

Conclusion

By exploring both wealth and wellbeing, the Africa Prosperity Report provides a broad overview of Africa's performance. In line with the "Africa Rising" narrative, the 2014 Africa Prosperity Report confirms great successes across the continent in terms of Economy and Entrepreneurship & Opportunity but at the same time it unveils serious problems in Health, Education and Safety & Security. These structural problems match with the issue that the vast majority of the African population is excluded from benefits of current economic growth, which may undermine future prosperity in Africa.

Unlocking the large human capital potential by empowering disadvantaged groups such as women, youth and the poor is critical for boosting inclusive growth in Africa. In particular, as discussed in the report, well-educated people, female entrepreneurs, and the middle classes deserve attention.

The African education system fails to provide individuals with the right set of skills needed in the labour market. In the first chapter of the report we looked at impediments to education quality and how these might be solved in part by integrating technology and indigenous knowledge into education systems.

Data show that African children lack the fundamental hard and soft skills necessary for sustained economic progress. The Tanzanian education system provides a good case study into the factors, both on the demand and supply side, which contribute to the poor performance of the African education system. On the demand side the main factors that decrease access to education include economic constraints and cultural norms, which predominantly penalise girls. On the supply side the lack of provision of school infrastructure, inadequate curricula, overcrowded classes, teacher's absenteeism, and poor learning outcomes play a role in keeping children out of school.

Improving the basic education system and providing the right set of employable skills remain the biggest challenge

for Tanzania and many other African nations. Beyond that, expanding post-school training opportunities in colleges and universities would further improve the education system. It is becoming increasingly clear that a concerted effort is needed from governments, business, civil society, and local communities.

Introducing e-learning and giving more space to indigenous knowledge in the traditional curricula and teaching methods can help to improve education quality and the relevance of the subjects taught. As mentioned by Njideka U. Harry for example, the provision of MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) can help reach remote rural communities that generally suffer most from lack of access to education; support teachers' learning; and complement traditional teaching methods. Policies such as these require continued investment, particularly in the expansion of ICT infrastructure in African countries. By giving more space to indigenous knowledge, Africa would be able to improve the school curricula which have not fundamentally changed since independence, and soften the mismatch between what students learn at school and the challenges they face in their countries.

With regards to entrepreneurship, despite efforts to promote business across Africa, women are often left out. As discussed in the second chapter, in addition to cultural barriers and prejudices, women often lack access to finance as well as support for their family and they often receive differential access to social networks and property rights, which are often fundamental requirements for starting a business. Experimental networks and leadership centres have proven successful in reducing social barriers for women to engage in entrepreneurship.

Many governments in Africa have taken steps to support gender equality and Rwanda offers a best practice example: the inclusion of women in governance has helped to enact many reforms to improve the business environment, which ultimately have benefitted women entrepreneurs. In the other hand, Egypt is a less promising case. Indeed, the already female-

unfriendly Egyptian business environment has worsened in the aftermath of the Arab Spring. Initiatives that support the private sector's expansion need to be scaled up and linked with targeted incentives to support women's empowerment and a more active participation in entrepreneurial activities. This is especially important because women tend to invest in the long-term prosperity of their families and communities. This will lead to greater economic empowerment, reduced poverty and ultimately to increased prosperity and wellbeing.

Finally the middle class, if well managed, could be a key factor in transforming prosperity in African countries. In line with the special feature written by Prof. Ncube and based on his most recent book "The Emerging Middle Class in Africa", the third chapter of this report showed that the middle class has well-defined consumption patterns, better education, lives in better houses, has better access to media, and has more stable jobs. Moreover, the middle class is generally more satisfied with their living standards and education, has more confidence in the government and a better perception of the job and business environment.

The middle class has a double role in driving prosperity: its higher income and consumption can increase the continent's economic growth and help rebalance the African economy; and its set of values and attitudes, if well managed, can improve the country's socio-political environment. Retail and fast food chains are scrambling for African consumers especially in countries like Nigeria but at the same time data show that Nigerians are engaged socially and politically. Although the characteristics of female entrepreneurs, well-educated people and the middle classes can contribute separately to greater African prosperity, the real power occurs when all three combine.

Better educated people are more active in the labour market and have greater opportunities to become entrepreneurs and to generally be successful in business. This will, in turn, result in

more people rising to middle-class status. In turn a growing middle class help to support education, by pressing for better education quality, and promote entrepreneurial activities, by demanding for new products and services. In addition, the middle-class can also have a positive effect on gender equality in African societies, by increasing girls' enrolment in school and new entrepreneurial opportunities for women. However, this would also require changes that correct the gender bias in the current cultural practices and norms as well as in regulations and laws.

Providing women with better access to education would not only help to unlock women's potential for entrepreneurial activities and support the expansion of the middle class but also contribute to social development. Indeed, education leads to reduced fertility rates, lowered maternal and child mortality rates, and increased investment in children's education. Investing in female education and women's empowerment will enable African women and girls to realise their full potential and will create a multiplier effect on productivity, efficiency, and sustained economic growth and prosperity. Closing the gender gap is thus not simply a matter of gender equality; it is a matter of human rights, economic potential, child protection and development, and efficiency.

Supporting and promoting better educated people, female entrepreneurship and a stable and rising middle class is a way of empowering women, the young, and the poor. Unlocking this great human capital potential will lead to more prosperous countries where the majority of the population benefits from Africa's economic growth.

Unlocking the large human capital potential by empowering disadvantaged groups such as women, youth, and the poor is critical for boosting inclusive growth in Africa.