

Abstract Volume 4 (1994/95): Active Labour and Employment Policies

When the Research Group on African Development Perspectives decided to publish a volume on *Active labour and Employment Policies* it was primarily for the reason that the employment problem became the key issue in the 1990s in African countries and will remain a core problem for the policymakers in Africa over the years to come. However, the Research Group was well aware of the fact that employment policies have to be looked at in a wider frame - considering also the role of labour in African economies. This required a careful review of the role of labour institutions, of the labour policies, labour conditions and also the labour rights. The Research Group therefore decided to focus on *Active Labour and Employment Policies* to underline the fact that appropriate policies have to consider much more than employment-friendly macrocosmic policies, that is necessary to include all relevant labour and employment issues in a broader strategy framework that is contributing to employment creation, poverty alleviation and livelihood enhancement.

The volume 4 and the complementing volume 5 deal with the concepts of active labour and employment policies and the contributions present not only analysis of trends, but most of all policy proposals and assessments of the situation of various countries. It is obvious that labour and employment policies were shaped tremendously since the 1980s by structural adjustment policies, and the economic crisis affecting African countries.

New approaches towards employment creation and poverty alleviation emerged in Africa and are discussed in the two volume. Of particular relevance are the analyses of country experiences and of successful policy adaptation. The members of the Research Group and the other contributors emphasise in all units and contributions a concept of active labour and employment policies that is broad enough to deal with the changing international framework for action.

This volume is an outstanding contribution to the debate on Africa's development perspectives.

This volume discusses in three units the important issues of employment and labour in Africa, by focusing on

- the impacts of structural adjustment policies on employment and the employment strategies for the next generation for structural adjustment programmes (Unit 1);
- the active labour and employment policies to be conceptualised and implemented on the African continent (Unit 2); and
- the interconnections of employment generation and sustainable development (Unit 3).

This is the first available contribution dealing in a comprehensive way with the repercussions of the economic crisis and of structural adjustment policies on employment and labour in Africa. This is also the first contribution that outlines a coherent strategy for employment creation, poverty alleviation and sustainable development.

The contributors have done an excellent job to highlight the issues, to present case studies, and to conceptualise a comprehensive strategy. Complementary to volume 4 on *Active Labour and Employment Policies* is volume 5 on *Regional Perspectives on Labour and Employment*. In volume 5 two of the units deal with employment policies in South Africa and Nigeria. Two other units deal with employment perspectives in the informal sector and with the employment effects of development co-operation between Africa and the European Union. Three other very informative units cover aspects of labour and development in the region. and give information on institutions and new publications.

The documents on African development presented by the volume editors highlight the intense debate going on in Africa and reveal also the fact that since the end of the 1980s the debate on African development perspectives has intensified in the African region.

The Research Group in Bremen took up this promising trend and since has published the African Development Perspectives Yearbook. The African Perspectives Yearbook is now the leading publication on Africa in Germany in English language. A great number of African institutions and universities use the Yearbook as a valuable source and as a guidebook.

The work on the Yearbook is supported by an increasing number of scholars from all over the world by reporting on Africa's development perspectives. The number of authors contributing directly from Africa is increasing. Many African institutions support the work of the Research Group by giving information and by stimulating exchanges.