



This newsletter covers:

Editorial from Vice-President Ousmane Diagana | Kids Ask Big Questions | Girl Power | Yearning for Learning | Women and Girls in Sciences | Events | AFW in the News | People first stories | Smart Data | Publication | Jobs and Careers

## EDITORIAL

### By Putting People First, Western and Central African Countries Can Reap Greater Social and Economic Rewards

Investing in people is essential to economic growth. But *what types* of investments can support inclusive and sustainable development and reduce fragility? During the last quarter, we convened several discussions to explore this question and two conclusions emerged repeatedly: investing in high-quality education and promoting gender equality.

We recently celebrated World Education Day and Women's History Month – these commemorations serve to brighten the spotlight on education and women's empowerment for a socially and economically inclusive Western and Central Africa. The importance of girls' education in reducing poverty cannot be overstated: educated girls are more informed about their own nutrition and healthcare, have fewer and healthier children, marry at a later age, and have better livelihood opportunities. As the largest financier of education in the region, the World Bank is committed to the goal of ensuring that every child has the opportunity to realize their full potential.

During his recent speech in Niger, "[Rethinking Development Policy in a Time of Crisis](#)", World Bank Group President David Malpass highlighted the ways in which education supports growth and creates pathways out of fragility and extremism. The importance of *investing in people* will be high on the agenda next week during the Spring Meetings in Washington, DC (April 10-16) as country delegations, experts, and other development partners convene to discuss transformational interventions that can support more equitable societies.

I look forward to seeing you there. You can follow the discussion online [here](#).

## KIDS ASK BIG QUESTIONS



### **A Conversation with Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and Ousmane Diagana on Girls' Empowerment**

The World Bank proudly presents "Kids Ask Big Questions," a unique opportunity for youth to drive the conversation on development issues that impact their generation. 10-year old Jemimah Ochole leads a discussion with Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, the Former President of Liberia, and Ousmane Diagana, Vice-President of Western and Central Africa, on how to better support and give agency to adolescent girls in Sub-Saharan Africa. Buckle up for inspiration and cuteness! [Watch this video.](#)

## HIGHLIGHTS



### **Girl Power! Driving Transformation in Western and Central Africa**

Empowering women and girls has transformational potential. Gender equality is not only essential for building more inclusive societies, but it can also accelerate progress on a broad number of development goals from human capital and food security to climate change and fragility. [To read more](#)

### **Yearning for Learning: 7 Lessons from Western and Central Africa**

Success for young girls in West and Central Africa like in the story of Ama starts in primary school where good teachers and good conditions can help them focus on learning. Providing training and resources for teachers, having regular learning assessments, but also good roads to facilitate school transport, clean water and toilets at school, and school feeding programs are proven interventions to help improve learning outcomes. [To read more](#)

### **Did you say, “Women and Girls in Science”? Meet Sally, who proves that women can succeed in STEM**

Growing up with her family in Brikama Nema in The Gambia, Sally has always had a deep love of learning. There was nothing that made her happier than going to school every morning and staying late for extra lessons as she pursued her dream of one day becoming an architect. [To read more](#)

## EVENTS



### Let's meet soon

- April 10-16, 2023 - **Spring Meetings** | [To register](#)
- April 15, 2023 - **The State of the Africa Region (SoAR)** | [To register](#)



### **Africa's corridors of life: Financing the infrastructure gap in Western and Central Africa**

**The Africa Report** - *A message from Mr. Ousmane Diagana, VP of the World Bank for WCA*

We often forget that life-changing infrastructure – a road, a powerline, or a fiberoptic cable – is a powerful driver for social and economic transformation. It provides a window of opportunity that opens up and facilitates the movement of people, products, and services. [To read more](#)

### **Africa: The Transformation of Africa Starts With Our Girls**

**All Africa** - *OPINION* By *Ousmane Diagana, World Bank Vice President for Western and Central Africa*

"When you educate a girl, you educate a nation." This African proverb resonates with the values passed on to me by my parents and guides my determination to drive change in the region through the education and empowerment of girls and women. [To read more](#)

## PEOPLE FIRST: STORIES OF PEOPLE THAT CHANGE LIVES



### **Nigeria: Changing the Lives of Adolescent Girls through Learning**

Adolescent girls in Nigeria face disproportionate obstacles in their lives and, in many cases, see their access to education interrupted. Attacks on schools, mass abductions of students, and violence have intensified over the last few years, making it less likely for girls to go to school. [Read more](#)



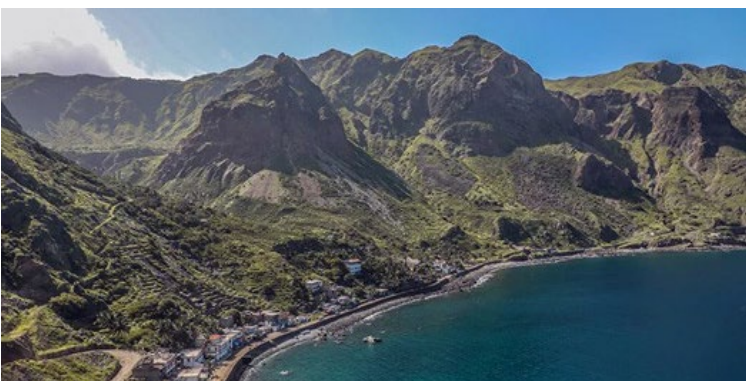
### **Niger: How new laws are protecting women and changing mindsets**

A few months ago, the Spotlight Initiative shared a story of two young girls in Niger – Olabisi, 17, and Aminata, 18 who reached out to their village's child protection committee to stop a friend from getting married at an early age. [To read more](#)



### **Benin: Multi-faceted gender reforms offer new opportunities**

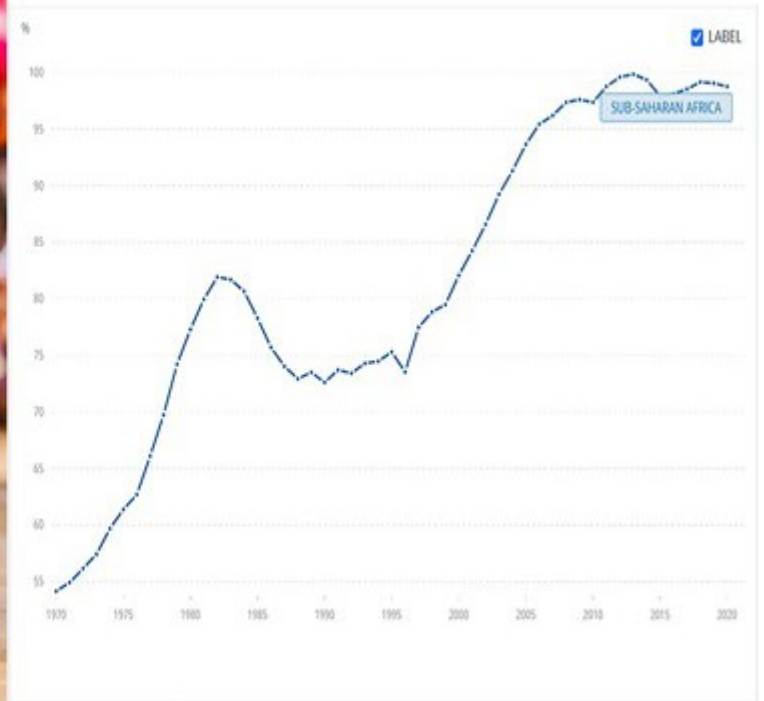
As the world marks International Women's Day this year, women and girls in Benin also have much to cheer about. Last year, medical certificates required for prosecuting gender-based violence cases were made free, so GBV survivors no longer have to pay for officially documenting a GBV crime. [To read more](#)



### **Cabo Verde: A new road for safety, development, and tourism**

One of the main investments on the island, which will ensure safe mobility and impact economic development, is the complete rehabilitation of the 5.25 km stretch of road that links Nova Sintra to Nossa Senhora do Monte and the drainage and slope improvements along a further 7 to 8 km, in a total road network of 29 km. [To read more](#)

## SMART DATA



### **99% gross - School enrollment, primary Sub-Saharan Africa in 2020**

[School Enrollment, Primary \(% gross\) - Sub-Saharan Africa](#)

The World Bank recognizes that transparency and accountability are essential to the development process and central to achieving the Bank's mission to alleviate poverty. Without data, you are just another person with an opinion. As a knowledge institution, the World Bank's first step is to share its knowledge freely and openly. Find [more data and statistics](#) from The World Bank.

## RESOURCES YOU MAY FIND USEFUL



### **Africa's Pulse: Leveraging Resource Wealth During the Low Carbon Transition**

The April 2023 edition of the Africa's Pulse shows growth across Sub-Saharan Africa remains sluggish, dragged down by uncertainty in the global economy, the underperformance of the continent's largest economies, high inflation, and a sharp deceleration of investment growth – and is insufficient to reduce extreme poverty. Economic growth is expected to slow from 3.6% in 2022 to 3.1% in 2023. [To read more and download the publication.](#)



## JOBS AND CAREERS



### Job opportunities at the World Bank Group

The World Bank Group's recruitment policy is to hire staff of the highest caliber, on as wide a geographical basis as possible, with preference to nationals of WBG member countries or countries of operations.

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