



## EVIDENCE BRIEF

### Swaziland: State of the Youth Report (2015)



#### Why is it important?

This report provides a comprehensive overview of the current status of young people across a variety of sectors in Swaziland. The conclusions and recommendations can serve as a roadmap for investing in the youth population.

This report is useful for better informed policy and planning, including research considerations, for youth programmes in Swaziland.

#### Methodology

The report was prepared in stages: a desk review and analysis, consultations and key informant interviews with stakeholders, data analysis and compilation of the report, and stakeholder workshops. The report relies greatly on secondary data sources. The statistics and indicators were obtained from such sources, as no specific quantitative survey was conducted for the purposes of this report. Primary data were collected in qualitative form only and in the context of focus group discussions and stakeholder interviews, to contextualize the information gathered from secondary sources.

#### Key findings

At present, Swaziland is entering a transitional phase and a window of opportunity to harness a demographic dividend has opened. A large, young working-age population is on the cusp of emerging, with fewer children to support and more potential health years in the workforce. However, the level of unemployment and poverty affecting the youth is startlingly high.

In addition, enrollment and school attendance in the higher grades continue to decline and the

drop-out rate is worrisome. More young women are affected than young men, with early pregnancy being the primary reason why most girls leave school. Tertiary education is widely inaccessible.

Furthermore, there are high levels of gender-based violence in Swaziland, affecting at least one in five women.

#### Conclusion

In order to harness the potential demographic dividend, it is recommended that the country focuses on investing in the development of young people – their health, education, and social protection. It is also recommended that Swaziland focus on encouraging a labour market that can absorb a growing, young, working-age population, and ensure that young people are appropriately trained for the needs of that market. Furthermore, accurate data is needed to fully assess the factors affecting young people. In general, data is not well disaggregated by gender and age, making it difficult to extract youth-specific information. Knowing that the developmental stages of youth and the unique challenges they face makes their needs and situations different from the majority of non-youth, examining data without disaggregating age groups shows an incomplete picture of the state of the youth, at best.

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