

Research project tackles unemployment

By Emelia Ennin Abbey



A RESEARCH project to support policy interventions in designing dignified employment for the youth in Ghana has recommended tailored approach to address the diverse aspirations and the growing unemployment rate.

The project explored the perspectives of the youth on dignified and fulfilling jobs, as well as their resilience and adaptability to socio-economic and environmental shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and

to make appropriate policy recommendations.

Dubbed: African Youth Aspiration and Resilience (AYAR), the project focuses on using evidence from an ongoing multi-country research to support policy interventions in designing dignified employment strategies for youth across Africa.

Funded by the MasterCard Foundation, the project has Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR), a pan-African not-for-profit organisation, as the implementing agency undertaking the project in seven African countries, namely Ethiopia,

Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal and Uganda.

In Ghana, it was launched in September 2021.

At the end of the research, a dissemination workshop in Accra last Wednesday attracted youth groups, policy makers and researchers.

The project is under an initiative dubbed: Young Africa Work Strategy, which seeks to enable 30 million young people in Africa, especially young women, to secure employment they see as dignified and fulfilling by 2030.

Involving the youth

At the workshop, the Director in charge of Research, Policy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation at the National Youth Authority, Pascal Assan Edwards, said youth unemployment appeared to be an intractable malaise rapidly threatening stability of the growth and development of the country.

Despite the numerous interventions deployed by successive governments, he said the challenge persisted.

He lauded the involvement of the youth in seeking solution to a

challenge that affected them.

"We believe that no issues of the youth can be addressed without the youth," Mr Assan Edwards said, adding that "the youth are better positioned to articulate their concerns and aspirations."

Decent jobs

The Country Director of MasterCard Foundation, Rica Rwigamba, said in Ghana, the goal of the project was to enable three million young people to secure work by 2030 with a focus on young entrepreneurial women, provide future business leaders with access to business development skills, financing and access to market.

To deliver, she said, there was the need to understand the aspirations of young people, and that the collective collaboration for progress would ensure young people achieved their dreams.

The AYAR Project Coordinator at PASGR, Joel Otieno, said Africa was the youngest and fastest-growing continent in the world, and by 2050, the population of young people would grow to about 2.5 billion from the current 1.4 billion.

He said the continent was experiencing increased unemployment and inadequate opportunities, yet the growing young population was a potential for the continent if appropriately harnessed.

The youth, whose views were sampled during the study, he said, considered dignified work as employment that was meaningful and provided a sense of purpose that offered good pay, and where employees had a safe and conducive environment for career and personal growth.

Finding, recommendation

The study found some of the constraints of the youth to meeting their economic aspirations as including limited financial resources and the lack of social and political connections.

The study recommended a comprehensive and holistic approach to promote youth employment and creating a supportive and conducive environment to sustain the entrepreneurial drive of the youth.

It also recommended social insurance and protection schemes to protect the business and assets of the youth against any potential future shocks.

