirm that youth with little education will face constraints in finding work at an enterprise.

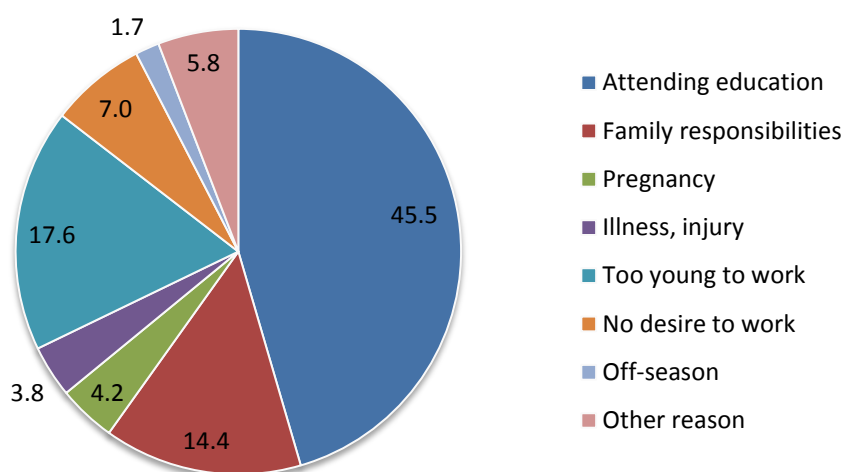
Table 24. Employed and unemployed youth by opinion of main obstacle to finding work (%)

	Employed	Unemployed
Saw no obstacle	16.1	n.a.
Requirements for job were higher than education/training received	15.6	13.0
Not enough work experience	17.2	15.1
Not enough jobs available	15.1	32.9
Considered too young	6.7	7.2
Being male/female	0.3	0.5
Discriminatory prejudices	0.8	2.2
Low wages in available jobs	1.4	1.0
Poor working conditions in available jobs	0.9	1.3
Did not know how or where to seek work	19.7	21.1
Other	6.3	5.7

n.a. = Not asked

Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

Figure 13. Reasons for inactivity (%)



Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

3.7 Characteristics of youth outside the labour market (inactive youth)

The total number of inactive youth is 116,220, of which 38.2 per cent are men and 61.8 per cent are women. The most common reason for inactivity – cited by 45.5 per cent – is attending education/training, followed by 17.6 per cent of inactive youth who feel they are too young to work and 14.4 per cent citing family responsibilities or housework (figure 13). Another 7.0 per cent of inactive youth had no desire to work and 1.7 per cent was waiting for seasonal work. Four (4.2) per cent were not economically active due to pregnancy and another 3.8 per cent due to illness or injury. More young men than women are inactive due to school attendance (52.9 and 39.6 per cent, respectively) while young

women are more likely to cite family responsibilities as a reason for economic inactivity (16.8 per cent for young women and 11.3 per cent for young men) and a lack of desire to work (8.5 per cent for young women and 5.1 per cent for young men). Of the inactive non-students, 81.3 per cent stated they will join the labour market in the future.

3.8 Current students

Slightly more than half of the Liberian youth population aged 15–35 is currently in school (52.6 per cent). Fifty-six (56.3) per cent of male youth are current students compared to 49.3 per cent of the female youth population. Nearly half (49.9 per cent) of young male students work while they study. The share of working female students is 37.1 per cent.

A majority of youth still in school expect to complete higher education (84.5 per cent). The importance Liberian youth in school place on higher education is a positive sign given the expectations of employers as indicated by the employers' survey (see section 5.3). For managerial and professional jobs, most employers prefer candidates with a higher degree (29.8 per cent).

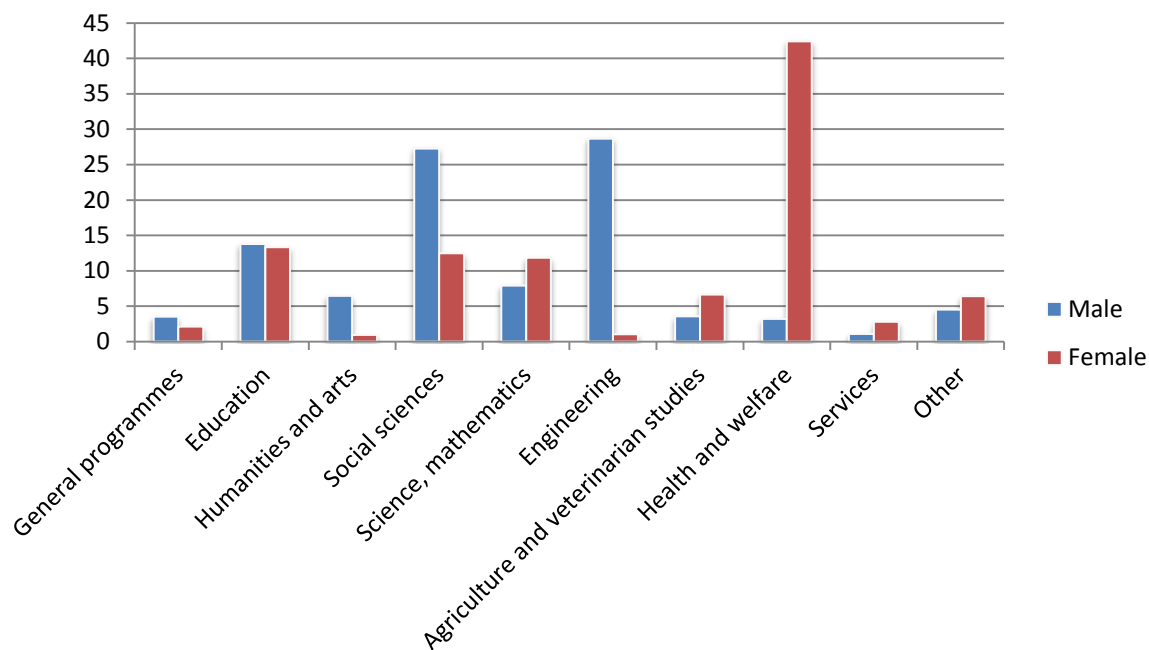
Most young females still in school plan to specialize in the field of health and welfare (42.4 per cent) followed by education (13.3 per cent), social sciences (12.5 per cent) and science or mathematics (11.8 per cent) (figure 14). Young male students show a preference for engineering (28.6 per cent), social sciences (27.3 per cent), education (13.8 per cent) and science and mathematics (7.9 per cent). Is there adequate demand in the labour market to absorb the supply of graduates according to their fields of study? The list of top ten growing occupations as captured in the LDES provides an assessment.²⁷ The growing occupations are listed in figure 15.

Results confirm that students in the fields of education, health and welfare, social sciences, engineering and manufacturing could have a good chance of finding work in the near future. However, the largest share of occupational demand reflected in figure 15 is for domestic cleaners and helpers (one-third of total demand). On the positive side, these are elementary occupations that do not require long investment in education and therefore offer opportunities to the many young men and women with low levels of education. On the negative side, however, these occupations bring little in terms of monetary returns and are known to potentially expose workers to violence and exploitation (ILO, 2013b).

Protecting the rights of domestic workers, promoting equality of opportunity and treatment, and improving working and living conditions are important ILO causes. Joining the ILO's global strategy could help to strengthen the capacities and institutions in Liberia towards policy and legislative reforms and work towards the eventual ratification and implementation of the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) and Recommendation (No. 201).

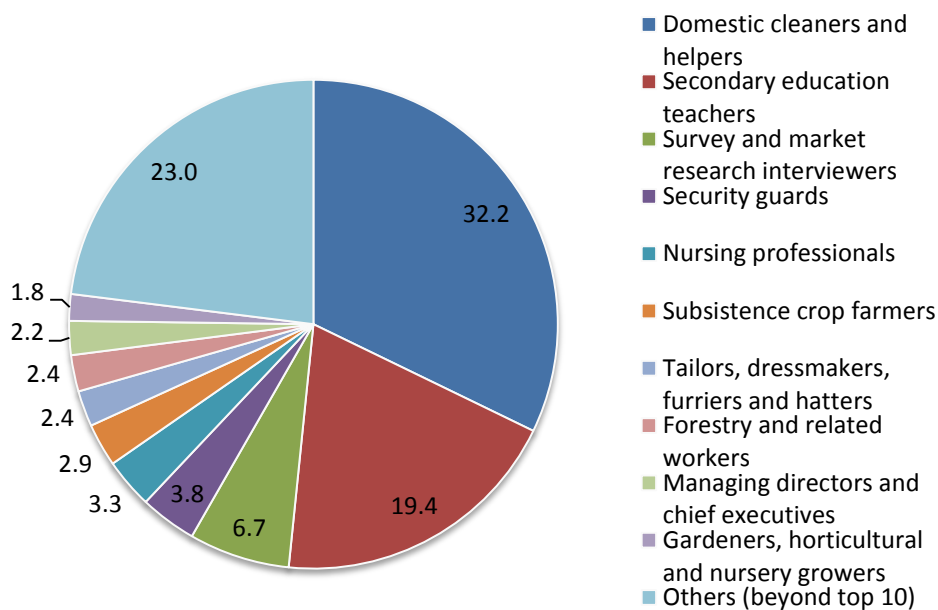
²⁷ Enterprises were asked to identify the occupations they are likely to recruit for over the next 2 to 3 years.

Figure 14. Preferred field of study of current young students by sex (%)



Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

Figure 15. Top ten growing occupations in Liberia (%)



Source: LDES-Liberia, 2012.

Numerous critiques of the quality of Liberia’s educational system call into question whether graduates from higher educational institutes will be ready to undertake the jobs available in the market. Some employers state their preference for hiring foreign workers for high-level jobs because they see a lack of skilled employees with job experience in the

local market (see section 5.6).²⁸ Still, the LDES also shows employers rating the competencies of young job applicants fairly high (for example, 90 per cent of employers were satisfied with the communications skills of young applicants). *It would seem, therefore, that it is less the skills mismatch that is the main problem in matching the supply and demand of labour in Liberia than it is the “experience gap”, whereby employers expect job applicants to have work experience which few young graduates are able to demonstrate. The employers are also not prepared to invest resources to train first-time jobseekers, which exacerbates the problem.*

Investment in internship and apprenticeship programmes (formal or informal) that provide some young people with an entry point into public or private enterprises could help to ease the transition from school to work of some young people. Likewise, raising the capacity of enterprises in the area of human resource management and offering subsidies for investments in basic on-the-job training programmes for new employees are other policy options to ease the experience mismatch.

4. Stages of transition

4.1 Concepts and definitions²⁹

In the preceding sections, the situation of youth with respect to their current activity status was analysed. Another means of classifying youth is to look at where they stand in their transition to the labour market. The labour market transition of young people concerns not only the length of time between their exit from education (either upon graduation or early exit without completion) to their first entry into any job, but also qualitative elements, such as whether the job is stable (measured by contract type).

The SWTS applies a stricter definition of “stable employment” than is typically used. By starting from the premise that a person has not “transited” until settled in a job that meets very basic criteria of stability, as defined by the duration of the employment contract, the SWTS analytical framework introduces a new quality element to the standard definition of labour market transitions. However, as seen in previous sections, only a very small share of youth in Liberia attains stable employment; if the “end goal” does not fit reality, then it is likely the statistics are not framed widely enough. For this reason, the ILO’s model looks also at job satisfaction and builds it into the concept of labour market transition.

More specifically, labour market transition is defined as the passage of a young person from the end of schooling (or entry to first economic activity) to the first stable or satisfactory job. Stable employment is defined in terms of the contract of employment (written or oral) and the duration of the contract (greater than 12 months). Introducing the issue of a contract automatically excludes the employment status of self-employed, where the employment relationship is not defined by a contract. The opposite of stable

²⁸ Multinational enterprises (MNE) have expressed a particularly strong opinion in their critique of the skills base of young Liberians. An ILO report summarizing results of a survey of MNEs in the country found that those surveyed are concerned with technological skills (Arai, Cissé and Sock, 2010). An example is the young accountant with a university degree who is not familiar with accounting software. The young applicant would not be hired by an MNE that requires an IT-literate candidate.

²⁹ This section is adapted from ILO (2013a), chapter 5.

employment is temporary employment, or wage and salaried employment of limited duration. Satisfactory employment is a subjective concept, based on the self-assessment of the jobholder. It implies that the respondent considers the job to be a good “fit” with their desired employment path at that moment in time. The contrary is termed non-satisfactory employment, implying a sense of dissatisfaction with the job.

Based on the definition of labour market transition, the stages of transition are classified as follows:

Transited – A young person who has “transited” is one who is currently employed in:

- a stable job, whether satisfactory or non-satisfactory; or
- a satisfactory but temporary job; or
- satisfactory self-employment.

In transition – A young person still “in transition” is one who is currently:

- unemployed (relaxed definition); or
- employed in a temporary and non-satisfactory job; or
- in non-satisfactory self-employment; or
- inactive and not in school, with an aim to look for work later.

Transition not yet started – A young person whose “transition has not yet started” is one who is currently:

- still in school and inactive (inactive student); or
- inactive and not in school (inactive non-student), with no intention of looking for work.

Two elements of this classification are noteworthy. First, the stages of transition span across the boundaries of economic activity as defined in the standard labour force framework.³⁰ The “transited” category includes a sub-set of youth classified as employed; the remaining employed fall within the category of “in transition”, which includes also the strict definition of unemployed and portions of the inactive (namely, those without work, available for work but not actively seeking work³¹ and inactive non-students who have stated an intention to join the labour force at a later stage). The “transition-not-yet-started” category is the residual of the inactive population.

Second, the stages of transition are not intended to be a normative framework. Because of the inclusion of youth in satisfactory self-employment and satisfactory temporary employment, one cannot say that all young people in the transited category have transited to a “good” job. In fact, a majority of young people in self-employment – the own-account workers and unpaid family workers – are among the poorly paid workers in the informal economy and thus are included in the “low” work quality segment shown in figure 10. By definition, they make up the bulk of the country’s share of irregularly employed. Yet they have expressed a degree of satisfaction with their job, and they are likely to have finished their transition in the sense that they will remain in the self-employed classification for the remainder of their working lives.

³⁰ The international guidelines for measuring statistics on the economically active population, set out by the 13th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) in 1982, provide the framework for measuring who is counted as employed and as unemployed according to the economic production boundaries set out by the System of National Accounts.

³¹ This is the portion added to the “strictly” unemployed category to make up the unemployed (relaxed definition).

It is important to note that the stage of transition classification is intended to offer a flow concept. A person is “in transition” until they have reached a stable position in the labour market; they have a job they are likely to maintain, regardless of whether it is good or bad. For a normative framework, greater emphasis should be given to the quality of work indicators presented in section 3.5.5.

4.2 Stages of transition by sex, education level, age group and area of residence

Table 25 shows the breakdown of the young population by stages of transition according to sex, age-band, geography and level of completed education. *The largest share of sampled youth in Liberia were still in transition (46.8 per cent), followed by those who had transited (38.2 per cent) and those who had not yet started transition (14.9 per cent).* A large majority of youth had either transited or remain in transition. In most developed economies, a larger share of youth can be found among the transition-not-yet-started category as many are still in school. But in Liberia, low school attendance is reflected in the low share of youth who have not yet started the transition.

The young male’s better chances of completing the transition are evident. Forty-two (42.1) per cent of the young men surveyed had completed the transition compared to 34.7 per cent of young women. In fact, the share of young men is nearly perfectly split between those who had completed the transition and those still in transition (42.1 and 42.6 per cent, respectively), while for young women, a clear majority are still in transition compared to those who had completed the transition (50.6 and 34.7 per cent, respectively).

Table 25. Stage of transition by sex, age group, area of residence and level of completed education (%)

	Transited	In transition	Transition not yet started	Total
Total	38.2	46.8	14.9	100
Sex				
Female	34.7	50.6	14.6	100
Male	42.1	42.6	15.1	100
Age group				
15 – 19	24.0	51.9	24.2	100
20 – 24	29.9	57.9	12.2	100
25 – 29	31.9	42.0	7.8	100
30 – 35	51.9	46.0	2.2	100
Area of residence				
Urban	38.3	46.5	15.2	100
Rural	38.1	47.4	14.5	100
Education (only completed education)				
None	48.7	46.9	4.5	100
Primary	43.4	5.0	2.0	100
Secondary	46.5	53.5	0.0	100
Vocational	39.0	61.5	0.0	100
University & above	66.4	33.6	0.0	100

Note: The distribution of stage of transition by level of completed education excludes current students whose final education level is still unknown.

Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

As one might expect, the age of the young person influences their current stage in the labour market transition. The tendency for the young person to move into the transition increases as they age. The younger age cohorts make up a much larger share of the transition-not-yet-started category because there is an overlap with typical schooling ages (15–19 and 20–24). Still, the fact that so many of the 15–19 year-olds are firmly in the labour market, either with a completed transition or still in transition, is disturbing when they should ordinarily be in school.

The impact of geographic residence is small. The distribution of youth employment by stage of transition is almost identical for youth in urban and rural areas. In both cases, as in the total population, nearly half of youth remain in transition, one-third has completed the transition and about 15 per cent have not yet started the transition.

The level of educational attainment proves to be the strongest predictor of where a young person lies in the stages of transition. *The university graduate has a significantly higher likelihood to complete the transition (66.4 per cent) than the young person with a primary level education (of which 43.4 per cent have completed the transition).* Young people who have not yet started the transition are found exclusively among those with primary level or no education, but it is important to bear in mind that the calculations exclude current students since their completed education level is yet unknown. The low-educated youth in the transition-not-yet-started category, therefore, refers to inactive non-students only.

4.2.1 Youth who have not started transition

The results of the SWTS show that most of the youth population (93.3 per cent) who have not started their transition are in school and only 6.7 per cent are currently inactive and not in school with no intention of looking for work. Young men and women are almost equally represented among the inactive students (49.9 per cent are male and 50.1 per cent are female). *The gender balance breaks down completely, however, in the category of inactive non-students with no plans to join the labour market in the future. Young women constitute 80.6 per cent of this sub-category.* Of total male youth who have not yet started their transition, only 2.7 per cent are inactive and not in school, while 97.3 per cent are in education. On the other hand, 10.3 per cent of the young female population is inactive but not in school, whereas 89.7 per cent is in school.

4.2.2 Youth in transition

A young person is classified as in transition if they are either unemployed (relaxed definition), engaged in self-employment or in a paid temporary job that they have expressed dissatisfaction with, or are an inactive non-student with an attachment to the labour market, indicated by their desire to work in the future. *A majority of youth in the category are classified as in transition because they are unemployed (60.4 per cent).* Thirty (30.4) per cent of youth in the category are in non-satisfactory self-employment or temporary employment and many fewer (9.2 per cent) are inactive non-students with plans to work (table 26). Young women in the in-transition category are more likely than young men to be unemployed or an inactive non-student (figure 16). Unemployment is also more likely the domain of the urban than rural youth and youth coming from above-average or average income households. Youth from poorer households, on the other hand, are more strongly represented in the sub-category of non-satisfactory temporary employment or self-employment.

Young persons with no education and the highest level of education are those with the least likelihood to fall within the in-transition category (table 25). The lowest share is seen among youth with tertiary education (33.6 per cent), which suggests that having a higher

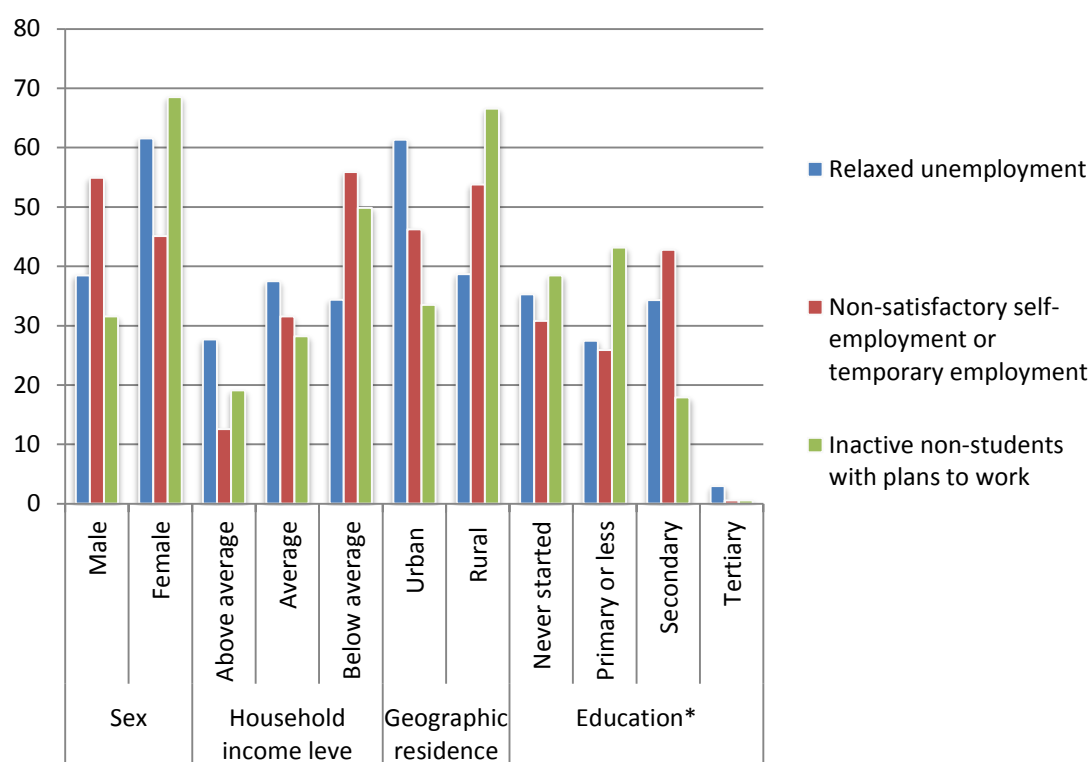
level degree does help to get youth out of the transition phase (confirmed in section 4.2.3). The youth with higher education among the category are much more likely to be unemployed than in non-satisfactory employment or inactivity.

Table 26. Sub-categories of youth in transition by sex (%)

	Total	Male	Female
Relaxed unemployed	60.4	54.2	65.0
In non-satisfactory self-employment or temporary employment	30.4	39.0	24.0
Inactive non-student with aim to work	9.2	6.8	11.0
Total youth in transition	100	100	100

Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

Figure 16. Youth in transition by sub-category and urban/rural geography, household income level and educational attainment level (%)



Note: The distribution of stage of transition by level of completed education excludes current students whose final education level is still unknown. The categorization of household income level is based on the perception of the young respondent.

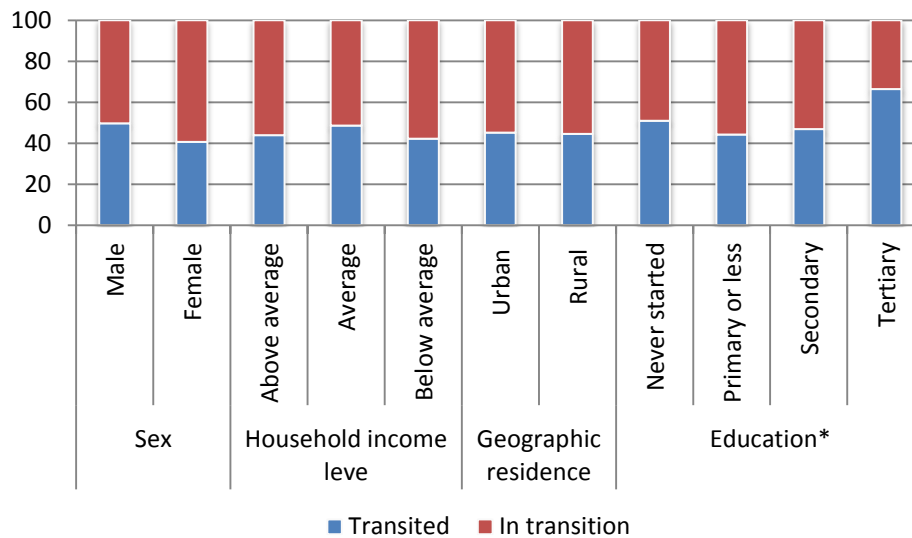
Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

4.2.3 Characteristics of a completed transition

Figure 17 compares the stages of completed transition and in-transition youth according to a breakdown by the variables of sex, geographic location, household income and educational attainment level to identify if there are any obvious advantages to the outcome of the transition. Focusing on only the youth either in transition or with completed transition, the following conclusions can be drawn: First, young men have a slight advantage in completing the transition than young women (49.7 per cent of young men (in the two groups) have completed the transition compared to 40.7 per cent of young women). Second, geography has little impact on the chance to complete the transition

(45.2 per cent of urban youth have completed the transition compared to 44.6 per cent of youth in rural areas). Household income level is also not a strong determinant of greater success in the transition. Forty-four (44.0) per cent of youth in above-average income household had completed the transition while 56.0 per cent remained in transition, compared to a distribution of 42.3 per cent transited and 57.7 per cent in transition among youth from below-average income households.

Figure 17. Distribution of transition groups (transited and in-transition youth) by sex, urban/rural geography, household income level and educational attainment level (%)



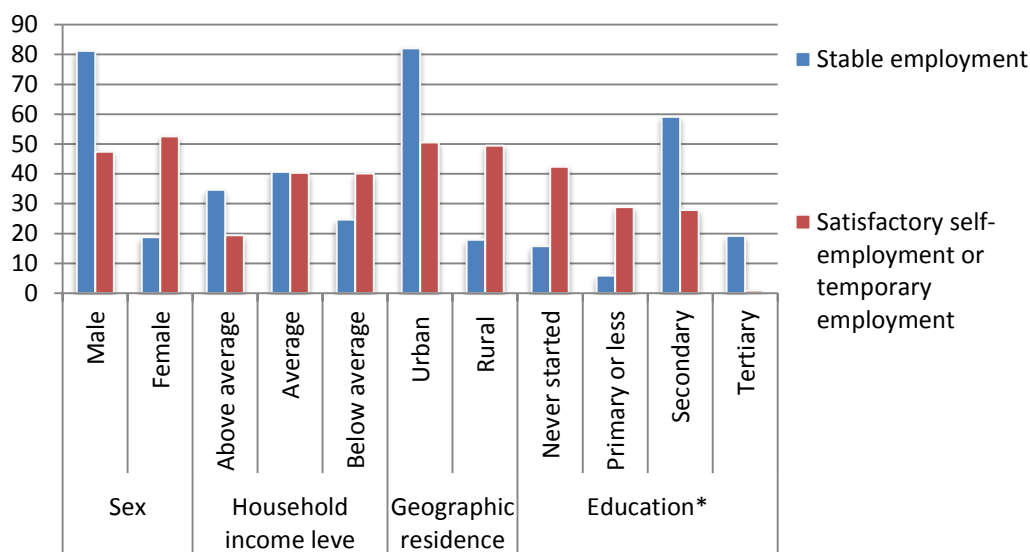
Note: The distribution of stage of transition by level of completed education excludes current students whose final education level is still unknown. The categorization of household income level is based on the perception of the young respondent.

Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

One of the strongest conclusions is that education matters to the transition: 66.4 per cent of youth with completed education at the tertiary level had completed the transition while the remaining 33.6 per cent were in transition. At the lower levels of education, in contrast, there is a greater tendency to remain in transition. Forty-four (44.3) per cent of youth with low levels of education (primary or less) had completed their transition compared to 55.7 per cent who were in transition.

Only a small portion of transited youth has attained stable employment (9.5 per cent in a stable and satisfactory job and 3.8 per cent in a stable and non-satisfactory job). By far the largest share within the transited category is young people who are in satisfactory self-employment (83.8 per cent). The residual 2.9 per cent are those who are in satisfactory temporary employment. Certainly there are job quality implications for the youth in the various sub-categories of completed transition. The young person may have stopped shifting between labour market categories but many of those in self-employment are unlikely to have attained quality employment. Figure 18 shows which characteristics are more likely to result in a transition to the most advantageous category of stable employment compared to the second-best category of satisfactory self-employment or temporary employment.

Figure 18. Transited youth by sub-category and sex, urban/rural geography, household income level and educational attainment level (%)



Note: The distribution of stage of transition by level of completed education excludes current students whose final education level is still unknown. The categorization of household income level is based on the perception of the young respondent.

Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

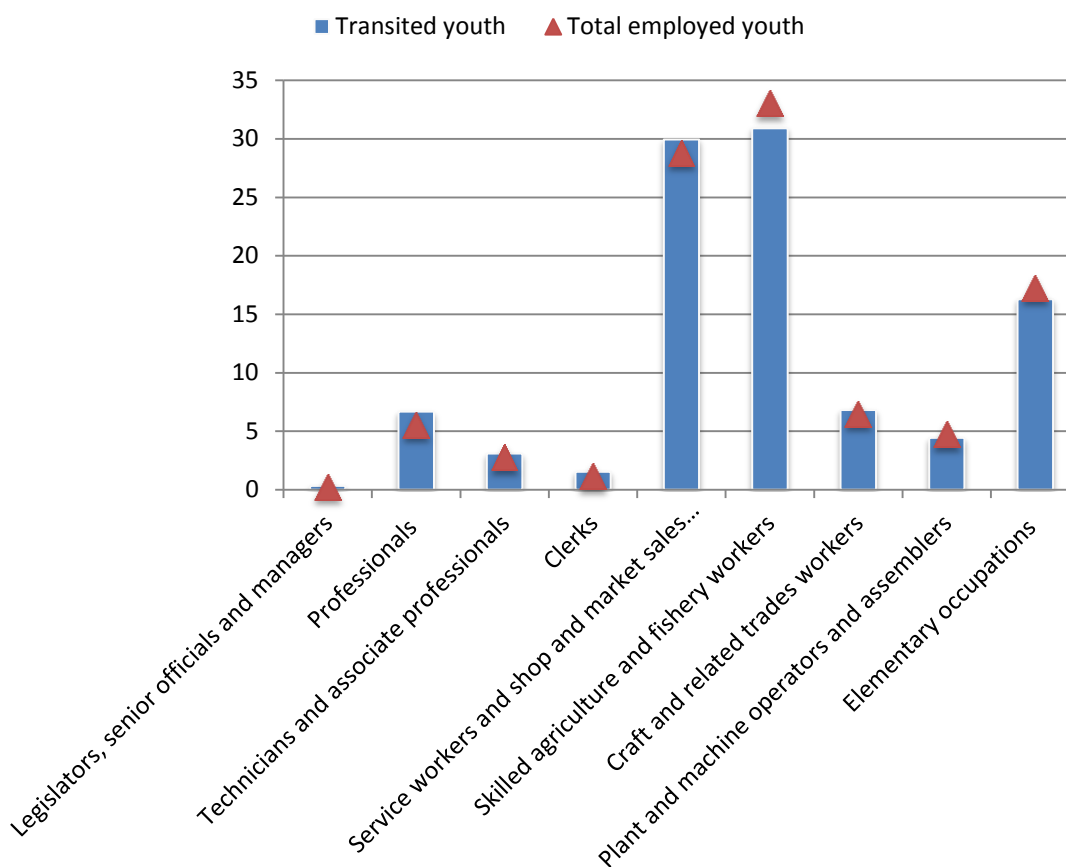
Young men who have completed their transition to the labour market have a much higher likelihood to attain stable employment than young women (81.2 and 18.8 per cent, respectively). The share of transited youth in stable employment is significantly higher than youth in satisfactory self- or temporary employment in urban areas and vice versa in rural areas. Transited youth have a greater tendency to reach stable employment at the higher end of household income distribution. The likelihood to attain satisfactory self- or temporary employment, in contrast, has an inverse relationship to the level of household wealth.

The more dramatic results come with educational level. *The higher the educational attainment of youth, the more likely they are to attain stable employment.* One-fifth (19.2 per cent) of transited youth in stable employment have a tertiary degree compared to 0.9 per cent of transited youth in satisfactory self- or temporary employment. At the secondary level, again there is a higher likelihood to attain stable employment. The transited youth with primary or lower education are three times more likely to have transited to satisfactory self-employment or temporary employment compared to stable employment.

Finally, occupations young Liberians have transited into are apparent. Comparing the occupations of transited youth to that of total employed youth can provide information on which occupations provide the more stable and satisfactory jobs. The distribution by occupation of transited youth follows closely that of the overall population of employed youth. Most transited youth are employed as skilled agricultural workers, followed by service workers, shop and market sales workers, and then by workers in elementary occupations (figure 19). The smallest shares of both groups are youth working as legislators, senior officials and managers and as clerks. There are only slight variations between the broader employment distribution by occupation and that of the youth settled in stable and/or satisfactory employment. The latter group (transited youth) are slightly less representation in elementary occupations (16.3 per cent compared to 17.3 per cent for all workers). This hints that some youth working in elementary occupations are dissatisfied with their work and are therefore classified as remaining in transition. Similarly, the share of total employed youth in skilled agricultural work exceeds the share of those in that

occupation among transited youth, which implies that the 2 percentage point gap is comprised of young people who are not satisfied with their work in the agricultural sector.

Figure 19. Transited youth by sub-category and total employed youth by major occupation group (ISCO-88, %)



Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

It is evident that most transited youth are absorbed by jobs requiring unskilled, manual and lower education levels. Jobs requiring educated and skilled workers, such as managers and professionals, technicians and associate professionals, are rarely filled by Liberian youth. These positions are mostly occupied by foreign expatriates. The LDES showed that a large number of vacancies designated as “hard-to-fill” by employers are in the higher-skilled professions (table 37). Examples are secondary school teachers, business and administration managers, managing directors and chief executive officers, systems analysts and engineers.

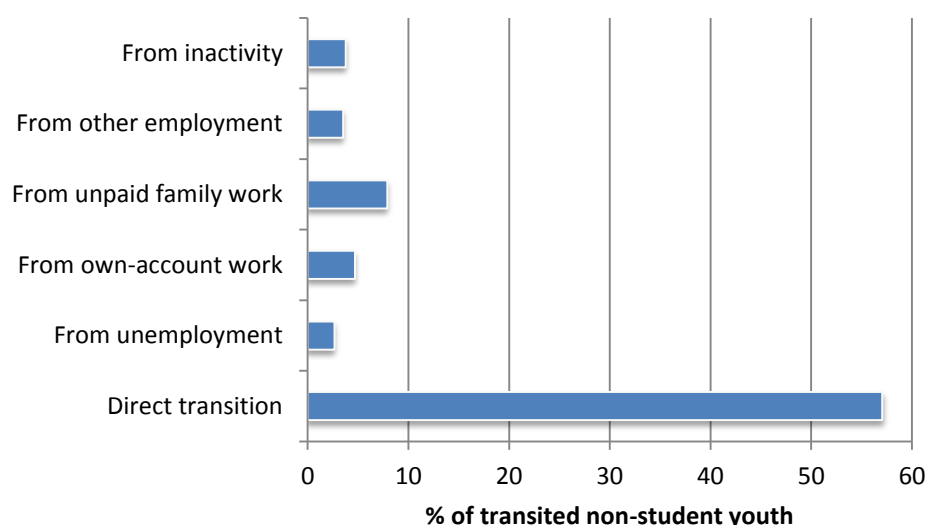
Enabling young people to stay in school longer and guiding them towards higher-skilled professions will both help young people attain jobs that are more likely to provide a level of stability and prevent enterprises from having to recruit from outside Liberia.

4.3 Transition paths and lengths of transition

Another means of looking at the transition is through flows, identifying the labour market category held by the young person prior to transiting to stable or satisfactory employment. In Liberia, a large share of transited youth transited directly to their current position (57.1 per cent) (figure 20). This means they had no intermediary spells before acquiring their current job, which is classified as stable in contract terms or satisfactory self-employment or temporary employment. Much smaller shares transited from an alternative status: 7.9 per cent from unpaid family work, 4.7 per cent from non-satisfactory

own-account work, 3.7 per cent from inactivity, 3.5 per cent from another category of employment and only 2.6 per cent moved to the current position after a period of unemployment.

Figure 20. Flows to stable and/or satisfactory employment (transited category)



Note: The chart excludes the category of young persons for whom it was not possible to calculate the path of transition due to an error in data entry. This share of “unknowns” is as high as 20 per cent. “Other employment” includes non-satisfactory temporary employment for those who transitioned to stable employment or satisfactory self- or temporary employment, and self-employment as employer or wage and salaried worker for those who transitioned to satisfactory self-employment or temporary employment.

Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

Figure 20’s results suggest that “shopping around” among labour market experiences is not the norm in Liberia. Table 27 presents additional transition path indicators to generate a more detailed picture of how youth arrived to the transited stage. Excluding the youth who transitioned directly to stable or satisfactory employment (the 57.1 per cent in figure 20), the path to transition involved, on average, 1.5 intermediary labour market activities – whether unemployment, employment or inactivity – prior to completing the labour market transition. But the time spent in intermediary activities was quite lengthy. *The Liberian youth who did not move directly to stable and/or satisfactory employment took, on average, 69.2 months in the labour market to attain transited status, or nearly 6 years.*

The typical Liberian youth experienced “only” one spell of unemployment in their transition path, but the spell was long, averaging 41.7 months or almost 3.5 years. The average young transited male spent longer in unemployment than the young female (49.1 months compared to 24.8 months). It is likely that the unemployment spell was combined with either temporary employment or self-employment. The average time spent in either temporary or self-employment prior to the transition was significantly longer for the young female than the young male. The young transited female spent on average nearly 2 years (21.0 months) in self-employment compared to the young male who spent less than 1 year (10.1 months) in the category.

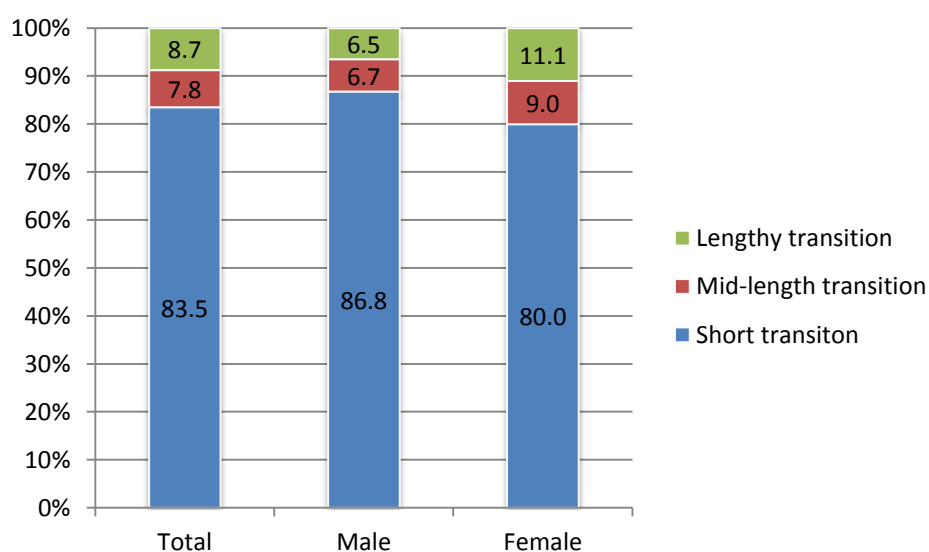
Table 27. Indicators on the path of transition for youth who completed their labour market transition

	Total	Male	Female
Average length of transition (months) - excluding direct transition	69.2 months	66.3 months	71.1 months
Average length of transition (months) - including direct transition	15.0 months	12.4 months	17.4 months
Average number of intermediary activities	1.5	1.6	1.5
Average number of unemployment spells	1.0	1.0	1.0
Average length of unemployment spells (months)	41.7 months	49.1 months	24.8 months
Average number of temporary employment spells	1.4	1.6	1.1
Average length of temporary employment spells (months)	13.8 months	6.2 months	32.6 months
Average number of spells of self-employment	1.2	1.2	1.2
Average length of spells of self-employment (months)	16.2 months	10.1 months	21.0 months

Note: The chart excludes the category of young persons for whom it was not possible to calculate the path of transition due to an error in data entry. This share of “unknowns” is as high as 20 per cent.

Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

Figure 21. Classification of length of transition of youth who have completed the transition, by sex

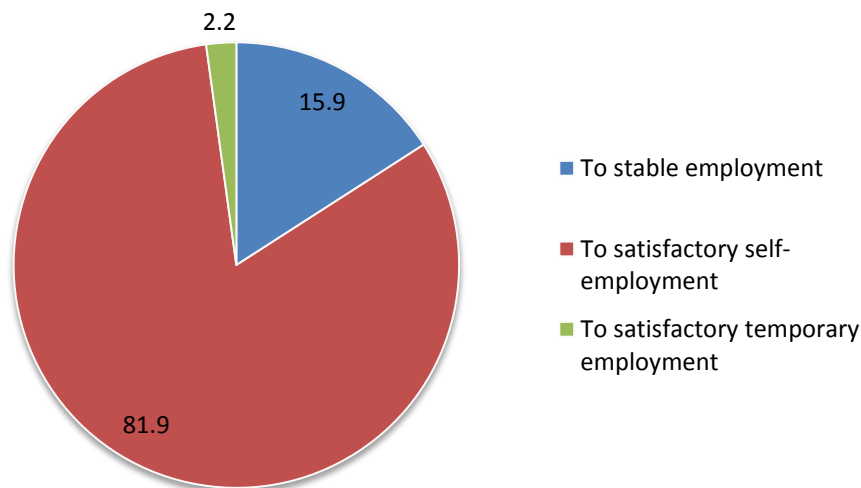


Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

What are the characteristics of the young person who transitioned directly to stable and/or satisfactory employment and, perhaps more importantly, in which of the sub-categories do they end up? Eight in ten of the youth who transitioned directly went straight to satisfactory self-employment (figure 22). Only 15.9 per cent attained stable employment

and 2.2 per cent satisfactory temporary employment.³² One-fifth (20.4 per cent) of the transitions could not properly be called “school-to-work transitions” since the young person never attended school (table 28). More youth in the older age group of 25–29 completed their transition directly than did youth in the younger age groups of 15–19 and 20–24 (the 30–35 age group was not considered in this analysis). Still, *the disturbing statistic lies in the 20.6 per cent of youth who completed their labour market transition before the age of 15. Given the weak educational system in the county, it appears that child labour is still the only option for far too many youth in Liberia.*

Figure 22. Share of direct transition to stable employment and satisfactory temporary employment or self-employment (%)



Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

Table 28. Additional characteristics of youth who transit directly to stable and/or satisfactory employment

	Share of youth who transited directly (%)
Never been to school	20.4
With some schooling	79.6
Currently 15–19	14.3
Currently 20–24	35.8
Currently 25–29	49.8
Transited before the age of 15	20.6

Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

Unfortunately, the youth who remain in transition are likely to stay within the category for an extremely long time. The data show that the youth remaining in transition spent, on average, nearly 7 years (82 months) within the category (meaning they had been unemployed, in non-satisfactory self- or temporary employment, or inactive non-students

³² These figures relate to 15–29 year-olds only.

with plans to work, or any combination of the three).³³ The length of time already spent in transition is longer for the young female than for the young male (88.9 months and 74.6 months, respectively). In fact, *given the length of time young people in Liberia remain in transition, the conclusion is that the youth are highly unlikely to attain a completed transition to stable or satisfactory work before they reach adulthood (or the age of 36, the upper limit of the “youth” definition in Liberia).*

5. Creating jobs for young people: The employer’s perspective

The labour demand enterprise survey (LDES) investigates the current and expected workforce needs of enterprises and the views of managers on the general capacities of available young jobseekers and workers. Without the demand-side view, the SWTS offers only an approximate means of discerning the occupations that are being flooded or starved by the current labour supply (for example, in looking at unemployment rates by occupation). The LDES, in contrast, gets directly to the heart of the matter – identifying current vacancies and vacancies projected over the next 2 years and, perhaps most importantly, capturing the “hard-to-fill” vacancies. Such information can be of invaluable use to policy-makers in the design or revision of vocational and training programmes. It is also of great value to employment services and career guidance counsellors to hone their advice to students or jobseekers on the fields of specialization in which they are most likely to attain employment. This section presents the main results of the LDES in Liberia.

5.1 Characteristics of enterprises

The largest proportion of enterprise surveyed was private companies (47.8 per cent), followed by family businesses (16.1 per cent) and not-for-profit organizations (13.0 per cent). The latter came to Liberia in large numbers subsequent to the civil conflict, primarily to engage in developmental activities. As the country moves towards stability, many developmental organizations are scaling down their activities and there are likely to be few future job prospects from this source.

Table 29 presents the distribution of enterprise types by size. Family businesses tend to be the smallest (41.7 per cent employing less than five workers). Foreign companies and non-profit organizations are the largest enterprises, employing 50 employees or more.

Employers sell their products and services to private individuals and households (47.8 per cent), public enterprises (7.0 per cent), small businesses (5.2 per cent) or large shops (3.2 per cent). One can reasonably assume that most employers are dependent on the purchasing power of local communities. Economic shocks and a declining expatriate community as development projects scale down are risks to local enterprises.

³³ The authors have considered the bias that the age of the young respondent can bring to the interpretation of duration of transition for those young people still in transition. The “older” youth, aged 35, for example, could have many more years in the labour market than a 15-year-old. This effort is partly balanced by the older youth who stay in education and therefore postpone their entry into the labour market. Rather than attempt a system of weighting by age of the respondent, the authors preferred to present the average duration without adjustment. Users are encouraged, however, to look for future disaggregation of such data by specific youth cohorts: 15–19, 20–24, 25–29 and 30–35.

Table 29. Type of enterprise by number of employees (%)

	Five or less	6 to 25	26 to 50	More than 50	Total
Family business	41.7	40.3	12.5	5.6	100
Government sector	16.7	50.0	16.7	16.7	100
Branch of a foreign company	0.0	40.0	20.0	40.0	100
Private company	19.1	41.6	25.8	13.4	100
Joint venture	7.7	73.1	11.5	7.7	100
Non-profit organization	1.7	44.8	32.8	20.7	100
Cooperative	18.2	50.0	13.6	18.2	100
Other	6.8	45.5	34.1	13.6	100
Total	18.3	44.6	23.7	13.4	100

Source: LDES-Liberia, 2012.

Asked to identify their first and second most significant business challenges, a majority of employers listed the difficulty in accessing financial services (52.2 per cent) (table 30). The other most common challenges identified were the lack of marketing services (10.1 per cent), problems accessing technology (8.8 per cent), product development (6.0 per cent) and local competition (6.0 per cent). *Only 3.3 per cent of employers cited the quality of the labour force as a main business constraint (and 3.5 per cent as a secondary concern).*

Table 30. Main obstacles faced by the enterprise (%)

	Most important problem	Second most important problem
Access to financial services	52.2	9.5
Access to marketing services	10.1	5.5
Access to technology	8.8	19.6
Product development	6.0	7.4
Competition in domestic market	6.0	7.4
Quality of labour force	3.3	3.5
Legal regulations	2.6	2.1
Other	2.4	14.3
Lack of business information	2.0	1.8
Political uncertainties	1.8	3.9
Labour shortages	1.8	3.9
Competition in export markets	1.1	0.5
Labour costs	1.1	2.1
Cost of input material & energy	0.2	4.4
Productivity	0.0	0.0
Total	100	100

Source: LDES-Liberia, 2012.

5.2 Recruitment of workers

Enterprises were asked to identify their most frequently used method for hiring workers for managerial/professional jobs and production/elementary jobs. Enterprises indicated that they mainly use advertisements (53.2 per cent), private employment agencies (15.4 per cent) and personal networks such as friends and relatives (10.1 per cent) to hire workers for managerial and professional jobs (table 31). In the same descending order, enterprises looking for production staff use advertisements (39.3 per cent), private employment agencies (22.2 per cent) and friends and relatives (15.2 per cent).

The hiring methods do not correspond to the ways young jobseekers and young workers claim to seek employment, but one must keep in mind that the methods used by young people aiming to set up their own business (applying for licenses, for example) do not correspond to the recruitment methods of enterprises. However, *there is a mismatch between enterprises' stated preference to use advertisements and employment services, and young people's attraction to using the two as job search options. In fact, young jobseekers mainly contact their friends and relatives to find a job, using employment services minimally.*

Table 31. Distribution of recruitment methods to fill vacancies (%)

	Managers/Professionals	Production workers/elementary occupations
Advertisements	53.2	39.3
Education/training institutions	3.2	1.9
Public employment services	2.1	1.9
Private employment services	15.4	22.2
Friends & relatives	10.1	15.2
Promotion within the enterprise	9.0	10.4
Other	6.9	9.1
Total	100	100

Source: LDES-Liberia, 2012.

For managerial/professional jobs, larger enterprises show a preference towards advertisements and networking as usual hiring methods. The smallest firms (less than five workers), on the other hand, show a preference for recruiting professional staff (table 32) through private employment agencies (28.1 per cent) and by promoting from within (26.6 per cent). For elementary workers, again the larger firms tend to place advertisements, while the smallest firms tend to look for staff through employment agencies or within their own enterprise. Enterprises of all sizes use private employment agencies more to find elementary workers than professionals. Interestingly, recruitment through the educational or training system is more relevant to larger enterprises in search of professional workers but is of greater interest to smaller enterprises in search of production workers.

The number of available vacancies has also proven to influence the recruitment method used by enterprises. Those with large numbers of vacancies tend to favour the use of private employment agencies. Using employment agencies can be the most cost effective and the quickest method of hiring workers, especially for elementary occupations. A slight preference appears to use public versus private employment agencies in enterprises with large numbers of vacancies for production workers.

Table 32. Enterprises by size and main recruitment method (%)

	Less than 5	6 to 25	26 to 50	More than 50
For managers/professionals				
Advertisements	12.5	58.3	62.4	69.5
Educational & training institutions	1.6	3.6	3.5	3.4
Public employment services	4.7	1.2	3.5	0.0
Private employment services	28.1	16.1	11.8	5.1
Friends & relatives	9.4	8.3	10.6	15.3
Promotions from within	26.6	7.7	4.7	0.0
Other	17.2	4.8	3.5	6.8
Total	100	100	100	100
For elementary jobs				
Advertisements	11.3	41.7	45.9	52.5
Educational & training institutions	3.2	1.8	2.4	0.0
Public employment services	1.6	0.6	4.7	1.7
Private employment services	32.3	24.4	14.1	16.9
Friends & relatives	8.1	16.7	17.6	15.3
Promotions from within	27.4	9.5	7.1	0.0
Other	16.1	5.4	8.2	13.6
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: LDES-Liberia, 2012.

5.3 Hiring preferences of enterprises

Table 33 outlines enterprises' selection criteria. Enterprises were asked their specific preferences on the age of candidates, sex, marital status and level of education.

Employers in Liberia seem to prefer young persons as employees (aged 15–29) (44.1 per cent for professional posts and 35.3 per cent for production posts). Yet a large share of enterprises state they have no specific hiring preference regarding the age of candidates (28.8 per cent and 40.6 per cent for professional and production posts, respectively). Surprisingly, 2.2 per cent of employers surveyed preferred to employ persons less than 15 years of age for elementary jobs and 1.7 per cent for professional jobs. This indicates there is still a considerable demand for child labour in Liberia.

The sex of the worker does not play a major role as a hiring criterion among employers for both professional (62.6 per cent) and elementary jobs (69.7 per cent), at least as reported. But a considerable number of employers (21.7 per cent) preferred to hire males for elementary jobs, perhaps due to the physical nature of the employment. Marital status also does not seem to have too much influence on hiring decision, but only for production posts. For professional posts, there is an evident bias towards married workers as opposed to unmarried workers (28.4 and 5.8 per cent, respectively). The discrimination is likely to stem from the assumption that the married worker may be a more stable employee and is less likely to move around in favour of other posts than the single worker (or drop out of the labour market upon marriage, as the case may be for female employees).

Table 33. Preferred hiring criterion of enterprises by age, sex, marital status, education and occupational class (%)

	Managers/professionals	Production workers/elementary occupations
Age		
Less than 15	1.7	2.2
15–29	44.1	35.3
Older than 30	25.5	22.0
No preference	28.8	40.6
Sex		
Female	17.8	8.6
Male	19.7	21.7
No preference	62.6	69.7
Marital status		
Unmarried	5.8	6.3
Married	28.4	11.5
No preference	65.9	82.2
Education level		
Elementary education	6.9	5.7
Vocational training (secondary)	12.4	6.7
Secondary education	20.5	20.3
Vocational training (post-secondary)	13.8	10.0
University	29.8	21.2
Post-graduate studies	4.1	2.6
No preference	12.6	33.4

Source: LDES-Liberia, 2012.

Opinions on the education level of prospective employees are stronger than on the other criteria. *For professional posts, one-third of enterprises expect the applicant to have a tertiary degree (33.9 per cent including university and post-graduate studies).* The share grows (to 47.7 per cent) if the preference for post-secondary vocational training is added. The preference for tertiary education is slightly less for production workers (23.8 per cent; it rises to 33.8 per cent including post-secondary vocational training), but the shares are by no means negligible, which raises the question of whether there might be some inflation of expectation on the part of enterprises vis-à-vis production workers. Also, *due to the very small share of young people completing higher education in the country, there are bound to be bottlenecks in this area, with the demand for educated youth far exceeding the supply.* Only 5.7 per cent of enterprises looking for production workers and 6.9 per cent of enterprises seeking professional workers expressed a preference for individuals with primary education only.

The enterprises were also asked to rank the most important characteristic they look for in the worker among sex, age, education/training, work experience, ethnicity, appearance, attitude and expectations. Table 34 shows the results by economic sector. For professional posts, employers value most the education level of the worker, followed by the level of work experience; the same holds for all sectors. The attitude and age of the worker are also given some importance in the agricultural and wholesale/retail sector. *The importance put on the level of education and on work experience does not bode well for*

the current generation of young jobseekers in Liberia. Most do not have a high level of education and, as regards work experience, while many youth start working at a very young age in the country, they are likely to work in areas of self-employment that are not valued by formal enterprises.

For production workers, less weight is given to their education level. *Employers value most the work experience of potential workers in the manufacturing sector and in education, while the greatest weight is given to the attitude of workers in the agricultural and wholesale/retail sectors.* Employers often look for persons who show a positive attitude towards work. Reporting late to work, not informing employers in advance when taking leave, and the lack of dedication to work and of friendliness to customers are symptoms of poor attitude and non-professionalism that young workers should avoid.

Table 34. Most important characteristic employers consider in workers by economic sector (%)

	Agriculture	Manufacturing	Wholesale/retail	Education	Total
Managers/professionals					
Sex	7.7	5.5	6.5	3.8	5.0
Age	15.4	3.6	12.9	13.8	11.9
Education/training	30.8	40.0	27.4	45.3	39.4
Marital status	7.7	7.3	4.8	6.9	6.6
Job experience	23.1	25.5	22.6	25.2	24.5
Ethnicity	0.0	0.0	1.6	0.0	0.3
Attitude	15.4	7.3	14.5	4.4	8.0
Appearance	0.0	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.3
Other	0.0	9.1	9.7	0.6	4.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Production workers/Elementary occupations					
Sex	0.0	3.8	4.9	1.9	2.7
Age	0.0	3.8	9.8	5.7	5.7
Education/training	11.5	9.4	8.2	27.7	19.1
Marital status	15.4	1.9	3.3	9.4	7.4
Job experience	19.2	35.9	19.7	29.6	27.8
Ethnicity	7.7	7.6	4.9	2.5	4.4
Attitude	34.6	24.5	27.9	16.4	21.7
Appearance	0.0	5.7	6.6	1.3	3.0
Other	11.6	7.6	14.8	5.6	8.4
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Note: For the purpose of analysis, only the economic sectors representing employers ≥ 5 per cent of the total are considered.

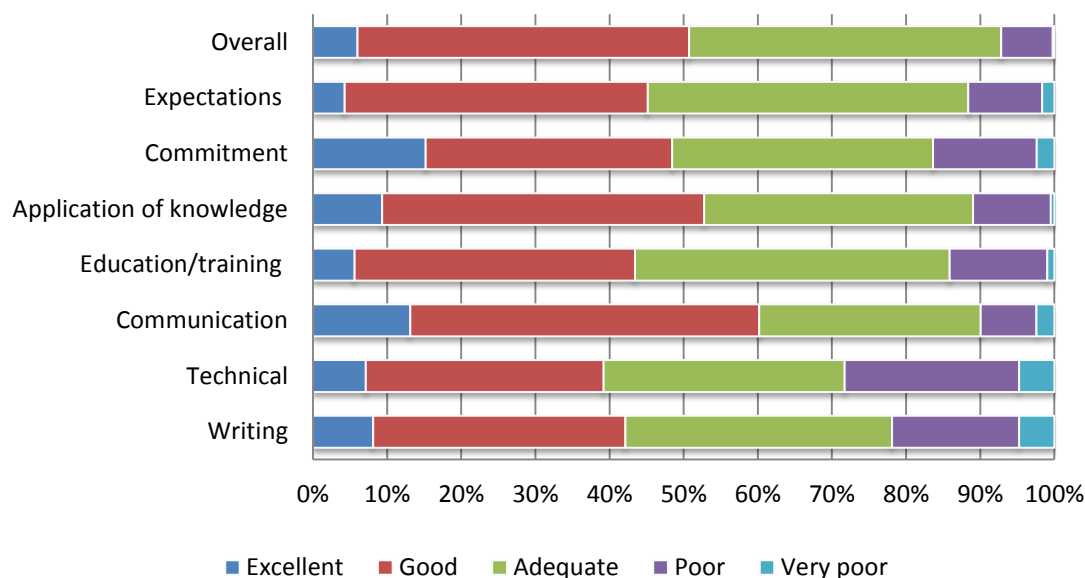
Source: LDES-Liberia, 2012.

5.4 Skills assessment of young workers

Employers were asked to rate the aptitude of young applicants on the following skills: writing, technical, communication, breadth of education/training, application of knowledge to work, commitment and discipline, and whether or not the young people have realistic expectations about the labour market. *For the most part, enterprises were generous in their*

assessment of young job applicants. The best marks went to communication skills (90.0 per cent of employers rated young applicants as at least adequate) and the application of knowledge (89.0 per cent); the lowest rating went to technical skills and writing skills, although a majority of enterprises rated these skills as at least adequate (figure 23). Employers also indicated the young applicants have realistic expectations. Only 11.7 per cent of employers rated young applicants as having poor expectations.

Figure 23. Employers' assessment of youth' skills



Source: LDES-Liberia, 2012.

5.5 Education and training

Section 3.5.5 investigated the issue of overeducation and undereducation among young workers. The conclusion was that the latter, whereby the education level of a young worker is below that which would best serve the job, is of greater significance in Liberia than overeducation. Undereducation was shown to affect as many as 49.3 per cent of young workers. Multinational enterprises (MNEs) in Liberia are particularly affected by what they deem to be skills shortages, especially in the area of use of modern technology (box 4). One means of addressing the qualifications mismatch and making sure that young workers have the necessary skills to best perform the job is to offer on-the-job training. A trained worker has the possibility to be more efficient, effective and better motivated at work than an untrained (and hence insecure) worker.

The LDES reveals that two-thirds (62.3 per cent) of employers offered some level of training to less than five employees in the previous 12 months (table A10). Employers seem reluctant to invest in training, perhaps due to the cost constraints. Twenty-four (24.3) per cent of employers had trained between five and 25 employees and 13.4 per cent of employers had provided training for more than 25 employees.

Greater investment in training could significantly improve the productivity and profitability of enterprises, while raising both the confidence and earning power of workers.

Box 4. Challenges of MNEs in Liberia in the agriculture, mining and banking sectors

Arai, Cissé and Sock (2010) investigated the potential for creating more and better jobs for young people through MNEs in Liberia. Based on a survey to identify the common practices and constraints to the use of local labour by MNEs in the agriculture, mining and banking sectors, the report finds that "MNEs prefer to recruit nationals; however, Liberia has a serious shortage of skilled labour with practical experience, knowledge of the latest technologies and principles in their fields. Schools providing basic education have not been able to equip students with the basic skills required in the labour market." The following table summarizes the challenges identified and some actions that MNEs are currently undertaking to address such shortages, including through training new staff upon engagement and attempting to engage in dialogue with training and educational institutions on improving curricula.

Sector	Challenges	Current activities (in response to challenges)
Agriculture	Lack of skills	Sub-sectoral associations are currently active Dialogue has taken place but is not well organized Training is provided at the enterprise level
	Lack of sectoral training institutions	
	Lack of interest on the part of youth	
	Unreliable infrastructure	
Mining	Lack of labour (quantity)	Training is provided at the enterprise level Financial support is provided to schools
	Lack of skilled labour within a small pool	
	Poor quality of education	
Banking	Lack of skills	Active association Dialogue between banks is taking place
	Lack of training institutions	
	Poor work ethic	

Source: Arai, Cissé and Sock (2010), table 14.

5.6 Labour demand

Enterprises' growth forecast was mostly positive. Table 35 shows 49.1 per cent of employers anticipated a significant expansion in volume over the following 12 months, while 41.4 per cent perceived only a minor increase and the remaining 9.5 per cent thought business would remain unchanged or decrease. Still, despite expected growth in many enterprises, expansion of the enterprises' workforces was less optimistic. Only 32.7 per cent of employers expected a significant increase in job opportunities. Forty-three (42.9) per cent thought they might see a slight increase in employment volume and 24.4 per cent anticipated employment levels to remain unchanged or decrease over the following 12 months.

Looking across sectors, 56.0 per cent of employers in agriculture perceived a substantial increase in business volumes while another 32.0 per cent expected only a minor volume expansion. At the same time, employers in agriculture expected to grow in terms of workers (40.0 per cent expecting substantial growth and 44.0 per cent minor expansion in employment levels). In fact, employment expectations were fairly positive across all four main sectors.

Irrespective of employer expectations about future business and employment volumes, their hiring capacity was not as encouraging. Asked about the number of existing open vacancies, 78.0 per cent of employers at the time of the survey did not have any open vacancies, 17.3 per cent of employers had one to five open vacancies and 4.7 per cent of employers had more than five vacancies.

Table 35. Employers' perceptions of growth over next 12 months by economic sector (%)

	Agriculture	Manufacturing	Wholesale/retail	Education	Total
Volume of business expectation					
Increase substantially	56.0	43.1	52.2	48.9	49.1
Minor increase	32.0	46.6	41.8	40.8	41.4
Unchanged	4.0	5.2	6.0	8.1	6.8
Minor decrease	8.0	3.5	0.0	2.3	2.5
Decrease substantially	0.0	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Employment expectation					
Increase substantially	40.0	19.3	28.4	37.7	32.7
Minor increase	44.0	45.6	40.3	42.9	42.9
Unchanged	8.0	29.8	31.3	17.1	21.6
Minor decrease	8.0	1.8	0.0	2.3	2.2
Decrease substantially	0.0	3.5	0.0	0.0	0.6
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Source: LDES-Liberia, 2012.

Table 36. Top vacancies likely to expand in the following 2 to 3 years by specific occupation (%)

Occupation title	Total	Occupation title	Total
Domestic cleaners & helpers	32.2	Waiters	1.0
Secondary education teachers	19.4	Accounting & bookkeeping clerks	0.7
Survey & market research interviewers	6.7	Information & communications technology service managers	0.7
Security guards	3.8	Vocational education teachers	0.7
Nursing professionals	3.3	Odd job persons	0.7
Subsistence crop farmers	2.9	Civil engineering technicians	0.6
Tailors, dressmakers, furriers & hatters	2.4	Sweepers & related labourers	0.6
Forestry & related workers	2.4	Senior officials of special-interest organizations	0.7
Managing directors & chief executives	2.2	Business services & administration managers not classified elsewhere	0.6
Gardeners, horticultural & nursery growers	1.8	Cooks	0.6
Typists & word processing operators	1.5	Systems analysts	0.6
Sales workers not classified elsewhere	1.2	Primary school teachers	0.5
Social work & counselling professionals	1.0	Special needs teachers	0.5
Construction supervisors	1.0	Sales demonstrators	0.5

Note: Occupations amounting to less than 0.5 per cent of the total are not shown.

Source: LDES-Liberia, 2012.

Employers were requested to identify the possible vacancies they thought would open up in their enterprises over the coming 2 to 3 years. Keeping in mind that responses are perceptions only, most expected vacancies were in the area of elementary occupations (35.1 per cent), followed by professionals (29.1 per cent), service and sales workers (8.8 per cent), clerical support workers (7.9 per cent), skilled agriculture, forestry and fishery workers (7.5 per cent), managers (4.6 per cent), craft and related workers (3.6 per cent), technicians and associate professionals (1.8 per cent), and plant and machine operators (1.5 per cent) (figure 12 in section 3.6).

A list of specific occupational titles that employers in Liberia have identified to expand in the next 2 to 3 years is presented in table 36. The strongest demand is shown for an occupation that is likely to offer very little in the way of wages and security, i.e. domestic helpers and cleaners. *Although these elementary occupations will be able to absorb the numerous youth in the country who do not manage to stay in education, inequality in the country is likely to grow as the uneducated remain constrained in these jobs while the growing middle classes who manage to educate themselves will take up the few available “good” jobs.*

It is questionable whether the local market will be in a position to meet the demand for secondary school teachers, nursing professionals, managing directors and chief executives, civil engineering technicians, system analysts, electronic engineering technicians, accountants and other higher skilled occupations over the next few years. *Low-quality education and training is creating a bottleneck on the supply of manpower in these professional occupational categories. The inability to meet the demand through the local market will result in employers having to import foreign labour.* Currently, foreign workers are distributed across the following occupations according to the LDES: secondary education teachers (30.6 per cent), managing directors and chief executives (24.1 per cent), senior officials of special interest organizations (9.1 per cent), construction supervisors (3.2 per cent), business services and administration managers (3.2 per cent), and financial analysts (1.9 per cent). In addition, foreign workers are also found in production/elementary jobs such as sewing machine operators (1.9 per cent), tailors and dressmakers (1.6 per cent), deep fishery workers (1.6 per cent) and cooks (1.3 per cent).

Hard-to-fill vacancies

Hard-to-fill vacancies are openings where employers find themselves unable to find persons to hire. The reason could be that there is insufficient quality among the candidates who apply for these posts relating to inadequate skills, experience, qualifications or poor attitude. Alternatively, hard-to-fill vacancies also exist as a result of an insufficient number of applicants applying for the vacancy, possibly due to the wages or terms offered for the job. Secondary education teachers were at the forefront of hard-to-fill vacancies (54.9 per cent), followed by business services and administration managers (6.2 per cent), and managing directors and chief executives (4.7 per cent). Table 37 lists the ten leading hard-to-fill vacancies as specified by the employers surveyed.

The consequences of hard-to-fill vacancies identified by enterprises included an inability to meet the quality standards required (17.2 per cent), delays in developing new products (12.9 per cent), loss of business (10.4 per cent) and difficulties in meeting customer service objectives (8.6 per cent) (table A11). In overcoming the challenges, many employers said they had resorted to changing the characteristics of the job vacancy (47.9 per cent), raising the wage, for example. Some have re-trained their current staff to attain the required skills (19.4 per cent) while others have changed the profile of the job vacancy, for example by lowering the required level of education (7.3 per cent).

Offering career and educational guidance within education and training institutions could help to guide young people towards existing hard-to-fill occupations so that enterprises' dependency on foreign labour to fill these posts can be lessened with time.

Table 37. Top ten hard-to-fill vacancies as classified by employers (%)

Occupation title	
Secondary education teachers	54.9
Business services & administration managers not classified elsewhere	6.2
Managing directors & chief executives	4.7
Typists & word processing operators	4.4
Senior officials of special-interest organizations	2.4
Domestic cleaners & helpers	2.1
Electrical engineers	2.1
Systems analysts	1.8
Carpenters & joiners	1.8
Civil engineers	1.8
All others	18.0

Source: LDES-Liberia, 2012.

6. Policy implications

6.1 Relevant policy framework in Liberia

6.1.1 Development frameworks

Long-term vision: Liberia National Vision 2030

The formulation of a long-term vision had been on Liberia's national agenda since early 2003. After several attempts to finalize a document, the formulation process gained new strength in 2006 after President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf came into office. President Sirleaf launched the Vision, "Liberia Rising 2013", in December 2012.

The Vision's overarching goal is to transform Liberia into a middle-income country³⁴ by the end of 2030. The document presents a holistic approach to development; priorities such as national unity, political stability, social inclusiveness, respect of human rights and gender equality are seen as inseparable from the path to poverty reduction.

Medium-Term Development Plan: Agenda for Transformation through Action

The National Vision 2030 is complemented by a medium-term economic growth and development strategy known as the Agenda for Transformation through Action (AfT). The strategy has a 5-year time frame (2012–17) and is designed as the first step towards the implementation of the longer-term Vision. The predecessor of the AfT was the 2008–11 Lift Liberia – Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), which put Liberia on the path of economic recovery from post-conflict emergency reconstruction. Compared to the PRS, the new medium-term plan has its foundation on the positive message that Liberia's development is no longer affected by unforeseeable factors related to the conflict. Rather,

³⁴ Defined as per capita income of more than US\$1,000.

peace has created the opportunity for the country to plan ahead and build economic and social progress systematically over time.

The Agenda is structured around five pillars representing five areas where action is required for Liberia to reach the aspirations set by the National Vision 2030. The pillars are: (1) peace, security and rule of law; (2) economic transformation; (3) human development; (4) governance and public institutions; and (5) cross-cutting issues, such as gender equality, HIV/AIDS, and youth empowerment (see box 5).

Box 5. Youth empowerment issues within the Agenda for Transformation through Action

The Agenda emphasizes the role of the economic and social inclusion of young people as a key determinant of a prosperous future for Liberia. During the war, the youth population was among the most affected by violence. The motives behind youth involvement as well as its legacies need to be addressed. Action becomes particularly urgent when the reintegration of young people into their communities of origin has not yet occurred.

To facilitate youth empowerment and full participation in Liberian society, the Agenda outlines a strategy that includes, among other points:

- expanding access to economic opportunities and participation in peace-building and leadership roles; improving their human rights;
- increasing youth's capacity in MSMEs and increasing the number of MSMEs registered and operational in the name of youth; and
- improving the enrolment of youth at all levels of professional training; improving youth' access to the benefits of social protection, especially in income generation.

The achievement of the Agenda's outcomes on youth empowerment by 2017 will be measured through specific indicators which include youth employment indicators and youth satisfaction/disengagement and disillusionment.

6.1.2. Employment framework

National Employment Policy (NEP) 2009 and Action Plan 2013-2017

The Employment Policy was designed in 2009 to accompany the then-operational Liberian Poverty Reduction Strategy, with the underlying acknowledgement that decent work is central to any intervention addressing poverty. The Policy was formulated after a process of wide-ranging consultations where consensus on core employment issues was reached among the government, social partners and other stakeholders. The ILO provided technical assistance throughout the formulation stages.

The NEP clearly identifies the country's main challenges and sets quantitative goals. The most important of these challenges is to provide Liberia's poor (accounting for two-thirds of the country's population when the NEP was drafted) with decent and productive work. For this goal to be achieved, productive employment is to be increased for 500,000 working poor, while approximately 120,000 jobs need to be created for the unemployed, and 250,000 jobs created for new entrants into the labour market before 2014 (Government of Liberia, Ministry of Labour, 2009).³⁵

A two-pronged approach set out by the NEP looks at *Emergency employment* and *Sustainable productive employment* as the areas where government efforts should be primarily directed. Aspirational strategies are then outlined for each of these two domains. Economic growth is recognized as essential to underpin the promotion of both. However, the NEP clarifies that a growing economy per se does not necessarily translate into

³⁵ The country's first ever Labour Force Survey in 2010 post-dates the NEP so quantitative information in the Policy document was based primarily on the limited information available from the Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire, 2007.

production of decent employment and reduction of poverty, unless the following priorities are carefully addressed:

- enhancement of human capabilities, improvement of quality of education and vocational training as well as access to them, and alignment of curricula with the demands of the labour market;
- revitalization of the agricultural sector; and
- promotion of entrepreneurship and formalization of enterprises.

Youth employment is one of the cross-cutting issues prominently featured in the NEP. Youth challenges are summarized upfront as the document states that “the majority of Liberia’s young people have spent more time engaged in war than in school... [Thus] their preparation for working life has been severely impaired...”. Helping young people secure decent employment is seen as highly dependent on the overall employment situation in the country. Therefore, solutions to improve employment prospects for youth are embedded in the overall NEP, although combined with interventions addressing the specific disadvantages faced by young people. The following strategies are listed:

- *Improve employability through vocational training and scaling-up proven apprenticeships:* increase vocational education opportunities, including scaling-up proven initiatives such as master apprenticeship and placement schemes; ensure the revision of curriculum to provide rapid and standardized skills in modern labour market areas, such as construction trades and business skills, but also in basic literacy; encourage mentoring schemes and public-private partnerships;
- *Ensure the educational system enables the provision of “second chance” training* by introducing relevant short courses and late entry for those young people who missed out on education during the years of conflict; ensure this includes basic literacy skills;
- *Promote business development services for young people* by actively providing information to youth via decentralized business employment services, jobseeker guidance and linkages and counselling of young people, including young women;
- *Ensure the social inclusion of particularly disadvantaged youth:* some groups of young people face specific hardships due to discrimination and social exclusion, including those with disabilities, those affected by HIV/AIDS, demobilized soldiers, ethnic minorities and migrants. Programmes directed to these special groups should be developed by government with support from skilled and experienced development experts; and
- *Guarantee representation and voice* by engaging workers’ and employers’ organizations in reaching out to young people as members of their organizations, and engaging them in the process of social dialogue processes, including collective bargaining.

More recently, in July 2013, the Government of Liberia launched the National Employment Policy Action Plan (NEP-AP) with the objective of operationalizing the NEP. The Action Plan identifies the performance indicators, key performance actions, resources, and key partners per policy goal.

6.1.3. Skills development framework

Based on the framework for action laid out by the Liberian Poverty Reduction Strategy, the National Capacity Development Strategy (NCDS) was adopted by the country’s Cabinet in 2011. Both the formulation stage and the current implementation of the NCDS have received the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Liberia largely lacks the wealth of high-standard human competencies necessary to support growth, accelerate national development and foster poverty reduction. This is due to 13 years of violent civil war and its destructive impact on Liberia's human capital. Yet when the NCDS was adopted, the country could count on a number of assets, such as the reopening of schools, which was made possible thanks to improved security levels. In addition, the government's commitment to universal primary education in line with the Millennium Development Goals had been driving significant investment. New quality institutions, such as the Liberia Institute of Statistic and Geo-Informational Services (LISGIS), were capable and ready to provide professional and technical services.

Based on a stocktaking of these and other opportunities, as well as the several existing challenges, the NCDS proposes the following strategic outcomes:

1. planning capacity investments for sector growth and reform;
2. matching the supply of capacity to current and emerging demands in the economy and supporting capacity development institutions to meet demands;
3. investing in institutional capacity to deliver services to the Liberian people;
4. strengthening capacities for leadership, empowerment and civic engagement.

The Strategy provides recommendations on specific sectors and human capital targets and indicates implementation requirements including what partnerships need to be forged. An action plan assigns responsibilities and sets timelines, monitoring indicators and targets.

6.2 Policy implications

Identifying the nature and extent of the youth employment challenge at the country level is a prerequisite to formulating evidence-based and integrated policies and programmatic interventions. With detailed information on the blockages that are preventing sufficient job creation from absorbing the cohorts of young labour market entrants, governments will be better prepared to design effective policy responses. Facilitating an improved school-to-work transition (or work-to-school transition for youth previously engaged in child labour) is a precondition to helping young people overcome the difficulties in finding and maintaining decent jobs.

The analysis of the SWTS in Liberia highlights issues of low-quality employment, low, but improving, levels of educational attainment, inefficiencies in meeting the demand of employers, etc. The evidence from the survey clearly demonstrates that Liberia needs a vision for the future of its labour market and a strategy to improve its labour market outcomes, particularly for youth. Since youth employment is highly dependent on the country's general employment situation, it is critical to prioritize employment in national policy-making and to centralize employment within economic and social policies.

The Government of Liberia is already active in the area of employment promotion. Specifically, the NEP lays out the strategy to "promote productive employment that will reduce poverty, ensure peace and stability, and enhance the overall well-being of the Liberian population" and such themes are continued with an outline of strategies in the recent NEP Action Plan.

The 2012 SWTS and future dataset for 2014 can make a significant contribution to providing policy-makers with information to initiate, monitor and evaluate the numerous policies and programmes outlined in the NEP and other current policy documents. In particular, the following main areas of action should be followed closely:

- 1. Design macroeconomic policy to promote job growth, especially within the services sector.** The results have shown that a large number of unemployed youth are hoping to gain work as “professionals”, while currently the occupation group ranks low among employed youth. There is a clear gap in the supply and demand of young “professionals”. The young person seeking work as a shop worker, on the other hand, is likely to find it less difficult to find work. Beyond improving the alignment of the educational system to the demands of the labour market, demand-side solutions are needed to generate additional jobs for young professionals. This requires coordinated policy efforts to support aggregate demand through pro-employment macroeconomic policies and to foster growth engines through an appropriate balance of export-driven growth and the expansion of domestic markets (ILO, 2013a, chapter 6). See box 6 for some general approaches in this area.

The Government of Liberia is well aware that sectoral policy is an important aspect of macroeconomic policy. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry’s “Industry for Liberia’s Future”, developed with the support of the UNDP, describes the vision to strengthen the private sector with particular focus on diversification and development within targeted sectors, such as construction, transportation and food supplies (Government of Liberia, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, 2011). The NEP Action Plan highlights the focus of job creation in agriculture, with a specific focus on rice production and infrastructure development. It would be crucial for the employment and skills development strategies to align with the vision laid out in the industrial policy and Action Plan.

Box 6. Approaches to boost aggregate demand and promote youth employment

Policies that promote employment-centred and sustainable growth are vital if young people are to be given a fair chance at a decent job. Youth labour market outcomes are closely related to overall employment trends but are more sensitive to the business cycle. A boost in aggregate demand is key to addressing the youth employment crisis as this will create more job opportunities for young people. ILO research shows that macroeconomic policies can influence youth employment by:

1. encouraging economic diversification and productive transformation;
2. reducing macroeconomic volatility by engaging in timely and targeted counter-cyclical policies;
3. loosening constraints on private sector growth, with a particular emphasis on access to finance for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises;
4. focusing on targeted demand-side interventions with particular impact on youth employment (e.g. labour intensive infrastructure works, public employment programmes, wage and training subsidies); and
5. ensuring adequate and predictable funding for targeted youth employment interventions.

Source: ILO, 2013a, box 8.

- 2. Ensure educational access for all and prevention of early school leaving.** The report clearly describes the need for enhancing employability among young men and women. More education is shown to make for a better labour market outcome and easier labour market transition. At the same time, the early ages of transition shown in the results, which reflect youth leaving school young, are worrisome in the country; a large share of young persons with low levels of education who lack many of the skills required by the labour market will stall the productive transformation of the country.

Policies and resources should be directed towards enhancing the quality of education in academic institutions and vocational training centres. Two main policies and programmes can address this. The first relates to expanding the investment in education, especially in rural areas, and expanding access to education and training to the most disadvantaged youth excluded by costs. The second is improving the educational quality and addressing

the skills mismatch to allow young males and females to better meet the needs of the market.

- 3. Improve the quality of education and open the dialogue between employers and universities and training institutions on identification of core skills to be added to curriculum.** Private sector development is hampered by the insufficient numbers of skilled youth. Employers are looking for employees who can continue to learn and adapt; read, write and compute competently; listen and communicate effectively; think creatively; solve problems independently; manage themselves at work; interact with co-workers; work in teams or groups; handle basic technology, lead effectively as well as follow supervision (Brewer, 2013). Developing curricula that evolve through continuous dialogue with employers to align the training programme with business needs and local realities as well as keep teachers up-to-date about workplace practices is one good practice aimed at improving core skills. Mentoring programmes that link students with professionals or young workers is another.
- 4. Improve conditions of work by ensuring equal treatment for and rights of young workers.** The survey results show that young people continue to suffer from decent work deficits and low-quality jobs. Most working youth are in irregular employment in the informal economy. Labour laws and collective agreements, including through sanctioning mechanisms, can protect young workers and facilitate their transitions into stable and decent employment. In parallel, a system of incentives to encourage the registration of enterprises is to be encouraged, while at the same time providing incentives for employers to invest in the improvement of young people's work conditions.

The Government developed a "Decent Work Bill" with ILO technical assistance, which was introduced in the Legislature in 2010. The Bill is intended to establish a regulatory environment that will facilitate the promotion and creation of decent work. The most contentious aspect of the proposed labour law is an attempt to set a national minimum wage. The discussion on the Bill continues; the latest rejection of a new amendment by the House of Representatives to set the minimum wage occurred as recently as 5 July 2013.

Given the large share of youth in elementary occupations, including in domestic work, it will also be important to strengthen the capacities and institutions in Liberia towards policy and legislative reforms and eventual ratification and implementation of the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) and Recommendation (No. 201).

- 5. Support employers in taking active part in the creation of decent jobs for young people.** Employers may take on young people when subsidies are offered in the way of tax breaks or other financial incentives, although the very high levels of informality among enterprises in the country can hamper the effectiveness of such a strategy. Perhaps more can be done to make the business case for employing young people by highlighting how this impacts on organizations' competitiveness. Helping employers to link investment in young people and also training of their young staff to their business strategy is an area that could be expanded.
- 6. As very few young people use formal means of finding work, enhance the role of institutions that deal with employment/unemployment issues and improve the collection and dissemination of labour market information.** Young people mainly use informal methods to search for jobs. Employers also use informal networking to recruit young persons. Given this situation, increasing labour demand without improving information and access to the labour market will do little to help integrate disadvantaged youth who lack personal connections to the labour market.

Labour market information, job search assistance, vocational counselling and career guidance should be promoted in Liberia to assist and orient young persons. Greater

investment in employment offices and agencies can help to improve the connection between young people and enterprises. Specific recommendations for policy-making and programme formulation are: i) build a knowledge base about youth employment in Liberia, ii) continue to conduct school-to-work transition surveys, iii) develop links to youth information on websites developed by the Ministry of Labour, iv) prepare a “pocket guide” for youth employment with information about job search, resume writing, interview techniques, training institutions, required licenses, workers’ rights, useful websites and other information, and v) introduce job fairs for young people.

- 7. Promote decent work in the agriculture sector and among low-wage occupations.** Low-skilled youth in elementary occupations and in agriculture are unlikely to have a stable contract or are dissatisfied with their work. Many of the low-paid youth in informal employment are likely to be engaged in these two occupations. The adoption and enforcement of labour laws, such as the Decent Work Bill, and collective agreements could help to protect young workers in the more disadvantaged sectors. The minimum wage proposed within the Decent Work Bill can help to promote decent working conditions.
- 8. Facilitate the financial inclusion of youth and access to credit and business support services to young entrepreneurs.** Access to finance is consistently listed as a major constraint for enterprises to expand their capacity via investments that lead to the creation of new jobs (Matsumoto, Hengge and Islam, 2012). This is particularly important in countries where a majority of establishments are micro- and small enterprises. Liberia is no exception. The results of the SWTS show that more than two-thirds (69.4 per cent) of self-employed youth in the country have named insufficient access to capital as their most significant challenge. Similarly, the LDES showed 52.2 per cent of enterprises stating a lack of financial resources as their main challenge to doing business. Consequently, measures aiming at improving financial inclusion are likely to stimulate labour demand and to thereby generate new employment opportunities for young people. At the same time, young entrepreneurs will need more than financial support to stay in business. Policies and programmes to strengthen business development services for young people and establish mentoring programmes in which an established company provides support to a youth business are also needed.
- 9. Ratify the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and ensure the development and adoption of a list of prohibited hazardous work that is in line with the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).** Liberia does not have an overall child labour policy, but the objective towards the elimination of child labour is firmly rooted within the child protection agenda and is one of the priorities in the Children’s Act, which provides the wider framework for child protection in Liberia (ILO, 2013d). Hence, formulating a specific child labour policy may be useful but is most likely not something that should be given urgent priority. The policy justification and mandate for the elimination of child labour in Liberia is already formulated and adopted through the Children’s Act. The ILO International Programme towards the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) is currently working with the National Commission on Child Labor (NACOMAL) to develop a National Action Plan towards the elimination of child labour.
- 10. Promote bipartite and tripartite cooperation on youth employment to yield better employment outcomes.** Establishing an enabling environment for the successful implementation of employment and labour market interventions for young people requires bipartite and tripartite cooperation. This is confirmed by the results of evaluations of youth employment programmes. The Government, employers’ organizations and trade unions of Liberia have a role to play by fulfilling their own specific mandates and through concerted and joint efforts for the promotion of decent work for youth in the country.

References

- Arai, Y.; Cissé, A.; Sock, M. 2010. "Promoting job creation for young people in multinational enterprises and their supply chains: Liberia", Employment Sector, Employment Report No. 7 (Geneva, ILO).
- Brewer, L. 2013. "Enhancing youth employability: What? Why? and How? Guide to core work skills", Skills and Employability Department (Geneva, ILO).
- Government of Liberia, Ministry of Commerce and Industry. 2011. "Industry for Liberia's Future", February; http://www.lr.undp.org/Documents/PDF/Liberia_Industrial_Policy.pdf.
- Government of Liberia, Ministry of Labour. 2009. "Employment Policy 2009", April; http://www.ilo.org/emppolicy/pubs/WCMS_143264/lang--en/index.htm.
- . Ministry of Labour. 2013. "National Employment Policy Action Plan 2013-2017", April.
- Government of Liberia, Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS), 2011. "Report on the Liberia Labour Force Survey 2010", February.
- Ha, B.; McNerney C.; Tobin S.; Torres R. 2010. "Youth Employment in Crisis", International Institute for Labour Studies Discussion Paper No. 201 (Geneva)
- International Institute for Educational Planning. 2011. *Education and Fragility in Liberia* (Paris).
- International Labour Organization (ILO). 2010. *Global Employment Trends for Youth: Special issue on the impact of the global economic crisis on youth* (Geneva).
- . 2013a. *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2013: A generation at risk* (Geneva).
- . 2013b. *Domestic workers across the world: Global and regional statistics and the extent of legal protection* (Geneva).
- . 2013c. *Ending child labour in domestic work and protecting young workers from abusive working conditions* (Geneva).
- . 2013d. "Background document for the development of a National Action Plan towards the elimination of child labour in Liberia", draft (Geneva).
- Matsumoto, M.; Hengge, M.; Islam, I. 2012. "Tackling the youth employment crisis: A macroeconomic perspective", *Employment Working Paper*, No. 124 (Geneva, ILO).
- Omolade, A.; Kassim, A.; Modupe, S. 2011. "Relative effect of parents' occupation, qualification and academic achievement of wards on students' achievement in senior secondary school mathematics in Ogun State", *British Journal of Arts & Science*, Vol. 3. No. 2, pp. 242–252.
- Quintini, G. 2011. "Over-qualified or under-skilled: A review of existing literature", *OECD Employment and Migration Working Papers*, No. 121 (Paris).
- Sabates, R.; Akyeampong, K.; Westbrook, J.; Hunt, F. 2010. "School dropout: Patterns, causes, changes and policies" (UNESCO, Paris).
- Schulz, G.; Klemmer, B. 1998. *Public Employment Services in English-speaking Africa* (ILO, Harare).
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). 2011. "Education and Fragility in Liberia", International Institute for Education Planning Research Paper (Paris).

Annex I. Definitions of labour market statistics

1. The following units are defined according to the standards of the International Conference of Labour Statisticians:

a. The **employed** include all persons of 15 years of age or more who during a week of reference:

- worked for wage or profit (in cash or in kind) for at least one hour;
- were temporarily absent from work (because of illness, leave, studies, a break of the activity of the firm, etc.), but had a formal attachment to their job;
- performed some work without pay for family gain.

b. The **unemployed** (strict definition) include all persons of 15 years of age or more who met the following three conditions during the week of reference:

- They did not work (according to the abovementioned definition);
- They were actively searching for a job or took concrete action to start their own business;
- They were available to start work within the two weeks following the reference week.

c. Persons neither included in the employed nor in the unemployed are classified as **not in the labour force (also known as inactive)**.

2. The International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE) categorizes the employed population on the basis of their explicit or implicit contract of employment, as follows:

a. **Employees** (also wage and salaried workers) are all those who hold the type of jobs defined as "paid employment jobs", where the incumbents hold explicit (written or oral) or implicit employment contracts that give them basic remuneration that is not directly dependent upon the revenue of the unit for which they work.

b. **Employers** are those workers who, working on their own account or with one or a few partners, hold the type of jobs defined as "self-employment jobs" (i.e. jobs where the remuneration is directly dependent upon the profits derived from the goods and services produced) and, in this capacity, have engaged, on a continuous basis, one or more persons to work for them as employee(s).

c. **Own-account workers** are those workers who, working on their own account or with one or more partners, hold the type of jobs defined as "self-employment jobs" and have not engaged, on a continuous basis, any employees to work for them.

d. **Contributing (unpaid) family workers** are those workers who hold "self-employment jobs" as own-account workers in a market-oriented establishment operated by a related person living in the same household.

3. The employed are also classified by their main occupation, in accordance with the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08).

4. A **household** is every family or other community of persons living together and jointly spending their income to satisfy the basic necessities of life. The concept of household includes members present in the place where the household resides, as well as individuals who are temporarily absent and living elsewhere, including abroad, for business, education or other, as long as their residence in the foreign country does not exceed 1 year. A person living alone can also qualify as a household ("single household") if they do not already belong to another unit.

The single household can reside in a separate or shared apartment, considered as an independent unit as long as the household's income is not shared with other residents. Collective households such as prisons and institutions and their members are not observed in the LFS.

5. The reporting period, to which the questions on the economic activity are related, is the week before the week of interview (52 reporting weeks throughout the year).

6. The following units are also defined within the SWTS analysis but are outside the scope of those defined within the international framework of labour market statistics mentioned in item II above:

a. **Relaxed unemployment** – a person without work and available to work (relaxing the jobseeking criteria of item 1b above).

b. **Labour underutilization rate** – the sum of shares of youth in irregular employment, unemployed (relaxed definition) and youth neither in the labour force nor in education/training (inactive non-students) as a percentage of the youth population.

c. **Regular employment** – the sum of employees with a contract (oral or written) of 12 months or more in duration and employers; the indicator is therefore mixes information on status in employment and contract situations.

d. **Satisfactory employment** – based on the self-assessment of the jobholder; implies a job that the respondent considers to “fit” their desired employment path at that moment in time.

e. **Stable employment** – employees with a contract (oral or written) of 12 months or more in duration.

f. **Temporary employment** – employees with a contract (oral or written) of less than 12 months in duration.

Annex II. Additional statistical tables

Table A1. Household size of youth population by area of residence (%)

	Urban	Rural	Total
Less than 5 members	18.8	20.1	19.4
5 to 9 members	47.7	51.1	49.2
10 to 14 members	25.1	19.9	22.7
15 to 19 members	7.0	5.0	6.1
20 or more members	1.4	3.9	2.5
Total	100	100	100

Note: *Due to lower numbers reported, these estimates may not be precise.

Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

Table A2. Age of first marriage (mean and median) by sex, level of education and area of residence

Characteristic	Mean	Median
Sex		
Female	20.5	20
Male	23.5	24
Total	21.8	21
Education		
None	20.5	20
Elementary	20.2	21
Secondary junior	23.0	24
Secondary senior	25.9	26
University & above	25.0	25
Not stated	22.7	23
Total	22.2	22
Area of residence		
Urban	22.8	22
Rural	21.1	21
Total	21.8	21

Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

Table A3. Health issues and disabilities in youth population by sex (%)

Health issue	Female	Male	Total
Eye sight			
No difficulty at all	89.9	95.2	92.4
Some difficulty	8.3	3.6	6.1
Much difficulty	1.3	1.0	1.2
Completely difficult	0.5	0.1	0.3
Total	100	100	100
Hearing			
No difficulty at all	96.9	97.4	97.1
Some difficulty	2.5	1.8	2.2

Much difficulty	0.6	0.4	0.5
Completely difficult	0.0	0.4	0.2
Total	100	100	100
Walking			
No difficulty at all	90.3	92.5	91.3
Some difficulty	8.2	5.9	7.1
Much difficulty	1.0	0.8	0.9
Completely difficult	0.5	0.8	0.6
Total	100	100	100
Memory/concentration			
No difficulty at all	89.7	94.7	92.0
Some difficulty	9.3	5.0	7.3
Much difficulty	0.8	0.0	0.4
Completely difficult	0.3	0.3	0.3
Total	100	100	100
Difficulties in selfcare			
No difficulty at all	96.5	97.2	96.8
Some difficulty	3.2	2.0	2.7
Much difficulty	0.0	0.5	0.2
Completely difficult	0.3	0.3	0.3
Total	100	100	100
Communicating			
No difficulty at all	95.1	97.8	96.3
Some difficulty	4.3	1.8	3.1
Much difficulty	0.4	0.1	0.3
Completely difficult	0.3	0.3	0.3
Total	100	100	100

Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

Table A4. Previous residence of youth and reason for moving by sex (%)

Original residence	Female	Male	Total
Rural area	17.2	24.5	20.5
Small town	17.2	11.8	14.7
Metropolitan area	12.2	7.3	10.0
Large city	48.3	42.1	45.5
Another country	5.1	14.3	9.3
Total	100	100	100
Reason for moving			
To accompany family	50.1	46.5	48.5
For education/training	17.6	23.8	20.4
For employment	1.7	14.5	7.4
Other reason	30.6	15.2	23.8

Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

Table A5. Number of jobs applied to and interviews attended by unemployed youth in previous 12 months (%)

	Job applications	Interviews faced
None	75.8	88.7
1 to 5	21.8	11.3
More than 5	2.4	0
Total	100	100

Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

Table A6. Current students by preferred place of future employment (%)

	Female	Male	Total
Self-employment	14.8	9.7	12.4
Government	68.1	58.3	63.4
Private company	12.5	24.9	18.5
International organization	2.6	5.0	3.8
Family business	1.2	2.0	1.6
Do not wish to work	0.7	0.0	0.4
Total	100	100	100

Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

Table A7. Wage and salaried young workers by type of contract and duration of contract by sex (%)

Type of contract	Female	Male	Total
Written contract	45.1*	46.3	46.1
Oral agreement	54.9*	53.7	53.9
Total	100	100	100
Period of duration for limited duration contracts			
Less than 12 months	53.1	69.8	67.2
12 months to less than 36 months	14.3*	12.1*	12.4*
36 months of more	32.6*	18.1*	20.4*
Total	100	100	100

Note: *Due to lower numbers reported, these estimates may not be precise.

Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

Table A8. Main challenges of self-employed youth (%)

Main challenge	(%)
Insufficient financial resources	69.4
Insufficient quality of staff	1.3
Insufficient (personal) business expertise	0.9
Legal regulations	0.9
Shortages in raw materials	3.3
Labour shortage	7.7
Access to technology	1.9
Product development	1.9

Competition in the market	4.6
Other	8.2
Total	100

Source: LDES-Liberia, 2012.

Table A9. Employed youth by duration of job search, number of jobs applied to and interviews attended prior to attaining current job by sex (%)

Duration	Female	Male	Total
Less than 1 month	58.7	48.7	53.8
1 to 3 months	11.2	12.2	11.7
3 to 6 months	3.2	7.1	5.7
6 months to 1 year	3.0	5.3	4.1
More than 1 year	23.9	26.6	25.2
Total	100	100	100
Number of jobs applied to			
0	86.3	78.1	82.3
1 to 2	9.5	10.7	10.1
3 to 4	3.0	8.5	5.7
5 or more	1.2	2.7	1.9
Total	100	100	100
Number of interviews faced			
0	95.2	89.9	92.6
1 to 2	4.6	6.1	5.3
3 to 4	0.2	3.8	2.0
5 or more	0.0	0.3	0.1
Total	100	100	100

Source: SWTS-Liberia, 2012.

Table A10. Enterprises by number of workers trained, type and place of training and training provider (%)

	(%)
Number of workers trained	
Less than 5	62.3
5 to 25	24.3
More than 25	13.4
Total	100
Type of training	
Job related education/training	96.6
Non job related education/training	3.5
Place of training	
On the job informal	30.6
Classroom, on premises	41.5
Classroom, off premises	19.4
Other	8.5
Total	100

Training institution	
Enterprise	58.4
A private sector training institution	28.2
A government training institution	8.4
Other	5.0
Total	100

Source: LDES-Liberia, 2012.

Table A11. Enterprises: Most significant consequence of hard-to-fill vacancies (%)

	(%)
No impact at all	42.3
Loss of business	10.4
Delays in development of new products	12.9
Difficulties in meeting customer service objectives	8.6
Difficulties in meeting quality standards	17.2
Increased operating costs	3.1
Other	5.5
Total	100

Source: LDES-Liberia, 2012.



This report presents the highlights of the 2012 School-to-work Transition Survey (SWTS) and Labour Demand Enterprise Survey (LDES) run together with the Liberian Institute of Statistics and Geo-information Services within the framework of the ILO Work4Youth Project. This Project is a five-year partnership between the ILO and The MasterCard Foundation that aims to promote decent work opportunities for young men and women through knowledge and action. The W4Y Publication Series is designed to disseminate data and analyses from the SWTS administered by the ILO in 28 countries covering five regions of the world. The SWTS is a unique survey instrument that generates relevant labour market information on young people aged 15 to 35 years. The survey captures longitudinal information on transitions within the labour market, thus providing evidence of the increasingly tentative and indirect paths to decent and productive employment that today's young men and women face.

The W4Y Publication Series covers national reports, with main survey findings and details on current national policy interventions in the area of youth employment, and regional synthesis reports that highlight regional patterns in youth labour market transitions and distinctions in national policy frameworks.

Work4Youth



For more information, visit our website: www.ilo.org/w4y
Youth Employment Programme
4 route des Morillons
CH-1211 Genève 22
Switzerland
youth@ilo.org

ISSN 2309-6799