



► ILO WAEMU Youth Country Briefs

May 2026

Youth Labour Market Trends in Togo¹

Key points

- Following a period of political isolation and economic stagnation in the early 2000s, Togo's economic growth has been steady. Since 2021, the country has consistently maintained annual real gross domestic product (GDP) growth rates of over 5 per cent. Togo is a low-income country, with a purchasing power parity (PPP) adjusted GDP per capita (p.c.) of US\$3,043 in 2025 – around 40 per cent below the sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) average of US\$5,324. Extreme working poverty is currently at 20.3 per cent; significantly below the SSA average of 40.1 per cent. The country currently ranks in the lower half of all West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) countries in terms of the Global Peace Index (GPI), reflecting persistent fragility and security challenges over the last decade.
- The sector which employs the largest share of workers is Services, which accounts for over 42 per cent of employment in the country. Industrial sector employment is also relatively substantial, especially amongst the young. Almost one in four young workers are employed in Industry.
- The overall youth (15–29) NEET rate – the share of young people not in employment, education or training – is relatively low compared to its neighbours and stood at 13.9 cent in 2022. As in many countries, there is a gap in NEET rates between young men and women, however here too, the difference is quite modest in comparison with its neighbours with young women experiencing a NEET rate that is around 6 percentage points (p.p.) higher than the NEET rate of young men. Moreover, the NEET gender gap fell between 2019 and 2022, although this was entirely due to an increase in the NEET rate of young men, rather than any improvement in the female situation.
- There are also significant disparities in NEET rates between young people with and without disabilities, although the gap narrowed between 2019 and 2022, although here too this was due to a worsening of the situation facing less vulnerable young people without disabilities, rather than any reduction in the penalty associated with this form of vulnerability.
- Like some other WAEMU countries, NEET rates in Togo are slightly higher for young people – especially young men – with higher levels of educational attainment, confirming the existence of some educational mismatch.

¹ This brief was prepared by Niall O'Higgins and Vipasana Karkee (ILO) with some AI support managed by Dibyaudh Das (ILO). The authors are grateful for the very helpful comments provided by ILO colleagues Jonas Bausch, Yacouba Diallo, Sara Elder and Ali Madai Boukar as well as those provided by colleagues at the Mastercard Foundation including participants at a webinar organised by MCF on January 27, 2026.

► 1. Introduction: Contextual indicators

Following political instability and economic stagnation in the country during the first decade of the new millennium, Togo has experienced improved macroeconomic performance. Over the last twenty-five years, economic growth has significantly outpaced population growth. Between 2000 and 2025,² Togo reported an average real growth rate (local currency) of 4.2 per cent per annum (p.a.), compared to an annual population growth rate of approximately 2.6 per cent.³ Very low, or even negative, growth rates in the early 2000s were followed by faster growth rates in the early 2010s, which occasionally exceeded 6 per cent p.a. Following a pandemic-related slowdown in 2020, since 2021 annual real economic growth has consistently been around 6 per cent p.a. Overall, in the new millennium, economic growth in Togo has been a little below that of SSA as a whole, but significantly above the global average (figure 1).

► Box 1: YouthSTATS, a partnership between the ILO and the Mastercard Foundation

The ILO, in partnership with the [Mastercard Foundation](#), has created a regularly updated dataset called [YouthSTATS](#) available on [ILOSTAT](#). The dataset was first produced by the ILO as part of its partnership with the Mastercard Foundation “[Work4Youth](#)” project which concluded in 2016. Initially composed of labour indicators for young people aged 15-29 derived from [the school-to-work transition surveys](#) conducted through the partnership, the dataset now benefits from the ILO’s stock of [harmonized labour force survey micro-datasets](#). It serves as a central repository of international youth labour statistics.

This brief is one of eight country statistical briefs for WAEMU countries undertaken under the new partnership which provide an analysis of youth labour markets with a focus on gender, educational attainment and disability issues. To complement these statistical analyses, the new partnership also involves analyses of youth employment initiatives in WAEMU countries prepared with the direct engagement of young people in the region. The countries covered are Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo.

Togo remains a low-income country with a PPP-adjusted GDP p.c. of US\$3,043 in 2025⁴ which is significantly (roughly 40 per cent) below the corresponding average for SSA as a whole (US\$5,324). Compared to other countries in the region it is moderately stable and is ranked near the middle of the WAEMU region according to the GPI⁵; this places it at about the 30th position (out of 44) in SSA and 126th (out of 163) globally. It is worth noting that, unlike the rapid improvements seen in some neighbouring countries, Togo has not experienced a marked positive change in its peace and stability rankings over the last decade, with periodic security challenges persisting. Nevertheless, Togo has fared well its ranking in the Human Development Index among WAEMU countries, where it is placed second among the eight countries. The country

² IMF (2026).

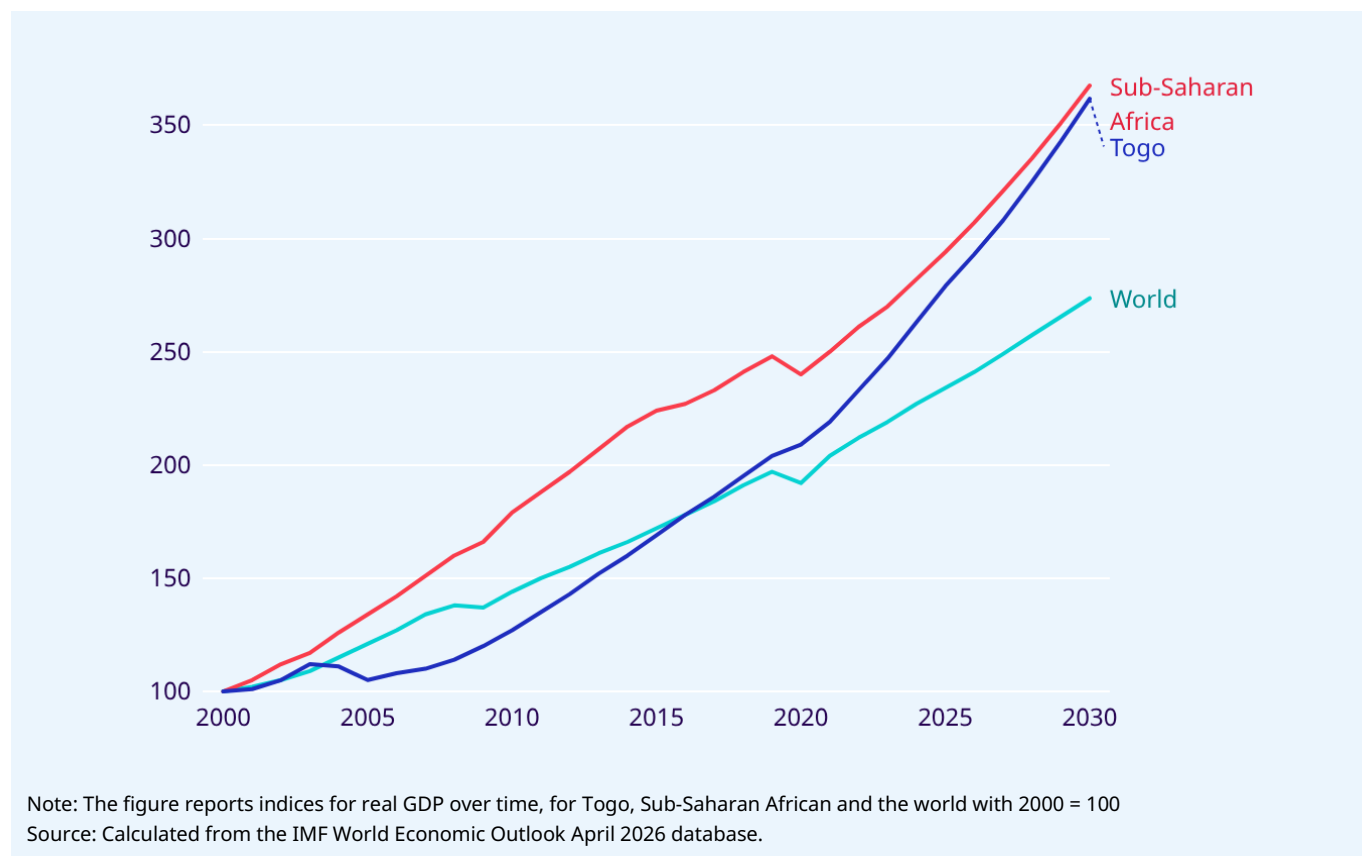
³ UN estimates and projections, July 2024 (UN, 2024; data also reported in [ILOSTAT](#)).

⁴ The PPP adjusted GDP p.c. estimates used in this brief are from the [IMF April 2026 WEO Database](#) (IMF, 2026). [Purchasing Power Parity \(PPP\)](#) adjusted GDP converts a country’s GDP into (usually) USD using exchange rates that equate the cost of a representative basket of goods and services in different countries.

⁵ Institute for Economics & Peace (2025) and GPI raw data, 2008-2023.

has made improvements to human development in the 21st century. Its relative position has improved, as the ranking has risen by four places between 2015 and 2023 (to 161st of 193 countries worldwide).⁶

► **Figure 1. Real GDP, Togo, Sub-Saharan Africa and the World, 2000-2030; 2000=100**



The employment-to-population ratios (EPR) in the country are above the ILO's modelled estimates for SSA, and well above those for Africa (and the world) as a whole, primarily due to relatively high employment rates among women (table 1).⁷

► **Table 1. Employment-to-population ratio by sex in Togo, SSA, Africa, and the World, 2022 (age 15+) (percentage)**

	Female	Male	Total
Togo	67.6	71.4	69.3
Sub-Saharan Africa (ILO Modelled Estimates)	59.7	71.8	65.6
Africa (ILO Modelled Estimates)	50.5	69.9	60.1

⁶ UNDP (2025). The [Human Development Index](#) (HDI) is a broader measure of a country's human development which takes into account also life expectancy and educational attainment, in addition to per capita GDP.

⁷ This brief applies the definition of employment established by the 13th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) in 1982. [The 13th ICLS](#) definition identifies all persons who worked for at least one hour during the reference period as employed. More recently, the [19th ICLS](#) established a new definition which classifies as employed all those who work for "pay or profit" for at least one hour during the reference period, however, the EHCVM survey does not contain sufficient information to apply the newer definition. The 13th ICLS definition tends to have a higher recorded employment-to-population ratio, especially in lower income countries because, for example, it includes among the employed, workers in subsistence agriculture, whereas the 19th ICLS definition does not. However, both definitions include workers in informal jobs and any other type of remunerated work of at least one hour whether or not it is formally recorded (including, for example, street vendors, unregistered platform workers and domestic workers).

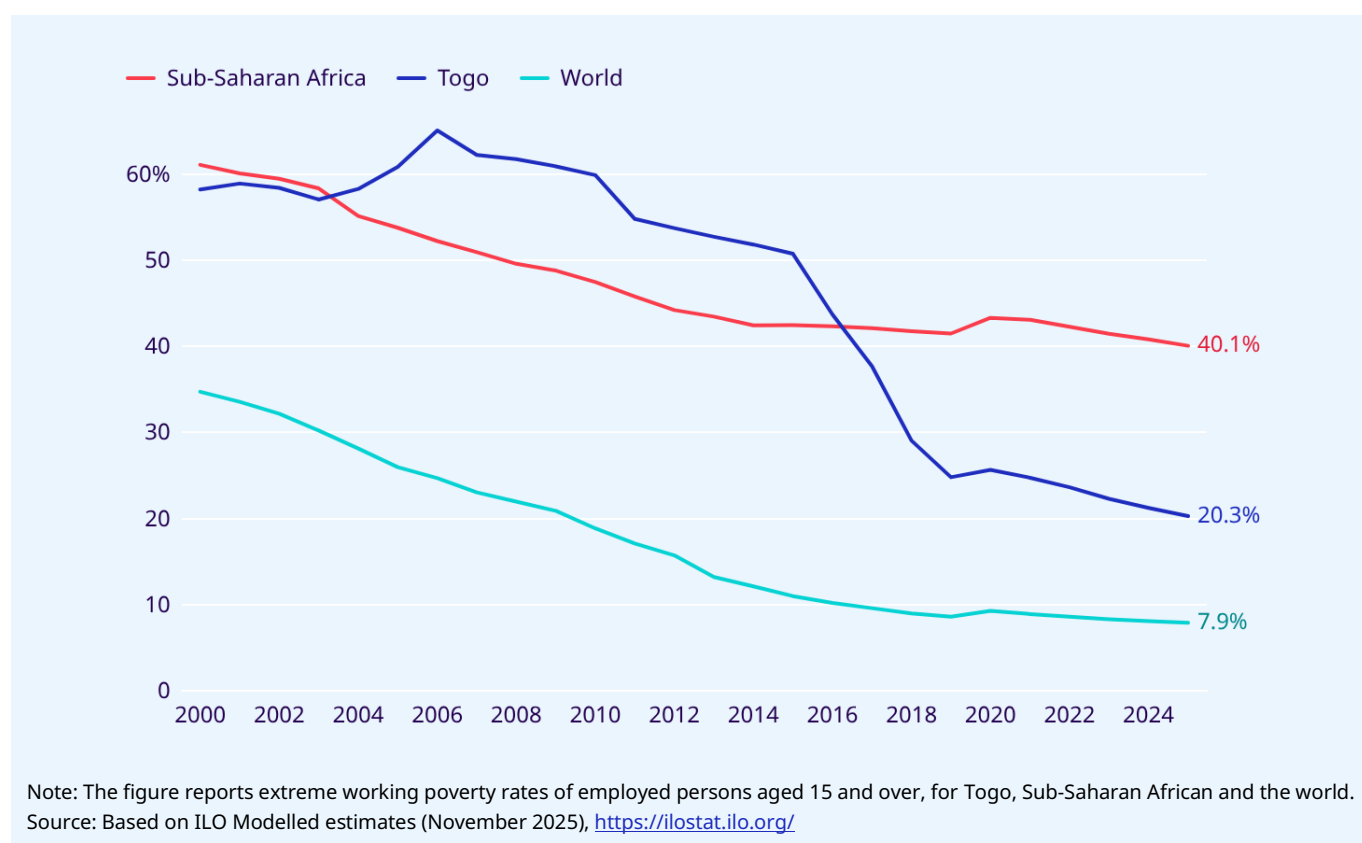
World (ILO Modelled Estimates)	45.7	69.4	57.5
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Source: Author's calculations based on the Harmonized Survey of Household Living Conditions (EHCVM), held in the ILO Harmonized Microdata Repository; ILO Modelled estimates (November 2025), <https://ilostat.ilo.org/>

Note: The reported ratios all apply the definition of employment established by the 13th ICLS in 1982.

Despite the relatively low average income levels, the extreme working poverty rate in Togo compares favourably to SSA as a whole. In 2025, this stood at 20.3 per cent – well below the corresponding estimate for SSA of 40.1 per cent, albeit significantly above the global average rate of 7.9 per cent (figure 2).⁸ This occurred despite some increases in working poverty experienced by the country in the early 2000s amid economic stagnation. Overall, between 2000 and 2025 working poverty fell considerably faster in Togo than in SSA as a whole.

► **Figure 2. Extreme working poverty rates, Togo, Sub-Saharan Africa and the World, 2000–2025**



► **Box 2: Harmonized Survey of Household Living Conditions (EHCVM) in WAEMU, 2019-2025**

The analysis of youth labour market trends in the ILO-WAEMU Youth Country Briefs is being undertaken primarily using the Household Living Conditions Surveys (Enquêtes Harmonisées sur le Conditions de Vie des Ménages; EHCVM) being undertaken by the World Bank and the WAEMU commission in [WAEMU member states](#). These are nationally representative [Living Standards Measurement Study \(LSMS\)](#) household surveys which incorporate labour modules, allowing for labour market analysis in the eight countries. The EHCVM surveys used in these briefs apply the same

⁸ [ILO modelled estimates](#), November 2025. The working poverty rate is an estimate of the proportion of the employed population living in poverty despite being employed, implying that their employment-related incomes are not sufficient to lift them and their families out of poverty and ensure decent living conditions. Extreme working poverty is defined as the percentage of the employed population living in households with a per capita income of under US\$3 PPP per day, <https://ilostat.ilo.org/topics/working-poverty/>.

international statistical standards and questionnaires across years and countries, thereby collecting data that can be harmonized and allowing comparisons across countries and over time. These household surveys were conducted in each of the WAEMU countries in 2018-2019, 2021-2022 and 2025-2026.

Data for 2019 and 2022 has been received and processed by the ILO for all eight countries. All data in the ILO-WAEMU Country Briefs utilize EHCVM survey data unless otherwise stated. Data for the third round (2025-2026) will be available in late 2026.

Unusually for the region, agriculture is not the primary employer, with services accounting for a larger share of the workforce overall. As elsewhere in the region, however, industry accounts for a relatively modest share (around 18 per cent) of total employment. Men predominate in agriculture – and it remains the sector with the largest slice of male jobs – whilst women are more likely than men to work in industry and services (table 2).

► **Table 2. Employment distribution by economic activity by sex, Togo, 2022 (age 15+) (percentage)**

	Female	Male	Total
Agriculture	36.2	43.6	39.7
Industry	20.7	15.5	18.2
Services	43.1	40.9	42.1

Source: Author's calculations based on the Harmonized Survey of Household Living Conditions (EHCVM), held in the ILO Harmonized Microdata Repository, <https://ilostat.ilo.org/>.

Informal employment is widespread in Togo, especially amongst women. In 2022, around 95 per cent of workers in the country were informally employed; almost all female workers (over 98 per cent) and a little over 90 per cent of male workers.⁹ Among young people, this incidence is even higher, with nearly all (over 97 per cent of young male and 98 per cent of young female) workers in informal jobs. This prevalence is typical of the situation in other WAEMU countries.

Taken together, compared to other countries in the WAEMU area, Togo has a relatively high prevalence of employment in the service sector, although agriculture still employs almost two out of every five workers and jobs remain overwhelmingly informal.

► 2. Youth labour market trends

Africa is a relatively young continent, with a youth population which continues to grow with all the potential and challenges this brings (ILO, 2020a; box 3). Between 2015 and 2025 the youth population (aged 15–29) in Togo grew by about 2.6 per cent p.a.¹⁰ slightly below the annual growth rate (2.9 per cent) of the youth population in SSA as a whole (figure 3).

⁹ ILO micro database. As noted in box 2, these and the other labour market indicators analysed in this brief are derived from the EHCVM survey data.

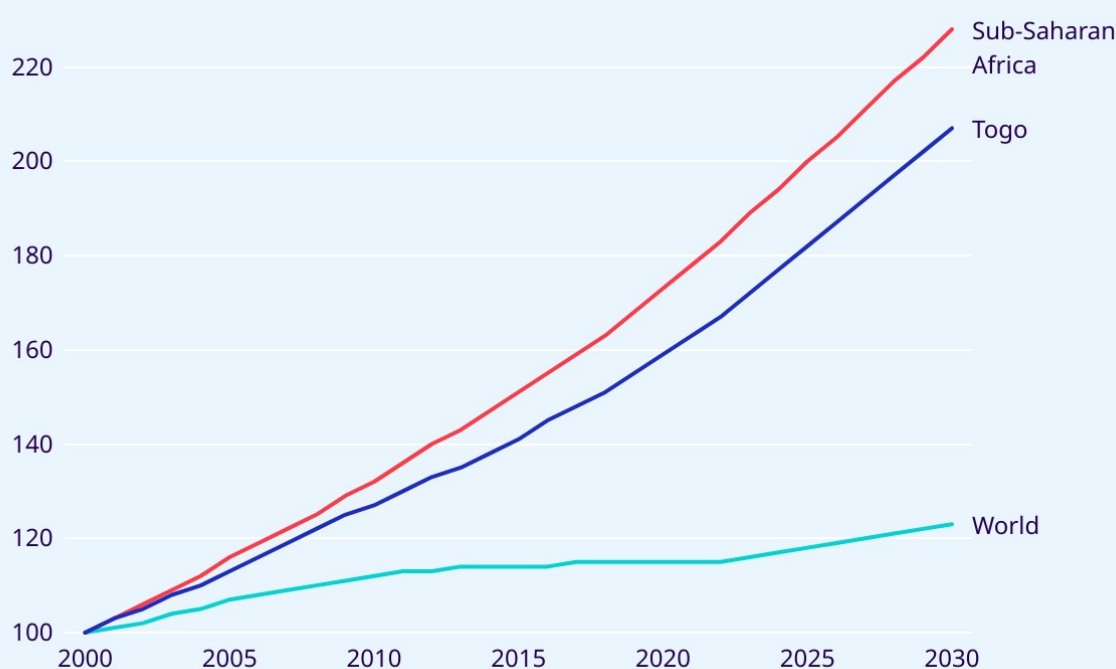
¹⁰ UN estimates and projections, July 2024 (thousands), [ILOSTAT](https://ilostat.ilo.org/)

► Box 3: Who are the youth?

For statistical purposes, the United Nations defines youth as persons aged between 15 and 24 years old. The specific age-group was originally intended to cover the period during which the School-to-Work transition takes place for most young people. This is the definition used for the standard indicators produced by the ILO in ILOSTAT including the ILO modelled estimates of regional and global age-based aggregate indicators (ILO, 2026).

In practice, varying approaches to the age-range applied to define of youth are to be found in different contexts. The [African Union](#), for example, defines young people as those aged between 15 and 35 inclusive. For the analysis presented in this brief, following the standard practice for the country level indicators reported in the ILO's [YOUTHSTAT database](#), youth refer to persons aged between 15 and 29 years old. This recognizes the fact that some young people remain in education for longer and captures more information on the post-graduation employment experiences of young people. For comparison purposes, selected indicators for young people aged 15-35 are available in an online data annex.

► Figure 3. Youth (15–29) population in Togo, Sub-Saharan Africa, Africa and the World, 2000–2030; 2000=100



The figure reports indices for the youth population (age 15–29), for Togo, Sub-Saharan Africa and the World with 2000 = 100 in each case.
 Source: Population indices are calculated on [UN estimates and projections of population by age and sex](#), July 2024 (thousands)

In 2022, UNESCO estimates that 79.1 per cent of children completed primary education in Togo – well above the corresponding SSA average of 66.5 per cent.¹¹ The primary completion rate has almost doubled since 2000, when it stood at 43.0 per cent, marking strong progress in basic education in the country. Improvements in primary completion rates have been especially marked among girls, who saw primary completion rise more than double from 35.5 per cent in 2000 to 76.2 per cent in 2022, enabling them to narrow the gap with boys significantly (82.1 per cent in 2022). The overall completion rates for lower secondary education, at 47.7 per cent, compare well with the SSA average of 46.7 per cent. However, the same cannot be said for gender parity. In 2022, there was still a significant gender gap of 11 p.p. in lower secondary completion rates; much larger than the corresponding SSA gap of just 1.8 p.p. In the country in 2022, 53.3 per cent of boys completed lower secondary education, whilst just 42.3 per cent of girls did. Although completion rates for girls increased almost eightfold between 2000 and 2022 from a starting point of 5.5 per cent, the p.p. gender gap fell by less than 1 p.p. It is also noteworthy that the gender gap in completion rates continues to widen significantly at higher levels of educational attainment: in 2022, the completion rate for upper secondary education was 23.2 per cent for girls, nearly 15 p.p. below the corresponding completion rate for boys of 37.8 per cent. Here too, however, the overall upper secondary completion rate of 29.5 per cent is above SSA average of 28.1 per cent.

Turning to educational participation among young people aged 15–29, the gender imbalance observed in completion rates is evident here as well, although the disparity in participation is smaller than the difference in completion rates is (figure 4). In 2019, an estimated 30.2 per cent of young women (aged 15–29) were enrolled in education or training, compared to about 38.1 per cent of young men. Participation in education or training increased for both sexes by 2022 – slightly more so for young men – such that by 2022, around 44.7 per cent of young men and 36.1 per cent of young women were in education or training.

► Box 4: NEET

This brief makes extensive use of the NEET rate – the share of young people Not in Employment, Education or Training – as a measure of youth labour market vulnerability. This is in line with the adoption of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 and the consequent establishment of reductions in the NEET rate as the [target indicator \(SDG 8.6.1\)](#) chosen to measure progress in youth labour markets. Although NEETs also includes (most of) the young unemployed¹² (the so-called 'Active NEETs'), the NEET rate is a broader concept encompassing all young people who are, for whatever reason, not studying or working for pay or profit. NEETs are consequently a much larger, as well as a more heterogeneous group than the young unemployed including a substantial group of young people who are not studying or working, but who are also not actively looking for work. Often termed 'inactive' NEETs, many of these young people would like to work but are not looking for it, either because they believe no jobs are to be found or because they face additional obstacles – such as care responsibilities – which impede their active participation in the labour force.

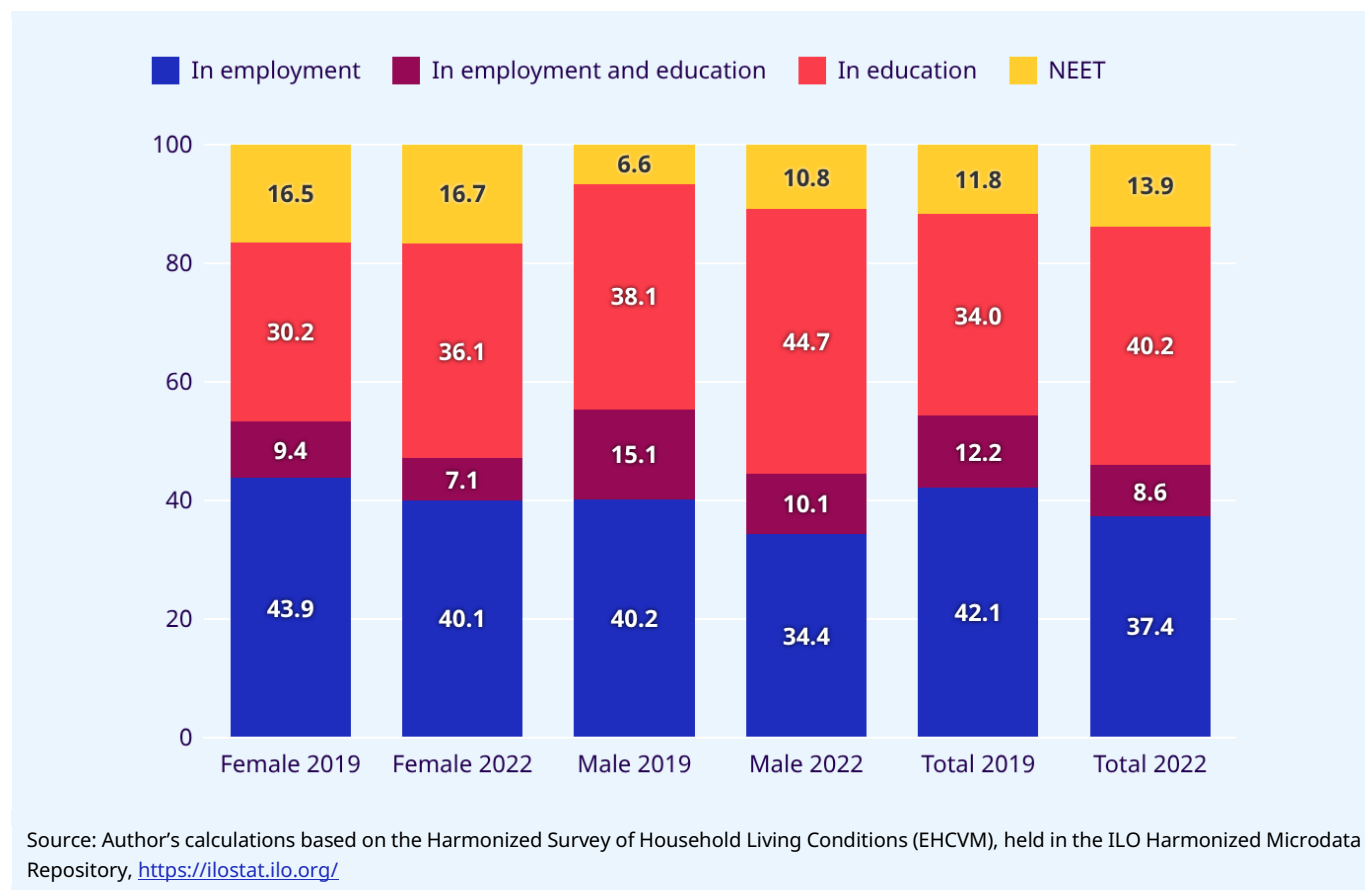
Inter alia, the shift from the youth unemployment rate to the NEET rate as the focus of policies to promote decent work amongst young people leads naturally to a broadening of the scope of such interventions. Reducing the NEET rate can be achieved both by increasing entry into employment, but also by increasing participation in education and training. Moreover, there are many factors underlying (different types) of NEET status. These include in particular obstacles to obtaining decent work faced by specific groups – such as young women and/or young people with disabilities.

Source: O'Higgins et al. (2023). O'Higgins (2025) provides a brief non-technical overview.

¹¹ <http://sdg4-data.uis.unesco.org/> [accessed on 18 August 2025].

¹² Excluding a relatively small but increasingly significant group of young people who are both unemployed and in education.

► **Figure 4. Youth (age 15–29) status in Togo by sex, 2019–2022 (percentage)**



The increase in educational participation was primarily accounted for by falling EPR among both young women and young men between 2019 and 2022, although in this case the decline was more pronounced among young men. At the same time, young men are more likely than young women to be simultaneously studying and working, although the population share is fairly modest for both sexes and has fallen from 2019 to 2022. The larger share of young men who are both studying and working reinforces the significant gender gap which exists in educational participation and attainment noted above. One important implication of these changes is that NEET rates among young men increased between 2019 and 2022, as will be discussed further below.

► **Table 3. Youth (age 15–29) employment distribution by economic activity and sex in Togo, 2022 (percentage)**

	Female	Male	Total
Agriculture	35.4	41.6	38.2
Industry	24.3	22.4	23.4
Services	40.3	36.0	38.4

Source: Author's calculations based on the Harmonized Survey of Household Living Conditions (EHCVM), held in the ILO Harmonized Microdata Repository, <https://ilostat.ilo.org/>

Young people (aged 15–29) in Togo, of both sexes, are less likely to work in agriculture or services – and more likely to work in industry – than their older counterparts (table 3). Indeed, almost one in four young people work in the industrial sector in the country. Consequently, the gender differences in sectoral employment (especially in industrial

employment) found in the overall working-age population are generally less pronounced among young people than they are among older workers.

A substantial, and increasing, share of young people are employees, as opposed to being self-employed, suggesting a trend towards a gradual improvement in working conditions.¹³ By 2022, around one-third of young workers (aged 15–29) – and two out of every five young men with jobs – were employees (table 4). This is significantly above the share of adults (aged 30+) workers, amongst whom 27.6 per cent of male and just 9.6 per cent of female workers were employees. However, this is well below the levels of wage employment found in Senegal, the WAEMU region's leader in this respect, where most young male workers are employees. Moreover, the moderate increase in the share of total employment accounted for by employees – from 28.9 per cent in 2019 to 34.4 per cent in 2022 – does not represent a major expansion of wage employment in the country. As we saw above, over the same period, the employment to population ratio among young people fell from 54.3 per cent in 2019 to 45.9 per cent. Overall, wage employment as a share of the youth population remained almost unchanged over the period, accounting for under 16 per cent of young people as a whole.

► **Table 4. Youth (age 15–29) employment distribution by status in employment and sex in Togo, 2019 and 2022 (percentage)**

	Female		Male		Total	
	2019	2022	2019	2022	2019	2022
Employees	21.7	28.2	36.4	41.8	28.9	34.4
Self-employed	78.3	71.8	63.6	58.2	71.1	65.6

Source: Author's calculations based on the Harmonized Survey of Household Living Conditions (EHCVM), held in the ILO Harmonized Microdata Repository, <https://ilostat ilo.org/>.

Informal employment is even more common among young people, especially among young men, than it is among older workers. In Togo, 96.5 per cent of young male workers and 96.0 per cent of young female workers aged 15 to 29 are in informal employment – compared to 88.6 per cent of male and 93.1 per cent of female workers aged 30 and above, respectively. The prevalence of informality among young workers does not vary significantly across sectors, as nearly all employed youth across every broad sector are in informal employment. Still, young people in the services sector (market and non-market) have slightly smaller shares of informal employment (table 5).

► **Table 5. Distribution of employment, prevalence of self-employment and prevalence of informality by sector among youth (age 15–29) in Togo, 2019 and 2022 (percentage)**

Sector	Employment by sector		Prevalence of self-employment		Prevalence of informality
	2019	2022	2019	2022	2022
Agriculture	43.2	38.2	97.6	97.1	99.4
Manufacturing	14.2	17.7	60.2	55.4	96.2
Construction	4.9	4.7	21.5	23.6	96.8
Mining and quarrying; Electricity, gas and water supply	0.5	1.0	37.9	47.0	96.8
Market Services (Trade; Transportation; Accommodation and food; and Business and administrative services)	19.6	21.3	66.0	59.6	93.2

¹³ The ILO status in employment indicator subdivides workers to describe the relationships of their jobs to the workplace. Broadly, the employed are classified as either “employees” or “self-employed”. The former are in paid employment (with explicit or implicit contracts) which provide them with basic remuneration, whereas the latter are mainly or wholly reliant on sales and profits. Self-employment is dominated by own-account workers in low quality informal employment and in the past was indeed used as a proxy for informal employment.

Non-market services (Public administration; Community, social and other services and activities)	17.6	17.0	35.2	26.0	92.8
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Note: Informality could not be defined in the 2019 EHCVM/ECVM surveys due to missing information on registration and bookkeeping of enterprises.

Source: Author's calculations based on the Harmonized Survey of Household Living Conditions (EHCVM), held in the ILO Harmonized Microdata Repository, <https://ilostat.ilo.org/>

NEET rates among young women remained almost constant, increasing by just 0.2 p.p. between 2019 and 2022 (figure 4, box 4). This had some impact on the significant gender disparity in NEET rates – a disparity that is common in youth labour markets in low- and lower-middle-income countries (O'Higgins et al. 2023). In 2019, 6.6 per cent of young men and 16.5 per cent of young women in Togo were NEET, while in 2022 the corresponding NEET rates were approximately 10.8 per cent and 16.7 per cent respectively. In other words, the gender disparity was reduced from roughly 10 p.p. to about 6 p.p. over the period.

► **Table 6. Youth (age 15–29) NEET distribution by active-inactive status and sex in Togo, 2019 and 2022 (percentage)**

	Female		Male		Total	
	2019	2022	2019	2022	2019	2022
Active NEET	7.1	7.8	21.0	14.1	10.9	10.1
Inactive NEET	92.9	92.2	79.0	85.9	89.1	89.9

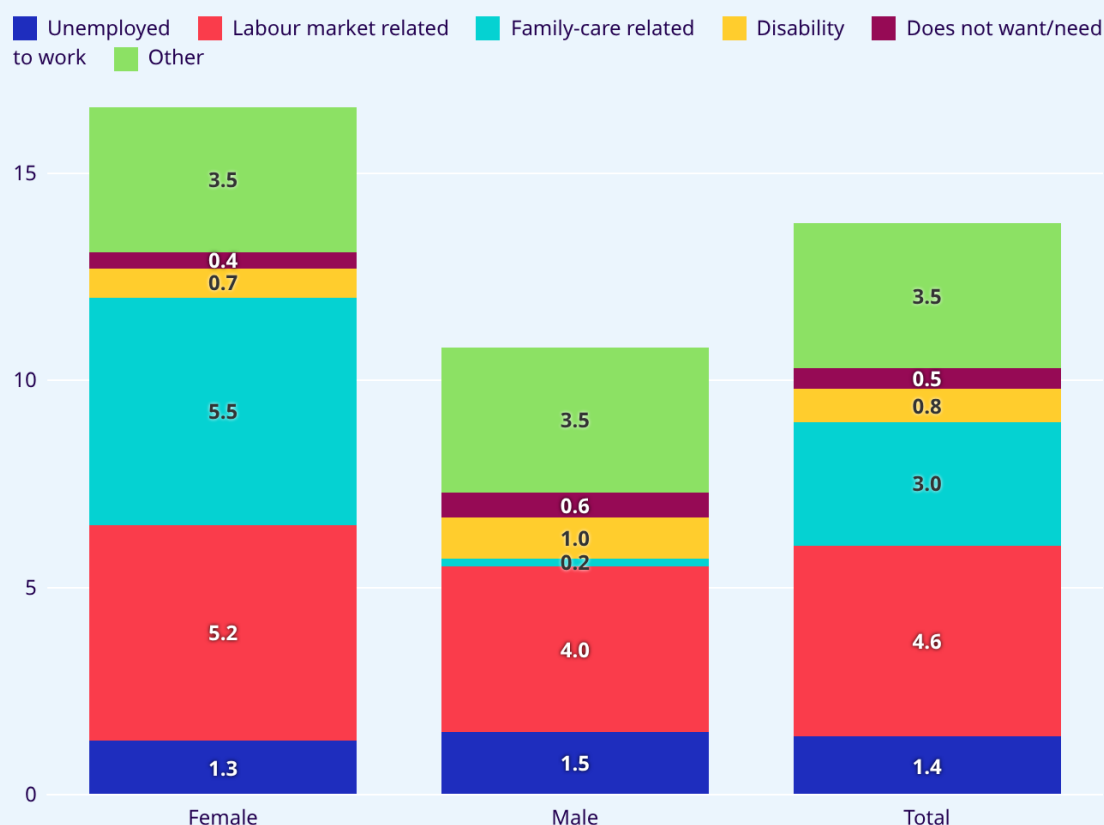
Note: Active NEETs are those who are not engaged in employment, education or training but are available and actively looking for employment opportunities, whereas inactive NEETs are also not engaged in employment, education or training but are not available or actively looking for employment.

Source: Author's calculations based on the Harmonized Survey of Household Living Conditions (EHCVM), held in the ILO Harmonized Microdata Repository, <https://ilostat.ilo.org/>

The vast majority of young NEETs in the country fall into the category of inactive NEETs; more than nine in ten young women, and around four in five young men who are NEET are also not unemployed (table 6). Moreover, the share of male NEETs who are not actively looking for work increased between 2019 and 2022, whilst inactivity amongst young female NEETs did come down slightly. Even so, the fact that nine in ten young NEETs are not actively looking for work is clearly an issue of some concern, but is also typical in the WAEMU region.

Most young NEETs in Togo are either discouraged from seeking jobs, awaiting job or business prospects, or remain outside the labour force due to domestic responsibilities (figure 5). Traditional gender roles play a significant role in the large gender gap in NEET rates. Consistent with other countries in the region, 5.5 per cent of young women in Togo are NEET due to care responsibilities at home, compared to 0.2 per cent of young men. All other reasons for being NEET show little or no difference between young women and men. Family-care responsibilities consequently account almost entirely for the NEET gender gap.

► **Figure 5. NEET rates of young people (aged 15–29) by sex decomposed by reason for being NEET, Togo, 2022 (percentage)**



Note: **Unemployed** NEETs are those who are not engaged in employment, education or training but are available and actively looking for employment opportunities. **Labour market related reasons** for being NEET include those associated with discouragement (past failure to find a suitable job, lack of experience, qualifications or jobs matching the person's skills, lack of jobs in the area, considered too young or too old by prospective employers, and does not know how/where to find a job) as well as other labour market reasons (waiting for an answer to an application, and seasonal break). **Family-care related reasons** cover looking after small children and other household and domestic responsibilities; **disability** covers young people who are not seeking a job due to disability or illness; whereas a young NEET who **"does not need/want to work"** may have other sources of income. **Other** is a residual category covering a variety of motivations not covered by the first four categories.

Source: Author's calculations based on the Harmonized Survey of Household Living Conditions (EHCVM), held in the ILO Harmonized Microdata Repository, <https://ilostat.ilo.org/>.

► 3. Vulnerable groups in the youth labour market

3.1 Sex

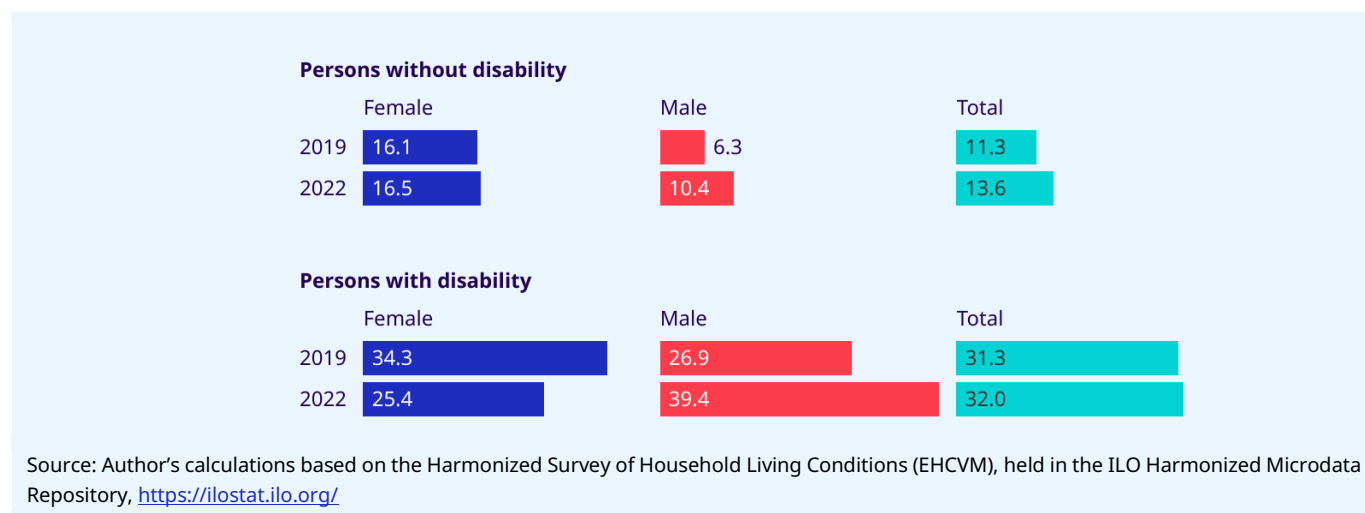
Young women face more challenges than young men in gaining entry to the labour market in Togo. NEET rates among young women are higher than those of young men, and EPR and educational participation rates (as well as educational attainment levels) are all lower for women. At the same time, some improvement has been achieved in recent years, with a reduction in gender differences in core youth labour market indicators. However, this is largely due to a decline in labour

market indicators for young men, rather than an improvement for young women. Between 2019 and 2022, the NEET rate of young men increased, while the young female rate remained largely static. At the same time, the educational participation rate of young people increased significantly, but (slightly) more so amongst young men than young women. In what follows, we look in more detail at what happened to other vulnerable groups and how these factors interact with gender in determining youth labour market outcomes.

3.2 Disability

The labour market participation of people with disabilities is hindered by additional obstacles. The 2025 Global Disability Summit in Berlin noted that young people with disabilities face NEET rates twice those of their non-disabled peers globally.¹⁴ In Togo, less than 2 per cent of the youth population report having an illness or disability that affects their ability to work, and there is strong evidence of disadvantages facing this group. Indeed, such disadvantage appears more pronounced in Togo than in some other countries in the region (figure 6).¹⁵

► **Figure 6. NEET rates of young people (aged 15–29) by disability status in Togo by sex, 2019 and 2022 (percentage)**



In 2022, young women with disabilities had NEET rates around 8 p.p. higher than those without disabilities. For young men, the disparity was even larger –young men with disabilities experienced NEET rates almost four times those of young men without disability, a difference of 29 p.p. The relative situation of young men with disabilities worsened considerably between 2019 and 2022, although the NEET rates of young women with disabilities did decline somewhat over the same period. Among young men, NEET rates increased for both those with and without disability; however, it did so much more for those with disability – substantially widening an already large gap.

3.3 Educational attainment

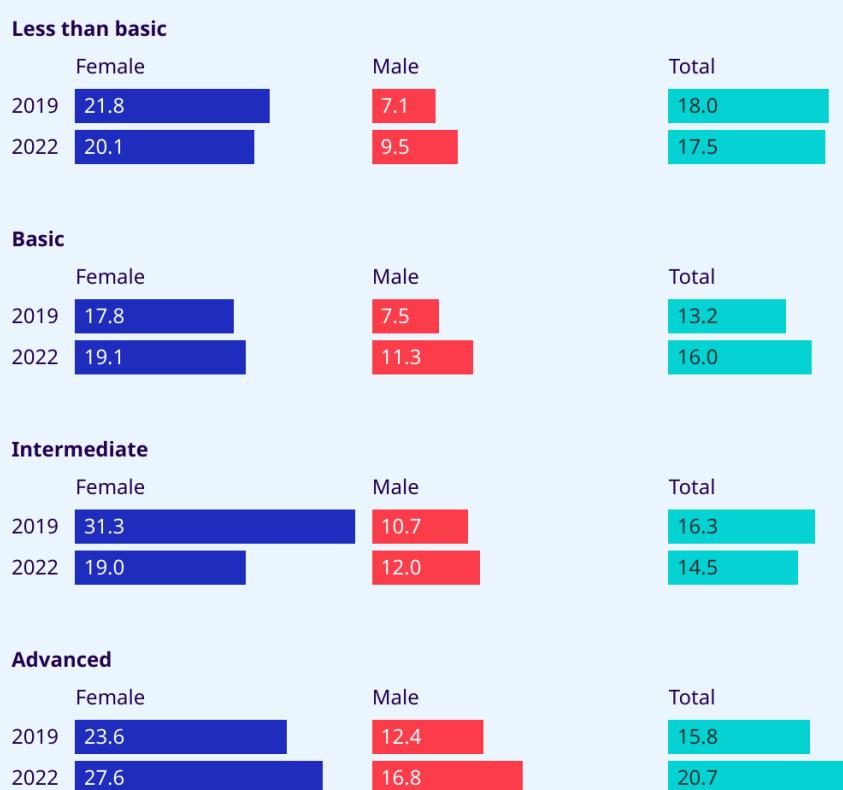
The gender gap in educational participation and attainment was already observed above. One way in which this is important is in determining young people's access to labour markets. Globally, NEET rates are significantly higher among young people with lower levels of educational attainment (O'Higgins et al. 2023). This relationship, however, tends to be less pronounced in low and lower-middle income countries with quite some variation across countries. In 2022, in Togo, the NEET rate of young adults (aged 25–29) with advanced levels of education was slightly higher than that of young people with less than basic educational attainment. In other words, 25 to 29 year-olds in Togo with a tertiary education faced a

¹⁴ For a more detailed analysis of the disparities in the labour market outcomes faced by people with disabilities, see, for example, Annanian and Dellaferrera (2024).

¹⁵ The sample size of persons with disabilities is typically rather small in the household surveys, and even smaller for the age group of 15 to 29. This small sample size means that the estimates of indicators for youth with disabilities are necessarily relatively imprecise.

NEET rate that was slightly higher than their peers who had not completed primary or lower secondary education (figure 7). This marked a change from 2019 when, broadly speaking, NEET rates tended to fall albeit slightly with higher educational attainment. The change is primarily attributable to a significant increase in the NEET rates of young people – both young women and young men – with advanced levels of education. In part, this may reflect the strong increase in educational participation of youth between 2019 and 2022 noted above. More education in itself does not create more jobs, and there are some signs of the emergence of educational mismatch in the country, as discussed in recent editions of the ILO's Global Employment Trends for Youth (ILO, 2020b; 2024).

► **Figure 7. NEET rates of young people (aged 25-29) by educational attainment in Togo by sex, 2019 and 2022 (percentage)**



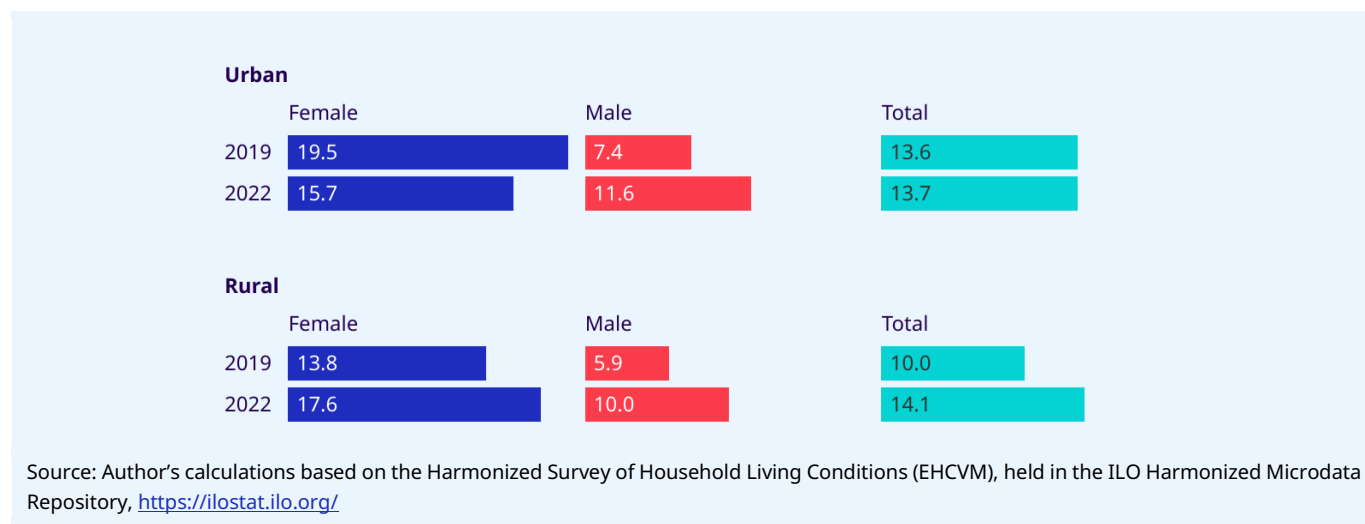
Note: Youth is defined as young people aged 25-29 when analysing educational attainment. Educational attainment is defined here based on the [ILO aggregation of the International Standard Classification of Education \(ISCED\)](#) designed to produce a simple classification of individual educational attainment which is comparable across countries. Broadly speaking: **Basic** educational attainment corresponds to the completion of primary or lower secondary education; **Intermediate**, to the completion of upper secondary education; and **Advanced**, to the completion of tertiary educational studies.

Source: Author's calculations based on the Harmonized Survey of Household Living Conditions (EHCVM), held in the ILO Harmonized Microdata Repository, <https://ilostat ilo.org/>

3.4 Urban-Rural location

Globally, across all country income levels, NEET rates tend to be higher in rural areas compared to urban ones. Indeed, in Togo, NEET rates in 2022 were slightly higher in rural areas than in urban ones (figure 8). The difference is small and, moreover, is not true of young men amongst whom living in an urban area was associated with higher NEET rates than those facing their rural counterparts. Of some concern, NEET rates increased significantly for young men and young women living in rural areas between 2019 and 2022.

► **Figure 8. NEET rates of young people (aged 15–29) by geographical location in Togo by sex, 2019 and 2022 (percentage)**



► 4. Summary and conclusions

Togo has largely emerged from the political and economic stagnation that characterized the early 2000s. Since the mid-2010s, economic growth has been steady. The recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic has been relatively robust, with annual real economic growth rates consistently exceeding 5 per cent since 2021.

Working poverty remains significant in the country, with the extreme working poverty rate estimated to stand at around 20 per cent in 2025 – below the SSA average of 40.1 per cent but still significantly above the global average of 7.9 per cent. Industrial sector employment accounts for a relatively large share of the employed population, compared to other countries in the WAEMU region, especially among young people. Service-sector employment, particularly among young women, has been on the rise and is the sector accounting for the largest share of workers of all ages. Informal employment still accounts for nearly all youth jobs (close to 98 per cent).

On the back of significant progress over the past two decades, educational attainment in Togo is relatively high compared to the SSA average although there are significant gender gaps which increase at higher levels of educational attainment. At the primary level, gender differences are relatively small, but female attainment drops off at higher grades, leading to significantly lower completion rates for young women at the secondary and tertiary levels.

NEET rates in the country are relatively modest. Although young women in Togo face higher NEET rates than young men, the gap – currently standing at around 6 p.p. – is also relatively modest and has narrowed further since 2019. This was due to a significant worsening of the situation of young men, rather than any absolute reduction in female NEET rates.

Vulnerability, as measured by differences in NEET rates, is also evident when one considers the situation of young people with disabilities. In this case, there has been no major improvement – and no major worsening of the situation – since 2019.

In common with other WAEMU countries – and in contrast to the typical picture globally – NEET rates do not fall markedly with higher educational attainment in Togo. Here, as in its neighbours, there are some indications of educational mismatch. Certainly, rising educational attainment in the country has not been accompanied by a sufficient expansion of employment opportunities to absorb the growing supply of young jobseekers with higher levels of education.

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Contact details
International Labour Organization
Route des Morillons 4
CH-1211 Geneva 22
Switzerland

Employment, Labour Markets and Youth
Branch
E: emplab@ilo.org
W: www.ilo.org

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