

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN AFRICA: VIEWS AND NEWS

Open Doors of Opportunity for young people in the tourism sector in Tanzania

In many countries, tourism offers numerous possibilities for job creation, poverty alleviation, and foreign exchange earnings. It has high employment potential and if specific measures are taken, can create endless job opportunities for young people. The industry has a multiplier effect on job creation. In several African countries, the tourism sector is the highest foreign exchange earner and a significant generator of employment. In Tanzania, it accounts for about 16 percent of the Gross National Product (GNP) and is a vital source of foreign exchange. In 2007, Tanzania earned about US\$1 billion from 719,030 international visitors, employing 200,000 Tanzanians and accounting for roughly 25 percent of foreign exchange inflows.

Although earnings from this sector are impressive, it would be good to know how much of it filters down to the local communities. Moreover, what kinds of jobs and working conditions are created by tourism. It is not just to generate jobs. Rather, only decent and sustainable jobs have the potential of long term benefit to the country. A study (2003) undertaken by Luvanga and Shitundu¹ on *"The Role of Tourism in Poverty Alleviation in Tanzania"* revealed that, although tourism generates a significant number of direct and indirect employment opportunities, most jobs are in low cadres involving low skills and yielding low remuneration. Let us examine the case of Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa and a big tourist attraction.



Assisting tourists to climb Mount Kilimanjaro provides a major source of income for the local population in the surrounding towns of Arusha and Moshi as well as in other villages, such as Marangu and Tarakea. Tourists from the United States and Britain, Germany, Italy, France, Spain, the Scandinavian countries and South Africa arrive daily to climb the mountain. Employment is seasonal peaking from July to September and from December to March. Direct job opportunities are available for young men who are employed as guides, porters and cooks. Porters must be physically fit to carry heavy loads, including tents, sleeping bags, mattresses, food, water, cookware, gas, stoves, chairs, tables and other camping gear, across rugged and challenging terrain. The national regulation limits the load that each porter must carry to a maximum of 20 kilograms. Guides must be fluent in English and are trained in first aid, mountain rescue, knowledge of flora and fauna, and history of the region. Trained guides are registered with Kilimanjaro National Park (KINAPA).

Both guides and porters are employed by tour companies and are paid per trip, however the porters' conditions are more flexible. Unlike the guides, who are under contractual obligations with the tour companies, the porters may work with several companies simultaneously. During high season, a guide may lead three trips ranging from five to ten days. Salaries range from US\$25-US\$12 per day. Porters and cooks earn US\$18-US\$8 per day. The guides and porters rely heavily on tips to supplement their salaries and these are given at the discretion of the climbers. The tips may vary from US\$100-US\$20. The highest amount is given to the guides followed by the cooks and porters. However, the government is working to standardize salaries for all categories of workers by 1 January 2009.

It is critical that guides, porters, and cooks receive fair wages, wear adequate clothing and are protected from having to carry very heavy loads. Hence the Mount Kilimanjaro Porter Society (MKPS) was established in 2004 with the goal of improving the working conditions of all porters on Mount Kilimanjaro and other hiking areas in Tanzania. A set of rules, which addresses the concerns indicated above have been defined which operators have agreed upon. More than 700 guides and porters are members of MKPS and benefit from their services.

¹Luvanga, Nathanael and Shitundu, Joseph (2003).

The Role of Tourism in Poverty Alleviation in Tanzania. Research Report No. 03.4, Tanzania available at http://www.repoa.or.tz/documents_storage/Publications/Reports/03.4_-_Luvanga_Shitundu.pdf

The MPKS has attended to the exploitation of workers however, it is the quality of jobs that are being generated that is now the subject to discussion. As pointed out by Luvanga and Shitunda, employment opportunities tend to be created in the low cadres with low skills and remuneration. In addition, these jobs are seasonal. The challenge is to create jobs that require higher skills and therefore more remuneration and create jobs that ensure year round employment. There needs to be a shift away from survivalist jobs towards those that can generate growth, tap into new areas, and open doors of opportunity for young people in the tourist sector. so as to take full advantage of the employment potential in the sector.



WHAT'S HAPPENING?

The Regional Youth Employment Policy Conference organized by the Youth Development Network (YDN) held in Johannesburg, South Africa from 17 to 19 June 2008 focused on mainstreaming youth employment within employment policies of 14 Southern African countries². Its theme was "Creating an enabling environment for youth employability within Southern Africa" and was attended by forty two delegates, representing policy formulation and research institutions and civil society. The conference created a platform to discuss ; relevant policy imperatives for youth employment; the development of an effective advocacy strategy; and the dissemination of best practice models. Some of the resolutions included: lobbying SADC and national governments to ratify the African Youth Charter; developing a coherent Regional Youth Employment Strategy; reviewing all SADC Institutional Mechanisms supporting Youth Development, with an emphasis on National Youth Councils and their mandate; advocating for the establishment of youth directorates in all countries for inter-ministerial collaboration in pursuit of Youth Development; lobbying for mainstreaming of youth employment in all national policies; and advocating for the establishment of National Youth Councils in countries that have none. Together with the SADC Youth Steering Committee, the Youth Development Network was given the responsibility of coordinating the implementation of the above resolutions. Implementing the resolutions at national level was tasked to the National Youth Councils and Youth Organizations.

The Umsobomvu Youth Fund (UYF), through its Centre for Youth Development Practice (CYDP) hosted the Entrepreneurship Development Conference in Cape Town, South Africa on 1 to 4 July 2008 with the theme "Youth Entrepreneurship for 2010 and Beyond: Unlocking, Unleashing and Empowering". The objectives of the conference were the following: to discuss entrepreneurship tools, systems and processes thereby creating a platform for knowledge generation and learning; to share best practices in Youth Enterprise creation and development; and to share information on past FIFA World Cups and possible upcoming opportunities for young entrepreneurs. During the conference a Business Development Exhibition was presented. Most delegates agreed that existing young entrepreneurs were not given positive publicity and,; this led to a negative perception of entrepreneurship among youth. Thus, the Youth Entrepreneurship Campaign 2010, a partnership between UYF, National African Federated Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NAFCOC) Youth and the South African Youth Chamber of Commerce was established to improve public perception of youth entrepreneurs. For the presentations from the conference, visit www.youthportal.org.za

² Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Seychelles, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, and Zambia.



The International Training Centre of the ILO conducted a one and half week training course on "Tackling youth employment problems" in Turin, Italy on 7 to 16 July. The course followed the policy cycle, and in the framework of the ILO's Global Employment Agenda, participants examined the latest thinking and practice in the promotion of more and better jobs for young people. Twenty representatives from the Ministries of youth, labour, education or vocational training; workers' and employers' organizations; and relevant NGOs and mainly from Africa (Ethiopia, Gambia, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Zimbabwe) participated in the course.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The Africa Commission, set up by the Danish Government, aims to present new and creative strategies to revitalize and strengthen international development cooperation with Africa by focussing on Youth and Employment. The Commission has prepared three main meetings, the first of which took place in Copenhagen on 16 April 2008. The second meeting will be held in Addis Ababa on November 20 and the last meeting in May 2009 in Copenhagen. At this final meeting, the findings and the recommendations of the Commission will be presented. In between the meetings, a number of thematic conferences and workshops will be held. Their recommendations will be crucial input in the Commission's deliberations. Four of the five thematic conferences have been held. They address a number of related issues such as education; women and employment; youth and employment; and the challenge of climate change on economic growth and employment. The fifth thematic conference on "**Creating Economic Growth**" will take place on 30 October 2008 in Kampala, Uganda.

Links to other sites on youth employment:

www.ilo.org/youth

www.ilo.org/yen

www.yesweb.org

yen-wa@un.org

<http://go.worldbank.org/48Z06GMD70>

DID YOU KNOW?

- 1st November is African Youth Day;
&

- 2008 is the Year of the African Youth?

