



**Quantitative Analysis and Modelling  
of Youth Not in Education, Employment  
and Training (NEET 15 – 24 years old)**

**Country Report | Rwanda**



# **Quantitative Analysis and Modelling of Youth Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET 15 - 24 years old)**

**Country Report: Rwanda**



UN WOMEN: Quantitative Analysis and Modelling of Youth Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET 15 - 24 years old). Country Report: Rwanda  
By Helen Perry, November 2021

East and Southern Africa Regional Office

UN Gigiri Complex, UN Avenue;

Block M, Ground Floor

P.O. Box 30218- 00100 Nairobi, Kenya

Tel: +254 20 762 4778

[africa.unwomen.org](http://africa.unwomen.org)

Email: [esaro.publications@unwomen.org](mailto:esaro.publications@unwomen.org)

 [unwomenafrica](https://www.facebook.com/unwomenafrica)

 [unwomenafrica](https://twitter.com/unwomenafrica)

 [unwomen](https://www.youtube.com/unwomen)

 [unwomenafrica](https://www.instagram.com/unwomenafrica)

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS .....	7
1 INTRODUCTION .....	8
2 SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE.....	10
2.1 Demographic profile by sex and age .....	10
2.2 Economic growth and structure of the economy in Rwanda.....	11
2.3 Employment profile by sex .....	11
2.4 Unpaid care and domestic work by sex.....	12
2.5 Poverty profile by sex and age.....	13
3 ANALYSIS OF THE RLFS 2019 SURVEY: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS.....	14
3.1 Definition of NEET .....	14
3.2 Population of youth by sex and age (15-24).....	16
3.3 Overview of youth by activity status .....	17
3.4 Education profile of youth .....	18
3.5 Employment profile of youth.....	20
3.6 Profile of NEET youth by sex .....	22
3.7 Additional characteristics of NEET youth .....	24
4 DETERMINANTS OF YOUTH NEET .....	27
4.1 Structure of the model .....	27
4.2 Findings of the model.....	28
5 NEET POLICY AND PROGRAMMES.....	30
5.1 Increased access to education and training.....	30
5.2 Transition from school to work.....	30
5.3 Underage marriage and cohabitation.....	30
6 REFERENCES.....	31
7 DATA.....	33

## List of Tables

Table 1: Total number of youths included in the survey by sex and age (15-24).....	16
Table 2: Percentage and ratio of women to men by age group (15-24).....	17
Table 3: Percentage of youth by activity status – NEET; employed; employed and in education; and in education only, by sex and age (15-24) .....	18
Table 4: Percentage of all youth by highest level of education, sex and age (15-24).....	19
Table 5: Reasons for youth wanting work but not seeking by sex and age (15-24).....	24
Table 6: Reasons for youth wanting work but not seeking by sex and age (15-24) .....	29

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Youth population and youth as a percentage of the total population from 2000 projected to 2030 by sex and age (15-24) .....	10
Figure 2: GDP per capita and GDP growth rates projected to 2026 .....	11
Figure 3: Percentage of all youth employed by sex and age (15-24).....	12
Figure 4: Percentage of total population living in extreme poverty in selected East and Southern African countries by sex .....	13
Figure 5: Percentage of youth population living in extreme poverty by sex and age (15-24) .....	13
Figure 6: Population by sex and age (15-24) .....	16
Figure 7: Percentage of youth by activity status – NEET; employed; employed and in education; and in education only, by sex and age (15-24). .....	17
Figure 8: Percentage of all youth by highest level of education attained sex and age (15-24) .....	19
Figure 9: Percentage of youth employed by sex and age (15-24) .....	20
Figure 10: Percentage of employed youth by highest level of education, sex and age (15-24) .....	21
Figure 11: Percentage of youth employed by type of employment, sex and age (15-24) .....	21
Figure 12: Percentage NEET youth by sex and age (15-24).....	22
Figure 13: Percentage of total NEET by highest level of education, sex and age (15-24) .....	22
Figure 14: Unemployed youth as a percentage of the labour force by sex and age (15-24) .....	23
Figure 15: Married or cohabiting NEET and EET youth as a percentage of .....	25
Figure 16: Average time spent on household tasks in hours per week by sex and age (15-24) .....	26
Figure 17: Average hours of work in family agriculture, paid and unpaid by sex and age group (15-24).....	26

# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ALMP	Active labour market policies
ESA	Eastern and Southern Africa
GDP	Gross domestic product
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LMIC	Low to middle income country
NEET	Not in education, employment or training
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RLFS 2019	Rwanda's Labour Force Survey 2019
SDG	Sustainable development goals
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UN DESA	United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UN Population Division	United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division Population Division
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UN Women ESA-RO	UN Women Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office
UNW	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

# 1

## INTRODUCTION

Neither good quality education nor productive employment is universally available to the world's youth. The ILO, in their *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2020* estimate that:

*One-fifth of young people currently have NEET status, which means they are neither gaining experience in the labour market, nor receiving an income from work, nor enhancing their education and skills. Clearly, their full potential is not being realized, though many may be contributing to the economy through unpaid work, which is particularly true of young women.* (ILO 2020a)

Rwanda over the past 20 years has had greater economic growth than population growth, education access has expanded but employment opportunities have yet to improve for young adults, especially young women. In Rwanda, 35% of women and girls between the ages of 15 and 24 and 26% of young men in this age group are not in education, employment or training (NEET).



Source: UN GIS 2018

While development efforts and declining poverty rates in the region were slowly improving the overall outlook for these young men and women, the COVID-19 pandemic threatens to roll back these gains (UN Women 2020a). Young women are disproportionately affected by NEET status - early marriage, unpaid domestic work, taking care of family members and fewer opportunities to take up work which may be seen as inappropriate or unsafe for young women all play a role in the NEET status of young women. NEET status is also more likely to become a permanent state for young women with the NEET rate in many developing countries declining very little for young women between 25 and 34 years of age ten years later (ILO 2020a)

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have led to job losses and increases in poverty – especially in the urban centres. Schools and educational institutions have been closed for extended periods. Development initiatives, healthcare services and nutrition levels have all declined since 2020 (UN Women 2020). Young adults whose place in the labour market is often informal, temporary and tenuous at best have seen greater job and income losses than their parents. Increased numbers of young adults are likely to be lost to the education system. Young women are more vulnerable to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Interrupted education, economic and food insecurity, disruptions in services, unplanned pregnancy, all increase the risk of early marriage (UNICEF and UNFPA 2021).

To ensure that recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic also reduces the number of youth NEET, especially young women, the UN Women Eastern and Southern African Regional Office has commissioned a quantitative research report on the status of youth NEET in twelve East and Southern African countries. This report constitutes the investigation into the status and determinants of NEET in Rwanda. The report analyses data from Rwanda's Labour Force Survey 2019 (RLFS 2019).

First, the report describes Rwanda's economic and social development context – including the status of women. It then presents a descriptive and a statistical analysis of the data from the RLFS 2019. The statistical analysis will look at the determinants of NEET by developing a logistical regression model that estimates the probability of being NEET. The last section of the report will reflect on the findings of the determinants of NEET in the light of country policy on gender equity and youth development as well as international literature on youth employment.

# 2

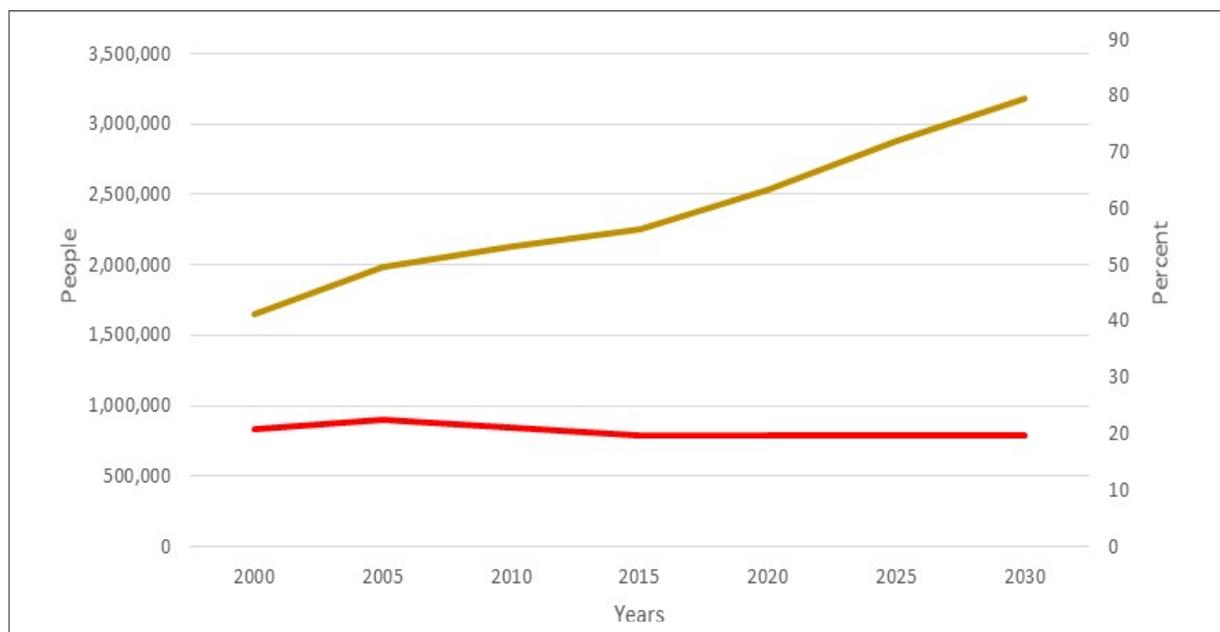
## SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

### 2.1 Demographic profile by sex and age

*Intrinsic to wealth is population growth. This impacts at a macro level in per capita terms, in the labour absorption capacity and in the state's ability to provide services. At a family level without sufficient employment the number of dependents increases and the potential for a spiral of vulnerabilities increases. Those countries whose population growth rate has slowed down "are much better placed to achieve economic take-off and middle-income status."(Bryceson 2018:23)*

Figure 1 shows the projected youth population (left hand axis) in Rwanda as well as the projected youth population as a percentage of the total population (right hand axis). The youth population was estimated to be 2.613 million in 2021 and is estimated to grow to 3.218 million in 2030 (UN Population Division 2019). Over this period, to 2030, growth in the Rwandan youth population is expected to remain between 2.5% and 2.9% per annum.

**Figure 1: Youth population and youth as a percentage of the total population from 2000 projected to 2030 by sex and age (15-24)**



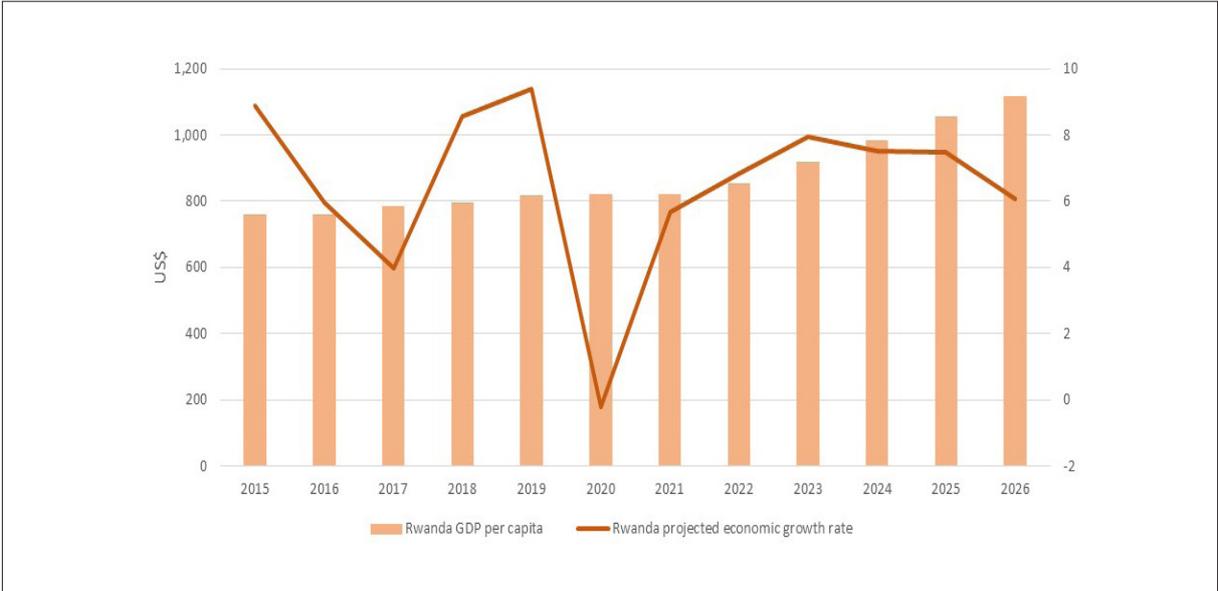
Source: UN Population Division (2019), author's calculations.

Note: Youth is the estimated population ages 15-24.

## 2.2 Economic growth and structure of the economy in Rwanda

Rwanda has seen sustained economic growth over the past decade with government spending on infrastructure and social services impacting on increased employment and human development (AfDB 2021). The Covid-19 pandemic forestalled economic growth in 2020 which was projected to be over 9% in 2020. While 2021 has seen the economy improve with a projected 5.5% growth, the negative impact of Covid-19 on human development has meant that the poverty rate has risen by 5.1 percentage points, there have been reductions in healthcare services and lengthy school closures (World Bank 2021).

Figure 2: GDP per capita and GDP growth rates projected to 2026



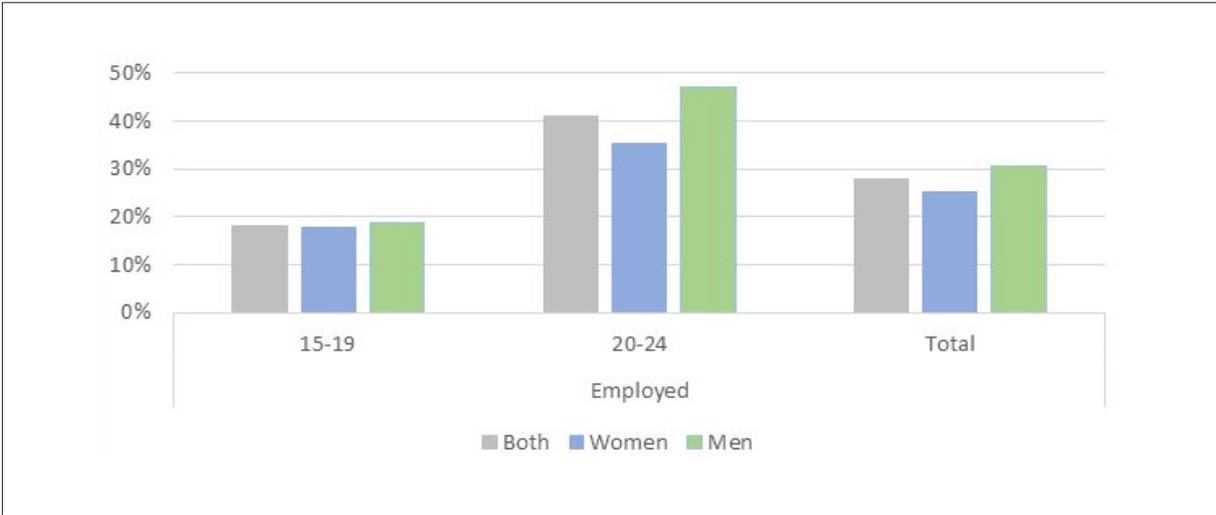
Source: IMF World Economic Outlook Database (2021).

## 2.3 Employment profile by sex

The Rwandan economy, while beginning to diversify, is predominantly agrarian with half of women in Rwanda working in agricultural production – predominantly for household use. This includes young women who are disproportionately involved in family agricultural production. Figure 3 shows the percentage of youth employed by sex and age group. Of the 20–24-year age group, 35% of women are employed and 47% of men are employed. More than half of these women are employed in agricultural production. (ILO 2020b)

Data from the RLFS 2019 shows that young aged 20 and 24 years spend an average of 16.4 hours per week on family farming for income and 18.7 hours on subsistence family farming. The men in this cohort spend less time, indicating an average of 12.7 hours per week on family farming for an income and 16.2 hours per week on subsistence family farming.

**Figure 3: Percentage of all youth employed by sex and age (15-24)**



Source: Rwanda’s Labour Force Survey 2019, author’s calculations.

### 2.4 Unpaid care and domestic work by sex

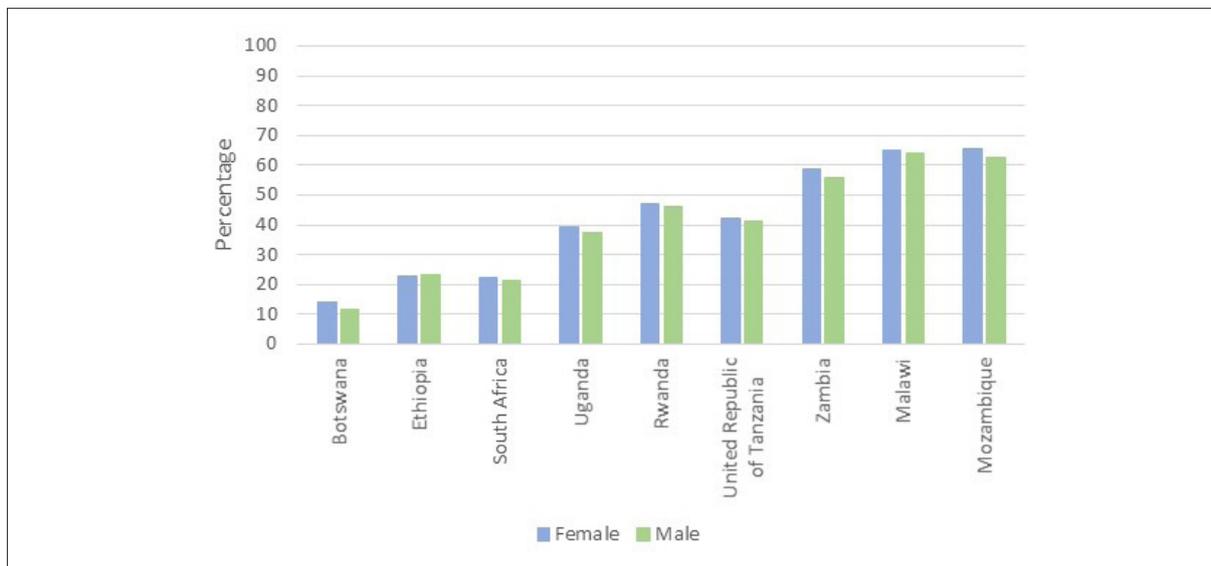
In addition to being the predominant producers of paid and unpaid family agriculture, 15-24 year-old women in Rwanda are also doing more unpaid domestic and care work than their male counterparts. Possibly due to an increasingly equal enrolment in school of girls and boys, the difference between girls and boys in amount of domestic work done by 15-19-year-olds is lower than for the 20-24 age cohort. Women between 15 and 19 years old do an average of 17 hours domestic work per week and men do 12 hours respectively. Women aged 20-24 do an average of 22 hours per week and men of the same age group do 11 hours on average (Data from the RLFS 2019).

The concern that arises from the relative burden of household farming, domestic and care work is that women are potentially permanently excluded from the labour market. The ILO (2020a) finds that the longer a young person stays outside of the labour market the less likely they are to become employed.

## 2.5 Poverty profile by sex and age

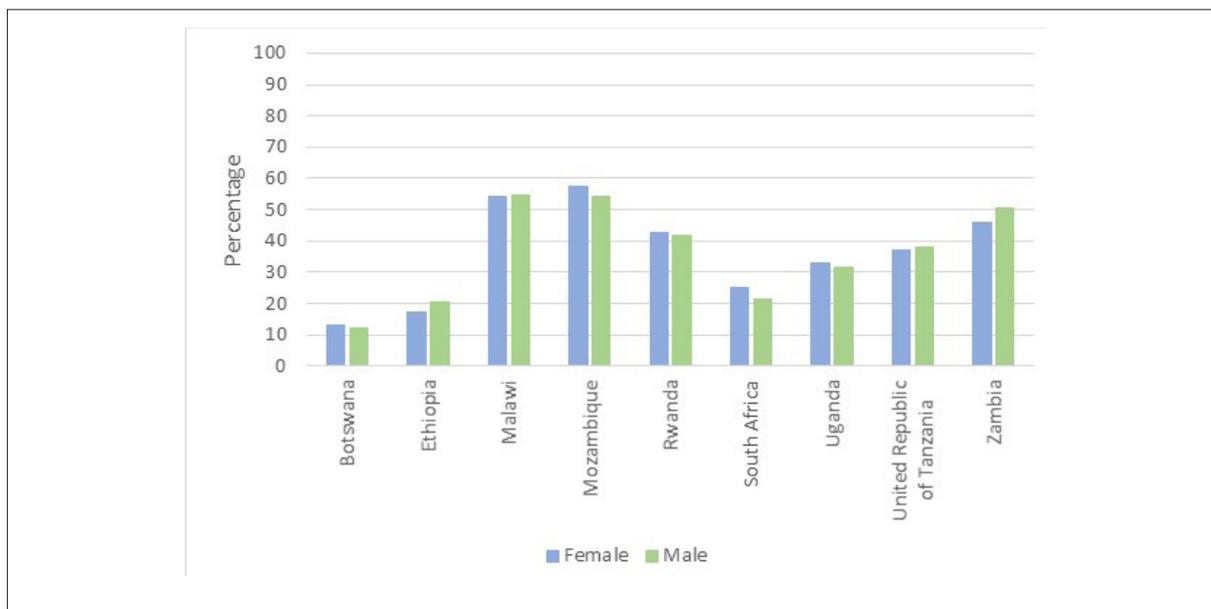
Rwanda's poverty levels decreased from 77% of its population living in extreme poverty in 2001 to 41% in 2020.

**Figure 4: Percentage of total population living in extreme poverty in selected East and Southern African countries by sex**



Source: UN Women et. al. (2020) Annex 4: Estimates and Forecasts of Extreme Poverty by Sex and Age - Population aged 15-24.

**Figure 5: Percentage of youth population living in extreme poverty by sex and age (15-24)**



Note: Extreme poverty is below US\$ 1.90 per person per day in 2011 parity purchasing power (PPP).

Source: UN Women et. al. (2020) Annex 4: Estimates and Forecasts of Extreme Poverty by Sex and Age - Population aged 15-24.

# 3

## ANALYSIS OF THE RLFS 2019 SURVEY: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Rwanda's Labour Force Survey 2019 (RLFS 2019) was conducted by the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda has a sample of 81 778 individuals of all ages, 16 610 of which are youth between the ages of 15 and 24. This country report looks at the profile of youth in the survey between the ages of 15 and 24 who live in the households surveyed and were present at the time of the survey. No data is specifically included on usual household members who may have been absent at the time – either studying and living in hostel accommodation or working and staying in workers' lodgings.

### 3.1 Definition of NEET

The literature review contained in the ESA regional report of this series has a more detailed definition of NEET and employment as well as a discussion of several of the statistical considerations surrounding the calculation of the NEET rate. This will not be repeated in this report, rather a brief definition of NEET and the calculation of the NEET rate is presented.

Youth not in employment, education or training is the indicator of the Sustainable Development Goal 8, Target 6: "By 2020 substantially reduce the proportion of youth aged 15-24 not in employment, education or training". According to UN DESA (2021) the youth NEET rate differs from the youth unemployment rate as it includes the discouraged worker category as well as those who are outside the labour force due to disability or engagement in household chores (ILO 2013).

The NEET rate is calculated as follows:

$$\text{NEET rate (\%)} = \frac{\text{total number of youth aged 15-24} - (\text{number of youth aged 15-24 in employment} + \text{number of youth aged 15-24 in education or training})}{\text{total number of youth aged 15-24}} \times 100$$

It is important to note that the indicator is composed of two different sub-groups – unemployed youth (actively seeking work) not in education or training as well as youth outside the labour force (not actively seeking work) not in education or training. Unemployed youth who are in education and training who should not be counted as NEET.

### Implications of the new international definition of the labour force for NEET rate calculations

Increasingly country level household and labour force surveys are being updated to include questions that return data on employment according to the new international definition established in 2013 by the International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS). This means that there is not necessarily synergy between country data based on surveys using the new definition of employment and the ILO modelled estimates.

This particularly affects countries where large percentages of the population depend on agricultural, fishing or manufacturing for household consumption only. While this remains defined as “work” according the 2013 definition, it is no longer defined as “employment”. As such there is, in some countries, a substantial drop in the proportion of the population employed and an increase in the percentage of NEET – by between 10 and 30 percentage points. This difference is especially apparent for women who are the predominant producers of subsistence agriculture. This paper will be using the new definition of employment for its NEET calculations.

The other consequence of the change in the definition of employment is that time series analysis and tracking of trends with country survey data is problematic and will not be attempted in this paper. It should also be noted that the household surveys in the ILO Stat database do not necessarily contain NEET rates according to the 2013 definition and caution should be exercised when observing changes in the NEET rates over time.

Increasingly country household and labour force surveys are being updated to include questions that  return data on employment according to the new international definition established in 2013 by the International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS). This means that there is not necessarily synergy between country data based on surveys using the new definition of employment and the ILO modelled estimates.

This particularly affects countries where large percentages of the population depend on agricultural, fishing or manufacturing for family consumption only. While this remains defined as “work” according the 2013 definition, it is no longer defined as “employment”. As such there is, in some countries, a substantial drop in the proportion of the population employed and an increase in the percentage of NEET – by between 10 and 30 percentage points. This difference is especially apparent for women who are the predominant producers of subsistence agriculture.

The other consequence of the change in the definition of employment is that time series analysis and tracking of trends with country survey data is problematic. It should be noted that the household surveys in the ILOStat database do not necessarily contain NEET rates according to the 2013 definition and caution should be exercised when observing changes in the NEET rates over time.

### 3.2 Population of youth by sex and age (15-24)

Table 1 and Figure 6 show the number of youths represented in the survey when weighted by their sample weight. There are a total of 2.510 million young women and men between the ages of 15 and 24, of these 1.287 million are women and 1.222 million are men. It appears as if there is a slight undercount in the RLFS 2019 of men in this age group. Table 2 shows the percentage and ratio of women to men in the survey. For the entire age-group the ratio is 1.05. According to the UNDP population estimates for 2019 the ratio of women to men in this age group is 1.009 (In UN Women et. al. 2020). This undercount of young men is typical of most of the surveys analysed for this study. The difference between the two is likely to be due to the greater number of young men who leave the household for education, employment or seeking employment and are living in hostels, at their places of work or sleeping rough and as such they aren't included in the survey.

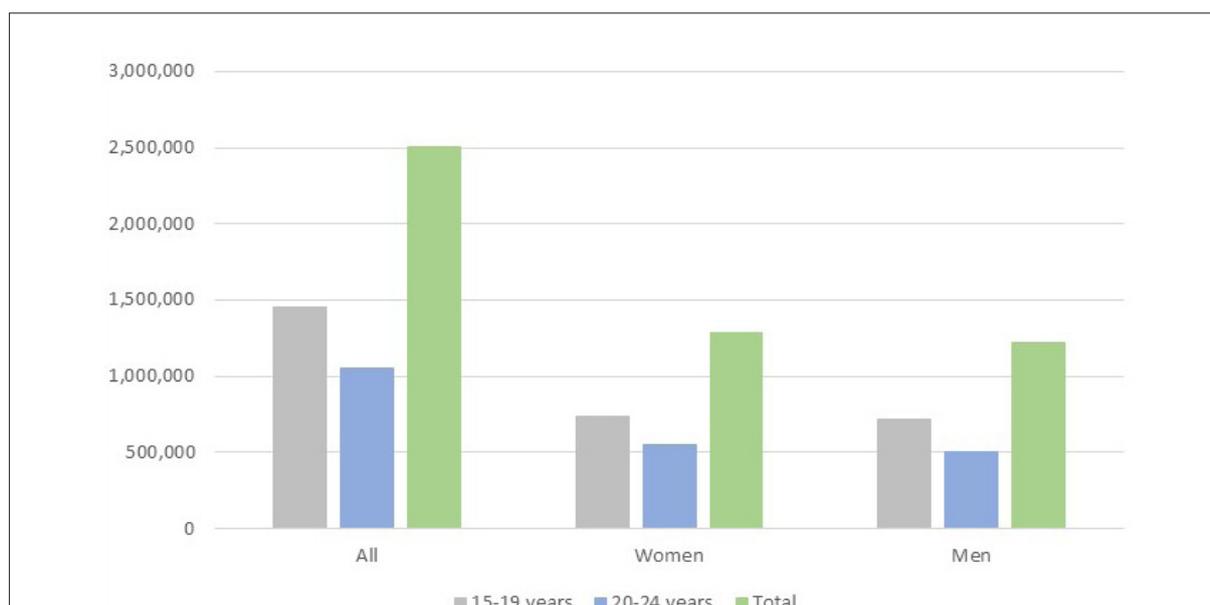
Unfortunately, their absence from the survey does create some confusion in the data analysis. This is most evident in education enrolment where there is secondary data to verify the results. Uganda has more women between 15 and 19 enrolled in school as, as will be seen in later sections, this is not evident from the RLFS. This will be noted where necessary.

**Table 1: Total number of youths included in the survey by sex and age (15-24)**

	Total	Women	Men
15-19 years	1 453 188	738 764	714 424
20-24 years	1 056 420	548 721	507 699
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 509 608</b>	<b>1 287 485</b>	<b>1 222 123</b>

Source: Rwanda's Labour Force Survey 2019, author's calculations.

**Figure 6: Population by sex and age (15-24)**



Source: Rwanda's Labour Force Survey 2019, author's calculations.

**Table 2: Percentage and ratio of women to men by age group (15-24)**

	Women Per cent	Men Per cent	Ratio of women to men
15-19 years	51	49	1.03
20-24 years	52	48	1.08
Total	51	49	1.05

Source: Rwanda's Labour Force Survey 2019, author's calculations.

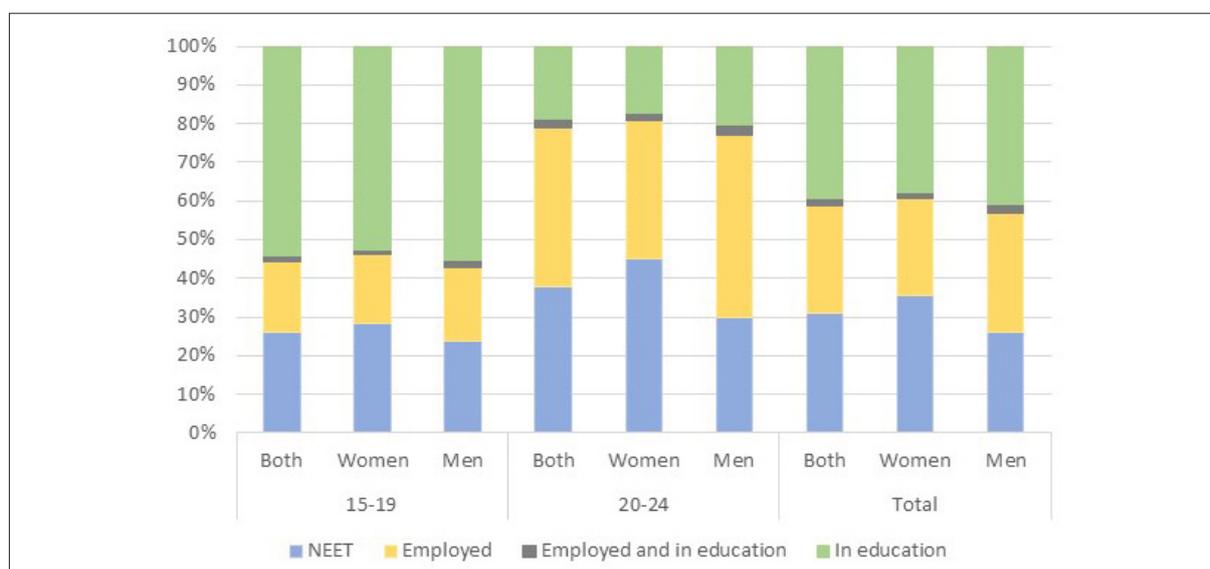
### 3.3 Overview of youth by activity status

Figure 7 shows the percentage of youth by activity status – NEET; employed; employed and in education; and in education only – by sex and age group. Table 3 shows the ratio of women to men of each activity status. The highest percentage of youth NEET are women aged 20-24 (45%). Young men in that age group are much less likely to be NEET (30%) with 47% employed, 20% are in education and 3% are employed and in education. 35% of young women in the 20-24-year age group are employed, 17% are in education and 2% are employed and in education.

In the age group 15-19, the RLFS data shows 52% of women and 55% of men enrolled in education. This is comparable to the statistics for this cohort in other countries in the region such as Malawi with 49% of women and 51% of men enrolled in education and Uganda which has 56% of women and 61% of men in this age group enrolled in education. However, Rwanda has more women in this age cohort enrolled in school than men. In fact, the number of boys in primary school was less than 50% until 2017 and currently 53% of secondary school pupils in Rwanda are women and girls (UNDP Rwanda CO 2020).

Of this age group 18% of women and 19% of men are employed, while 1% and 2% respectively are employed and in education. In this cohort, 28% of women and 24% of men are NEET.

**Figure 7: Percentage of youth by activity status – NEET; employed; employed and in education; and in education only, by sex and age (15-24).**



Note: Education enrolment of women is higher than indicated in this figure due to the lower representation of men in the survey. Source: Rwanda's Labour Force Survey 2019, author's calculations.

**Table 3: Percentage of youth by activity status – NEET; employed; employed and in education; and in education only, by sex and age (15-24)**

	Age Group	Women Per cent	Men Per cent	Ratio of women to men
NEET	15-19	28	24	1.6
	20-24	45	30	1.5
	Total	36	26	1.4
Employed	15-19	18	19	1.4
	20-24	35	47	1.0
	Total	25	31	0.9
Employed and in education	15-19	1	2	0.8
	20-24	2	3	0.8
	Total	1	2	0.9
In education	15-19	53	55	0.8
	20-24	17	20	0.5
	Total	38	41	0.5

Source: Rwanda's Labour Force Survey 2019, author's calculations. Note: Education enrolment of women is higher than indicated in this figure due to the lower representation of men in the survey.

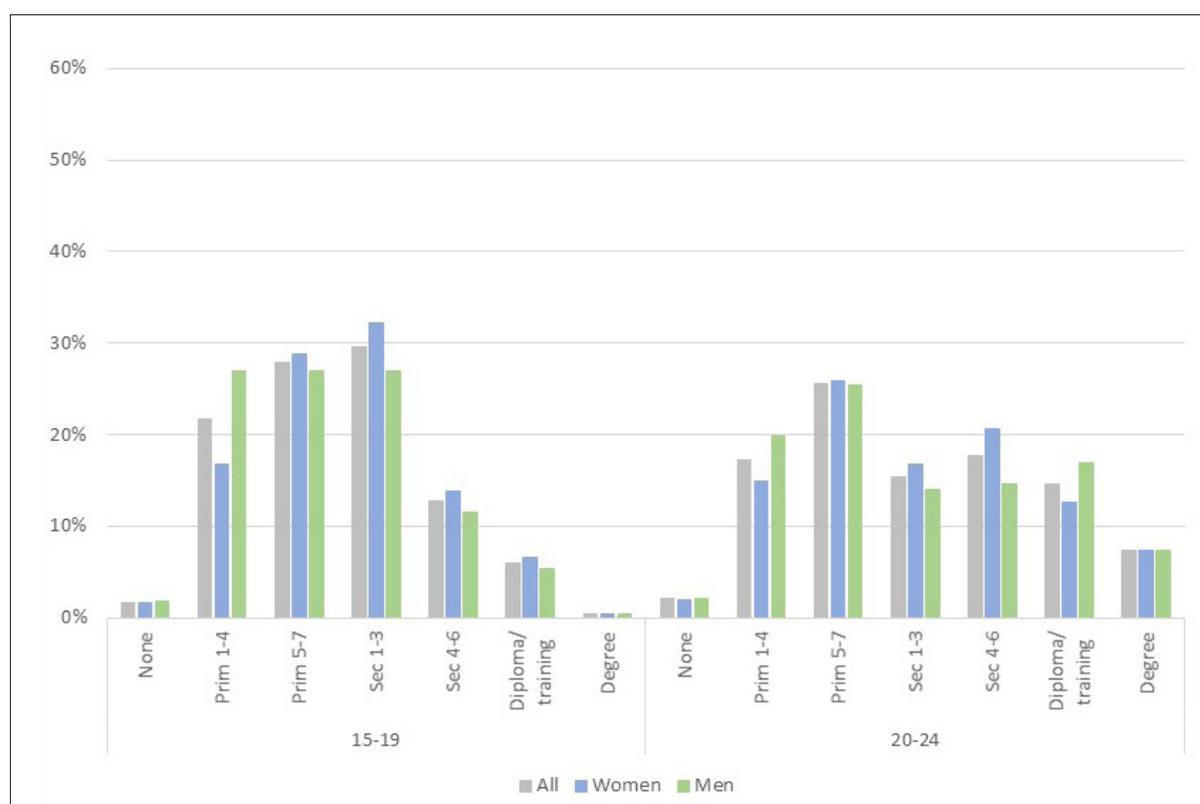
### 3.4 Education profile of youth

Access to education in Rwanda has improved over the past decade due to substantial investments in human capital. This has resulted in provision of primary schooling available to all children. There were more girls than boys enrolled in primary school until 2017 when boys started to be enrolled in higher numbers. Access to secondary education has also been expanding especially for women and girls who made up 53.4% of all secondary school enrolment in 2017. (Bashir et. al. 2018, UNDP Rwanda Country Office 2020). In the RLFS 2019 there 54% of secondary school enrolment is young women.

It should be noted that the RLFS 2019, due to the undercount of men 15-24, it should be noted that *percentages* of men attending each education level is slightly higher than it would be if all men were included in the survey.

Figure 8 and Table 4 shows the percentage of women (46%) and men (38%) between 15 and 19 who are attending or have attained secondary school as their highest level of education. This is a substantial difference in favour of women. As seen by the 27% of men still enrolled in the early grades of primary school compared to 16% of women, young men are falling behind in years of education attained. This is most probably due to having their schooling interrupted by seasonal agricultural work and temporary employment opportunities leading to repeated grades or leaving school temporarily and then restarting.

Figure 8: Percentage of all youth by highest level of education attained sex and age (15-24)



Note: Education enrolment of women is higher than indicated in this figure due to the lower representation of men in the survey. Source: Rwanda's Labour Force Survey 2019, author's calculations.

Table 4: Percentage of all youth by highest level of education, sex and age (15-24)

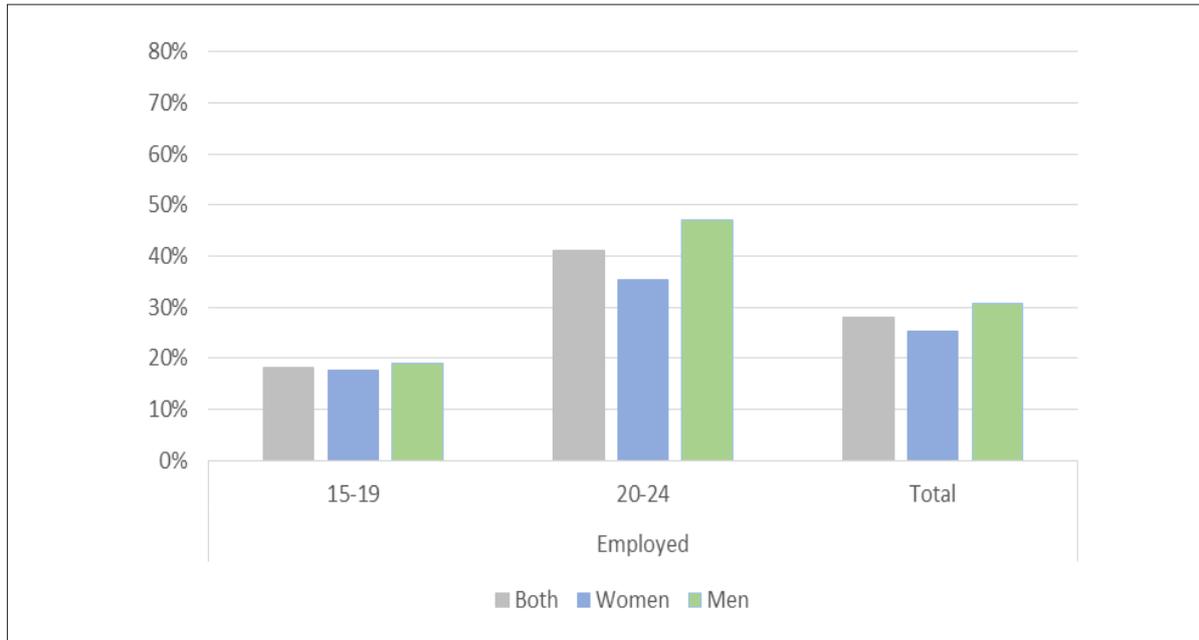
		Women Per cent	Men Per cent	Ratio of women to men
15-19	None	2	2	0.9
	Prim 1-4	17	27	0.6
	Prim 5-7	29	27	1.1
	Sec 1-3	32	27	1.2
	Sec 4-6	14	11	1.3
	Diploma/training	7	5	1.3
	Degree	0	0	0.8
20-24	None	2	2	1.0
	Prim 1-4	15	20	0.8
	Prim 5-7	26	25	1.1
	Sec 1-3	17	14	1.3
	Sec 4-6	21	15	1.5
	Diploma/training	13	17	0.8
	Degree	7	7	1.1

Note: Education enrolment of women is higher than indicated in this figure due to the lower representation of men in the survey. Source: Rwanda's Labour Force Survey 2019, author's calculations.

### 3.5 Employment profile of youth

Figure 9 shows the percentage of youth employed by sex and age group. 18% women and 19.5% of men aged 15-19 are employed; and 35% of women and 48% of men aged 20-24 are employed.

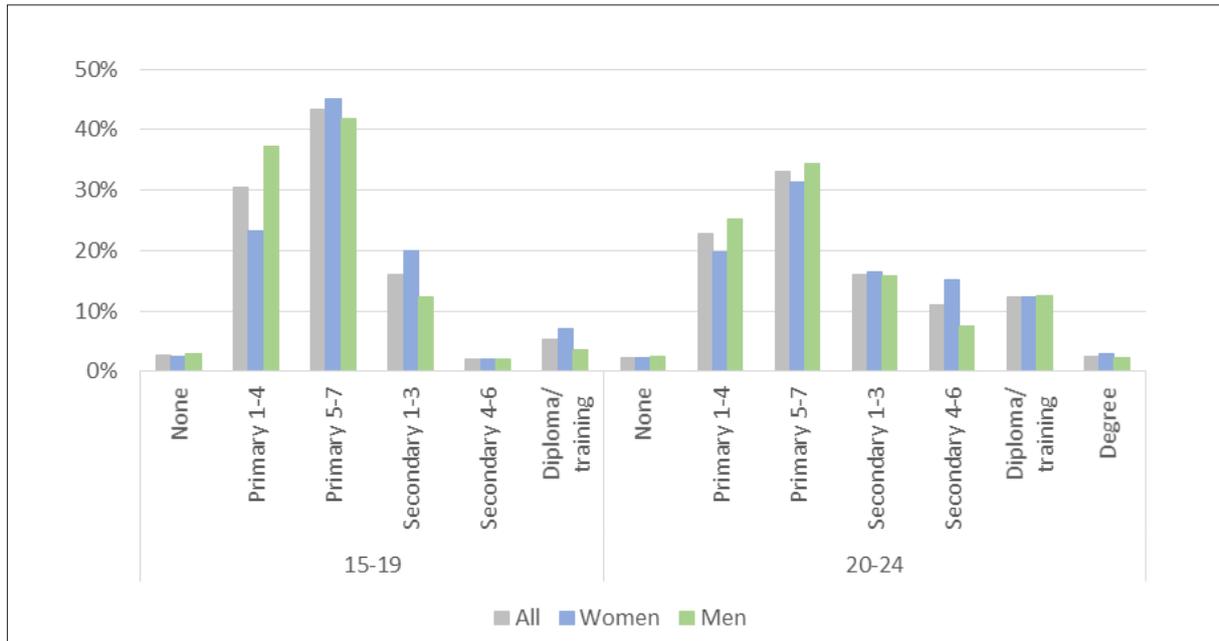
**Figure 9: Percentage of youth employed by sex and age (15-24)**



Source: Rwanda's Labour Force Survey 2019, author's calculations.

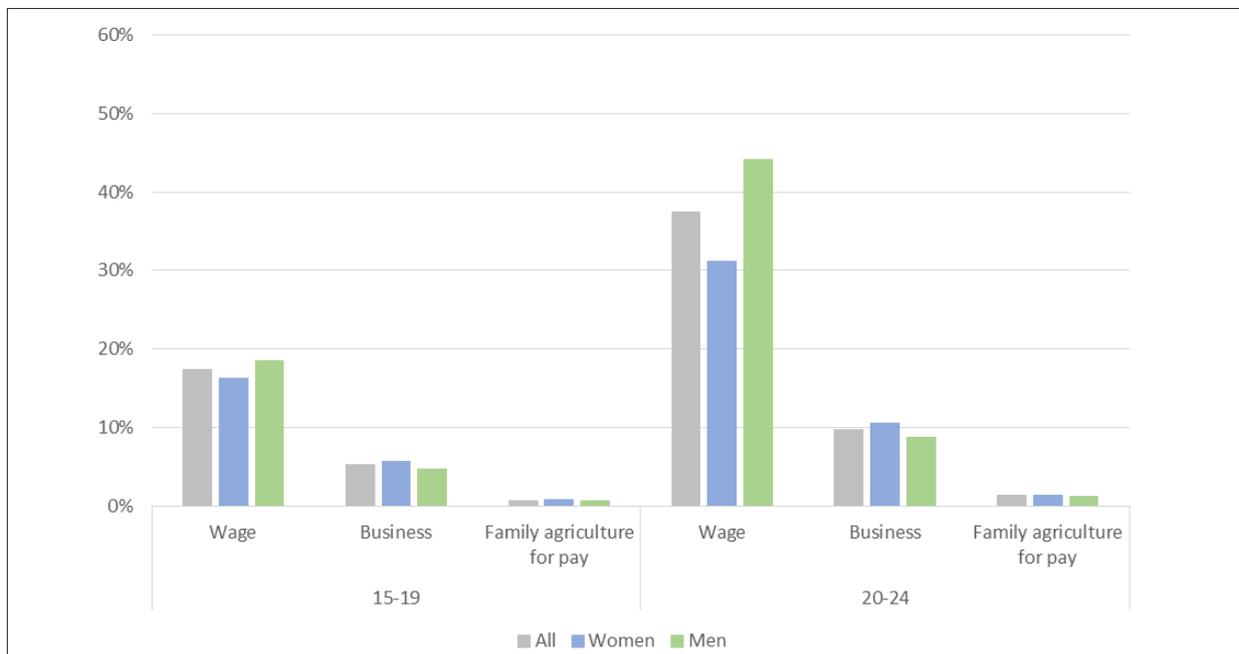
Figure 10 shows the number of employed youth by highest level of education. A greater percentage of men (37%) aged 15-19 have lower primary as their highest level of education than women (23%). This supports the suggestion made earlier that young men take longer to attain higher grades of education as they tend to repeat grades or leave and re-enter school due to seasonal or temporary employment. There are also numerically more women employed who have attained lower secondary as their highest education level—with 28,000 women employed and 19,000 men employed in the 15-19 age group. This trend is also evident in the 20-24 year old age group where 31,000 women and 19,000 men who have attained at least some grades of senior secondary education are employed. These numbers should be treated with some caution as there appears to be an under-representation of men sampled in the survey—as outlined in 3.3.

Figure 10: Percentage of employed youth by highest level of education, sex and age (15-24)



Source: Rwanda's Labour Force Survey 2019, author's calculations.

Figure 11: Percentage of youth employed by type of employment, sex and age (15-24)

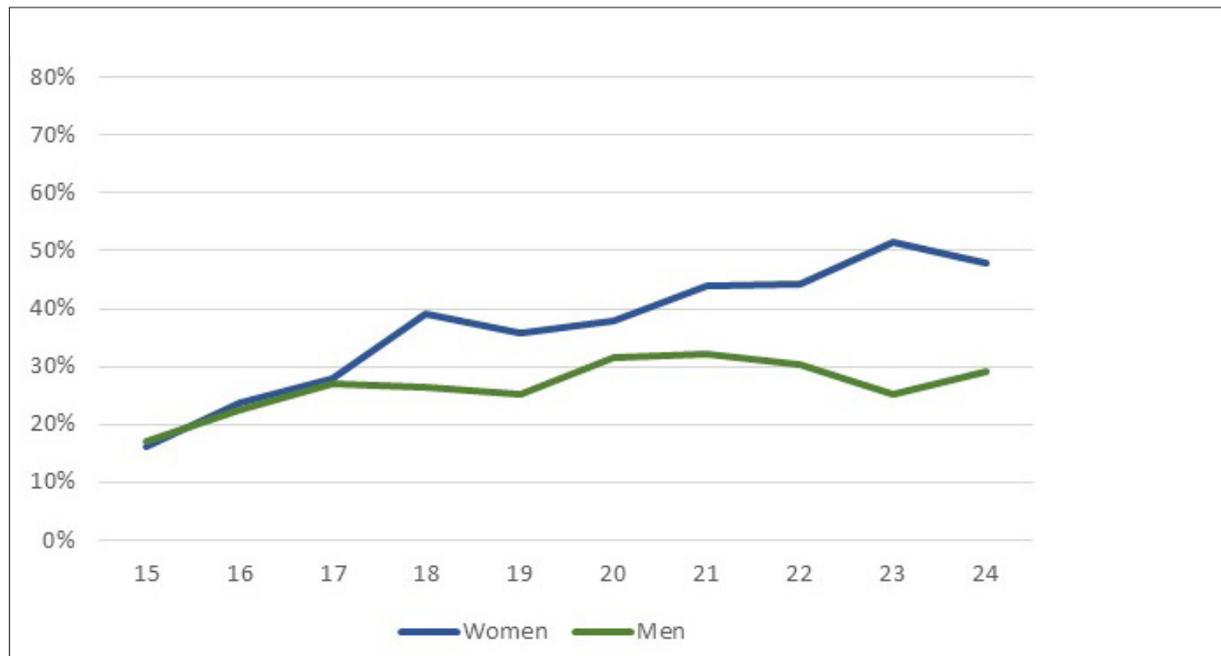


Source: Rwanda's Labour Force Survey 2019, author's calculations.

### 3.6 Profile of NEET youth by sex

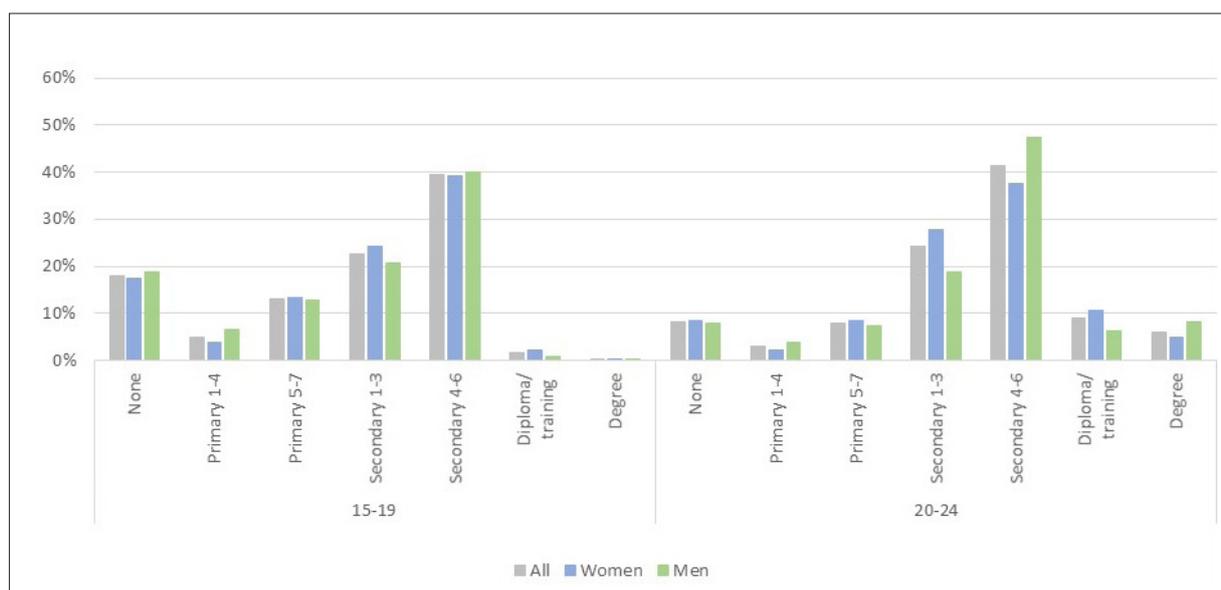
Quite closely mirroring the education enrolment by individual year of age, the NEET rates of young women increase at the age of 18, with 40% of women NEET compared to 28% of men. Women’s NEET rates continue to climb to 24 years of age where it is 49%. Men’s NEET rates remain somewhat steady from 19 to 24, rising slightly between 20 and 22.

Figure 12: Percentage NEET youth by sex and age (15-24)



Source: Rwanda’s Labour Force Survey 2019, author’s calculations.

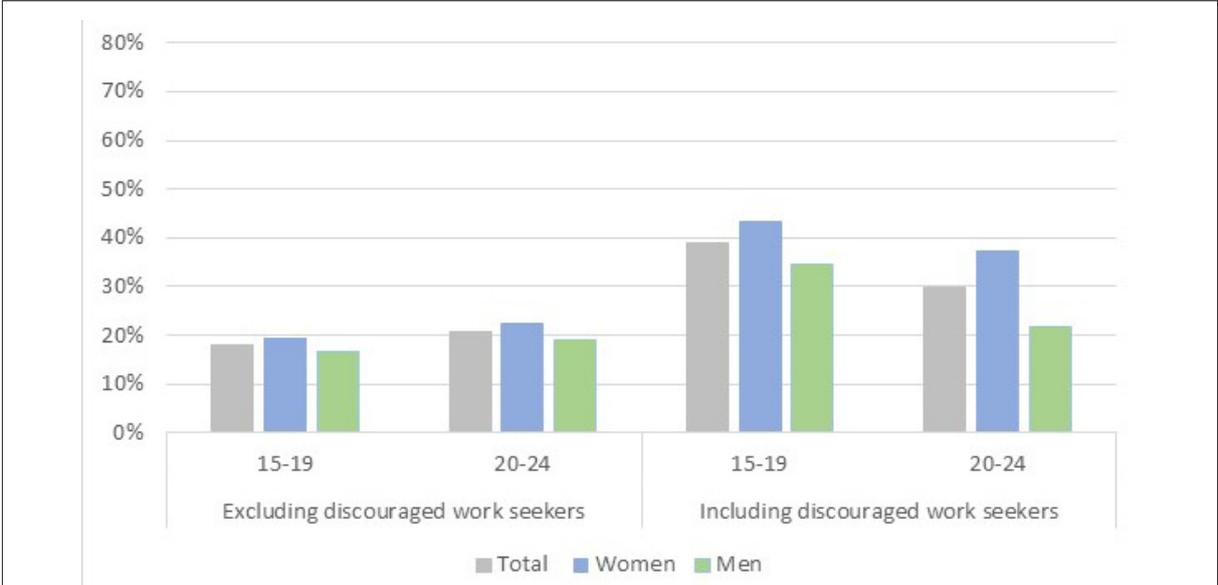
Figure 13: Percentage of total NEET by highest level of education, sex and age (15-24)



Source: Rwanda’s Labour Force Survey 2019, author’s calculations.

NEET includes all youth who are active in the labour market but unemployed, those who are inactive but are discouraged work seekers and those who are inactive. Figure 15 provides a breakdown of the NEET youth in two broad categories, namely those who are unemployed by the narrow definition and the broader definition which includes discouraged work seekers. 33% of women and 25% of men in the 15-19-year-old age group are unemployed by the narrow definition (excluding discouraged work seekers). These figures increase slightly with the 20-24-year-old cohort, namely 35% of women and 28% of men. Using the broader definition (including discouraged work seekers), the unemployment rate is 43% for women and 34% for men aged 15-19. For the ages between 20 and 24, the rate becomes 37% for women and 21% for men.

**Figure 14: Unemployed youth as a percentage of the labour force by sex and age (15-24)**



Source: Rwanda’s Labour Force Survey 2019, author’s calculations.

The RLFS 2019 asks the respondents who self-identified as discouraged work seekers for their reasons for not seeking work. Overwhelmingly the response is that there are no jobs in the area with 60% of women and 65% of men indicating that this is the case. More than one in ten women (12%) and 2% of men say that there are small children to be cared for and 4% of women say that it is because they are pregnant.

**Table 5: Reasons for youth wanting work but not seeking by sex and age (15-24)**

	Women Per cent	Men Per cent
Did look for work	0	1
Considered too young or too old by prospective employers	2	6
Disability	0	0
Estrangement	0	0
Lack of experience, qualification or jobs matching skills	6	8
Lack of infrastructure (assets, roads, transportation, employment services)	1	2
Lack of jobs in the area	60	65
Other sources of income (pension, rent)	1	1
Own illness	4	4
Past failure to find suitable job	8	8
Pregnancy	4	0
Presence of small children	12	2
Refusal by family	2	3

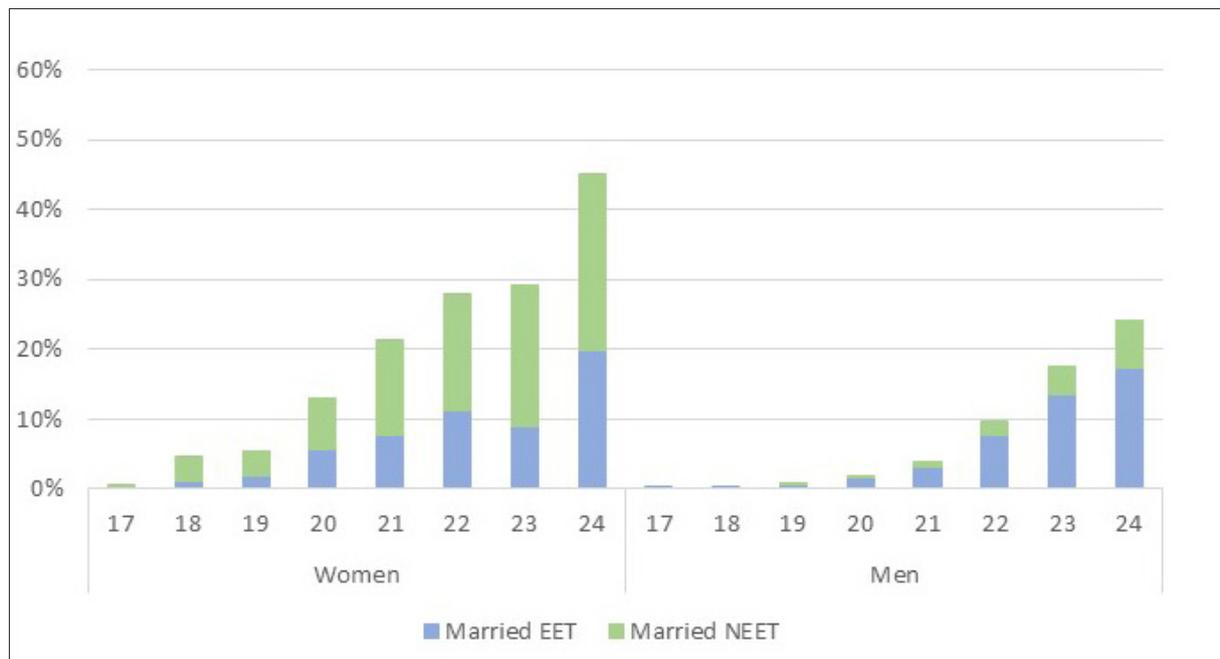
Source: Rwanda's Labour Force Survey 2019, author's calculations.

### 3.7 Additional characteristics of NEET youth

This section looks at some of the characteristics of NEET youth that may affect the reasons for NEET status. These are marriage, the time spent on household and domestic chores and the time spent in family agriculture both paid and unpaid.

Marriage in Rwanda is not legal until the age of 21 and the relatively low marriage or cohabiting rates up to the age of 20 are an indication of this. Figure 16 compares the percentage of youth NEET against those in employment education or training (EET) who are married or cohabiting. The percentage of women married or cohabiting at 18 is 5% and men is less than 1%. For women the percentage married increases to 45% at 24 and to 24% of men. The proportion of women EET to NEET married is roughly 2 to 5 until 24 when the percentage of EET women and NEET women married is approximately the same. By 24 years old only 24% of men are married and these are predominantly EET.

**Figure 15: Married or cohabiting NEET and EET youth as a percentage of youth by sex and age in single years (15-24)**

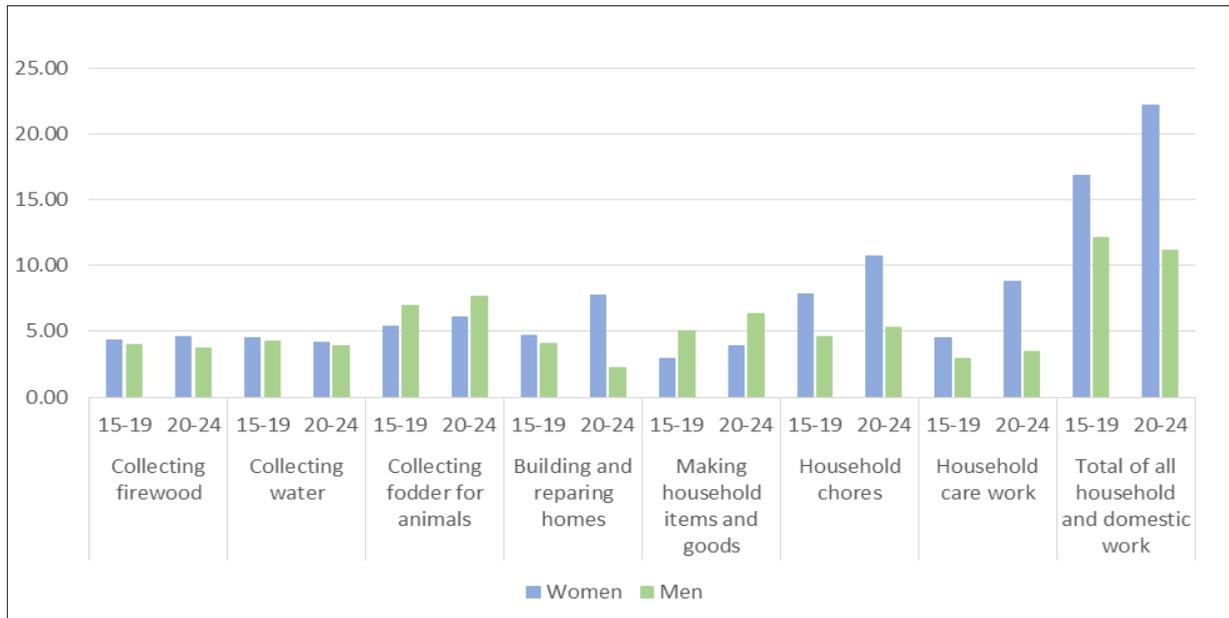


Source: Rwanda's Labour Force Survey 2019, author's calculations.

Figure 16 shows the average number of hours that young people spend on household and domestic work. Young women, in general, spend more time on household tasks than men except for collecting fodder for animals and making household items. Women between the age of 20 and 24 tend to spend the most time engaged in household chores and care work with an average of 22 hours of work per week compared to men of this age who spend an average of 11 hours of per week.

Figure 16 needs to be read in conjunction with Figure 17 which gives the average time spent per week on family agriculture – paid and unpaid. In this regard young women and men are spending close to the same amount of time per week on household work – especially NEET youth. NEET aged 15- to 19 spend close to 19 hours per week on unpaid family agriculture, NEET women 20-24 spend on average 21 hours and NEET men in this age group spend 19 hours on average.

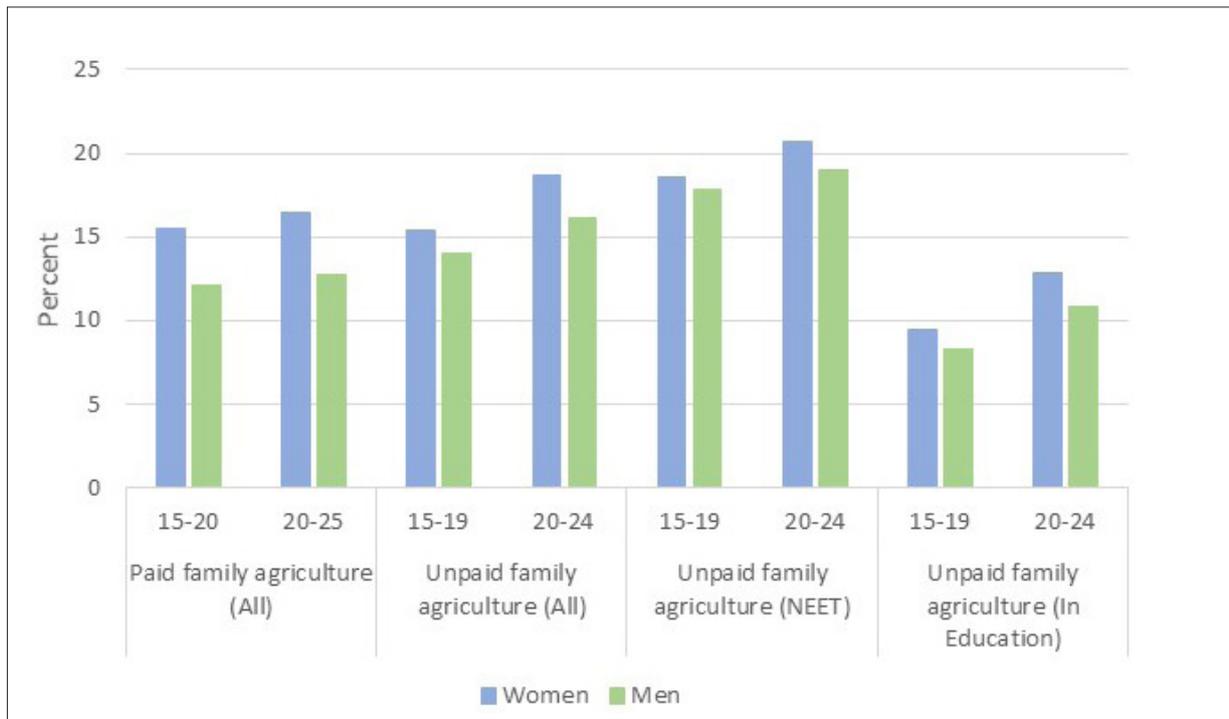
**Figure 16: Average time spent on household tasks in hours per week by sex and age (15-24)**



Note: Average hours are calculated as the weighted average of those respondents who engaged in the task.

Source: Rwanda's Labour Force Survey 2019, author's calculations.

**Figure 17: Average hours of work in family agriculture, paid and unpaid by sex and age group (15-24)**



Source: Rwanda's Labour Force Survey 2019, author's calculations.

# 4

## DETERMINANTS OF YOUTH NEET

The descriptive data from the Rwanda Labour Force Survey showed the differences in female and male youth in terms of their enrolment in education, employment status and NEET status. While younger women in the age group 15-19 are achieving parity in education attainment and even gaining more years of schooling they are not entering the labour market at the same rate as their male peers. Women between the ages of 20 and 24 have the greatest rate of NEET (45%) compared to men in that age group (30%). More than a third (36%) of women are employed, compared to 47% of men; 17% of women and 20% of men in this age cohort are still in education.

In addition to these observations, it is important to attempt to understand what identifiable factors in the Rwandan context determine why women are more likely to be NEET than men. Unlike many of the other countries in this East and Southern African study, marriage was not as high a determining factor in whether women were NEET or not. This is most likely due to the legal age of marriage in Rwanda being 21. In the age group 15-19, women were 3.6 times more likely to be NEET if they were married than not. However, relatively few women in this age group are married. Women aged 20-24-years are 1.8 times as likely to be NEET if they are married. While this is an important finding, women 15-19 are as likely to be NEET if they are engaged in unpaid farm work. Women in the age group 20-24 are almost as likely NEET if they are engaged in unpaid farm work as if they are married.

### 4.1 Structure of the model

The determinants of youth NEET are analysed by applying a binomial logistic regression with NEET status as the dependent variable. Numerous independent variables from the survey data set were coded and tested in the logistic regression for both their strength and statistical significance. Variable choice was guided by previous research as outlined in the literature review, the data collected in the survey and the methodology appropriate to the categorical nature of survey data.

Variables used in the final model are:

*Dependent variable:* NEET or not NEET

*Independent variables:* sex, age group, married, highest level of education, rural/urban, whether the head of household is a woman or not, relationship to head of household, parents living and number of children.

The model is:

$$\log(\pi/(1-\pi)) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 \dots\dots\dots$$

where  $\Pr(Y=1) = \pi$

Due to the relative heterogeneity of NEET observed in the descriptive data both in terms of age group and sex, six separate models were run as follows:

- All 15-24 year-olds.
- Only 15-24-year-old women;
- All 15-19 year-olds.
- Only 15-19-year-old women
- All 20-24-year-olds.
- Only 20-24-year-old women.

Several variables were tested and discarded due to both a lack of meaningful results and a lack of statistical significance. These are outlined in Section 4.2.4.

## 4.2 Findings of the model

**Marriage:** As mentioned in the introduction to this section the legal age of marriage in Rwanda is 21 years old and this is most likely why marriage is not as high a determining factor of women NEET as in most of the other countries in the study. In the age group 15-19, women were 3.6 times more likely to be NEET if they were married than if they are not. However, relatively few women in this age group were married. In the 20-24-year age group women are 1.8 times as likely to be NEET if they are married.

**Education attainment:** As with other countries in the study, increased years of education attainment reduce the probability of being NEET by a significant amount. Attaining primary school reduces the probability of being NEET by 77% for women in the 15-19 age group and by approximately 50% for women in the 20-24 age group. Attaining secondary education reduces the probability of being NEET by 95% in the 15-19-year age group and by close to 60% for 20-24 year olds.

**Unpaid domestic and care work:** The RLFS 2019 has detailed information on how many hours the respondents were involved in household chores and care work. It is important to note that while these only increased the probability of being NEET by about 5%, women between 20 and 24 years old spend twice as much time on household chores as men with an average of 22 hours per week compared to 11 hours per week for men. It is not possible, from the data, to know if the social norms of women being more engaged in domestic and care work prohibits them from entering the labour market; or if the types of paid work that young men are able to look for and engage in are not deemed suitable for young women.

**Engagement in unpaid family agriculture:** Unfortunately, insufficient respondents had data on the hours spent in unpaid family agriculture so the independent variable in the regression model was whether the individual was engaged in unpaid family agriculture or not. Engagement in unpaid family agriculture is most likely to be associated with NEET status in the 15-19-year-old population for whom there is a 3.23 times greater probability of being NEET for both women and men and an 3.45 times greater probability of being NEET for women only. 20-24-year-old women have a 1.73 times greater probability of being NEET if they are engaged in unpaid farm work. This is lower than the increase of 2.05 times the probability for women and men combined in that age group, suggesting that having to be engaged in unpaid labour places more constraints on men's ability to be in education or employed than women.

Since it was not possible to add several factors that might affect women's NEET status such as age of first child, access to community employment projects or socio-economic status of the household it is not possible to know if controlling for these other factors might increase or decrease the impact of those factors that were available.

**Table 6: Reasons for youth wanting work but not seeking by sex and age (15-24)**

		15-24-year-olds		15-19-year-olds		20-24-year-olds	
		Women and men	Women only	Women and men	Women only	Women and men	Women only
Category (omitted variable in parenthesis)	Variable	Coefficients					
Sex (men)	Women	1.04		1.02*		1.18**	
Age group (15-19)	20-24	1.81***	1.81***				
Married (No)	Married	1.52***	1.50**	3.20**	3.55***	1.81	1.85***
Relationship to head of household	Child	3.91***	2.31***	3.32*	3.17	4.11***	2.40***
	Grandchild	3.13***	2.17***	2.27*	2.30	4.01***	3.37***
	Spouse	2.23***	1.50**	2.25*	2.41	1.82***	1.20
	Other adult	0.5	0.32	1.70	1.52	0.46	0.31
Highest level of education (none)	Prim 1-3	0.38***	0.33***	0.27***	0.23***	0.52***	0.45***
	Prim 4-5	0.37***	0.35***	0.26***	0.23***	0.52***	0.53**
	Sec 1-3	0.16***	0.16***	0.06***	0.06***	0.54***	0.59***
	Sec 4-6	0.17***	0.16***	0.04***	0.04***	0.47***	0.41*
	Training	0.15***	0.12***	0.07***	0.06***	0.30***	0.25***
	Higher Ed	0.06***	0.07***	0.05***	0.05***	0.11***	0.11***
Average hours of care work		1.05***	1.05***	1.07***	1.09***	1.05***	1.04***
Average hours doing chores		1.05***	1.05***	1.05***	1.06***	1.05***	1.05***
Engaged in unpaid farm work (no)	Yes	2.61***	2.5***	3.23***	3.45***	2.05***	1.73***
Constant		0.21***	0.38***	0.39*	0.42	0.22***	0.42**

Source: Rwanda's Labour Force Survey 2019, author's calculations.

# 5

## NEET POLICY AND PROGRAMMES

The descriptive statistics and the regression model yield several findings that could contribute to policy aimed at reducing NEET in young women.

### 5.1 Increased access to education and training

Rwanda has universal access to primary school with rapidly expanding access to secondary school. More girls are enrolled in both levels of schooling than boys and are gaining more years of schooling than boys (Crawford 2017, UNDP Rwanda CO 2020). As with many countries in East and Southern Africa the education challenge is to improve the quality of education in schools and to increase enrolment of women in post school education and training. In the budget speech to parliament in 2020 the Minister of Finance committed the government to increasing the budget for education by 52%, predominantly for increasing the number of teachers, school building and textbooks (UNICEF 2020).

### 5.2 Transition from school to work

The RLMS data analysed in this study was able to show the extent of young women's work in unpaid family agricultural production and the higher levels of unemployed and discouraged women work seekers, suggesting several factors that may be preventing women from entering the labour market.

In its *Country Brief* on youth employment in Rwanda the ILO (2020b) outlines the importance of expanding youth employment by “promoting macro-economic and/or sectoral strategies to create wage employment opportunities for young people.” Rwanda's current youth employment policies centre on increasing access to education and training opportunities.

Any strategy for expanding employment would need to prioritise access by young women to suitable employment as well as ways in which women could access employment opportunities such as increased public transport.

### 5.3 Underage marriage and cohabitation

The legal age of marriage in Rwanda is 21 and there are consequently fewer young women in the survey who are married or cohabiting before that age. At 18, 19 and 20 the number of women cohabiting is approximately 6 000, 9 000 and 15 000 respectively.

# 6

## REFERENCES

AfDB. 2021. African Development Bank: Rwanda Economic Outlook. Accessed on 26 October 2021. Available at: <https://www.afdb.org/en/countries/east-africa/rwanda/rwanda-economic-outlook>.

Bashir, S, M Lockheed, E Ninan and J Tan, 2018. Facing Forward: Schooling for Learning in Africa. *Africa Development Forum Series*. Co-published by Agence Française de Développement and the World Bank.

Bryceson, D. 2018. Agrarian Labour and Resources in Sub-Saharan Africa: Gender and Generational Change within Family Farms, 1980–2015. UN WOMEN Discussion Paper Series No. 22, March 2018. UN Women. Accessible at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/3/discussion-paper-agrarian-labour-and-resources-in-sub-saharan-africa>.

Crawford, L. 2017. “Accounting for Repetition and Dropout in Contemporaneous Cross-Section Learning Profiles: Evidence from Rwanda.” RISE Working Paper. Accessed at: <https://riseprogramme.org>.

ILO. 2013. Resolution I: Resolution concerning statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization. From the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians. Geneva, 2–11 October 2013.

ILO. 2020a. “Youth Not in Employment, Education or Training.” ILO/SIDA Partnership on Employment: Brief 3.

ILO. 2020b. Rwanda: Youth Labour Markets and the School-to-Work Transition. ILO Youth Country Brief. Accessed on 15 November 2021 at: [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/documents/publication/wcms\\_760578.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_760578.pdf).

National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR). (2020), Labour Force Survey: Annual report 2019.:NISR: Kigali.

UNICEF, UNFPA. 2021. Act Now: Accelerating gender equality by eliminating child marriage in a pandemic; UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage Annual Report 2020. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/reports/act-now-eliminating-child-marriage>.

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Rwanda. 2020. National Budget Brief Investing in children in Rwanda 2020/21. Accessed on 15 November 2021 at <https://www.unicef.org/rwanda/reports/education-budget-briefs>.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDP). 2021. Sustainable Development Goals Web Page. Available at: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal8> 06/09/2021.

UNDP Rwanda Country Office, 2020. *Rwanda National Human Development Report 2018. Policy Innovations and Human Development: Rwanda's home-grown solutions*. Kigali: UNDP Rwanda Country Office.

United Nations, Geospatial Information Section. 2018. Map of Rwanda. Accessed on 14 November 2021 at <https://www.un.org/geospatial/content/rwanda>.

United Nations Women. 2020. *From Insight to Action: Gender Equality in the Wake of Covid-19*. United Nations: New York.

World Bank. 2021. The World Bank in Rwanda: Overview. Accessed on 14 November 2021 at <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/rwanda/overview#1>.

# 7

## DATA

IMF World Economic Outlook Database. 2021. Accessed on 17 July 2021 at: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/weo-database/2021/April>.

National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR) 2019 Rwanda Labour Force Survey 2019 (RLFS 2019).

UN Women, 2020b. *From Insight to Action: Gender Equality in the Wake of COVID-19*. Annex 4: Estimates and Forecasts of Extreme Poverty by Sex and Age - Population aged 15-24. Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/09/gender-equality-in-the-wake-of-covid-19>.

World Bank PovcalNET data. Accessed on 17 July 2021 at: <https://povertydata.worldbank.org/poverty/home/>







East and Southern Africa Regional Office  
UN Gigiri Complex, UN Avenue;  
Block M, Ground Floor  
P.O. Box 30218- 00100 Nairobi, Kenya  
Tel: +254 20 762 4778

[africa.unwomen.org](http://africa.unwomen.org)

Email: [esaro\\_publications@unwomen.org](mailto:esaro_publications@unwomen.org)

 [unwomenafrica](https://www.facebook.com/unwomenafrica)

 [unwomenafrica](https://twitter.com/unwomenafrica)

 [unwomen](https://www.youtube.com/unwomen)

 [unwomenafrica](https://www.linkedin.com/company/unwomenafrica)