

Digital transformation potential to address youth unemployment — ActionAid

**From Gilbert Mawuli Agbey,
BOLGATANGA**

DIGITAL transformation has the potential to create meaningful and decent jobs, as well as reverse the trend of youth unemployment in Ghana and Africa as a whole.

The Upper East Regional Programme Officer, ActionAid Ghana, Yakubu Akuka, said digital policies and interventions with specific focus on gender mainstreaming were fundamental and key in reversing the negative impact of unemployment on particularly women and girls.

“Interventions across the entire digital ecosystem to boost youth employment are needed to prepare the youth for the current and future world of work,” he said.

Mr Akuka was addressing a youth forum organised by ActionAid Ghana to commemorate International Youth Day in Bolgatanga.

It was on the theme: “From clicks to progress: Youth Digital pathways for sustainable development”. It was preceded by a procession by some youth groups through some principal streets of the town.

He stated that it was key if the youth bulge and demographic dividend was to be transformed into an economic one, and to counter employment trends across the African continent which was characterised by informal work, underemployment and precarious working conditions.

Support to youth

He mentioned that over the years, ActionAid had been empowering the youth with knowledge and

entrepreneurial skills and supporting them to become self-employed as a way of contributing to reducing unemployment among them.

Giving further details, he said, about 2,000 youth in the region had been trained in various livelihood skills and innovations, including mobile phone repairs, satellite installation, tiling, soap making and leatherwork, among others.

He stated that between 2020 and 2023, 1,200 people were supported with start-ups to establish their own businesses, noting “this support has led to the improvement in the lives of the beneficiary individuals”.

Crucial role

Mr Akuka pointed out that government institutions and other stakeholders had a crucial role to play in driving the shift to the digital economy, saying “smart

policymaking makes a decisive difference in ensuring an inclusive transition by investing in technological skills training and education”.

Therefore, he called on them to consider the role of education and digital skills for youth employment, and how it is linked to both policy and practice.

“It is up to us as a nation to put the right educational and innovative policies in place, advance digital skills training and invest in opportunities that make technological innovations accessible to all,” he stated.

The Regional Coordinator of Activista, a group affiliated to ActionAid, Nicholas Nambirigya Azebire, emphasised that technology and digitalisation were shaping the future of the world for the benefit of all.

He mentioned that Ghanaian

youth should not be left out in this era of digital transformation, adding “it is important to ensure that the appropriate infrastructure and systems are in place to adequately prepare the youth to judiciously use digital platforms”.

He said it was important for young people to stay away from issues of cybercrime and bullying on various online platforms but should rather learn ways of using them to their benefit.

The Programme Officer, National Youth Authority (NYA), Upper East, Mumuni Abdul-Majeed, in a remark, said in today’s digital era, the youth had an incredible opportunity to make a meaningful impact, particularly in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).