

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT NETWORK newsletter

A joint initiative of UN, ILO and World Bank



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editorial

Dear Reader of the YEN Newsletter,

The second quarter of the year was extremely busy thanks to the hard work of the YEN team!

In May, the Africa Commission under the chairmanship of the Danish Prime Minister approved the youth entrepreneurship program jointly submitted by YEN and the ILO. It will be a big opportunity for us to expand some of our products like the competitive grant scheme and our Evaluation Clinics to more African countries.

In June, the winners of the competitive grant scheme for youth led organizations in the Mano River Union were announced. Fifteen innovative proposals on how to combat youth employment were selected. The letters of agreement are being finalized over the next days – congratulations to the winners. We look forward to seeing the launch of these projects which will be accompanied by piece on CNN featuring one of the Grant Scheme winners.

In July, the first Evaluation Clinic of YEN took place in Damascus, Syria. Two youth employment programs from the Middle East served as live cases to design impact evaluations. The specific task was to show how to conduct low cost evaluations for relatively small projects – a challenge for which we do not yet find sufficient case studies.

Finally, we came out with the final version of a study assessing private sector demand for youth labour in Senegal and Ghana asking 750 enterprises about their plans to hire and the main barriers for recruiting more youth – very important primary data to improve the design of future employment programs.

Best wishes,

Markus Pilgrim

YEN Manager

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News from the Secretariat

Winners of YEN's Inaugural Round of Grants Announced

The winner's of YEN's inaugural round of grants for the Multi-stakeholder Programme for Productive and Decent Work for Youth in MRU countries were officially announced this month. Fifteen projects have been chosen by a regional selection committee made up of representatives from government, youth groups, and multilateral agencies. The selected projects include 4 from Côte d'Ivoire, 3 from Guinea, 4 from Liberia and 4 from Sierra Leone. In total 270 ap-

plications were received from the 4 countries resulting in 6% of applications receiving grants.

The selected projects aim to serve a combined total of 2486 direct beneficiaries and were selected under 5 thematic windows: Vocational training, Entrepreneurship, Community projects and services, Economic empowerment of young women and Transition from school to work.

The winning projects demonstrated an innovative approach to project design, combining well defined and quantifiable project outcomes with a realistic plan for sustainability. The following 15 selected projects offer a small glimpse into the creativity that was sought amongst grant recipients. Full details of selected projects will be made available on the YEN website.

Country	Organization	Name of the Project	Type of Project	Amount (USD)
Côte d'Ivoire	Fraternité-Solidarité-Jeunesse Côte d'Ivoire	Elevage et production d'escargot géants d'Afrique	Economic empowerment of young women	7'582
Côte d'Ivoire	Gnihonde	Construction de 30 fumoirs de poissons	Economic empowerment of young women	38'088
Côte d'Ivoire	Union des Jeunes de l'ILOT (U.J.I.V.) Port Bouet	Assainissement des plages/ activités touristiques	Community projects and services	24'005
Côte d'Ivoire	Comité de Suivi à l'Action Citoyenne (C.S.A.C)	Programme pilote de réduction de la pauvreté	Community projects and services	50'000
Guinea	Guinée Initiatives Pour le Développement (G.U.I.D.E)	Vulgarisation et de Commercialisation du Moringa Oléiféra	Economic empowerment of young women	23'839
Guinea	SOS MISKINES	Recyclage des déchets plastique	Community projects and services	49'755
Guinea	AVGRN	Projet de reboisement	Community projects and services	45'429
Liberia	Youth Education Foundation Initiative (YEFI) Inc.	Job Shop - Empowering Youth to Access the Labor Market	Transition from school to work	45'075
Liberia	Youth Action International, Inc	Center for Women Empowerment	Economic empowerment of young women	32'700
Liberia	iEARN-Liberia	Creative Arts for Sustainable Empowerment (CASE)	Vocational training for young people	4'157
Liberia	Better Future Foundation, Inc	Bricks for Life Project (BLP)	Transition from school to work	29'560
Sierra Leone	Democracy and Improvement Associates (DAIA-SL)	Kailahun Field Researchers	Transition from school to work	24'408
Sierra Leone	Klin Salone Waste Management Association KSWMA	Employment Promotion and Private Waste Management	Youth entrepreneurship	23'595
Sierra Leone	Kafoima Youth Development Organization	Mapaki Youth Training and Manufacturing Centre	Vocational training for young people	49'155
Sierra Leone	Kenema District Youth Development Agency (KEYDA)	Women in sustainable bee-keeping activities	Economic empowerment of young women	22'843

Youth Employment Public-Private Partnerships Fair

As the key driver for economic growth and job creation, it is essential that the private sector in West Africa takes the lead in finding solutions to the region's youth employment challenge.

On 9 and 10 June 2009, YEN's Office for West Africa joined its partners at Microsoft and Planetfinance to host the region's first ever Public Private Partnerships Fair for Youth Employment. The objective of the event was to launch new partnerships between NGOs working on youth employment

and their counterparts in the world of business. By the end of the workshop, plans for 5 new youth employment projects were being discussed. Here is a sample of some of the potential new partnerships:



- The largest Senegalese mineral water distributor Kirène launched partnership talks with the Dakar based Synapse Centre to sponsor Synapse's annual "Employment Marathon". Kirène was also interested in recruiting graduates of Synapse Centre's Promise Programme.

- Microsoft agreed to extend their assistance to the NGO Planetfinance to train local microfinance institutions in new information technologies. Microsoft also initiated discussions to grant financing to the NGOs CRESP and RECEC.

- The Senegalese Public Works and Construction Agency (ETPB) discussed a proposal from the NGO Synergie Banlieue to train suburban youth in the construction industry.

The event demonstrated that while companies understand the importance of youth employment both for

their social responsibility agenda and as a contribution to their core business practices, there are not enough venues for business's to become engaged. The private sector representatives called on government's, NGOs and multilateral institutions to reach out to them.

A press conference was also held during the event to announce the launching of YEN's new publication "Building the Case for Business Collaboration on Youth Employment". Joining YEN in the press conference were Microsoft's Chairmen for West Africa, M Ibrahim Youssry, Synapse Centre's Director Ciré Kane and the Director of Senegal's Youth Employment Agency, Mr. Khafour Touré. The panel referred to youth as "Africa's biggest natural resource for economic growth and prosperity" and called on business to increase investment into the development of the region's youth.

For more information on the workshop contact Drew Gardiner at gardiner@ilo.org

Private Sector Demand for Youth Labour in Senegal and Ghana

Many of the youth entering West African labour markets every year cannot find formal employment. At the same time the private sector continues to state very strongly that the large gap between the skills needed by firms and those available on the market is a strong deterrent to youth employment. Does the gap really exist or is it just an excuse not to hire more youth?

In an effort to address this critical issue YEN and the International Youth Foundation joined forces and resources to commission a study on

private sector demand for youth labour. Based on a competitive tender YEN and IYF contracted FocusAfrica, a young West African management consultancy firm, teamed with the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research, University of Ghana.

YEN interviewed the managing director of FocusAfrica, Madjiguene Sock, on the key findings of the study which is based on interviews with 750 companies in Ghana and Senegal.

Madji, what is for you the most

striking result of the study?

I was very surprised that life skills would be ranked as such a critical issue for private sector employers. I expected to see technical skills as more critical.

Do the companies interviewed by you offer any vacancies to youth and if yes what are sectors that offer opportunities?

Yes they do. In Ghana, a total of 3,624 potential job openings are available (376 formal enterprises) for 2009. A

majority of the opportunities will be in agriculture, business process outsourcing, and financial services. In Senegal, 290 formal enterprises plan to hire 3,490 young people in 2009, mainly in construction, business process outsourcing, agriculture, import-export, and security services. It is important to note that for Senegal, more than half the jobs are part-time or seasonal.

What are the main barriers of companies to hire more youth?

In Senegal, life skills and professional maturity are the major barriers. In

Ghana, the ability to demonstrate high levels of literacy, independence, IT and analytical skills, and initiative.

Can you see any impact of the world economic crisis on plans to hire?

Not at this point. Companies are still recruiting but remain very cautious.

What are the implications of the study for the design of programs aiming to improve youth employability?

It was clear to us that soft skills need

to be high on the agenda. And perhaps this is not to be considered at the post high-school level only but well before.

What has been your experience in setting up your own consultancy firm in your home county after having worked 13 years in the US?

I work mostly with young people less than 34 and have seen their energy and incredible will to succeed. I am very confident that Africa's youth can address the challenges head on.

The Report can be accessed by clicking [here](#)

YEN Evaluation Clinic in Damascus

In an effort to broaden the evidence base for "what works" in improving employment outcomes for youth,

YEN brought together a team of evaluation specialists from its core partners at ILO, World Bank and UN with employment practitioners from the Middle East to share best practice in conducting rigorous evaluations. The Clinic was hosted by the Syria

Trust for Development's Shabab Programme in Damascus as part of the World Bank's Global Partnership on Youth Employment and Employability.

The group of 30 participants included both Jordanian and Syrian Labour Ministries, consultancy firms, academics and youth employment project managers. The concept for the Clinic was unique in that it allowed participants to apply impact evaluation methodologies to live case studies in the process of designing their evaluation plans.



The first case study came from Shabab's Business Clinic Programme (BCP). As a result of consultations during the Clinic,

BCP adapted its evaluation plan to use a "Constructed Matched Control" design which, due to constraints in randomly selecting

participants, was considered more appropriate than the originally planned experimental design. The second case study came from the Jordan River Foundation's Youth Career Initiative (YCI). YCI traditionally used before and after project comparison groups to evaluate the impact of their projects. Given the massive excess demand for YCI's product, the Clinic's resource people suggested that YCI use an experimental design where participants and a control group are randomly selected after going through an initial screening process by YCI project managers and participating hotels.

The event provided a unique opportunity for evaluation specialists and academics to collaborate with field practitioners thereby providing insights into the constraints faced at the project level in conducting rigorous evaluations. These constraints include not only a lack of resources, time and data but also low levels of project beneficiaries meaning evaluation outcomes could lack statistical relevance. Consensus was reached among evaluation experts and practitioners that smaller sized projects can provide relevant evidence on successful employment promotion outcomes and should be encouraged. It was also agreed that more work is needed to develop methodologies for "second best", non experimental evaluations.

The broad support and success of the event lead participants and resource people to call on YEN to organize subsequent Clinics. YEN plans to organize Clinics for other regions including East Africa.

A report for the event will be available in 2 weeks. For more information contact Drew Gardiner at gardiner@ilo.org

SPOTLIGHT:

Kimmie Weeks and Youth Action International



Youth Action International is a global nonprofit organization working in Liberia to improve the opportunities for young women to find decent employment

and start their own business. YAI was recently accepted to the shortlist of candidates to receive a grant under YEN's first round of Competitive Grant Scheme for youth lead organizations in the Mano River Union. YAI has proposed the creation of a Center for Women Empowerment in Monrovia. The Center for Women Empowerment will use basic education, alternative counseling, vocational training, and micro-credit loans to alleviate the negative impact the civil war has had on young women in Liberia.

YAI was started and is inspired by acclaimed youth activist Kimmie Weeks, a survivor of the Liberian Civil War. After having survived enormous personal tragedy, Kimmie has gone on to receive the 2007 Golden Brick Award and has been decorated the Knight Grand Commander in the Hu-

mane Order of African Redemption in Liberia, all before the age of 25.

YEN had the chance to interview Kimmie and present his thoughts on the future for Liberian youth:

So much has been said about the devastating effects of 5 years of civil war on Liberia's youth, how can the perspectives for Liberia youth to find decent jobs be improved?

This is a major concern for anybody looking at long term peace, stability and development in Liberia. The country currently has an extremely high unemployment rate. Some data puts it at 70-80%. A majority of those unemployed are young people. I strongly believe that by helping to foster a spirit of local innovation, and entrepreneurship we can encourage self employment across the country. In addition, we need a heavy focus on vocational training, education etc. The jobs might not be here now, but if they came tomorrow would Liberians be prepared? Not unless we can develop a skilled workforce.

How is your organization, Youth Action International, contributing to the fight against youth unemploy-

ment?

Youth Action International's entire mission is dedicated to education and economic empowerment for young people. Our vision is to open training centers, business development skills centers, job resource centers etc across the country that help young woman gain decent employment. I can think of no challenge more critical and timely. YAI has been granting training and small business grants to young Liberians to start and scale up their business for many years now. Two of our young graduates include Mamie H. and Princess K. who both received small business grants of \$200 in 2006. Today Mamie H. has a business worth around \$2,500 while Princess K has three businesses worth more than \$7,000.

Kimmie and YAI's work will be featured as part of a CNN International series "Africa Voices". The piece will highlight YAI ongoing work with YEN and UNIDO's Programme Decent and Productive work for youth in the Mano River Union. The piece is set to air in late July. For more information visit <http://www.cnn.com/CNN/Programs/africanvoices/>

Lead Country Process update

In April 2009, the YEN Secretariat finished the revision of the Lead Country Process, its flagship product for the promotion of youth employment around the globe. In the future, YEN lead countries will periodically report on a small set of standardized youth labor market indicators, helping to monitor their performance on youth employment and providing targets to aim for. In addition, countries will provide specific information on poli-

cy and institutional progress made in the area of youth employment.

The YEN has invited all 21 Lead Countries to renew their status under the conditions of the revised Process. By mid July, 12 countries had positively answer this call and expressed their interest for maintaining a strong commitment in the development of employment opportunities for young people. These countries are:

the Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ghana, Indonesia, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Syria, Togo, Turkey, and the United Kingdom.

More information on the lead country process and its new framework of benefits and commitments can be found at www.ilo.org/yen or by contacting Susana Puerto -Gonzalez at puerto-gonzalez@ilo.org

ILO's International Training Centre Offers Two Courses on Youth Employment

The ILO's International Training Centre (ITC) will offer two courses on youth development later this year. "Building Effective Youth Investment Programs: Issues for Project Design" is a one week inter-agency course offering a unique learning experience on how to support the design of youth interventions in the area of youth citizenship, youth employment and adolescent health. The course builds on practical lessons learned from country experiences as well as from technical assistance programs delivered by the ILO, UNICEF, the World Bank, WHO, the Council of

Europe and GTZ. The course will take place at the ITC in Turin, Italy from 5 – 9 October 2009.

The second course "Conducting Impact Evaluations of Development Programs: An application to ALMPs, CCTs and Training for Youth" aims to introduce participants to the concepts and methods for conducting impact evaluations of youth employment programs enabling participants to identify and apply appropriate methods of impact evaluation. Detailed case studies will be reviewed to allow for practical application of methodologies. The course is being offered

in partnership with the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), the Understanding Children's Work (UCW) Project, the Youth Employment Network (YEN), the Youth Employment Programme (YEP) and the World Bank. The course will take place at the ITC from 16 – 20 November 2009.

For more information on the courses, including application forms and sponsorship opportunities, please visit the [ITC website](#) or contact Ms. Michela Ripandelli at m.ripandelli@itcilo.org

Unemployment Rate Among Young Brazilians is 3.2 times higher than adults

Report published by ILO and the National Youth Council

At the beginning of July, within the framework of the Latin American based PREJAL project, the ILO-Brazil office presented to Constituents and to the general public the study "Decent Work for Youth in Brazil". The study presents an in-depth analysis of the situation of youth employment in the country, focusing, in particular, on the qualitative aspects of employment.

Overall, the 34 million youth in the country enjoy today better possibilities in access to education than their predecessors. Nonetheless, inequalities remain considerable, in particular those related to the income, race, geographical region and the urban/rural divide.

Inequalities are noteworthy with respect to all the other labour market dimensions. While youth unemployment (16.8%) is almost three times the adult rate, the rate varies substantially between young men and women and depending on the race. Similarly, while 58% percent of the total youth workers appear to be informally employed, informal employment affects disproportionately the less educated, the women and the non white youth population. Amongst the 18% percent of youth neither in education nor employment, a majority is represented by young girls engaged in unremunerated household activities. The report concludes that a total of more than 14 million youth seem to suffer from decent work deficit because they are either unemployed or employed informally. To tackle the situation effectively a series of macro

and meso integrated interventions dealing with both the demand and the supply side, and including social protection, quantity, quality and access to education, and respect for youth labour rights are called upon. Brazil became a YEN Lead Country in 2003, submitting a National Action Plan on Youth Employment to the UN General Assembly in 2005. Brazil's focal point agency for the Lead Country Process is the Ministry of Work and employment.

The report is available (in Portuguese only) at: http://www.oit.org.br/topic/decent_work/doc/news_9.pdf

For more information, contact Diego Rei at rei@ilo.org



Ikatu International

A New Player on the Youth Employment Scene

Ikatu International is an emerging nonprofit organization based in Devon, Pennsylvania, whose goal is to create employment opportunities for young populations in Sub-Saharan Africa using a Youth Employment Promotion (YEP) approach. Our analysis of global YEP concludes that many initiatives only focus on promoting the employability of the labor supply like TVET and entrepreneurship training. Ikatu's interventions will begin in Ghana's urban environments creating a demand for labor, like supporting entrepreneurial growth and expanding job opportunities. Additionally, Ikatu will concentrate on matchmaking and mediation (M&M) interventions that facilitate information exchange between labor supply and demand and bring transparency

to the market.

To facilitate this approach, Ikatu will act as an intermediary to connect national youth policy and strategy to field practitioner work, increasing YEP intervention effectiveness. Additionally, we will support other intermediaries like youth network organizations and advocacy groups to create a ripe environment for YEP interventions to flourish. Where demand side and M&M interventions do not exist, Ikatu will drive their creation. To solidify our initial programmatic efforts and galvanize an often siloed field, Ikatu hopes to flush out Ghana's urban specific YEP issues by interviewing hundreds of business, government, NGO, and youth community leaders and then convening these leaders to discuss findings.

We are committed to making evidenced based strategic decisions and focused on investing in operational processes defined by reusable research, methodologies, and tools, all available upon request. Ikatu is Guarani for "Yes I Can", a translation that speaks to both our organization and the belief system we hope to implant in those we provide programming for and the supporting cast vital to our success.

For a more detailed information packet, partnership opportunities, or just to reach out, please contact:

Eric D. Rassman, Deputy Director
Eric@IkatuInternational.org
www.IkatuInternational.org

Commission for Africa Launches its Report

The Africa Commission, under the Chairmanship of the Danish Prime Minister met for a 3rd time on May 6 2009 to finalize its Report and Recommendations for effective development cooperation with Africa. The meeting served to launch 5 ambitious initiatives aimed at creating employment for African youth. YEN will cooperate

with the ILO on delivering Initiative 4 "Unleashing Africa Entrepreneurship". As part of the programme, it is foreseen that ILO will offer entrepreneurship training and business plan competitions while YEN will focus on results measurement and a Competitive Grant Scheme for Youth Organizations. A guarantee fund out-

sourced to a microfinance institution is also envisioned. The Commission will make available USD 40 million for four years.

The final report can be accessed here:
[Africa Commission Final Report](#)

News from the secretariat



Sara Spant, Technical Officer and Focal Point for the Grant Scheme has left YEN to join the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida)

after 4.5 years. Before joining YEN Sara spent 2 years with the ILO Sub regional Office for East Asia in Bangkok.

Sara was an inspiration to the entire Network combining expert technical skills on employment with a passion for youth development and gender issues. We wish Sara all the best in her new career.

Maria McLaughlin, Subregional Coordinator for YEN's West Africa Office in Dakar, Senegal has left YEN to take up consultancy position with the European Commission Delegation in South Africa on a grants programme

for youth arts and culture. Maria previously worked as a consultant for the European Commission Delegation in Mali on the set up of a migration/employment information project. In addition to Maria's managerial tasks at YEN, she was also responsible for coordinating the Private Sector Initiative promoting the engagement of the private sector on youth employment in West Africa.