

Youth Employment Issues in Malawi

Options for Action

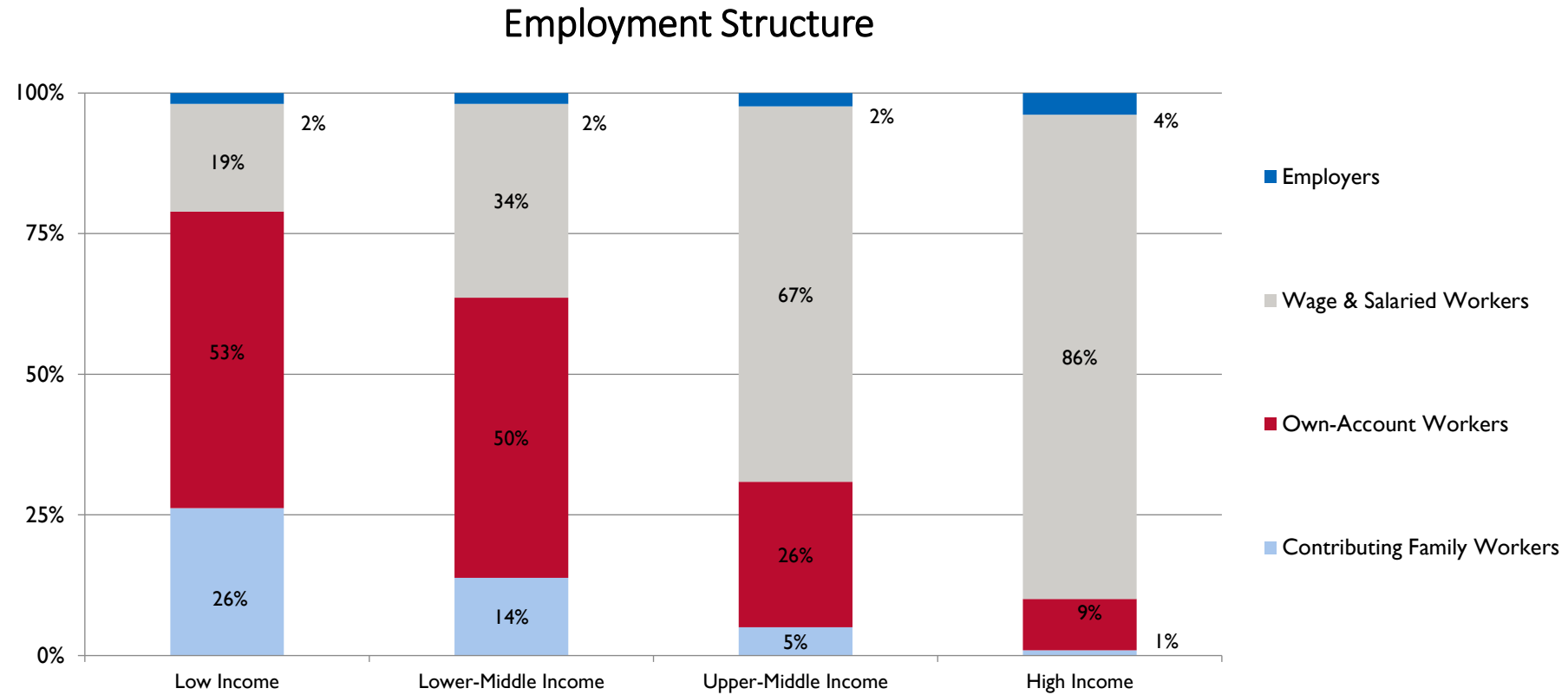
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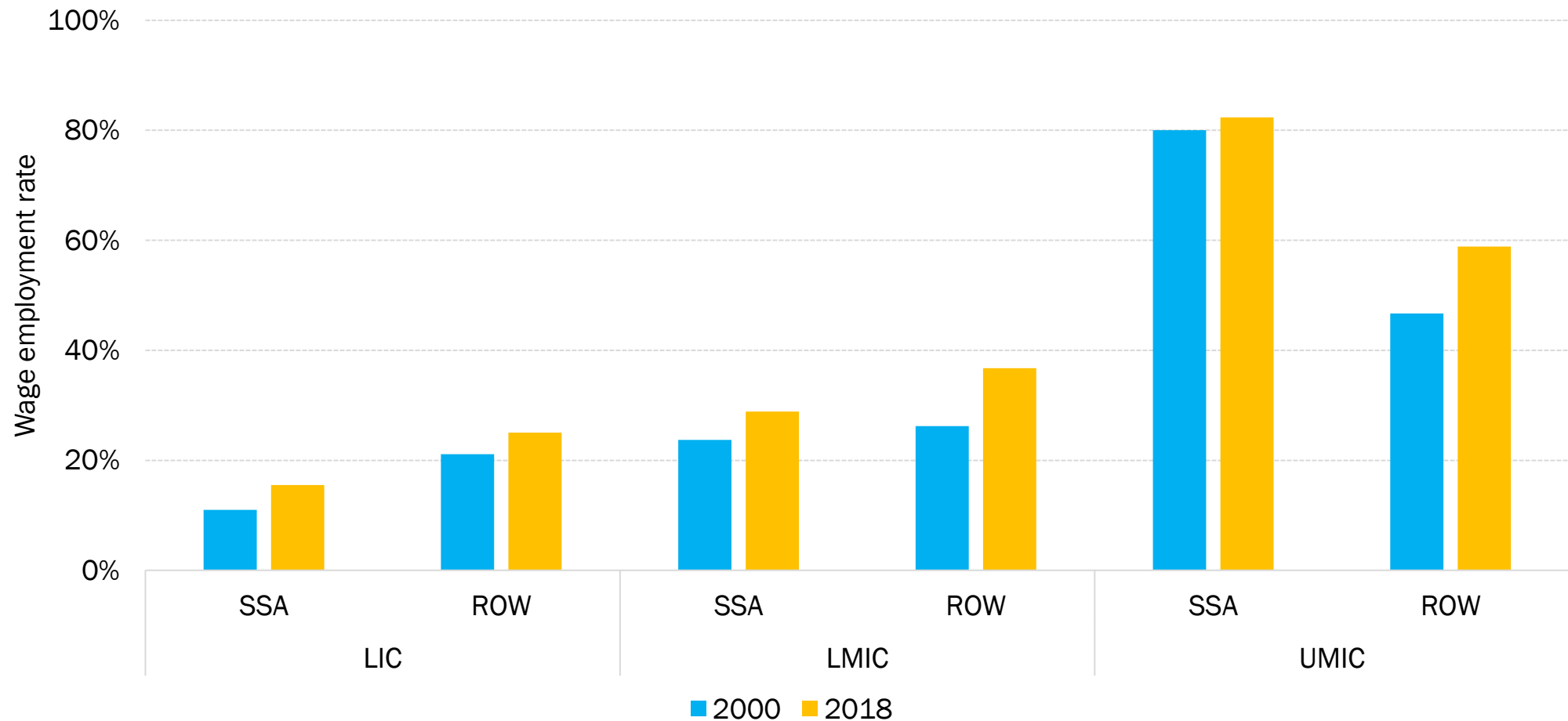


Informal is normal until economic transformation takes place

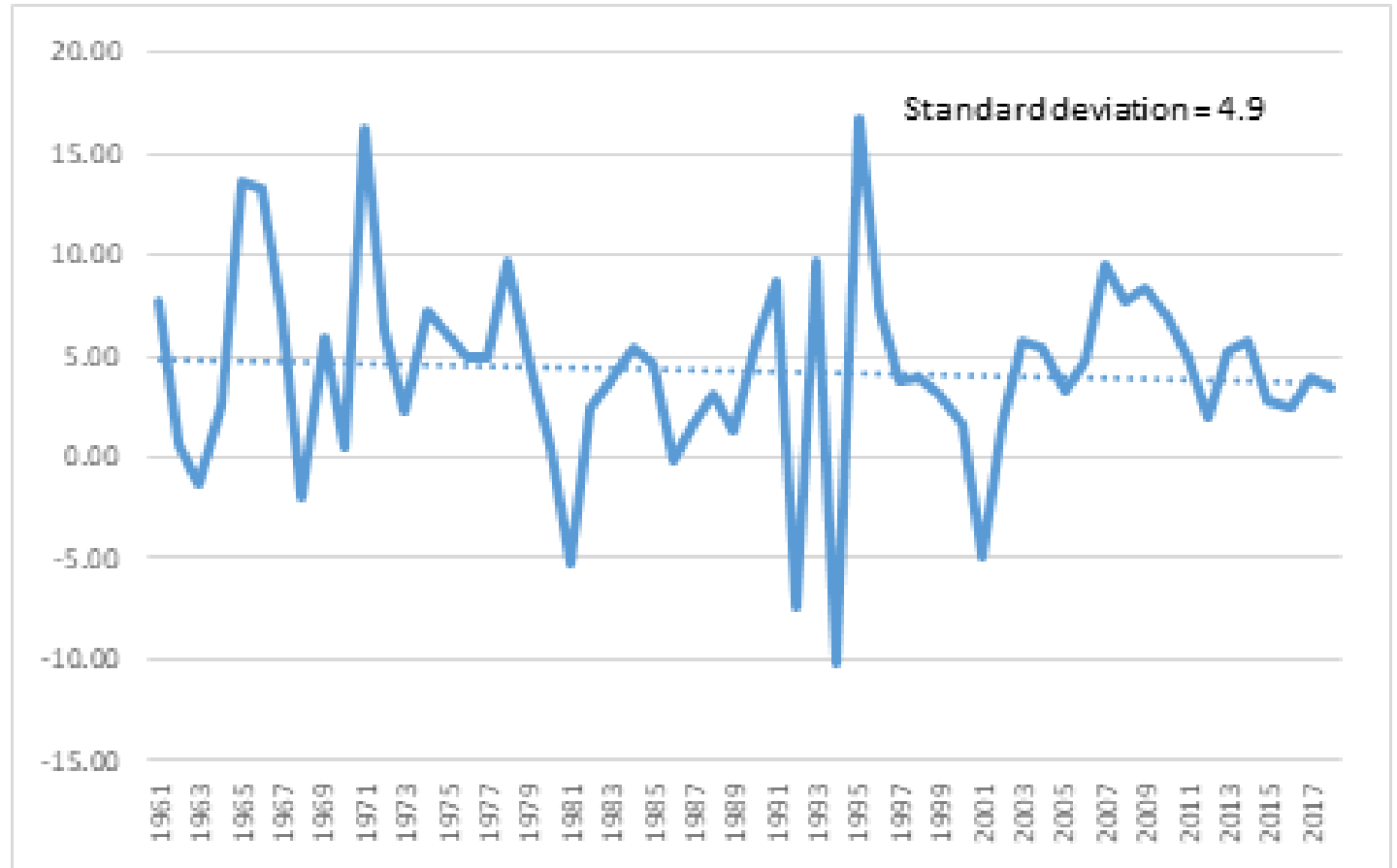


Source: ILO STAT, 2017

Employment transformation is still behind in SSA - progress has been modest



Malawi's growth pattern does not support transformation – time to think differently about development policy?



Malawi's youth employment challenges are long term – but start on them now

Economic transformation is hard in a small land-locked country

- Economies of scale – need regional and (potentially) international trade
- Manufacturing growth difficult; Services will have to be an engine of transformation
- Agriculture will undergird the transformation

Informal will be normal for the foreseeable future

- Youth will work in mostly the same sectors as their parents – can they be more productive and earn more?
- 1/3 of all employed, and 45% of youth in Malawi are underemployed – can this be addressed?

Youth need basic cognitive skills

- Access to education has not kept up with population growth in Malawi
 - Literacy rate today not much better than in 1952 – women account for most of gain
- 64% of working age population have no or primary education only; learning outcomes worse today than 30 years ago (Sandefur, et al.2020)
 - Need more education for digital economy, tradeable services

What can be done for youth today?

Focus on fixing the economy

- The real problem is missing opportunities, not deficient youth
- Youth need opportunities, not training for opportunities that are not there

Help youth use their education to boost agricultural productivity

- Youth need access to land, and to know-how (extension – use peer learning mechanisms)
- Use Livestock, irrigation programs to reduce under employment
- Youth specific savings groups
- Bring youth into producer associations, give them voice
- Make mobile phone use, broadband cheaper

Mixed livelihoods - help youth start nonfarm businesses

- Reduces underemployment, has a high multiplier effect
- Mobile money, cash transfers work best. Training does not

Build skills

Expand access to education

- Secondary school, - try private schools, try other options
- University is expensive – get RSA to help with scholarships? Build partnerships with private sector?

Build socioemotional skills

- These skills are linked to higher earnings, better employment outcomes
- Community-based afterschool programs a cheap option
- Especially effective for teen-aged girls - to help them stay in school develop negotiation and “mindset” skills

Other priority actions

All women of childbearing age need access to contraception

- 4 in 10 Malawian women report unmet need for contraception
- Malawian young women need to marry and conceive later, stay in school
 - 47% of women age 25-49 got married before age 19, 67% had sex before age 19, 1/3 of these had forced sex as first encounter
- USAID brief praises Malawi's policies, faults implementation

Build evidence base – engage with donors on evidence-based, scalable programs

Your Thoughts?

