

The Global Impact of the COVID-19 crisis on Youth Labour Markets

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Overview

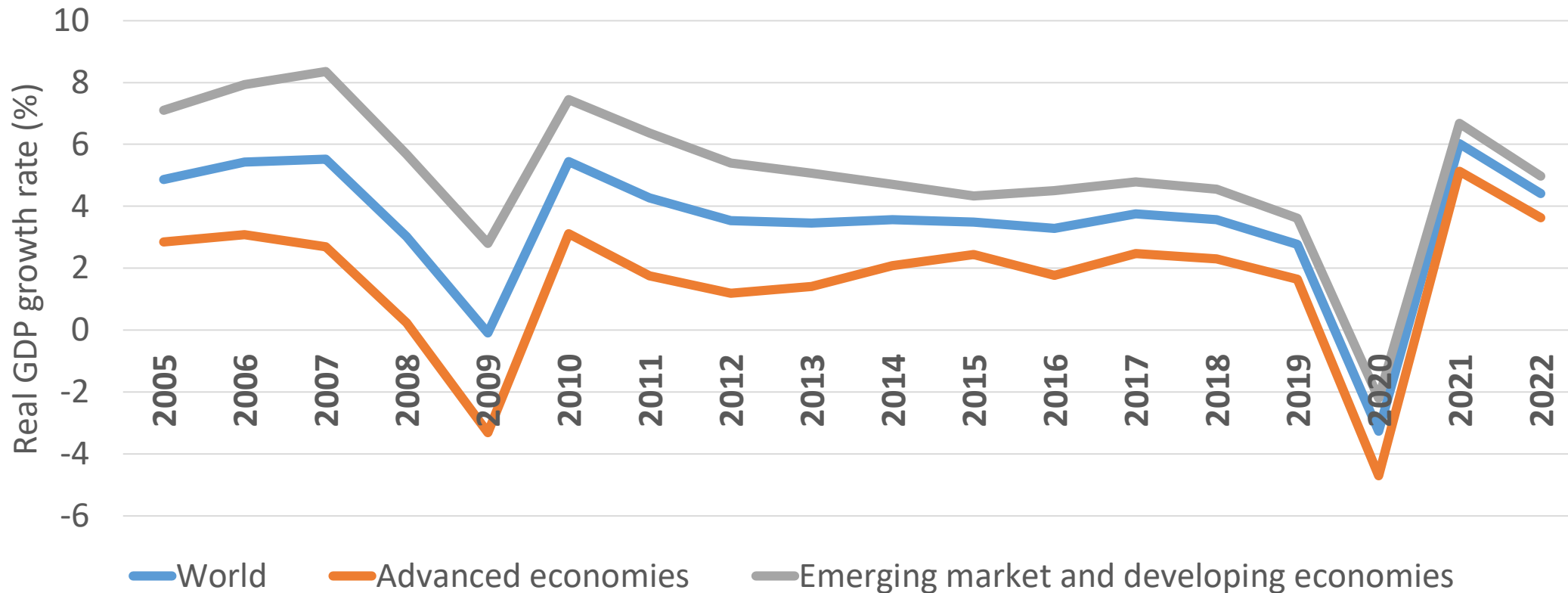
- Young people, especially young women, were particularly hard hit by the Covid-19 pandemic
 - How so?
 - Why?
 - Some Implications

► In order to discuss this, the presentation today...

- Outlines some key features of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on youth (vs. adult) labour markets
- Reports the results of a simple econometric analysis focussing on the differences between youth and adult changes in employment
- Offers some concluding remarks on the implications

► **Some Background:** Covid-19 and youth labour markets

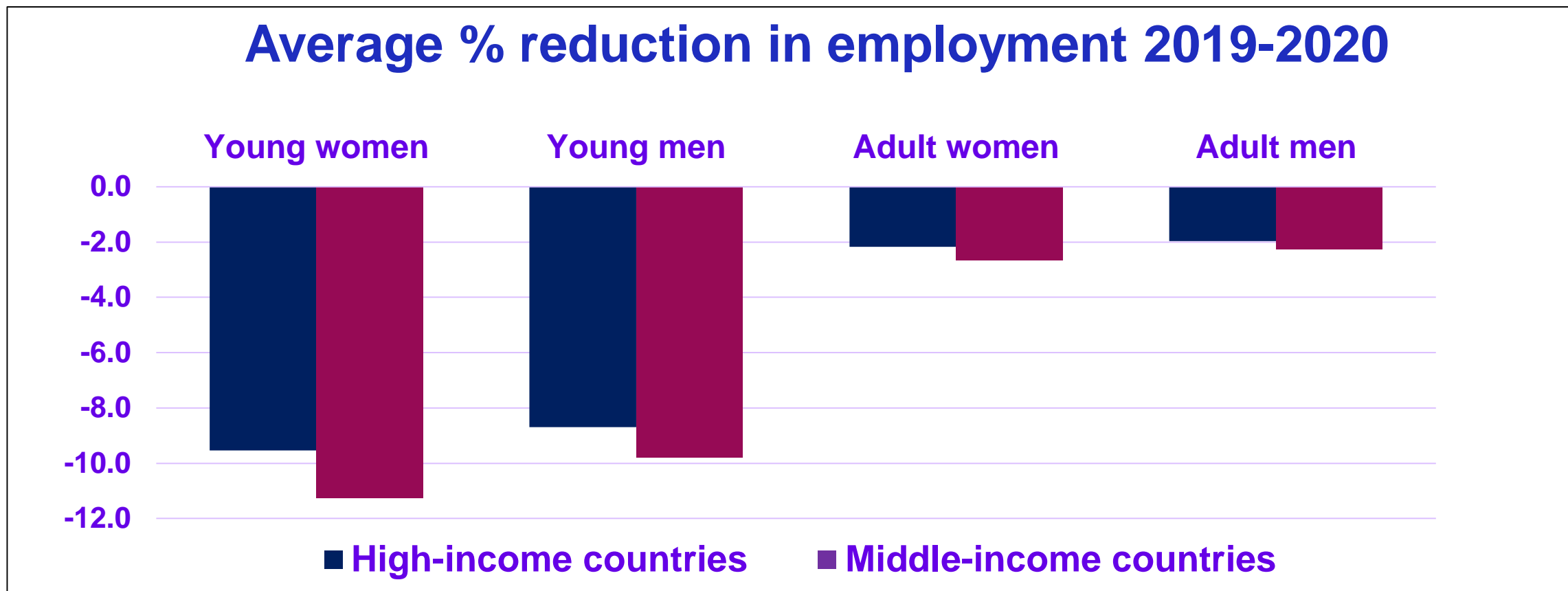
COVID-19 crisis has resulted in a truly global recession: Bigger and broader than the Global Financial and Economic Crisis



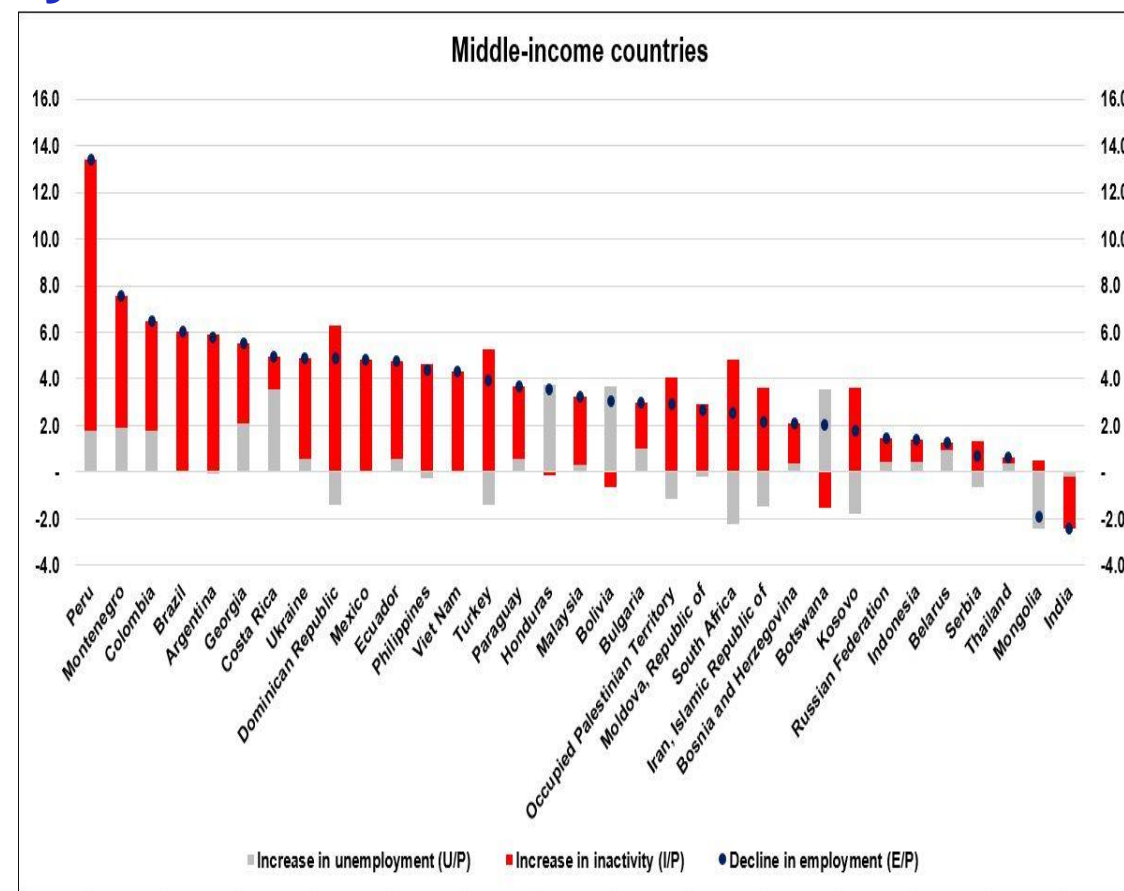
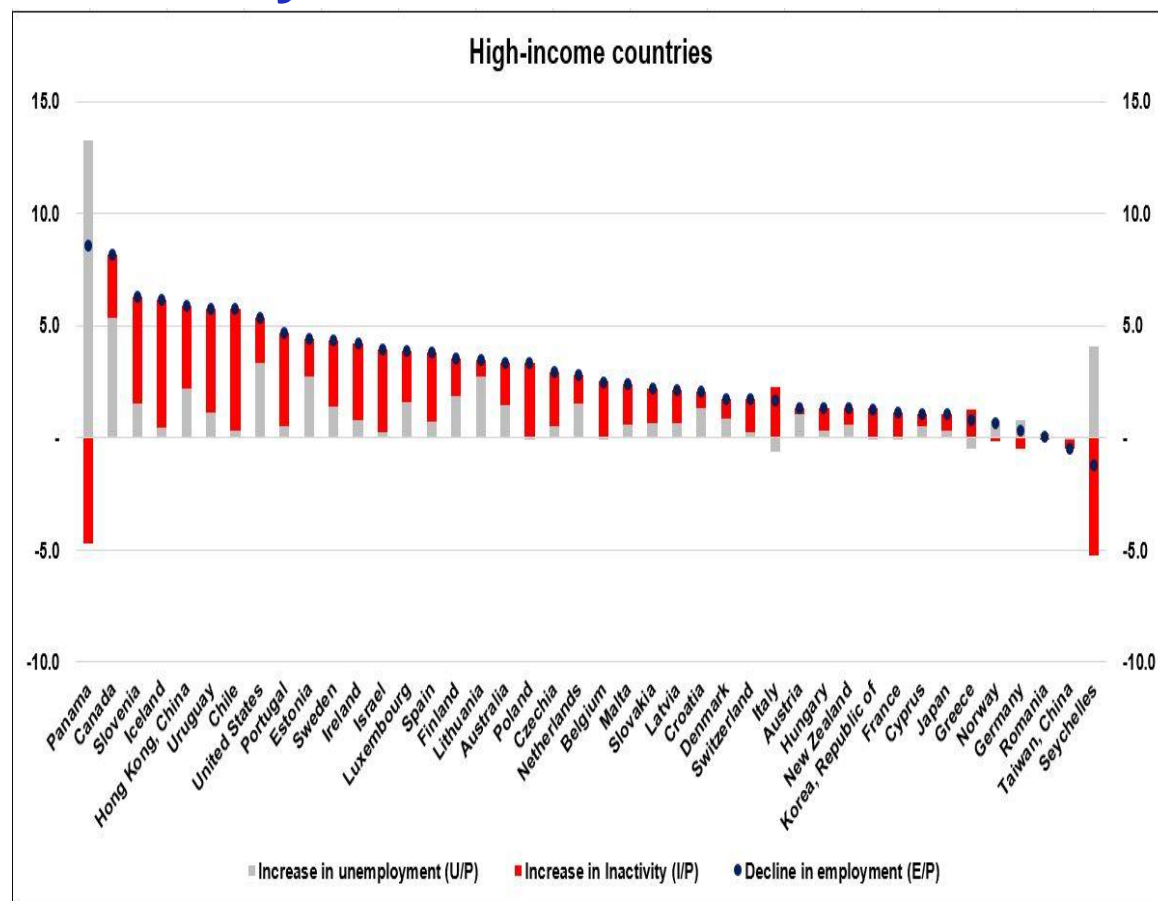
▶ COVID-19 inflicted a triple shock on young people through:

- ▶ Disruptions to education and training
- ▶ Increased difficulties for young jobseekers to transition to decent jobs
- ▶ Job and income losses for young workers

Between 2019 and 2020, Young people – and especially young women - suffered much bigger falls in employment than adults (25+), especially in Middle Income Countries...



...These youth employment losses translated PRIMARILY into increased inactivity rather than increased unemployment



Decomposition of the decline in youth employment-to-population ratio (2019 to 2020)

► Why was youth employment hit so hard?

- Young people **more susceptible** to COVID-19 related employment losses

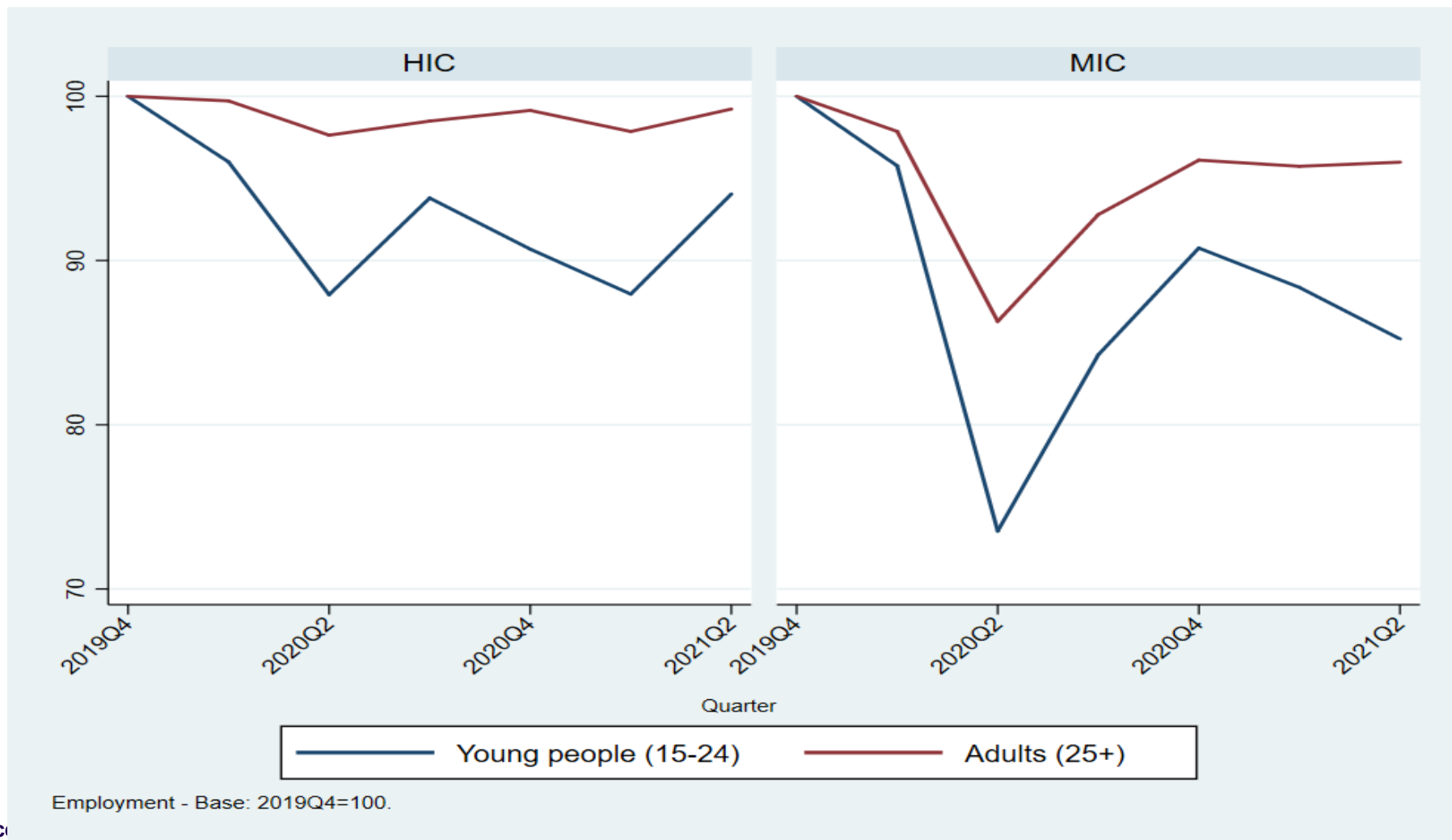
But also

- They **benefitted less** than adults from response measures

Much variety in recovery, but in general youth labour markets hit harder, recovered more slowly



Young People: Their employment was hit hard, but also its recovery slower (compared to adults (25+))



► To summarize...

- Young people, especially young women, suffered much bigger falls in employment than adults (25+)
- Reduced youth employment has translated into increased inactivity (rather than increased unemployment) and NEET
- Recovery began in second-half of 2020, was very different across countries, but overall was weaker amongst young people.

► Towards some explanations

Why were young people so hard hit?

► Simple (preliminary) cross-section (difference in difference) econometric model of differential impact on Young people & Adults of GDP and Labour Market Institutions

- Dependent variable: % in employment (by age, gender), 2019-2020 (Q2 – Q2); LFS
- 44 High and Middle income countries
- Explanatory variables:
 - GDP growth,
 - Labour Market Regulations (EPLEX)
 - Country Income level (fixed effects)

► Youth and adult employment were first estimated separately...

	Total (15+)		Young people (15-24)		Adults (25+)	
Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
GDP growth rate (2020)	0.012*** (0.004)	0.010** (0.004)	0.015** (0.006)	0.015** (0.006)	0.012*** (0.003)	0.009** (0.004)
Income group (compared to high income)						
Upper-middle income	-0.098*** (0.03)	-0.097*** (0.029)	-0.122*** (0.045)	-0.122** (0.04)	-0.094*** (0.029)	-0.099*** (0.027)
Lower-middle income	-0.124*** (0.04)	-0.104** (0.042)	-0.114* (0.061)	-0.111* (0.065)	-0.119*** (0.039)	-0.094** (0.039)
Labour market regulation index		0.025* (0.015)		0.008 (0.019)		0.027** (0.011)
Observations	44	44	44	44	44	44
R ²	0.39	0.43	0.28	0.28	0.40	0.44

► Youth and adult employment fell in response to recession...

	Total (15+)		Young people (15-24)		Adults (25+)	
Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
GDP growth rate (2020)	0.012*** (0.004)	0.010** (0.004)	0.015** (0.006)	0.015** (0.006)	0.012*** (0.003)	0.009** (0.004)
Income group (default = high income)						
Upper-middle income	-0.098*** (0.03)	-0.097*** (0.029)	-0.122*** (0.045)	-0.122** (0.04)	-0.094*** (0.029)	-0.099*** (0.027)
Lower-middle income	-0.124*** (0.04)	-0.104** (0.042)	-0.114* (0.061)	-0.111* (0.065)	-0.119*** (0.039)	-0.094** (0.039)
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With employment in Middle Income Countries falling more sharply...

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...but only adult employment responded to protective LMIs...

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► ...which also reduced (marginally) the coefficient on GDP...

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GDP growth rate (2020)	0.012*** (0.004)	0.010** (0.004)	0.015** (0.006)	0.015** (0.006)	0.012*** (0.003)	0.009** (0.004)
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...and the relation was best defined for adults

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GDP growth rate (2020)	0.012*** (0.004)	0.010** (0.004)	0.015** (0.006)	0.015** (0.006)	0.012*** (0.003)	0.009** (0.004)
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Expressing the relations in terms of difference-in-difference (and by gender)...

	Total		Female		Male	
Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
GDP growth rate (2020)	0.003 (0.004)	0.008* (0.004)	0.003 (0.004)	0.008* (0.076)	0.004 (0.004)	0.008* (0.004)
Youth*GDP growth rate (2020)	0.016*** (0.003)	0.008 (0.005)	0.019*** (0.003)	0.009* (0.009)	0.014*** (0.003)	0.007 (0.005)
Income group (compared to high income)						
Upper-middle income	-0.111*** (0.027)	-0.111*** (0.026)	-0.115*** (0.02)	-0.115*** (0.026)	-0.111*** (0.027)	-0.111*** (0.027)
Lower-middle income	-0.100** (0.03)	-0.100*** (0.033)	-0.115*** (0.039)	-0.115*** (0.037)	-0.092** (0.038)	-0.092** (0.038)
Labour market regulation index	0.017 (0.013)	0.032** (0.013)	0.017 (0.011)	0.034** (0.013)	0.017 (0.011)	0.029** (0.013)
Youth*labour market regulation index		-0.028** (0.012)		-0.034*** (0.013)		-0.023* (0.013)
Observations	88	88	88	88	88	88
R ²	0.42	0.45	0.45	0.49	0.38	0.40

...GDP is more important for young people than adults,...

	Total		Female		Male	
Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
GDP growth rate (2020)	0.003 (0.004)	0.008* (0.004)	0.003 (0.004)	0.008* (0.076)	0.004 (0.004)	0.008* (0.004)
Youth*GDP growth rate (2020)	0.016*** (0.003)	0.008 (0.005)	0.019*** (0.003)	0.009* (0.009)	0.014*** (0.003)	0.007 (0.005)
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Observations	88	88	88	88	88	88
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But this is explained by the (lack of) role of protective institutions

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GDP growth rate (2020)	0.003 (0.004)	0.008* (0.004)	0.003 (0.004)	0.008* (0.076)	0.004 (0.004)	0.008* (0.004)
Youth*GDP growth rate (2020)	0.016*** (0.003)	0.008 (0.005)	0.019*** (0.003)	0.009* (0.009)	0.014*** (0.003)	0.007 (0.005)
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Lower-middle income	-0.100** (0.03)	-0.100*** (0.033)	-0.115*** (0.039)	-0.115*** (0.037)	-0.092** (0.038)	-0.092** (0.038)
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R ²	0.42	0.45	0.45	0.49	0.38	0.40

► **To conclude...**

▶ The preliminary results suggest...

- ▶ Young people – especially young women – were particularly severely affected by the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic
 - ▶ This in part depends on the fact that young people are always harder hit by recessions
 - ▶ But also, on the fact that protective labour market institutions did not protect young people

In summary...

- Young people, especially young women, have suffered much bigger falls in employment than adults (25+)
- Reduced youth employment has translated into **increased inactivity** (rather than increased unemployment) and NEET – need greater emphasis on outreach measures
- **Recovery** began in second-half of 2020 but often **weaker amongst young people** and is very different across countries – need more targeted **job creation** measures for young people
- **Bottom line:** Danger that short-term job (opportunity) loss will turn into long-term exclusion of young people from the labour market

▶ For more information:

ILO. *An update on the youth labour market impact of the COVID-19 crisis*, ILO Statistical Brief, June 2021.

Niall O'Higgins, Sher Verick & Adam Elsheikhi. *On the Nature of the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Youth Labour Markets: A Cross-Country Analysis*. Paper presented at the Regulating for Decent Work Conference, Geneva, July 2021.