

The Weekly

Information Resource Bulletin

FOCUS: Youth Unemployment

Unemployment is one of the challenges most young people in Malawi are facing.

The National Statistical Office (NSO) indicates the unemployment rate in the country increased to just over six percent in 2013. That's doubled since 2011.

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), more than 70 percent of Malawians between 15 and 29 are employed in the informal sector such as vending.

The report also indicates that five out of ten young Malawian workers are either under-educated or over-educated for the work they do. In addition, six out of ten young workers receive below average wages.

The report cites lack of work experience as one of the major obstacles to securing a job.

The goals of the Weekly Bulletin are:

- To educate listeners about the importance equipping the youth with skills to deal with unemployment
- To help create a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship
- To promote discussion and dialogue between listeners and other community members about the solutions to youth unemployment

The Problem: Youth Unemployment

As we have discussed in our previous Bulletins, Malawi's population is made up mostly of young people.

As the population expands, more jobs are supposed to be created as well.

If there are not enough jobs, many of these young people will be unemployed.

A 2008 World Bank report titled 'Youth Employment in Africa: the Potential, the Problem and the Promise,' noted that it was easier for youth to find a job in urban than rural areas.

Worsening conditions in rural areas lead to more people migrating to urban centers which ultimately leads to

unemployment challenges in the urban areas.

Most times, unemployed youth have little or nothing to do – creating a climate for criminal activities. This in turn, can derail the development of a country.

A large unemployed population indicates lost potential since communities and the nation, as a whole, fails to benefit from what young people could contribute to the development of their country.

Therefore, it is the responsibility of government and the youth themselves to find solutions to this problem.

Getting a handle on rapid population growth is a good place to start.

Activities for Journalists

Use your radio station to help your community, understand that it is important to start finding solutions to youth unemployment.

Remind them that unemployment drives a lot of young people to indulging in bad behaviours that could put their lives at risk.

Smoking and drinking alcohol helps many unemployed youth escape the reality of their daily lives because they cannot cope with their seemingly hopeless situation. With no other options, girls are sometimes forced into prostitution in order to make enough money to survive.

The reality is that even young people who are educated -- sometimes with a university degree -- struggle to find a job.

The promotion of entrepreneurship is one of the most powerful steps the government can take to help create a strong foundation for economic growth.

Youth must be encouraged to start their own businesses through vocational training – through such programs as the one that the Technical,

Entrepreneurial and Vocational Education and Training Authority (TEVET) offers.

For instance, young people could choose to get training in carpentry or tailoring and then start their own business in the future.

The government could also help young people with getting access to loans from either banks or microfinance organizations such as FINCA, to help them kick start their businesses.

Do a vox pop with some young people in your area and find out from them why they think it is so hard to find a good paying job in the Malawi.

Talk to young people about how unemployment affects them. Do they feel helpless?

Are there programs in your community to help young people start a business? If so, interview someone with the program – and someone who has benefited from it.

What are the solutions to youth unemployment? How is it related to population growth?

Interview the minister of youth, sports and culture on what the government is doing to deal with this problem.

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