



African Institute for Development Policy

Bridging Development Research, Policy and Practice

Demography and COVID-19 in Africa Evidence and Policy Responses to Safeguard the Demographic Dividend

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Overview

- Background and objectives of the webinar series
- Morbidity and Mortality from COVID-19 in Africa
- Measures to control the pandemic and implications
- Key recommendations

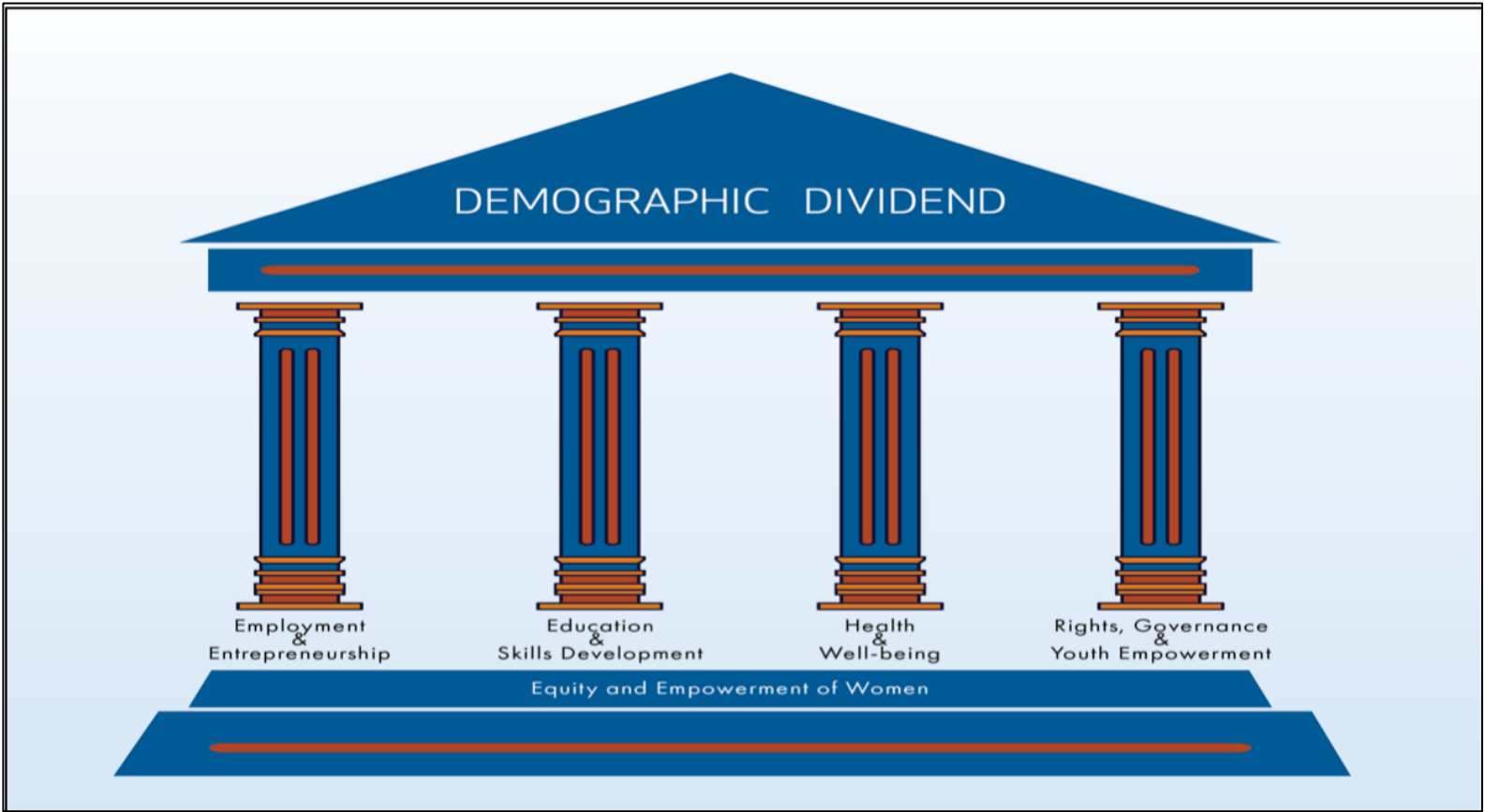
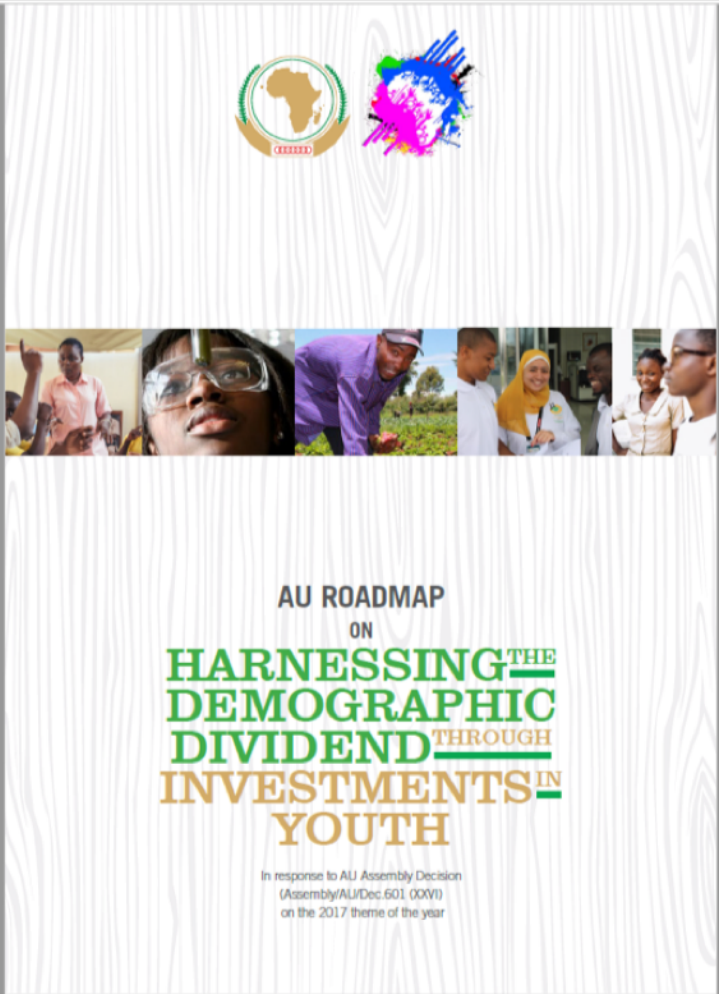
Background

- Compared to the rest of the world, Africa is youthful. The United Nations (UN) estimates that 60% of Africa's population is under 25 years of age compared to a global average of 41%.
- The region can capitalise on this youthful population to benefit from the *Demographic Dividend (DD)*.

What is the Demographic Dividend (DD)?

- It is the **economic benefit** arising from a **significant increase** in the ratio of **working-age adults** relative to young dependents.
 - ✓ When **birth rates decline significantly**, the age structure shifts in favor of **more working-age adults**, which can help accelerate economic growth through **increased productivity**, **greater household savings**, and **lower costs for basic social services** provided to children
 - ✓ The DD is not guaranteed by the shift in age structure alone but must be accompanied by investments in human capital development (health; education and skills) and promoting an enabling environment that provides opportunities for decent jobs

The African Union and Member States have prioritised the Demographic Dividend as a pathway to inclusive prosperity



Source: AUC 2017

Webinar series objectives

- 5-part webinar series
- To create a space for sharing a demographic perspective on the impacts of COVID-19 with partners on the continent, considering its implications for Africa to reach a demographic dividend and achieve the SDGs.
- Develop policy recommendations that South Africa and the continent can implement now and in the post-pandemic period to safeguard the DD

Partners



- Department of Social Development (DSD), South Africa - Lead
- Statistics South Africa
- British High Commission to South Africa and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)
- African Union (AU) and Africa CDC
- African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP)
- Union of African Population Studies (UAPS)
- Population Association of Southern Africa (PASA)

Key questions addressed during the webinar series

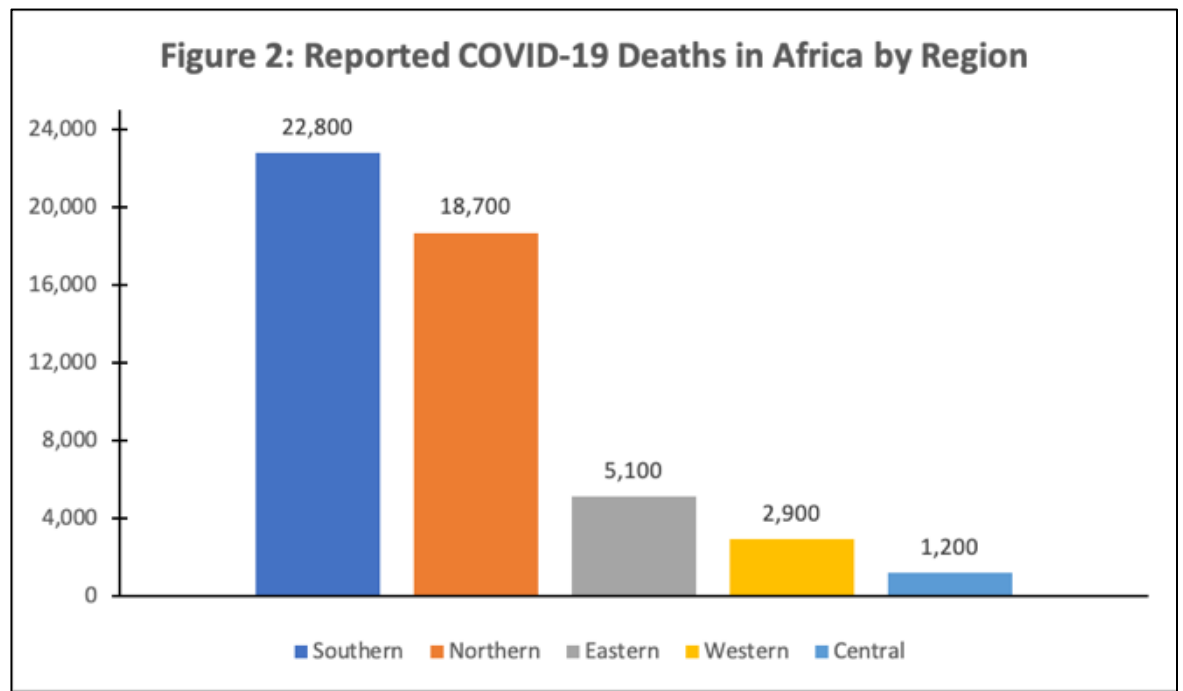
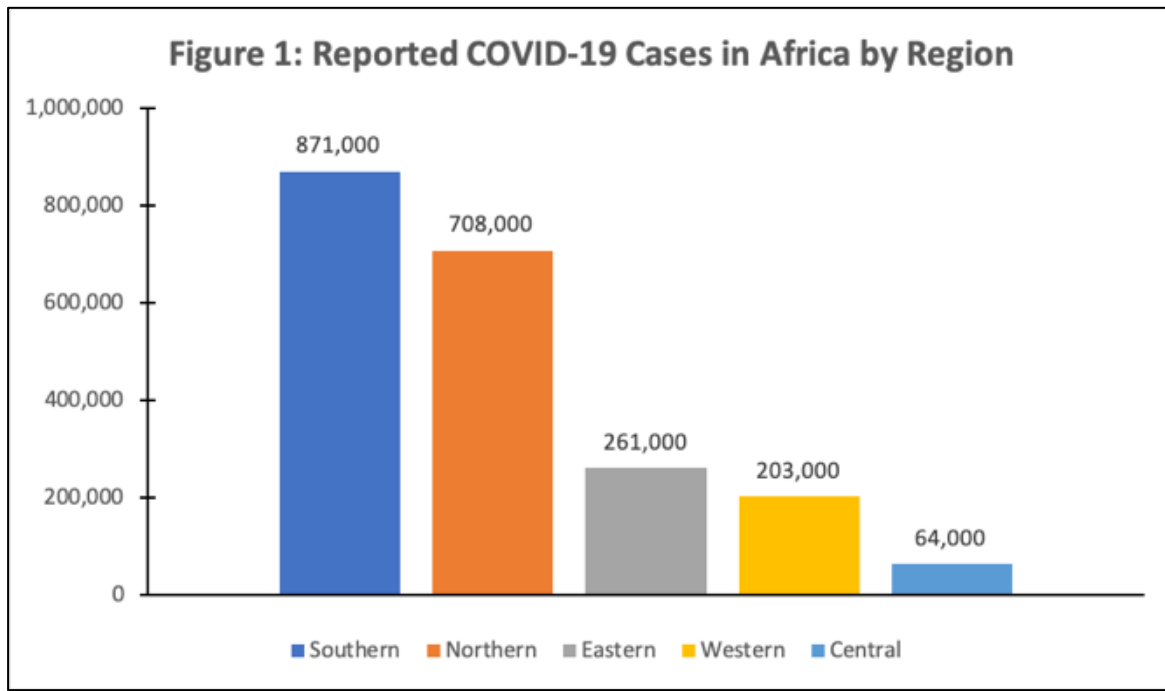
1. How do demographic age structures and indicators influence the way COVID-19 spreads in and affects a population?
2. What has been learnt about data, indicators and the measurement thereof to monitor and evaluate the impact of COVID-19 and to inform governments' responses?
3. What are the possible implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on progress towards a positive and inclusive demographic dividend in South Africa and the rest of Africa?
4. What lessons can we learn from Africa's response to COVID-19? Develop policy recommendations that South Africa and the continent can implement now and in the post-pandemic period to safeguard the DD

Morbidity and Mortality from COVID-19 in Africa

- First case of COVID-19 in Africa reported in Egypt on 14 February 2020.
- Optimism and concern for Africa at the beginning
 - Would Africa's relatively young population provide a protective shield?
 - Would higher prevalence of infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS compared to other world regions put it at higher risk than the rest of the world?
 - Would weak health systems in the continent cope or be overwhelmed?
 - Will the climate have an impact?

Fewer reported cases and deaths..... So far

- 2.1 million deaths and 50,628 deaths as of 26th November 2020, representing 3.5% of global cases and 3.6% of global deaths



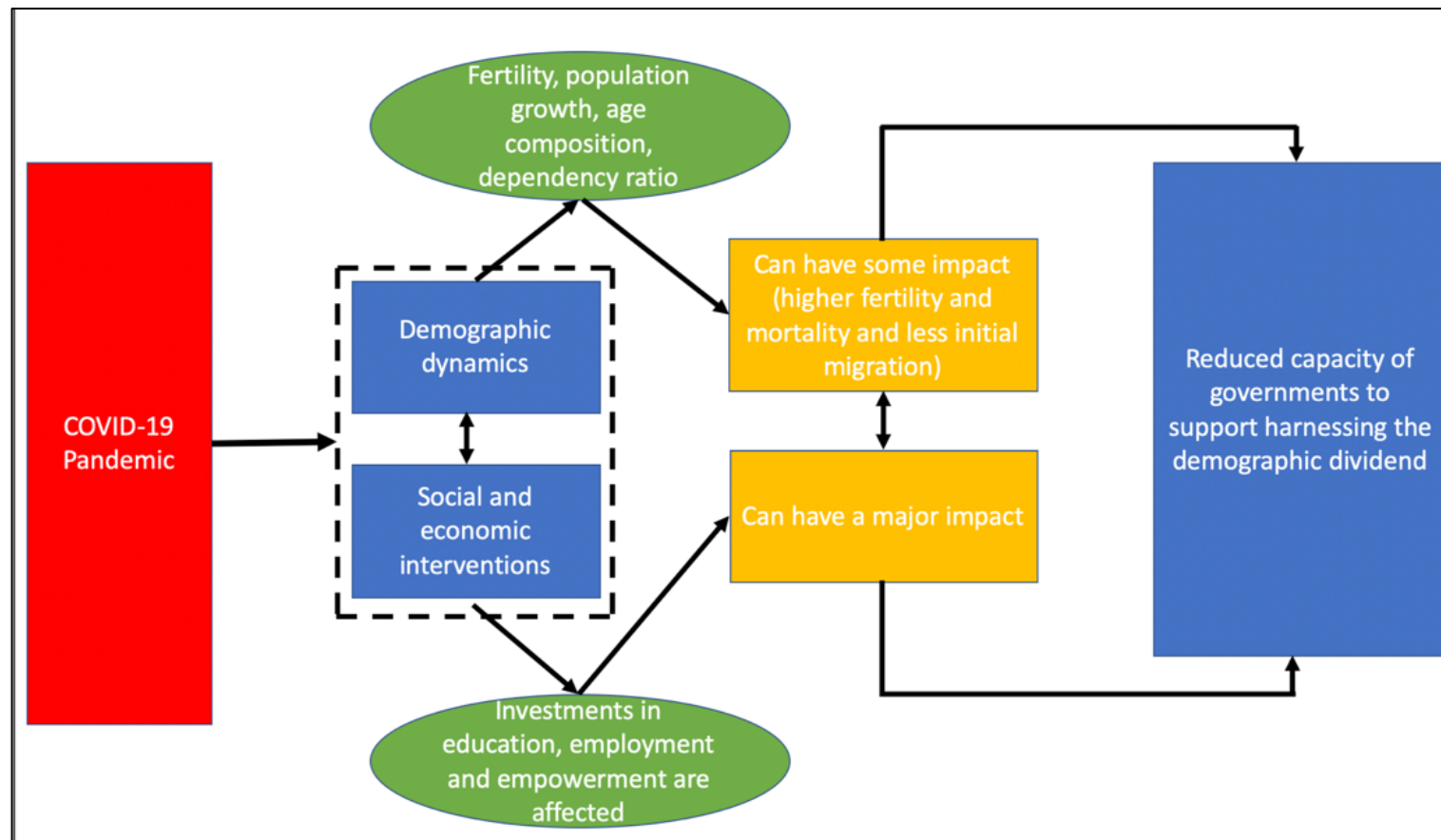
Source: Africa CDC official Regional Collaborating Centre and Member States reports (26/11/2020)

Key measures by African governments to control the pandemic

- i. Public health measures on hygiene including measures to improve hand-washing and mandating the use of face masks.
- ii. Mass screening and testing.
- iii. Social distancing and limiting public gatherings.
- iv. Closure of schools and training institutions.
- v. Movement restrictions within countries ranging from night-time curfews, partial lockdown and national lockdowns.
- vi. International travel restrictions including full border closures and international air traffic closures.

Possible impact of COVID-19 on the DD

Summarized conceptual framework for main effects on Africa's DD



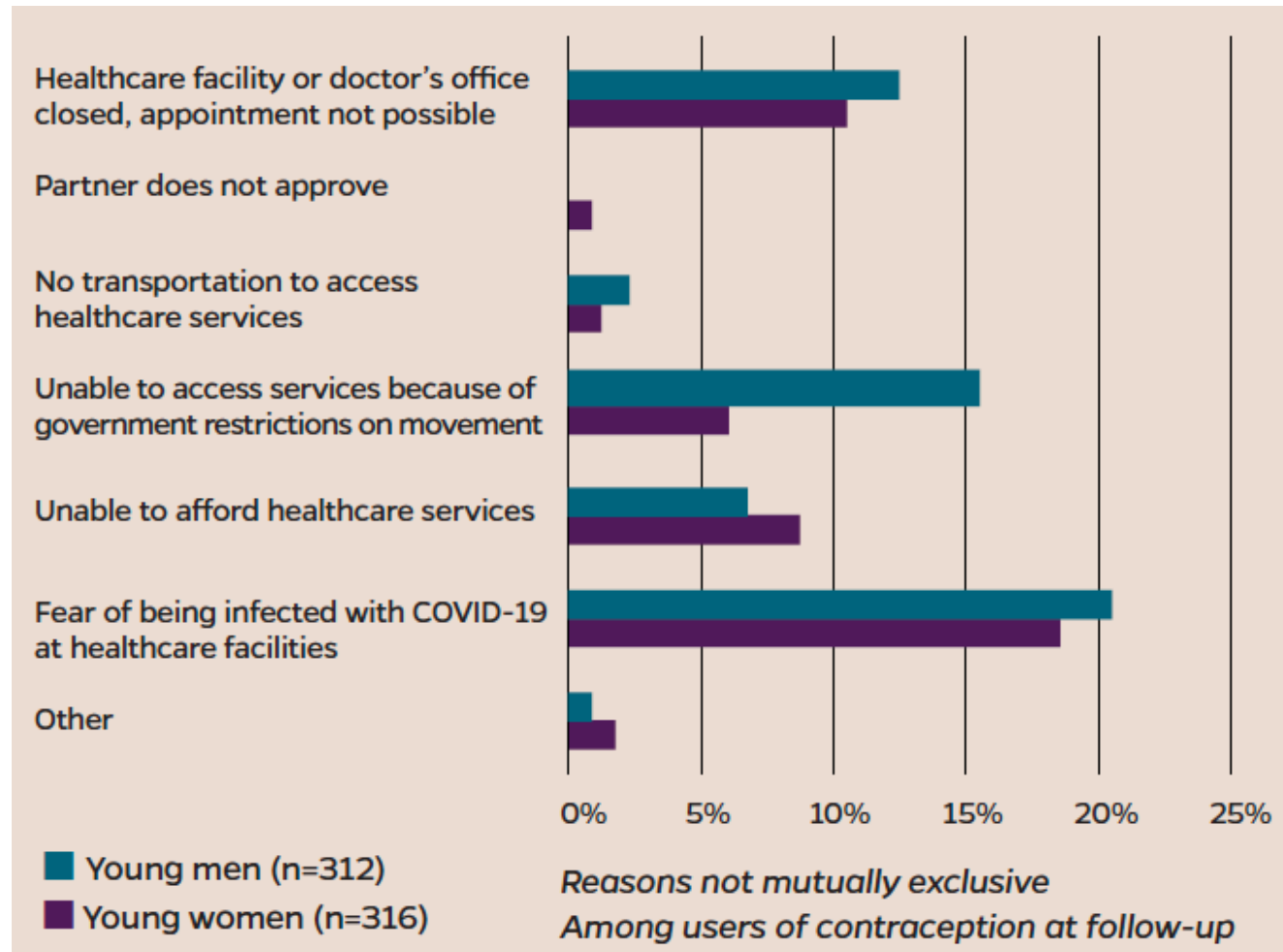
Source: Adapted from presentation by Jose Manuel Guzman (2020)

Impact: Health

- Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) services disrupted
 - Stock outs of FP commodities due to disruptions of supply chains
 - Closure of service delivery points
 - Reduced access to services due to movement restrictions and fear of contracting COVID-19 at facilities
- Emerging evidence on increased unwanted pregnancies/teenage pregnancies
- Reports of increased Sexual and Gender-based violence
- Increased mental illness
- Disrupted vaccination campaigns and diversion of resources away from other critical healthcare needs

Example from study in Kenya

Disruptions to contraception for adolescents and young adults (age 15-24) in Nairobi during the pandemic



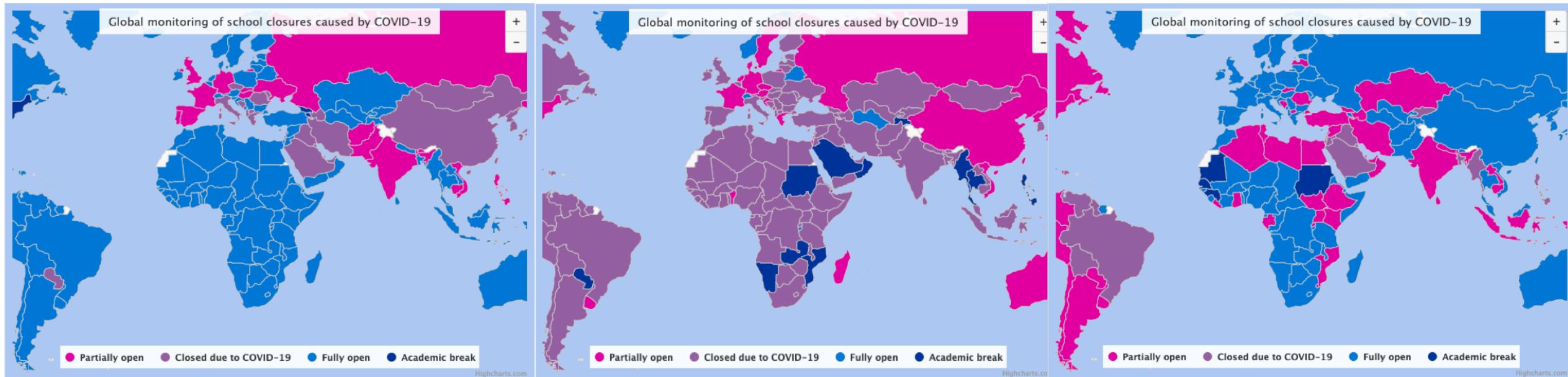
Source: PMA Agile/Gender and ICRHK (2020)

Education and training has been massively disrupted

March 10, 2020

May 10, 2020

November 10, 2020



Source: UNESCO

Implications for Education and Training

- Learning disrupted and education years lost
- Drop-outs

UNESCO estimates that about 5.3million learners in sub Saharan Africa (from pre-primary to university level), are at risk of not returning to school in 2020

- Child marriages and teen pregnancies
- Rising inequality

Mitigation strategies

- Continuity of learning strategies including:
 - Online learning including the use of teleconferencing platforms
 - Delivery of curriculum through radio and television
 - Partial re-opening of schools

Challenges

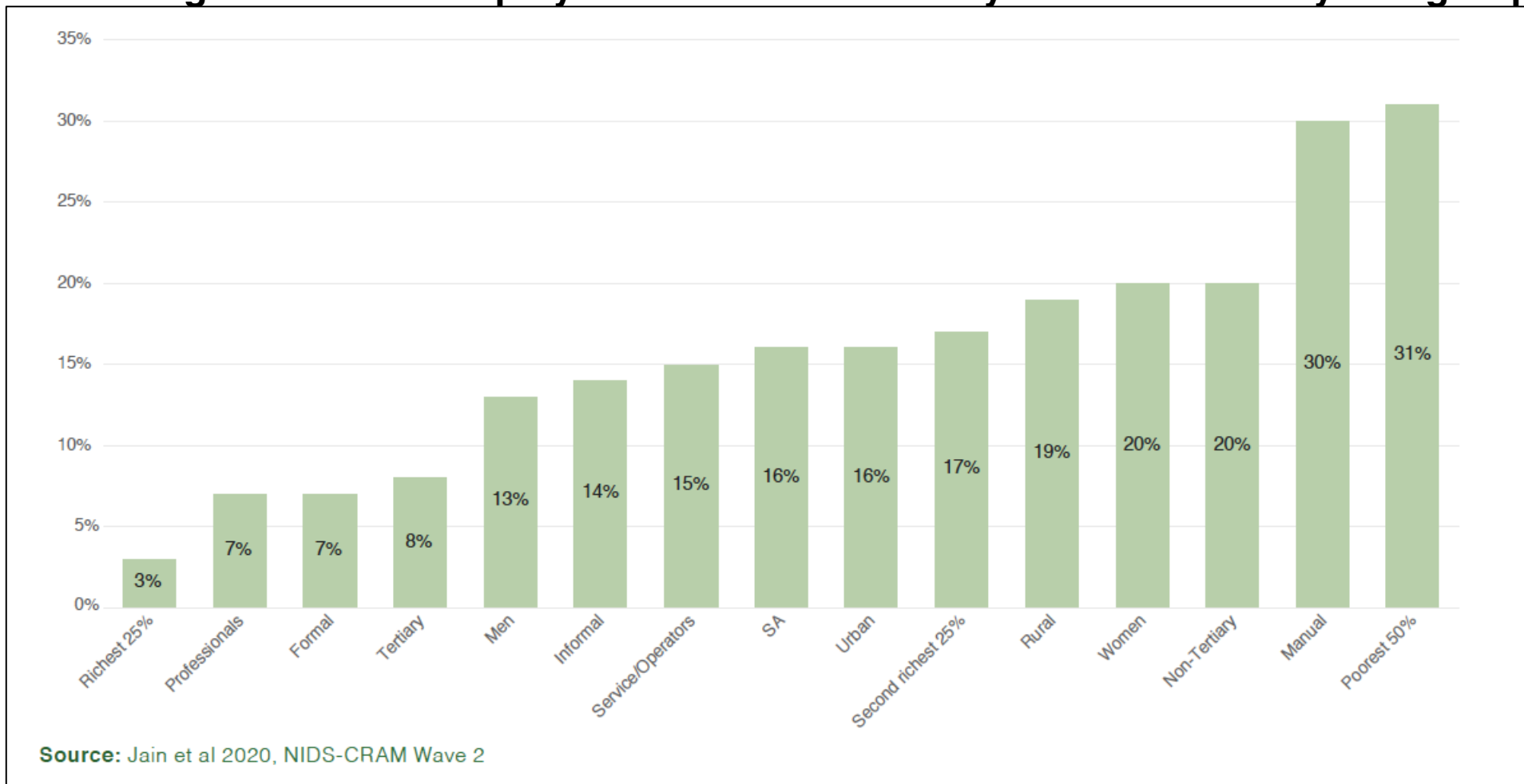
- Lack of inclusion - poor and rural communities were unable to access alternative platforms to in-person training
- Females disadvantaged by digital learning
- Curricula and teacher training not designed for effective delivery on alternative platforms

Strict lockdown and other restrictions severely affect livelihoods

- Massive job losses and reduced income especially in the informal sectors and urban areas
- For most countries, exposed a lack of formal social safety nets to support families
- Urban to rural migration as a coping strategy
- Recovery will take long and the World Bank is projecting a recession for the region
- Re-allocation of resources for emergency needs and borrowing will limit fiscal space for investments in critical social sectors

Example from NIDS_CRAM Study in South Africa

Percentage net loss in employment between February and June 2020 by sub-group



Observations on Data and Measurement

Key challenges noted included:

- Limitations to measure the full extent of spread of the pandemic (partly as a result of limited testing kits and facilities and trained technical personnel)
- Serious data gaps to guide targeted responses in the health sector or social protection measures, or to forecast future needs for the post-COVID-19 recovery.
- Lack of crucial disaggregated data that would enable refined analysis to inform different aspects of interest such as sub-national and gender-lens analysis.
- COVID-19 has severely disrupted the collection of routine data and signature large scale data collection activities for important data sources such as the national population and housing census, the Demographic and Health Surveys and Labour Force Surveys.

Opportunities to strengthen data and measurement

- Leveraging administrative data such as civil registration and vital statistics data
- Longitudinal data platforms such as the health and demographic surveillance sites – these will also be useful to monitor the long-term impacts of COVID-19
- Modelling and forecasting
- Innovations and adaptations that leverage digital technology – most of the evidence in the continent from households during the pandemic has for example relied on telephone surveys

Protecting the vulnerable

- A clear observation through the webinar series was that vulnerable groups require special attention during the response to COVID-19 as they have been disproportionately affected and even the responses in place against the effects of the pandemic do not adequately reach them.
- The poor, females, and youth have been disproportionately affected

Recommendations

- Put in place measures to fully resume service delivery in the health sector that will safeguard SRHR and family planning programmes including service delivery to the youth.
- Map and invest in addressing other emerging priorities that have been observed to have intensified during the pandemic including SGBV and mental health.
- Implement return-to-school strategies that will ensure minimal drop-out and in particular, take measures to ensure that the disadvantaged groups as well as girls do not drop out of school.

Recommendations

- Deploy an economic recovery strategy that will safeguard informal sector jobs and extend social protection to the most vulnerable in the communities during the recovery period.
- Develop a youth centred post COVID-19 recovery strategy.
- Invest in data and measurement to inform both the short-term and long-term responses to COVID-19 and similar episodes that may occur in the future.

Recommendations

- Strengthen joint efforts that leverage on regional and continental collaborations such as has been the case with the response to COVID-19 coordinated by the Africa CDC in health, and SADC and the AU on socio-economic priorities. This should also be extended to documenting and sharing lessons on best practices to overcome COVID-19 among countries and regions.

Thank You!