

YOUTH LEADERS CONVENE TO ADDRESS THE IMPACT OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN KENYA

What does a conversation by young Kenyans about one of the country's huge problems look like

The magnitude and severity of unemployment in Kenya continue to worsen, with youth bearing the brunt of this crisis, out of every 10 unemployed Kenyans, seven of them are young people aged 35 and below.

In May 2022, youth entrepreneurs, policy makers, private sector and development partners convened in Nairobi, Kenya, to reflect on solutions that will lead to transformative impact for unemployed youth. Speaking to the urgency to develop solutions to the youth unemployment crisis, Raphael Obonyo, co-founder of The Youth Congress highlighted, “Youth unemployment is a ticking time bomb waiting to explode. Urgent and robust action is required.” “The median age is estimated at 19 years, and about 80 percent of Kenya's population is below 35 years— a significantly large youth population – but they are disproportionately affected by unemployment. This is a persistent problem. We need to act now, and we need to act together if we are going to realize the significant opportunities presented by this many young people today,”

Speaking at the same forum, Raymond Ochieng, Secretary Youth Affairs at State Department for Youth at Government of Kenya, emphasized the need for collaboration among different actors to make significant dent on youth unemployment. “The youth unemployment problem is a complex multi-layered issue and new and strengthened partnerships are needed, involving the government, private sector, development partners and civil society to create solutions that are sustainable and effective.

Kenya’s private sector is positioned as a critical agent for change in youth unemployment problem in the country. Speaking at the Youth Entrepreneurship Summit at Nairobi Marble Arch, Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) representative noted that with at least one million young Kenyans entering the job market each year, the economy has not been able to provide the required number of employment opportunities to sustain the high entrants witnessed. With such alarming statistics, it is therefore within the mandate of the private sector that provides around 90 per cent of employment, for both formal and informal jobs to support with interventions that will address this ‘youth burden’ before it gets out of hand.

At the forum, diverse and often unrepresented voices led and shaped discussions to develop solutions addressing one of Kenya's big problems – youth unemployment. Young entrepreneurs shared their experiences, highlighting how they have remained resilient even as they go through challenges and adversity. These youth also exemplified the importance of creating opportunities for youth especially in the informal settlements. Development partners at the event led by Kenya Community Development Foundation shared their learnings from their work they have done to create social impact. More importantly, the Foundation renewed their commitment to development issues by making commitments to create solutions ranging from providing opportunities, linkages and funding to support youth livelihoods. The Youth Congress, in partnership with Kenya Community Development Foundation, have been providing grants, equipment, tools and skills to youth groups in the informal settlement including Kibra, Mukuru, Mathare, Korogocho among others. The joint project assists the youth to run businesses, generate income and create jobs.

The forum was a strong start to a long journey of applying entrepreneurship solutions to addressing youth unemployment problem in Kenya. As was demonstrated by the forum's discussion-there are many positive stories to tell about the role of youth entrepreneurial groups in socio-economic empowerment. In the same manner that women investment groups, chamas, have lifted millions of women from poverty, youth investment groups in entrepreneurship can create jobs for the youth, if supported and widely replicated. Business in youth entrepreneurship groups is centered around what groups of youth like doing, something that makes them focus more on pursuing their talents and passion as businesses.

From: Raphael Obonyo

Sent: Saturday, May 28, 2022 9:55 AM

To: EDROP DESIGN COMPANY <info@edropdesign.com>

Cc: Halima Youth Congress <halimahoney19@yahoo.com>; 'charles.m.waweru' <charles.m.waweru@gmail.com>; Stano Ogolla <stanogolla@yahoo.com>; Christine Ms Koch Finance <crisatieno@yahoo.com>

Subject: Mike: Post on website and share with us the link

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