



EVENT PROCEEDINGS

Youth - Employability - Opportunity Nairobi, Kenya

Hosted by:

International Youth Foundation (IYF)
African Centre for Women, Information and Communications Technology
Informal Sector Business Institute
NairoBits

In partnership with:
World Bank
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)

Organized by IYF, a two-day learning forum was held April 16-17 in Nairobi, Kenya under the auspices of the World Bank's Global Partnership to Promote Youth Employment and Employability. The partnership is supported by the Development Grant Facility and includes IYF, the Youth Employment Network, the Understanding Children's Work Project, and the Arab Urban Development Institute. Co-sponsorship of the meeting was provided through Youth:Work, a global youth employability partnership between IYF and USAID. Microsoft and Samsung, corporate partners who support IYF youth employability programs in Kenya and other African countries, were also active participants in the meeting. Local co-host organizations included IYF partner NGOs: the African Centre for Women, Information & Communications Technology (ACWICT), the Informal Sector Business Institute (ISBI), and NairoBits. Over 130 participants representing 15 countries from government, the private sector, civil society, academia and youth attended the forum.

The objectives of the meeting were to:

- o promote the discussion of "what works" in skills development for disadvantaged and highly vulnerable youth, especially in urban areas
- o share approaches to promoting entrepreneurship and enterprise development among young people
- o exchange experience and learning from monitoring and evaluation of youth employability and entrepreneurship programs
- o hear directly from youth their perspectives on employment issues
- hear the perspectives of regional private sector stakeholders on 'the skills gap' – between the supply of job-ready skills among young people and the demand for skills among employers – and to share experiences from private sector engagement in youth employability programs in Sub-Saharan Africa

This forum was the second in a global "Youth – Employability – Opportunity" learning series held with support from the World Bank, USAID and IYF. The first meeting was held in Amman, Jordan in January 2009 under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah.

This report provides a summary of the discussions which took place in Nairobi, including links to speakers' presentations.

Executive Summary

Meeting Objectives. A two-day learning forum organized by IYF was held April 16-17 in Nairobi, Kenya under the auspices of the World Bank's Global Partnership to Promote Youth Employment and Employability. The partnership is supported by the Development Grant Facility and includes IYF, the Youth Employment Network (YEN), the Understanding Children's Work Project (UCW), and the Arab Urban Development Institute (AUDI). The DGF partnership brought in additional sponsorship for the meeting through Youth:Work, a global youth employability partnership between IYF and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

The objectives of the meeting were to:

- Disseminate evidence-based, best practice programs in skills training, job placement and enterprise development for African youth, including those most vulnerable
- Identify gaps in proven practices and strategies for addressing the gaps
- Encourage rigorous evaluation of youth employment and job creation programs
- Promote partnerships among private sector, government, NGOs, donors and youth.

Keynote Address. Introduced by the Hon. Prof. Hellen Sambili, MP, Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, the Rt. Hon. Raila A. Odinga, Prime Minister of the Republic of Kenya, opened the conference highlighting the urgency of addressing the youth employment issue not only in Kenya, but across Africa. 33% of the Kenyan population is defined as youth, but that they make up 67% of the unemployed. 750,000 Kenyans enter the labor market each year with only a fraction of that number being employed. The Prime Minister asked "...whether the education we offer really prepares our youths for the jobs available. Many employers will tell you that it does not."

He added, "The unemployment challenge that we face in Kenya is nothing but a time bomb. It has been correctly stated that despondency played a big role in fuelling the violence that swept our land during the political crisis last year." At the same time, the Kenyan government is supporting numerous programs to address these challenges. It is training youth in life skills and leadership, and has created a Youth Enterprise Development Fund. It has recently initiated a program to employ 300,000 Kenyan youth in a six-month public works program, and has developed a comprehensive national youth employment and job creation program with the goal of providing jobs for 500,000 young people each year.

Regional Trends. Africa has the most youthful population in the world with over 35% of the population in the 15-24 age range, totaling 220 million people. Whereas all other regions in the world have either reached the peak of their youth demographic bulge or will in the next 20 years, the youth population in Africa is expected to grow to over 400 million in the next 40 years and will still not have reached its peak.

While youth unemployment in Africa stands at 12%, it is a much more significant problem in some countries such as South Africa where it stands at 45%. Nonetheless, the more significant problem across Africa is youth underemployment and joblessness (including both those looking for work and discouraged youth who have stopped looking for work). Joblessness rates reach over 60% for rural youth in Mozambique and over 50% for urban youth in Zambia.

A major challenge for African youth is the skills gap between what the educational system provides and what business and industry need. Across Africa, youth are less likely to be employed in skilled jobs and professions, despite gains in basic education and literacy. Overall, some 72% of the African youth population lives on less than \$2 a day.

Private Sector Labor Demand and Skills Training. Business leaders identified their needs not only in terms of the technical skills that are required, but also put even greater emphasis on the "soft skills" that are critical for workplace success. These include communication and analytical skills, flexibility and adaptability, multicultural sensitivity, teamwork, problem-solving and creative-thinking, motivation, self-confidence, a willingness to learn continuously, and personal values of honesty, responsibility, reliability and loyalty.

Investing in the educational system so that it can respond to local industry and commerce needs is another critical means of enhancing youth employability. Training programs that form partnerships with business and provide a mix of technical and life skills along with internships and an active job placement service have been proven to be the most effective in placing newly skilled workers in jobs. Certification of training, well-designed wage subsidy programs and youth community service programs can all be effective ways for unemployed youth to get basic workplace skills as a pathway to decent jobs.

Youth-Led Enterprises and Job Creation. An important part of the solution to youth unemployment is the development of youth-led enterprises and job creation for youth through expansion of small and medium-sized enterprises. There is a stigma attached to becoming an entrepreneur in many African countries that needs to be overcome. At the same time, only a minority of youth has the drive, the resiliency and the talent to become highly successful entrepreneurs, as opposed to those large majorities who are entrepreneurs by necessity. Successful enterprise programs for youth include selection of youth with entrepreneurial vocation and building the self-confidence of youth so that they can succeed in business.

Other key ingredients of success include adequate training of young entrepreneurs in the various skills required for growing businesses, and business support services to aid in managing challenges common to early-stage businesses. Mentors to young entrepreneurs and access to credit and financing are also critical elements.

School-to-Work Transitions. Improving the responsiveness of the educational system to the needs of employers to ensure that graduates are prepared to enter the workforce is a high priority. Strong partnerships between the private sector

and educational institutions are needed for this. Other strategies include mainstreaming life skills curricula and career guidance into school systems, improving the training of teachers, using technology effectively as a teaching tool, and recognizing out-of-school programs for the contributions they make in educating young people. With regard to highly vulnerable youth, it is critical to design a comprehensive and youth-centered package of services that address their special needs (e.g. psychosocial, remedial).

Improved Program Evaluation and the Research Agenda. More and better evaluations of youth employment and enterprise programs are urgently needed. Impact evaluations and cost benefit analyses will provide solid evidence of what kinds of programs work (and which do not), and why. At the same time, programs of all types need solid monitoring and evaluations systems in order to generate lessons learned that can be incorporated into program design and ensure continuous program improvement.

Relatively little research on youth employment has focused on Sub-Saharan Africa. More research, including panel data, is needed on: school-to-work transitions in Africa (including on the job search process, first jobs, and the role of social networks); career guidance; demand for youth labor; what works in apprenticeship, internship, and attachment programs; and the role of youth volunteerism or service as well as life skills in employability, among other topics. It was emphasized that there is a need for engaging local researchers and sharing data collected with local universities to foster knowledge creation. Research must be accessible, "policy-friendly", and widely disseminated in order to result in policy application.

Conclusion. While the challenges of meeting youth employment needs are great, the meeting underscored the value of youth as assets to society. Countries with large youth populations have the opportunity to engage a young labor force unburdened with the large numbers of dependents which countries with ageing populations face. With the right investments in education and health, life skills and employability skills, the youth of today will be prepared to take the successful transition to be productively employed, life-long learners who will be active citizens of their countries and prepared to raise their own next generation of families.

Thursday, 16 April 2009

Theme: "Youth Employment and Employability in Sub-Saharan Africa: Regional Perspectives on Challenges and Current Responses"

Welcoming Remarks

- ~ Erna Kerst, Mission Director, USAID/Kenya
- ~ Johannes Zutt, Country Director, East Africa Region, World Bank (Kenya)
- ~ William Reese, President and Chief Executive Officer, IYF (U.S.)
- ~ Hon. Prof. Hellen Sambili, MP, Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports (Kenya)

William Reese welcomed participants to the forum, noting that attendees represented the public, private, and civil society sectors, academia and youth from 15 countries. The World Bank's 2007 *World Development Report* highlighted the challenges and opportunities arising from the "youth bulge" in the global population, with 1.5 billion young people ages 12-24 worldwide, the overwhelming majority living in developing countries. These population numbers can present a fiscal and economic risk, from the cost of schooling to the consequences of youth unemployment. If large populations of young people are not integrated into global labor markets, there is potential for social unrest, poorer investment climates, and lower levels of economic growth, especially in developing countries.

Yet the youth bulge also presents great opportunity for increased growth and prosperity through an expanded labor force engaged in productive activity. We have seen the benefits of creating a stronger enabling environment for countries to develop their human capital by investing in children and youth. In response to the global youth bulge, the need for better knowledge and understanding of the kinds of policies, institutions, programs and approaches that support conditions for youth to obtain a quality education, make successful transitions into the labor market, and build productive working lives has become increasingly urgent and important. Over a billion jobs need to be created, yet the current world recession has been causing rapid job losses.

Initiatives such as the World Bank's Global Partnership to Promote Youth Employment and Employability and the USAID-IYF Youth: Work partnership are looking to understand better the problems facing young people in their transition to work and to identify effective programs and policies to help address these challenges. Experience has shown the great benefits of public-private-civil society partnerships to support youth employability initiatives; great strides can be made when we work together across sectors and leverage our collective efforts to find solutions to these challenges.

Erna Kerst welcomed meeting participants to Kenya. Having a large and robust set of programs in Kenya, USAID was happy to be a co-host of the

conference. USAID/Kenya has begun to focus on the issue of youth employment, particularly in areas hardest hit by the post-election violence in 2008. USAID views youth as assets with the potential to lead and determine the future of their country. This forum has provided a valuable opportunity to share and learn from experience from across the continent and other regions.

Johannes Zutt was pleased to support this important learning forum on youth employability in Sub-Saharan Africa through its Development Grant Facility. Youth employment is a critical issue in the region, with 15-24 year olds representing over a third of the working-age population but 3-3.5 times more likely than adults to be unemployed. The Bank has valued the work of this Global Partnership to Promote Youth Employment and Employability, which brings together IYF, YEN, the Understanding Children's Work Project, and the Arab Urban Development Institute. The World Bank has a keen interest in increasing understanding of "what works" in enhancing youth employability and employment through research and through design, implementation, and evaluation of program interventions, as well as in policy dialogue and capacity building of local governments. The World Bank expects that these discussions will help us collectively to identify key next steps and courses of action which stakeholders can pursue to promote economic development and youth employability in Africa and in Kenya specifically.

The Hon. Prof. Hellen Sambili, MP, Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports said that the Ministry looked forward to learning from friends from 15 countries about what has worked in helping youth and promoting youth employment. In Kenya, youth under 30 represent about 75% of the total population, yet they are not well-represented in the labor force. The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports itself is a young ministry, responsible for coordinating youth employment efforts as well as serving as a focal point for other issues that affect youth. Youth issues and youth employment are critical for Kenya to prosper, creating linkages to sustainable development, peace and stability. The Government of Kenya is committed to increasing youth employment and is launching the *Kazi Kwa Vijana* program for this purpose. The Ministry is also interested in the quality of jobs created, thus focusing on vocational training and the strengthening of youth polytechnics.

Keynote Address

The Right Honourable Raila A. Odinga, Prime Minister of the Republic of Kenya

The Rt. Hon. Raila A. Odinga, Prime Minister of Kenya, opened the conference by highlighting the urgency of addressing the youth employment issue not only in Kenya, but across Africa. The Prime Minister noted that 33% of the Kenyan population is defined as youth, but that they make up 67% of the unemployed. 750,000 Kenyans enter the labor market each year with only a fraction of that number being gainfully employed. He also recognized that a central problem for youth is a matter of employability, and "...whether the education we offer

really prepares our youths for the jobs available. Many employers will tell you that it does not." To underscore his point, he stated, "The unemployment challenge that we face in Kenya is nothing but a time bomb. It has been correctly stated that despondency played a big role in fueling the violence that swept our land during the political crisis last year."

At the same time, Prime Minister Odinga noted that the government has launched a number of programs to address the "youth bulge." The government created the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports to coordinate disparate initiatives. It has supported training in life skills and youth leadership, and created a new Youth Enterprise Development Fund to support youth-led enterprises. It has recently initiated the *Kazi Kwa Vijana* program to

In the words of the Prime Minister: "... If you empower the youth, you will actually transform the world.... We need to give youth the instrument with which to face the future more vigorously. And we begin by doing this right from the beginning – by offering every child that is born in our society an equal opportunity... Irrespective of their social background, they should have equal opportunity to education so that they can be able to realize their natural potential.... We must invest more in our youth as infants, and then provide opportunities for them after they have acquired that knowledge to earn a decent living. That is what is going to enable us to fight the four major enemies of mankind: ignorance, poverty, disease and bad governance."

employ 300,000 Kenyan youth in a six-month public works program focused on planting and nurturing trees and other conservation and public works projects. It has also developed a so-called 'Marshall Plan' to implement a comprehensive national youth employment and job creation program with the goal of providing jobs for 500,000 young people each year.

Regional Trends and Challenges in Youth Employment and Employability

- ~ David Newhouse, Labor Economist, World Bank (U.S.)
- ~ Johannes Zutt, Country Director, East Africa Region, World Bank (Kenya)
- ~ Wendy Cunningham, Manager, Children and Youth Unit, World Bank (U.S.)
- ~ T.C.I. Ryan, Chairman, Board of Trustees, Strathmore University (Moderator) (Kenya)

As detailed in the World Bank presentation, Africa has the most youthful population in the world with over 35% of the population (220 million people) between the ages of 15-24. Whereas all other regions in the world have either reached the peak of their youth demographic bulge or will in the next 20 years, the youth population in Africa is expected to grow to over 400 million in the next 40 years and will still not have reached its peak. Youth unemployment in Africa stands at 12%, but it is a much more significant problem in certain countries (e.g. 45% in South Africa). Youth are over three times as likely to be unemployed as adults and make up 60% of the total unemployed population. Nonetheless, the more significant problem across Africa is youth underemployment and joblessness (defined as those both looking for work and those

discouraged youth who have stopped looking for work). Joblessness rates reach over 60% for rural youth in Mozambique and over 50% for urban youth in Zambia.

A major challenge for African youth is the skills gap between what the educational system provides and what business and industry need. Across Africa, youth are less likely to be employed in skilled jobs and professions, despite gains in basic education and literacy. Many youth are forced to seek training in the informal sector where earnings in urban slum areas are below the poverty level of \$2 per day for men and even lower for young women. Overall, some 72% of the African youth population lives on less than \$2 a day.

What is needed is an overall policy framework for job creation, defined by the World Bank as "MILES":

- **M**acroeconomic stability
- Investment climate and infrastructure
- Labor market regulations and institutions
- Education and skills development
- **S**ocial protection

What Skills Do Employers Need Among New Entrants to the Job Market?

- ~ Mark Matunga, Microsoft East and Southern Africa (Kenya)
- ~ Madjiguene Sock, FocusAfrica (Senegal)
- ~ Mathew Njogu, Hawkins Associates Ltd. (Kenya)
- ~ Swaleh Shariff Abubakar, Nation Media Group (Kenya)
- ~ Peter Shiras, IYF (Moderator) (U.S.)

A major theme of the meeting was the critical role of skills training programs in meeting the labor market needs of the private sector. Key business leaders identified their needs in terms of the technical skills required, and put even greater emphasis on the "soft skills" that are critical for workplace success. These include communication and analytical skills, flexibility and adaptability, multicultural sensitivity, teamwork, problem-solving and creative-thinking, motivation, self-confidence, and a willingness to learn continuously. Personal values of honesty, responsibility, reliability and loyalty are critically important to this package of work-related "life skills." Technical skills valued by the private sector include the basics of literacy, numeracy and writing skills, as well as computer literacy and basic technical skills for an entry-level job. Employers expressed willingness to provide the technical skills training, but look to training providers, the educational system, and the family to provide the values and "soft skills" needed for workplace success.

Skills training and job placement programs can meet these needs in a variety of ways. Youth benefit from knowing what skills they must have to enter the workforce (e.g. through career counseling) and must also demonstrate to

employers that they have the necessary skills. Investing in the educational system so that it can respond to local industry and commerce needs is another critical means of enhancing youth employability. Other key elements of sustainable and scalable success include forming partnerships with business as a part of the program, so that business provides input into the training curricula and feedback about youth they have hired in order to make adjustments to subsequent training cycles. Training providers (public and private) also need to be willing to drop areas of training where labor market demand is weak, and channel youth into trades with high demand. Finally, training programs that provide a mix of technical and life skills along with internships and an active job placement service have been proven to be the most effective in gaining actual placements for newly skilled workers.

Certification of youth who complete training appears to be a fundamental characteristic of successful programs, although the evidence of this in countries with large informal sectors is less clear. In some countries, government has played a critical and effective role in providing certification or accreditation of training quality, while training has been delivered effectively by private or nonprofit training providers. Wage subsidy programs may also be effective if they are well-designed and particularly if they combine labor with training. Finally, youth community service programs can be an effective way for unemployed youth to get basic workplace skills, particularly life skills, and, when included as part of the educational system, offer an important avenue to develop the soft skills needed in the workplace.

Lunch Program

- Lunch Program

 ~ Jong Oh Lee, Samsung Electronics East & Central Africa (Kenya)

 ~ Youth Voices (Organized by ACWICT, ISBI and NairoBits)

Jong Oh Lee, Samsung Managing Director, spoke of his first-hand experience in trying to attract and hire appropriately qualified youth and noted the need for stronger technical skills among African youth. Samsung Electronics Co., Ltd., recently launched the Samsung Real Dreams program as part of the company's corporate social responsibility commitment in the region. Real Dreams, a partnership between Samsung and IYF, aims to increase economic activity in the region, particularly by promoting job skills and preparing young people for successful, long-term careers. Launched in 2008, the program is currently being implemented in Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa.

Youth Voices

Three youth presentations were led by students of NairoBits, ACWICT and ISBI. Anne Ikiara, General Manager of NairoBits, began by introducing Isaac Kinyanjui, an inspiring young man who shared his personal story of entrepreneurial spirit through a photo montage media presentation. Isaac was a community service volunteer in one of Nairobi's informal settlements before enrolling with NairoBits. At NairoBits, he learned computer software programs and graphic

design. He was able to design websites and hopes to become a graphic designer. In the meantime, he runs two businesses – a game shop, where children can come to play video games in a safe environment, and a small pig farm. Isaac learned to run his businesses more efficiently through an entrepreneurship course offered at NairoBits. He plans to return to the community organization from which he initially volunteered to pass on the knowledge and skills he has acquired at NairoBits.

A youth panel discussion followed, led by Tom Siambi of ACWICT. Gladys Muthoni Gitonga, Aquila Afandi, and Brenda Aluoch Oloo are young women who took life skills, entrepreneurship and ICT classes at ACWICT. The discussion focused on three key questions: What challenges does a young person face as s/he gets into the job market? Are young people adequately prepared for employment, and is employment training of any relevance? Are there adequate employment opportunities for youth in Kenya? Panelists noted that youth entering the job market in Kenya face myriad challenges such as inadequate employment information, lack of skills that are relevant to the job market, stereotypes against young people's ability to provide good service, and lack of job opportunities. Young Kenyans still need employment training to prepare them for the job market. There are certain life skills for employability (i.e., interviewing skills, resume writing, professional etiquette) that are not taught in the formal education system. Despite limited formal employment opportunities, panelists agreed that youth could still benefit from job skills training and/or entrepreneurship training and support.

The final presentation was an entertaining drama incorporating music and dance, full of powerful symbolism and lessons. Young men from ISBI (Newton Koya, John Titi Namai, Githanda Githae and Gerald Kamau) performed the tale of a Hare named Kaka Sungura, who was out to achieve his dream. He believed that if only he could get the Camel that was behind a fortified gate, then he would ride to happiness. On trying to pass through the gate, the voice of the Millipede – a multi-legged creature thought of as "hero of opportunities" – scared him away. Kaka Sungura sought help from Rhino, Hyena and Frog, representing different personalities who he thought could help. Rhino represented powerful people who, with their fishy connections and power of the purse, are believed to be able to pursue what they choose. Hyena represented people with cunning personalities who try to cheat their way to get what they want. Neither one was able to scare the Millipede. Finally, Frog represented sincere people who live a decent life and are truly interested in helping others. Frog was able to decipher the loud voice of the Millipede and was able to scare it away. Kaka Sungura was able to open the gate and found his Camel.

"Break-out" Discussion Sessions: What Works in Skills Development and Employment for Disadvantaged Youth

"Break-out" discussion sessions featured concrete examples and case studies of programs and strategies that are working or show potential for enhancing

youth employability and increasing youth employment. Discussants included practitioners from within and outside Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).

Session 1: What Works in Skills Training and Job Placement

- ~ Allison Appleton, Salesian Institute (South Africa)
- ~ Anne Ikiara, NairoBits (Kenya)
- ~ Wendy Cunningham, Children and Youth Unit, World Bank (U.S.)
- ~ Peter Shiras, IYF (Moderator) (U.S.)

This session investigated the components of effective youth employability programs, looking at what kinds of models have worked in SSA and whether program models from other regions can be adapted to fit local circumstances. Speakers discussed the role of soft skills, or life skills, in youth employability programs and ways in which these skills can be integrated with technical training. The session also considered the effectiveness of internship or apprenticeship programs in providing work experience for youth entering the labor market as well as engagement of formal and/or informal sector enterprises and employers.

Wendy Cunningham presented research findings and experience from across the developing world on what the existing evidence has shown to work in youth skills training and job placement and noted the unique challenges of the Africa region. More and more young people, if not properly prepared to become workers and firm owners, will result in increased unemployment. This not only impacts individual poverty and well-being, it also affects growth rates, may lead to new social pressures, and has myriad social implications.

But if productively employed, the growing youth population provides great potential for the Africa region. Benefits may include higher growth and prosperity and a large group of productive workers who have the resources to support the young and old in their societies. Thus, proper investment in the youth bulge could be a driving force for Africa's future, while poor investment could drag down the region. Youth unemployment is high in particular countries and is growing rapidly in a few countries.

Successful job placement requires that:

- Potential workers have skills that employers want;
- Potential workers can demonstrate those skills;
- Job seekers can find potential employers;
- Employers are not biased (e.g., on the basis of age, ethnicity, gender, religion, race, disability);
- Employers are willing to hire.

Determination of an appropriate program response depends on the constraints to employment. If youth have the "right" skills to get employment but lack needed information, information campaigns for youth can enable them to access the information they need. If youth lack skills, training can supply

skills that respond to labor market needs. In Latin America, a combination of demand-driven technical training, life skills training, and internships has generated positive results. Examples include: private supply of training with public oversight, accreditation and funding; internship commitments through MOUs with employers; and student stipends.

An intervention that can help potential workers demonstrate their skills is skills certification, e.g. through national occupational standards which can be publicly or privately implemented. Standards can be established by a National Training Institute or Ministries of Education, Labor or Commerce, and may be drawn from standards developed elsewhere. Certification may be awarded based on written or applied tests and will indicate the level of expertise in a particular occupation. Evaluation of certification interventions in countries with large informal sectors remains to be done.

Employment services, or labor intermediation, can help potential workers and employers find one another (e.g. programs that provide information about job vacancies, job search assistance, or counseling). Wage subsidies, by reducing cost, can encourage employers to hire "risky" workers or workers in a "target" group. In markets where there is a lack of jobs, volunteer or subsidized work (e.g. National Youth Service programs) can provide employment and provide services that contribute to the local, national, or world community. However, there is a weak evidence base for this type of intervention.

Allison Appleton said "hard work" was the secret to success of the Salesian Institute's youth employability program, which targets disadvantaged youth with "no experience and nowhere to go". The Institute's model is short-term employability training including three weeks of life skills training and five weeks of job skills training, including technical skills (e.g. computer literacy and office skills, computer maintenance, tiling and bricklaying). Life skills and individualized support services help youth to deal with problems such as drugs and alcohol. Life skills training focuses first on helping youth to accept themselves and trust one another, and then on teaching employability skills (e.g. communication, interviewing and CV-writing).

The Institute has found the commitment and passion of course facilitators to be a key factor in the program's success. Instructors also encourage students to come back after they've completed training to continue to avail themselves of the Institute's resources and job placement assistance. An emphasis on providing job placement services is a cornerstone of the program. The Institute has built strong relationships with local employers and employment agencies, placing nearly 100% of youth graduates in decent, entry-level jobs. Job placement has been more challenging since the onset of the economic recession.

Anne Ikiara described NairoBits' youth employability model, which focuses on enhancing the life opportunities of youth ages 17-26 from Nairobi's informal settlements. Selection of youth beneficiaries is an important component of the

program. NairoBits partners with community-based organizations in slum areas, which identify youth who have been engaged in community service activities and demonstrate functional literacy. Youth are required to "give back" to their communities through continued community service. NairoBits offers several course tracks, with the full program being a year in duration. Training begins with basic ICT, life skills, and reproductive health awareness. Youth then advance through several levels of computer and web design training and optional entrepreneurship training. NairoBits has made partnership with employers, especially web design and ICT firms, a centerpiece of the program, and it continually updates its curricula based on current industry trends and direct input from employers. Students are assisted in securing internships, often leading to permanent job offers. NairoBits has established a reputation as a credible training provider through placement of well-prepared graduates.

Session 2: What Works in Promoting Youth-led Enterprise

- ~ Osayi Oruene, FATE Foundation (Nigeria)
- ~ David Waithaka, Kenya Youth Business Trust (KYBT) (Kenya)
- ~ Alice Waweru, TechnoServe (Moderator) (Kenya)

This session presented case studies of program models and strategies for supporting youth entrepreneurship and enterprise development from Kenya and Nigeria. Osayi Oruene described FATE Foundation's youth entrepreneurship development model, which relies on volunteers to provide entrepreneurship and business training and mentoring focused on building the capacity of the entrepreneur and the enterprise. Over 800 private sector professionals have volunteered in various capacities as facilitators, mentors and consultants. FATE uses a practical curriculum, delivered by practicing businesspeople, and provides opportunities for youth to interact with business leaders. Once youth complete training, they have access to two years of business support services to enable them to attain "entrepreneurial stability and maturity". This ongoing support includes advisory services, visits to youth enterprises by FATE mentors, business referrals, industry-specific workshops, networking meetings, and annual alumni meetings. FATE also engages in research and policy advocacy in order to promote a business environment that encourages entrepreneurship and enables access to information and financing.

David Waithaka noted that KYBT aims to support youth from informal settlements who would not otherwise have the means to start a business. It conducts outreach to youth "where they are" – through networks of CBOs, NGOs, churches and mosques. To date, KYBT has provided outreach to over 6,000 youth and entrepreneurship training and support to over 500. KYBT provides small loans to start-up, micro and small youth enterprises and does not require any collateral. To date, KYBT has provided finance to over 100 youth businesses, creating at least 127 jobs. It also provides hands-on assistance to youth in developing their business idea and business plan and requires them to present their plan before a panel of experienced business-people who assess the plan's viability and the commitment of the young person

to building a business. KYBT offers general training as well as individualized training based on the needs of the young entrepreneurs in the program. KYBT also uses a mentorship model, though it is challenging to secure enough mentors. Ideally mentors commit to working with youth three hours per month over three years. KYBT has found close monitoring and follow-up with youth who have participated in the program and received loans essential. This includes site verification of the place of business and home or community visits. KYBT accepts the fact that some young entrepreneurs will fail, but others may be successful enough to employ others over time.

Alice Waweru explained that TechnoServe has developed a program focusing on young women from Nairobi's informal settlements, providing training in financial literacy as well as entrepreneurship and vocational skills such as soapmaking, fruit processing, baking and hairdressing. The organization has found it necessary to include employability training and support as well as enterprise development training and services because a majority of young women were more interested in finding wage employment than starting a business. Techno Serve's experience has shown that life skills training as well as employability skills (e.g. CV-writing, communication, interviewing) are essential to linking youth with employment.

Session 3: Integrating Highly Vulnerable Youth into the World of Work

- ~ Justa Mwaituka, Kiota Women's Health and Development Organization (Tanzania)
- ~ Claudette Richardson-Pious, Children First (Jamaica)
- ~ Marcia Feria Miranda, Consultant (Philippines)
- ~ Danielle Roziewski, IYF (Moderator) (U.S.)

Drawing on experiences in Tanzania, Jamaica and the Philippines, this panel focused on how programs can reach vulnerable, at-risk youth (e.g. gang members, ex-combatants, youth offenders, orphans and vulnerable children) and address their gamut of challenges. Panelists also discussed what kinds of approaches are needed to be most effective in working with these populations and re-integrating them in their communities and the world of work.

Special needs and challenges of highly vulnerable youth include domestic and community conflict/violence, drug abuse, basic survival (e.g. food) and poverty, lack of child care and transportation options, poor social/life/work skills, missing identity records (e.g. birth certificate), etc. Valuable services provided to these youth include vocational skills training, entrepreneurial skills training, life skills training, remedial education, career development and job placement, counseling and referral services, peer support, parenting and child rights education, subsidized day care, and adolescent reproductive health services.

Among characteristics of effective approaches, panelists noted they should be: youth-led, youth-focused and youth-friendly, participatory and consultative, innovative and interest-driven, conducive to learning, practical and experiential

(e.g. internships, role plays, mock interviews), age/culturally-appropriate, and remedial when necessary. Effective approaches should also involve parents and families, ensure community support through cross-sectoral alliances, closely involve the private sector, ensure formal certification, provide subsidies if possible (e.g. for food, scholarships, transportation), facilitate access to credit for entrepreneurs, and foster ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

Plenary: Promoting Entrepreneurship and Job Creation in Africa

- ~ Ken Njoroge, Cellulant Group (Kenya)
- ~ Peter Bamkole, Centre for Enterprise Development Services, Pan-African University (Nigeria)
- ~ Andrew Fiddaman, Youth Business International, The Prince's Charities (UK)
- ~ Martin Nzomo, Productivity Centre of Kenya, Ministry of Labour (Kenya)
- ~ Markus Pilgrim, Youth Employment Network (Moderator) (Switzerland)

An important part of the comprehensive package of solutions to youth unemployment throughout Africa is the development of youth-led enterprises and job creation for youth through helping existing small and medium-sized businesses to grow. In much of Africa, the informal sector dominates the economy and is a major provider of livelihoods. One of the major issues highlighted during the meeting is the need to change cultural attitudes toward entrepreneurship and self-employment. While the aspiration of most youth worldwide is the security of wage employment, there is a stigma attached to entrepreneurship in many African countries that needs to be overcome. At the same time, only a minority of youth has the drive, resiliency and talent to become highly successful entrepreneurs, as opposed to those large majorities who are entrepreneurs by necessity in the absence of other opportunities. Thus, important elements of successful enterprise programs include selection of youth with an entrepreneurial vocation and building youths' self-confidence to succeed in business.

Although research-based evidence on successful youth enterprise programs is scant, the meeting highlighted some key ingredients that need to be strengthened. These include adequate training of young entrepreneurs in the various skills required for growing businesses – from developing a business plan to conducting market analyses, managing cash flow and ensuring legal compliance. Young entrepreneurs also often require business support services and ongoing technical assistance for several years to aid them in managing challenges common to early-stage businesses. Many programs also provide mentors to young entrepreneurs for both technical assistance and the moral support needed to persevere in the face of initial failure and the negative attitudes often associated with entrepreneurial activity. Finally, enterprise development programs should facilitate access to credit and financing; those that extend credit directly must also perform due diligence and monitoring of the youth-led enterprises they support.

Friday, 17 April 2009

Theme: "Challenges and Creative Strategies for Increasing Youth Employment and Employability in Kenya"

Plenary: Youth Employability in Kenya

- ~ Isaac Kamande, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (Kenya)
- ~ Kevit Desai, Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) (Kenya)
- ~ Erna Kerst, Mission Director, USAID/Kenya
- ~ Michael Mills, World Bank (Moderator) (Kenya)

This session presented perspectives of key stakeholders in Kenya on youth employability in the country and avenues for promoting youth employment and employability within the current economic environment. Isaac Kamande, Acting Permanent Secretary and Chief Economist of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, gave a presentation on the ways in which the Kenyan government is addressing the youth employment challenge in the country through two new initiatives, the Kazi Kwa Vijana program and a Kenyan "Marshall Plan". The objective of the *Kazi Kwa Vijana* program is to create 200,000-300,000 jobs in drought-prone areas, urban slums, and other areas by providing significant public investment to support labor-intensive public works. Through the program, youth will receive not only jobs but also work experience and skills aimed to increase their employability. This governmentwide effort will engage not only the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports but also the Ministries of Roads, Forestry and Wildlife; Local Government; Water and Environment; Public Works; Regional Development; Finance; Planning; Provincial Administration; Internal Security; and Labour.

The objective of the Marshall Plan is to create at least 500,000 employment opportunities for Kenyan youth in the formal and informal sectors through focused initiatives and incentives. The program will engage the National Youth Service (NYS), which will provide training in construction, vocational, technical and entrepreneurship skills and enable access to seed capital at exit. NYS aims to raise recruitment from 10,000 to 50,000. The program will also include additional investment in youth polytechnics, in the Youth Enterprise Development Fund, and in minor public works projects. Public procurement incentives will be put in place, enabling up to \$200 million dollars in procurement from youth businesses. The program also includes a labor export component, which the Kenyan Government is negotiating with destination countries. In addition, the program will include youth "leadership and attitude" training as well as business plan competitions, mentorship, and public campaigns aimed at influencing attitudes toward agriculture and the decency of manual work. Finally, the program aims to facilitate ICT innovation and the involvement of youth in the growing ICT sector as well as enhance employment opportunities in sports.

The ensuing plenary discussion emphasized the concern not only in the Kenyan government but also among development partners and the Kenyan private sector and civil society over the country's high levels of youth unemployment and noted the importance of a good enabling environment that opens avenues of opportunity for youth. Panelists discussed the need to promote entrepreneurship and new enterprise development, especially among youth, and highlighted some of the challenges in linking youth with innovative ideas to private sector opportunities. Some promising signs were noted, in the recent entry of youth into the entertainment and creative industries including music, theatre, film, arts and culture. Kevit Desai of KEPSA discussed the platform it has built to enable youth to obtain practical training linked with employment needs.

Panelists noted the need for improved employment legislation and in particular the will to implement the practical action plans developed to address youth employment issues. Government should work closely with the private sector to ensure that training is relevant and that the private sector is engaged in youth development, mentoring, and job placement efforts. KEPSA is engaging with government ministries to highlight issues affecting youth and to support development of internship systems in Kenya that would provide much needed work experience for young people. Skills development is also critical.

Development partners (donors) should focus greater attention on youth issues. Erna Kerst noted that USAID has focused on working with government to support youth development programs focusing on basic training and life skills. There is a need to shift societal attitudes toward youth, from viewing youth as "problems" to viewing youth as assets for society. This has been a greater challenge since the post-election violence last year. Acting Permanent Secretary Kamande noted the importance of engaging youth in the development and implementation of programs like the Marshall Plan so that they are invested in the process.

"Break-out" Discussion Sessions: Enhancing Quality and Relevance of Skills Training for Youth in Kenya

Session 1: Learning about What Works through Effective Program Monitoring and Evaluation

- ~ Constantine Obuya, African Centre for Women, Information and Communications Technology (Kenya)
- ~ Maria McLaughlin, Youth Employment Network/ West Africa (Senegal)
- ~ Laura Bureš, IYF (U.S.)
- ~ David Newhouse, World Bank (Moderator) (U.S.)

This session explored approaches to monitoring and evaluation of youth employability programs. The discussion considered the results programs seek to achieve and looked at how programs define success. Presenters discussed the kinds of data and indicators they use to assess program quality and relevance.

Constantine Obuya described ACWICT's monitoring and evaluation system for a youth employability program that aims to improve the prospects of women living in Nairobi slums by equipping them with life skills, ICT and business skills. Job placement is a key indicator of success, along with internship placement, business start-up, community service participation, and return to school/further training. ACWICT keeps a training calendar including placement targets as well as an extensive database tracking beneficiary baseline, exit and placement information. Exit questionnaires are used to assess program effectiveness, and placement status is determined through follow-up calls and emails, including an automated text-messaging system. Challenges have included appropriate allocation of staff time and cost to keeping up M&E systems, communication breakdown after students have completed training and left ACWICT's training center, and a need for relatively sophisticated database systems and/or software to manage M&E processes and information most effectively.

Maria McLaughlin described the M&E system used in a five-year micro-finance and enterprise training program offered to 250 young people in difficult situations in Mali, Burkina Faso, Senegal and Togo. The program had to determine which of a range of objectives were most important to measure and focused on economic power and social inclusion as "high-level" objectives and capacity to manage a micro-enterprise as "second-level" objectives. These were monitored over period of time, with targets against expected timelines. Challenges encountered in implementing the program's M&E system included leadership, motivation, vision, language barriers, inadequate resources and feedback, and sustainability of the projects. Lessons learned included recommendations to assume limited capacity on outcomes monitoring; integrate outcomes monitoring in program implementation; factor in bad news and make adjustments; expect objectives to change over the lifespan of a program; move beyond a focus on outputs; and put a value on qualitative and anecdotal information.

Laura Bureš described IYF's approach to monitoring and evaluation of youth employability programs. Continuous learning and improvement supports the mission. M&E systems seek to determine whether youth benefit from interventions, what works well and how to achieve meaningful and sustained benefits for youth. M&E enables accountability to donors and partners and advances the aspiration to improve the state of the art in youth programming. General principles of IYF's approach to M&E include relevance, accountability, rigor and quality, realism, and regular conduct. Programs are expected to include an evaluation plan to determine whether the program is achieving expected outcomes and to promote learning about results, processes and strategies. The plan should define clearly how outcomes will be measured and include regular monitoring.

IYF strives to use the highest possible level of rigor given resources, with a minimum standard of comparison of baseline data. To compare youth outcomes, programs may seek to use statistics from a similar population in the same country/region; when possible, programs may include a control group to measure program impact. Data collection instruments should be tested, and youth may be consulted on the best ways to collect data in a given context. M&E roles and responsibilities should be divided appropriately between program partners and at least 5% of total program budget allocated to M&E.

Program monitoring focuses on processes and outputs and is used to monitor performance (learning by doing and continuous improvement). Monitoring data can be collected through quarterly reports and supplemented by monitoring visits. Program outcomes can be measured by analyzing baseline, exit and follow-up data collected on youth. Causal effects can be measured through experimental design/impact evaluation (IYF entra21 example). Flexibility is important; if experimental design is not possible, program effectiveness can evaluate outcomes against program targets. To interpret youth outcomes, quantitative methods can be combined with qualitative and focus group methods. Including employer perspectives on satisfaction with youth employees can strengthen evaluation.

Session 2: Improving School-to-Work Transitions

- ~ Nihan Koseleci, Understanding Children's Work (Italy)
- ~ Penina Mlama, Campaign for Female Education (Tanzania)
- ~ Cecil Agutu, Informal Sector Business Institute (Kenya)
- ~ Shobhana Sosale, World Bank (Kenya)
- ~ Kate Raftery, IYF (Moderator) (U.S.)

Ms. Koseleci set the stage with a presentation of facts and figures related to the issue in Africa. The data supported the understanding that the number of young people who will enter the workforce each year cannot be absorbed into the current jobs available. A key issue throughout the meeting was the critical importance of improving the responsiveness of the educational system to the needs of employers to ensure that secondary school, technical and vocational schools, and colleges and universities produce graduates who are prepared to enter the workforce and can adapt to changing circumstances over the course of their working lives. To do this, strong partnerships are needed between the private sector and educational institutions to ensure that mutual understanding leads to improved results from what now is widely considered to be a dysfunctional system (particularly with regard to the public educational system).

Suggestions for improving the school-to-work transition included mainstreaming life skills curricula and career guidance into school systems, improving the training of teachers, using technology effectively as a teaching tool, and recognizing out-of-school and after-school programs for the contributions they make in educating young people. The need for more research and understanding of school-to-work transition issues was emphasized. With regard to highly

vulnerable youth, who face a multitude of personal, social, economic and security challenges in their day-to-day lives, it is critical to design a comprehensive package of services that address their special needs (e.g. psychosocial, remedial). It is also very important that these approaches be youth-centered.

Session 3: Local Economic Development Practices and Policies to Support Youth Employability and Employment

- ~ Hamisi Mboga, Association of Local Government Authorities of Kenya
- ~ Janet Mawiyoo, Kenya Community Development Foundation (Kenya)
- ~ S. Ananthakrishnan, Partners and Youth Section, UN-Habitat (Kenya)

Drawing on experiences in Kenya, this session focused on local economic development (LED) as a means of promoting youth employment efforts, from the point of view of local government authorities, a community development foundation, and the UN agency charged with promoting socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities. This is a particular challenge in light of the "impending crisis" of slums and urbanization – not only in Nairobi but around the world.

All three panelists emphasized the importance and value of working in cross-sectoral partnerships involving government, private sector, and civil society organizations, while simultaneously strengthening their respective capacities (e.g. of local officials to improve governance, of CSOs to effectively provide services, of the private sector to provide opportunities), creating a framework for community participation, and getting the right policies and conditions in place. Panelists also emphasized the need to involve educational institutions in this dialogue since there is often a disconnect between the formal curriculum and what is required for subsequent employment or enterprise development.

Ensuring the participation of young people as key community stakeholders is also vital to harnessing their energy, fostering their initiative, providing a forum for their ideas, and breaking down barriers. Efforts should thus be made to involve youth throughout the project cycle – including visioning, planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation – and adopt an integrated approach to youth economic development. Because *youth* is, by definition, a transient path to adulthood, it is critical to create strong institutions and build local capacity that will be sustainable and equip each youth cohort to be productive, educated, responsible citizens. Interesting opportunities include UN Habitat's Opportunities Fund for Urban Youth-Led Development as well as KCDF's support to youth-led social enterprises.

New Directions in Youth Employment

~ Ture Boru, Kenya Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF)

Ture Boru spoke about the purpose and activities of the Youth Enterprise Development Fund since its launch in 2006. YEDF is a state corporation

which aims to finance and facilitate investment in commercially viable youth enterprises in Kenya. YEDF targets youth ages 16-35 with business ideas or with existing businesses ready for expansion, as well as youth-focused institutions. To date, YEDF has disbursed Kshs. 1.9 billion to more than 65,000 enterprises, trained over 200,000 youth, enabled over 1,200 to find employment abroad, and launched a national business plan competition. YEDF has "demystified the belief that youth are unbankable" and increased capital available through the financial system. YEDF works through financial intermediaries – except in remote areas where it provides finance to individual entrepreneurs. Working through intermediaries has minimized bureaucracy and enabled national reach through existing infrastructure as well as leveraged the competence of existing financial institutions in granting and recovering loans. Challenges have included high public expectations for a "quick fix" for employment, insufficient public information and sensitization especially in remote areas, inadequate financial and local government infrastructures, and delays in operationalizing activities.

Wrap-up Brainstorming Sessions: Identifying Priorities for Concerted Action to Address Youth Employment Issues in Kenya

1. Program Design and Delivery

~ Markus Pilgrim, Youth Employment Network (Moderator)

This brainstorming group focused on the key elements and approaches related to the design and delivery of successful youth training programs. Among the "ideal" design characteristics identified by the group were that programs should be: evidence- and asset-based; cross-sectoral, cross-cutting and comprehensive; relevant and demand-driven so they address identified gaps/problems/constraints; flexible enough to respond to changing needs; and based on consultation with major stakeholders, including youth. Well-designed programs should also: integrate rigorous monitoring and data collection; clearly define the roles/responsibilities of actors; identify a logical framework (e.g. objectives, indicators, assumptions, theory of change, externalities and risks, etc.); involve the private sector to respond to what is happening in the market; consider replicability and sustainability from the beginning; and take into account cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness issues.

Elements that should be integrated into strong program delivery include: implementation details (e.g. workplans, timelines, financial management, reporting, etc.); the formation of cross-sectoral partnerships with public and private sector actors who have sufficient service delivery capacity; local-level participation and buy-in/ownership at the community level; continuous learning and a feedback loop linking results to decision-making; assessment of organizational capacity and how to address weaknesses; gender analysis to ensure relative equity of interventions; and development of an exit mechanism.

2. Research on Youth Employment/Employability Issues

~ Wendy Cunningham, World Bank (Moderator)

A recurring theme of the meeting, which reflected one of the key objectives, was the need for more and better evaluations of youth employment and enterprise programs. There is a strong need for more impact evaluations which will provide solid evidence of what kinds of programs and approaches work (and which do not), and why, and what types of programs are cost-effective based on cost-benefit analysis. At the same time, programs of all types need solid monitoring and evaluations systems in order to generate lessons learned that can be incorporated into program design and ensure continuous program improvement.

It was found that while an increasing amount of research into youth employment and employability issues has been conducted in recent years, relatively little has focused on SSA. More research, including panel data, is needed on: school-to-work transitions in Africa (including on the job search process, first jobs, and the role of social networks); career guidance; demand for youth labor; what works in apprenticeship, internship, and attachment programs; and the role of youth volunteerism or service as well as life skills in employability, among other topics. It was emphasized that there is a need for engaging local researchers and sharing data collected with local universities to foster knowledge creation. Research must be accessible, "policy-friendly", and widely disseminated in order to result in policy application.

3. Partnerships to Promote Youth Employability

~ Peter Shiras, IYF (Moderator)

This break-out session discussed the types of partnerships needed to promote youth employability – both in Kenya and more broadly. Key points included the need for:

- a clear framework, like in South Africa, that spans the local to national levels in terms of different roles that partners can play.
- local ownership of projects by communities and citizens to foster sustainability.
- an information data bank where organizations can access information regarding a variety of resources (e.g. a training directory) and experts can share information about what works across organizations.
- close collaboration between the private sector, the Ministry of Education and NGOs involved in the training sector to foster greater synergy.
 Important areas for collaboration include curriculum development and certification to help meet employers' needs and identify the technical requirements demanded in the labor market, as well as the provision of mentorships and targeted assistance.

- partnerships between training providers and private sector employers to ensure that training is relevant to employers' needs and that it responds to the needs and aspirations of youth.
- education and employment alliances/partnerships comprised of different kinds of organizations (including local authorities, religious groups, human resource agencies, and others) to help coordinate education and job creation and placement programs, develop integrated strategies, and reduce duplication of efforts.

Examples of partnerships that were highlighted by the group included:

- In Malindi, Kenya, community members and the local government authorities meet once a year to show case what they want to do and build on what they are doing in economic development for youth;
- UN-HABITAT has a partnership with the City Council in Nairobi.
- KEPSA developed a structure for the Prime Minister's roundtable, a forum to raise issues affecting youth (e.g. curriculum development, employment promotion, ministerial stakeholders).
- YEDF is developing a database for youth to access government procurement.
- NairoBits partners with people from the grassroots for internships and job opportunities.
- A collaboration between colleges which train teachers (with CISCO, UNESCO and the Government of Kenya).
- Employer collaboration with higher institutions of learning, such as the Coca Cola Co. in Kenya and the USIU where they have introduced an Executive Master's Degree program in Business Management.
- There is a monthly forum in Sierra Leone where young people compare lessons learned and reports are shared by all stakeholders. This is hosted by the Ministry of Youth and Sports and sponsored by the UNDP.

Conclusion

While the challenges of meeting youth employment needs are great, the meeting underscored the value of youth as assets to society. Prime Minister Odinga himself emphasized the "asset-building" virtues of youth development, as did many other public and private sector speakers. Countries with large youth populations have the opportunity to engage a young labor force unburdened with the large numbers of dependents which countries with aging populations face. Youth also are increasingly willing to assume leadership roles at a young age, to be problem-solvers, and to engage with and learn from their elders.

With the right investments in education and health, life skills and employability skills, the youth of today will be prepared to make the successful transition to be productively employed, life-long learners who will be active citizens of their countries and prepared to raise their own next generation of families. As reinforced by the Prime Minister, these issues are "critical and deserve attention at the highest levels of government and the private sector."

Global Partnership to Promote Youth Employment and Employability











Youth: Work



