

YEA will address Ghana's unemployment challenges — CEO

News Desk Report

THE Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Youth Employment Agency (YEA), Kofi Baah Agyepong, has said the Business and Employment Assistance Programme (BEAP) will help reduce the country's unemployment rate.

That, he said, would be through the provision of lifelines for many young individuals striving to carve out a promising future, he said.

Mr Agyepong added that the initiative sought to address the financial strains faced by micro, small and medium-scale enterprises (MSMEs) during the tumultuous period of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Drawing upon a Ghana Statistical Service survey revealing the hardships faced by businesses, including wage reductions and closures, the BEAP emerges as a vital intervention to

support these struggling enterprises.

Speaking to journalists in Kumasi last Wednesday, Mr Agyepong said the BEAP aimed to provide a lifeline to MSMEs, offering salary support of GHe500 per recruited employee, with the employer supplementing the remainder.

Targeting various establishments such as chop bars, pharmacies, schools and more, the BEAP strives to alleviate the financial burden on these

enterprises while bolstering employment opportunities for Ghana's workforce, he added.

Goals

Highlighting the programme's ambitious goals, Mr Agyepong announced plans to support 10,000 companies, facilitating the employment of approximately 20,000 individuals in the process.

He reassured Ghanaians of the YEA's sustainable funding from the Communication Service Tax, emphasising the agency's unwavering commitment to directing those funds solely towards job creation.

Mr Agyepong extended appreciation to the government for its endorsement and support, ensuring the programme's successful launch and initiation.

The YEA has been instrumental in partnering state agencies, offering skills training and fostering employment opportunities, exemplified by the success stories of several programmes implemented over the past year.

Despite the admitted global economic challenges, he said, "We have been working hard to reduce the rate of unemployment and lessen the burdens of life on young people while allowing them to make ends meet."

Touching on the success story of the agency, Mr Agyepong said in 2022/2023, the government, through the YEA recruited 15,000 Community Protection Assistants working with the Ghana Police Service; 6,000 Community Health Workers working with the Ghana

Health Service; 1,500 Prison Office Assistants working with the Ghana Prisons Service and 4,000 workers on the Cocoa Rehabilitation Programme.

Job centre

Others are 5,000 insurance agents for the National Insurance Commission with base pay; 13,000 direct jobs secured through the YEA Job Centre; 2,000 dressmaking trainees undergoing apprenticeship training with GHe500 monthly support; over 30,000 entrepreneurs trained by both the National Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (NEIP) and the Ghana Library Board with support for

set-ups and 2,000 young people trained by the Accra Digital Centre in Basic and Advanced IT skills.

Currently, the YEA is recruiting another 20,000 young people to be trained and set up in 10 different trade areas being - carpentry, masonry, plumbing,

hairdressing, beauty care, auto works, General Electricals, Plaster of Paris (POP), steel works, welding and fabrication and painting.

All arrangements have been made for training to start next week.

Statistics presented by the CEO illustrated the extensive impact of the YEA initiatives, with over 16,000 jobs created in the Ashanti Region alone.

Notably, various sectors, including community services, health, entrepreneurship and vocational training, experienced substantial growth, offering a beacon of hope for Ghanaian youth seeking stable employment and entrepreneurial ventures.



• Kofi Baah Agyepong (inset) addressing journalists in Kumasi

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