

A man with dark, wavy hair is shown in profile, looking to the left. He is holding a lit cigarette in his right hand, with the smoke rising. He is wearing a dark, short-sleeved button-down shirt. The background is a rough, grey concrete wall with some green moss or algae growing on it. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows.

CHAPTER III

LOOKING FOR A JOB

AN EMERGING PICTURE: THE INCREASING LENGTH OF YOUTH JOB SEARCHES

Recent statistics on youth employment present a gloomy state of affairs for today's young people. In most developed economies, the long-term unemployment rates of youth significantly surpass those of adults. For example, in Italy, the gap between the youth and adult long-term unemployment rates is shocking: youth are three times more likely than adults to be unemployed for at least one year.¹

Of particular concern is the increasing length of job searches, which is not only leading to severe frustration and the disillusionment of young people, but also to increasing numbers falling out of the labour force entirely. The International Labour Organization recently reported that:

“In 56 countries for which comparable monthly/quarterly data were available, the youth labour force expanded by far less during the crisis than would be expected: [...] there were 2.6 million fewer youth in the labour market in 2010 than expected based on longer-term (pre-crisis) trends”.²

These are precarious times for many young people across the globe. However, within this uncertain climate, there is growing political will to address youth development issues. Since the Africa Commission's seminal report,³ there has been increasing momentum in Africa to respond to alarming statistics: that globally, “by 2025, one out of every four young people under 25 will be from Africa”.⁴ This population explosion will have a dramatic knock-on effect on the labour market, where “there is a[n urgent] need to create 10 to 15 million jobs a year to absorb the huge number of young people becoming part of the African labour force”.⁵

Hence, since 2009, there have been several high-level policy forums that aim to tackle the growing “youth bulges” and soaring rates of youth unemployment. The High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on Youth in 2011 emphasized the importance of youth employment, calling for targeted and integrated national youth employment policies for inclusive job creation, skills development and vocational training to meet specific labour market demands. At the 17th Ordinary African Union (AU) Summit, which was held in June-July 2011 under the theme, Accelerating Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Development, the United Nations Deputy Secretary-General, Asha-Rose Migiro, reminded Heads of State of the possibility of growing conflict associated with high youth unemployment and high population growth rates:

¹ International Labour Organization, 2011b, pp. 2-3

² Globally, the youth labour force participation rate decreased from 49.4 per cent in 2009 to 48.8 per cent, with the largest regional decreases in the Developed Economies & European Union and South Asia (International Labour Organization, 2011b, p. 2).

³ Realizing the Potential of Africa's Youth (2009)

⁴ Secretariat of the Africa Commission, 2009, p.12

⁵ *ibid.*

“If we are to bring lasting peace and sustainable development to the continent, we must empower Africa’s youth [...] For too many young adults in Africa, this is a time of dashed hopes, frustration, and political, economic and social exclusion,” said Ms. Migiro. “But there is a way for African nations to defuse the youth time bomb – by empowering youth and reaping the benefits”.⁶

At the national level, there are many complex challenges for young job seekers, which sadly often relate to socio-political factors and deep-seated exclusionary policies and practices. In January 2011, the South African Institute of Race Relations found that 51 per cent of young people between 15 and 24 are unemployed. But this statistic only scratches the surface: among those unemployed youth in South Africa, 63 per cent are young African (black South African) women, whereas this figure is only 15 per cent for young Indian (Indian South African) men. Furthermore, the youth unemployment rate varies considerably between races - it is 57 per cent among young Africans (black South Africans), 23 per cent among young Indians (Indian South Africans), and 21 per cent among young whites (white South Africans).⁷

This paints a disturbing picture of social inequality, not only in terms of access to decent work and job-seeking services, but also retention. While this is a particularly acute problem in South Africa, young job seekers across the globe are still excluded from the labour force based on gender, ethnicity, ability/disability and geography. Some of the participants on the e-discussion platform mentioned briefly some of these issues. However, it remains a sensitive area. How can these gross inequalities remain and still be prevalent in the year 2011?

STILL SEARCHING: A GLOBALIZED WORLD DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

During the week of 25 to 31 October, week III, the e-discussion platform was open to all to discuss the topic of “looking for a job.” The e-discussion invited the views of young people aged 15 to 30,⁸ as well as representatives of youth-led organizations. More than 310 comments were posted on the e-discussion platform by young women and men aged 16 to 30 from all corners of the world, including Nigeria, Bangladesh, the United Kingdom and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. In addition to the e-discussion site, there were also postings and uploads onto the United Nations International Year of Youth Facebook page, and a live question and answer Twitter session with United Nations Youth Champion Monique Coleman.

The views conveyed throughout this chapter focus on young people’s entry into the labour market. Almost all of the participants shared both positive and negative experiences of job searching. Indeed, there was no overall consensus as to whether globalization (as represented by such factors as use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) or working abroad, etc.) is,

⁶ United Nations, Department of Public Information, 2011

⁷ South African Institute of Race Relations, 2011

⁸ This is taking into account both the United Nations definition of youth (15- to 24-year-olds) and many local cultural contexts and understandings.

in general, favourable or not. What was made clear was that many educated young people around the globe are, as recently stated by the International Labour Organization, in “working poverty.” Whereas the technical definition of being in “working poverty” is working while in a family household that lives below the poverty line (US\$1.25 a day per person), several of the participants viewed it in a broader sense: as being underemployed and/or in jobs that they don’t see as having long-term prospects. Jimmy from Zambia, for example, replied that his understanding of working poverty relates to:

“...an increase in corruption and nepotism. As a result, youths cannot get jobs easily, especially through the formal channels. Youth are therefore facing working poverty because they are involved in jobs which are not in line with what they are qualified for. In addition, they are often exploited through internships which are not well remunerated.”

Despite this, many of the participants remained hopeful. As Nduta, a student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban, South Africa, exclaimed: the secret to getting that dream job is to *“start small and grow, learn and acquire skills as you progress.”* We now turn to some of the most perceptive comments shared:

WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE SAY

In your country, what kinds of job guidance initiatives (organizations and resources) exist?

The main initiatives reported by participants included:

- Business and social networks (both informal and formal).
- Youth-focused organizations. For example, Solomon from Ghana, who works with Global Youth Innovation Network (GYIN), explained how GYIN has created an online network where youth can meet and share knowledge and experiences. For him, this has meant, *“as an entrepreneur managing a startup company, providing professional [information technology] IT services to farmers in Ghana, [and] the business networks have been most beneficial.”*
- Career fairs or annual graduate recruitment programmes – especially at universities and colleges. Career fairs seem to be taking place at many universities, as mentioned by Preneshni, 22, a South African student. However, she also pointed out that *“there is often a small spectrum of businesses coming to these fairs, something that might only make them relevant to a limited number of students.”*

- Internships - which were found to assist young people with decision-making on career paths. Inger (in her mid 20s) from South Africa recommended making work experience compulsory for high school students, in order to help them choose the right career path.
- Assistance with CV/resumé and cover letter writing, and use of social media tools. An example of the provision of these was online recruitment agencies, which helped Germaine, a female in her mid-20s from South Africa, to get a job.
- Finally, Mitch (a young lecturer at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa) suggested that, *“it is not the responsibility of educational institutions to train students in job hunting,”* rather these institutions should facilitate the development of skills that are more suited for job hunting so that quality education provides a solid foundation for the transition from academic work into a job. This was certainly thought-provoking!

Tweet Corner

Some of the tweets from week III

RT @UNpYouth: [networking skills can be useful...how you interact/relate w/ people can be the advantage that sets you apart]#youthjobs
<http://t.co/TFea940w>

RT @UNpYouth: [You r always asked to have 2-4 years work experience, where r young ppl supp. 2 get this experience from?]
<http://t.co/TFea940w#youthjobs>

In your experience, what have you used and what was the most helpful?

- Several of the participants from both the Asian and African regions found that business and social networks (informal and formal) were the most useful source of career guidance. This included membership in youth networks which use online resources, such as Global, Connect African Development and opportunitiesforyouth.org.
- In general, participants were positive about using social media in job searches, but a few also mentioned that there were challenges to be overcome; namely, not having the desired

qualifications. Hikmat, 21, from Afghanistan and a member of Peshawar Youth Organization explained his experiences: *“social media helped me access new jobs, although I was not eligible for any of them because of the request for work experience and a Master’s Degree.”* Similarly, Seabe, 23, from Botswana confirmed this: *“apart from internships, fresh graduates are finding it difficult to find employment. This is because often companies advertise job positions for candidates with 3 years [experience] and above.”*

- Most participants also spoke about internships (paid or unpaid) as being a very useful form of job guidance. Ayshah, 26, from Kenya shared her experience: *“...when [I] was an intern I used that opportunity to expand my network and [...] market myself, especially when I was told to represent the organization in general – and it helped a lot, because by the end of the internship I left a legacy!”*
- Finally, many of our young participants mentioned that the most helpful approach for job searching is to maintain a positive outlook, including self-motivation and perseverance. Inger (a Swede studying in South Africa) explained how a combination of social networks and personal resources helped her secure her current job: *“I am a strong believer in social networking, and I think it can be very effective in learning more about employment opportunities that exist. I got my current job after debating with my now boss in a Master’s class!”*

How did you access / secure your first job?

- The e-discussion revealed that it took participants varying lengths of time to get their first job. It took Nduta, a student at KwaZulu-Natal University (originally from Kenya), seven years to get a stable paying job after high school. During those seven years, she volunteered for an organization that works with vulnerable children in Nairobi’s slums. This experience taught her not to give up.
- Volunteerism and internships emerged as important approaches to securing a first job, by enabling individuals to gain experience and develop networks. Fortune from Nigeria shared her path; she started as a trainee in an information and communication technology (ICT) training and education centre and worked her way up from there. Now, after several years of work experience, she is about to begin a Master of Science degree programme. Fortune’s advice: *“the work you do for free today will equip you for the income you will earn tomorrow.”*
- Respondents emphasized that getting a job requires a lot of dedication and patience. Eva, 21, from Spain had just found a job and described how the combination of a good CV, promoting her blog, sending many applications and *“insisting and showing confidence”* finally secured her a job with a hotel chain.

- Young job seekers shared that it was very important to have social networks, as these linked individuals with jobs as well as information-sharing. For Ayshah, 26, from Kenya, social networks were what enabled her to secure her first job as a promoter in a supermarket after she had “*applied everywhere*” without success. Fortune from Nigeria had a less positive experience. She explained how there are many barriers contributing to people’s struggles with job searching: their level of education, the “*excessive obsession for qualifications and certifications*” and the fact that “*jobs tend to be restricted within informal social networks (familial and friendship ties).*” However, she reminds us:

“In as much as we look out for opportunities, we must also note that opportunities can be created; volunteering is one very useful way of creating opportunities for oneself. Opportunities exist even beyond the confines of a person’s national borders. This is why the internet is very useful today. I cannot deny the fact that most of the opportunities that have come my way in terms of learning, networking and self-development are largely attributable to the internet and how I have explored it over the years (actively for about a decade now).”

Three Word Tag: Job Searching Guidance

Participants were also asked:

“from whom, what, and where have you received the best job searching guidance? For example: ‘father; persistence; home.’”

These were some of the responses received:

Participant	From Whom	From What	From Where
Luis, 24, Dominican Republic	father’s friend	patience	office
Seabe, 23, Botswana	career advisors	persistence	university
Amadou, 24, Senegal	google	persistence	online
Alexander, 25, Mexico	professor	making proposals	university
Lara, 21, United Kingdom	father	ambition	university

Vote Corner:

What are your top 3 tips for other young job hunters?

After several suggestions were submitted to the e-discussion platform, participants voted on the most talked-about submissions via the Facebook page. The top three tips were:

- 1) **Ambition:** have a “can do” attitude, take action and make things happen. This tip received 66 per cent of the votes. This can be done through working on the way one presents oneself, or by using volunteering as a way to a more stable job or to starting one’s own business. Sibeso, a 25-year-old female from Zambia working with the United Nations Youth Association of Zambia (YUNA ZAMBIA), wrote: “My fellow youths, I would advise you to start becoming your own bosses by starting up your own businesses, rather than waiting to get employed. Remember: we are not growing any younger – but older – by the day.”
- 2) **Perseverance:** do not give up. This received 18 per cent of the votes. Tinghua stated: “Always look on the bright side of life: If you failed a job interview, at least you accumulated interview experience.”
- 3) **Social networks (formal or informal) – build and make use of these.** This also received 18 per cent of the votes. Joe, 24, from the United Kingdom, who has never been unemployed, explained how he had spent months working to help his friends find jobs: by improving their CVs, giving interview advice and organizing interviews. Four of his friends have now secured jobs. He stated: “Your friends with jobs have knowledge about the process. Get that knowledge. If you have a job, share your knowledge with others.”

OTHERS ON FACEBOOK MENTIONED THAT THEIR BEST JOB SEARCHING TIPS CAME FROM

- Peers (Ahmad)
- Self-motivation (Shivani)
- Drawing a map of core values and names of organizations
(As well as signing up for newsletters and positive thinking) (Thanh)
- Personal effort (Nosakhare)
- Networking and knowing yourself (Amanda)

How does globalization have positive and/or negative effects on your – and your friends’ – efforts to secure a job?

Globalization describes the processes by which economies, societies and cultures have become integrated through communication, transportation and technology. The participants on the e-discussion platform focused on the movement of young people across borders and increased access to new resources – including communication technology.

ON THE UPSIDE

- Mobility and removing barriers: Globalization processes have opened up opportunities for young people looking for jobs. For Karolina, 27, from Sweden (studying in South Africa), globalization – through the removal of economic barriers and the opening up of borders – has enabled her to move (unforced) from her country of origin to other countries (such as the United Kingdom and Norway) in search of work. Regional agreements which govern travel and conditions of employment have created opportunities at both the national and international levels.
- The same sentiments on the benefits of mobility from globalization are echoed by Ayshah, 26, from Kenya, who observes that the advent of globalization has spurred intra- and inter-country movement (which is not forced). She is originally from a central region of Kenya, but due to a lack of opportunities there, she has now settled in another Kenyan coastal region which generates wealth from foreign tourists, and where it was easier for her to secure employment.
- In Jordan, Enass, 25, tells us that globalization has resulted in new information technology (IT) and software companies being set up. *“Many international companies are investing in and opening new companies in this country – they look to outsource here because we have qualified people in this industry with lower labour costs than in Europe.”* Furthermore, there has been a transfer of technology from one country to another, which can lead to innovative job creation.
- Eva, 21, from Spain (who works for a hotel chain) told us that: *“the ability to speak a diversity of languages can be both an opportunity and a challenge (as a result of globalization) for young people.”*

ON THE DOWNSIDE

- Muhamad, 20, from Indonesia perceives globalization as having the potential to increase competition for already scarce jobs. He argues that globalization means that young people, who in most cases have little or no work experience, are made to compete for jobs with people

with vast work experience. In this regard, it is the youth *“who suffer in the end”* as a result of globalization (particularly if they are exploited due to inexperience).

- In addition, Big, 24, from Zimbabwe believes that globalization is benefiting developed economies. He views this in light of *“brain drain,”* whereby improved transport and communication networks between countries have made it easier for developed economies to attract professionals from developing economies, thereby *“leaving behind people who do not have the necessary innovative and entrepreneurial skills”* to take developing countries forward.
- According to Jack, globalization has contributed to unemployment because of what he referred to as *“labour fragmentations.”* In other words, globalization brings about the interconnectedness of economies, which has contributed to the current global economic crisis. Even the current crisis in the euro zone affects most other countries. In a sense, *“globalization spreads instability.”*

FINAL INSIGHTS

Joseph from Latvia told us: *“The situation in Latvia is not good. We still have the third highest unemployment rate among [European Union] EU members. While Leo from Spain shared his opinion about emigration as the only solution, about 15 per cent of Latvian citizens have moved to another country, like Germany, Scandinavian countries, Ireland and the [United Kingdom] UK. I love my country, but I’m concerned about staying here [...] As a result of this huge emigration wave from Latvia, those who are left here in the near future will have to pay huge taxes to support the social insurance system, and that will cause another problem – a shadow economy.”*

What do you think will be the biggest opportunities and challenges faced by young job seekers in the future?

OPPORTUNITIES

- Muhamad, 20, from Indonesia saw a bright future for youth around the globe. He told us that there will be more new opportunities for young people which do not currently exist. However, he also views the increased competition in *“this era of globalization, which makes us compete with other youth in the world,”* as a challenge, but one which will ensure that young people will therefore seek to improve their skills in order to be competitive in the job market.

- Seabe, 23, from Botswana told us that, *“there are many African entrepreneurs; young, energetic and optimistic. I have a couple of friends who have started small businesses, mostly in the [information and communication technology] ICT sector, and some of them are actually competing with big brand names.”* Instead of waiting for that dream job, Seabe encourages all to be proactive and industrious!
- According to Dulal, with the National Federation of Youth Organizations in Bangladesh, that federation ran a programme which targeted *“480 rural poor youths, who received training on livestock and poultry farming. A revolving fund was then setup to provide loans to the trained youths to establish income-generating businesses.”* The federation thus seeks to develop entrepreneurial skills in these young people. This for Dulal is a window of future opportunities and possibilities in Bangladesh.
- Michael, 23, from Italy and the World Esperanto Youth Organization, saw a future in the green economy:

“As young people tend to be more interested in trying out new ideas and developing new solutions, I think that they are more likely to be employed in fields connected with new, green technologies. Furthermore, young people are, in general, more conscious of global issues like climate change and social equity. For this reason, I think that promotion of green economies among youth is a winning solution [...]”

For more information on green jobs, see chapter IV.

CHALLENGES

- In Botswana, Seabe, 23, informed us that graduates spend a lot of time looking for employment – in fact, *“between two and five years.”* According to him, the government and other organizations in Botswana cannot cope with the increasing number of graduates. (A similar sentiment was expressed by Enass, 25, from Jordan.) Seabe goes on to say that efforts to create employment in the form of internships have further worsened the difficulties of these young job seekers, who are now *“being exploited and in most cases are expected to undertake unmatched jobs.”* Another challenge is the significant amount of work experience that is required by several organizations, whereas young graduates often do not have any work-related experience. Finally, he argues that the government needs to be more creative in exploring possible new areas/sectors for employment, rather than focusing solely on farming and other agricultural areas.

- Yasmyn, 24, from Guadeloupe reflected that most people who are affected by unemployment in her country are those who do not have the necessary qualifications (such as diplomas). She also highlights racial discrimination as another persistent obstacle for many to attain meaningful employment in Guadeloupe.
- Lara, 21, a law student from the United Kingdom (UK), saw the application process to practice as a lawyer in the UK as a major obstacle in searching for and securing future employment. *“It is often a four-stage process, and while doing a degree at the same time can be extremely difficult.”*
- Bijay, 27, with the Association of Youth Organizations in Nepal, told us about the challenges he sees both present and in the foreseeable future:

“Working as part of civil society or as an [non-governmental organization] NGO is sometimes difficult, particularly in dealing with political parties. There is a triangular situation: on one side there is the NGO, at another corner are the political parties, and thirdly there is the government. A kind of opposing culture is developing. They are always complaining that NGOs are not working properly. There is also age-based discrimination. Being a youth, it is sometimes difficult to work. Thus, a good platform for youth should be created. Even NGOs and [international NGOs] INGOs are creating youth panels [and] volunteer groups; but even here, youth are being used for their own causes. Youth [are still restricted] and can’t make a meaningful contribution towards policy or programmes. If youth are [not] supported to develop their knowledge, then conflict can take place.”

If you are currently employed – is your job secure? Do you have several part-time jobs? Do you have benefits, such as insurance? Are you making use of your skills and qualifications? If not, is this your choice or due to underemployment?

Participants on the e-discussion platform during week III included a trainee lawyer, a member of a biodiversity-focused non-governmental organization, a social media officer and an amateur writer (of poetry and novels).

The following were the main issues discussed:

- The majority of participants were either unemployed, still completing their education, doing unpaid or part-time work, completing short-term contracts or “small jobs,” or engaged in several of these activities at one time. For example, Alejandro, 25, from Mexico works as a university teacher and is guaranteed a certain number of hours per week, which conforms with all Mexican labour laws. He is using this opportunity to get his Master’s degree to help further his goal – which is to work in the Mexican Foreign Service.
- Many participants indicated that they did lack job benefits, such as insurance, and experience underemployment, holding jobs that did not match their qualifications. Hamadullah, 24, from Pakistan told us that he is employed but his job is insecure, because he *“may be called off anytime.”* In addition, he believes that he is not making full use of his skills and qualifications, and that most young people in Pakistan work without signing any contract with their employers!
- Due to unemployment and lack of work experience, some young people are either participating in internship programmes or are volunteering.
- There was a general consensus that, through ambition, perseverance and gaining experience, one’s true career path will eventually be recognized later in life.

Poem Corner

Looking for a Job | Terna, Nigeria

LOOKING FOR A JOB

I have heard that name echo nearby,
 Or should I swear its shadow went by;
 Not now, feels nothing like a day-dream,
 Gave many years of my life.
 To work a job, and feel alive,
 It is there in my nightly dream,
 I created it doubly in my imagination.
 Perfect, with no trace of illusion,
 Still I await its long coming;
 Will cheer it like a lost son’s homecoming.
 I have walked many a town side street,
 Tired, wet and hot from heat;
 From sunrise to sunset to woo a job,
 Mail me the opening for that job!

If you are employed, are you in your ideal job?

If not, how are you trying to reach your goal?

- The majority of young participants informed us that they have not yet secured their ideal job, largely due to a lack of work experience. Several young people would ideally like to work in business, diplomacy, human rights and computer science/ technology.
- Jimmy, 26, from Zambia reminded us of the importance of volunteering. He volunteers at the United Nations Youth Association of Zambia, and decided to volunteer because he could not secure his ideal job. His frustrations continue, however, as there is still a mismatch between his qualifications and the voluntary role he is performing.
- Amadou, 24, from Senegal also highlighted the importance of work-related internships, as they allow individuals *“to utilize their skills and knowledge, and at the same time build on their work experience.”*
- Some positive comments came from Fortunate, a young African, who stated that she is engaged in her ideal job as a project officer. However, she advises other young job seekers that in order to get their ideal jobs, *“they need to develop their social networking skills, as this can expand opportunities for employment.”*

Have you managed to create an opportunity out of a crisis?

Are there any Middle Eastern entrepreneurs out there?

Are there any African Mark Zuckerburgs?

Or Asian philanthropists?

Seabe, 23, from Botswana recalled a chance encounter that he had earlier this year on a bus with an elderly person who said, “young people of this generation are well equipped, with technology, an inquisitive mind, schools to attend, programmes to follow, and at times people to guide you in your endeavours.”

He went on to say that, “young people have nothing to lose in becoming entrepreneurs and hence we shouldn’t be afraid to reach out for our dreams and take risks.” Seabe told us this had an impact on him: “I took his advice and I have been pitching ideas to a few investors for small start-ups.” So – let’s see what happens for Seabe!

How can we hold policymakers and governments to account for ensuring youth unemployment rates are reduced?

Responses included:

- Amadou, 24, from Senegal said, *“there is a need to lobby governments so that the issue is included in government planning.”* This call to activism and direct action was also agreed upon by Seabe, 23, from Botswana, Aku, 30, from Togo, and Lara, 21, from the United Kingdom. Lara reminded us that:

“Youth unemployment is a serious problem for the future of the economy and mindset of a generation, and policymakers need to be constantly aware of this. So, pressure groups and surveys being done to collate evidence and put pressure on governments to make change would be an efficient way to hold policymakers to account.”

- Ayshah, 26, from Kenya told us that governments should promote the creation of *“job opportunities for young people by funding and developing informal training and volunteering opportunities.”*
- Yasmyn, 24, from Guadeloupe also agreed that governments should be encouraged to promote and develop flexible jobs for young people.

Twitterview

With Monique Coleman, United Nations Youth Champion

United Nations Youth Champion, Monique Coleman (@gimmemotalk), was hosted by the United Nations Focal Point on Youth for a one-hour Twitter interview on: twitter.com/UNpYouth. Youth from around the world posed questions to Monique about various youth employment issues, including her own experiences and advice. Monique provided a down-to-earth perspective of her working life, even sharing her first job – babysitting! Some of Monique’s most notable quotes included:

“Sometimes people don’t see opportunities in front of them because they are clouded by a lack of belief in themselves.”

“Remember that you are not alone. So, find other people who are in similar situations & see how you can combine talents.”

“I strongly encourage entrepreneurship! Also social business. @Yunus_Centre has a great model for social business.”

Some of the notable comments sent to Monique by young people included:

“The foundation of every State is the education and awareness of its youth. without that #youthjobs seem unreal.”

“What about #green #youthjobs and making this a priority for #rioplus20 #EarthSummit?”

“More #youthjobs can be created by skill development on indigenous knowledge and modern technical skills.”

CHAPTER CONCLUSIONS

Some key themes that emerged from week III's discussion on looking for jobs were:

The experiences of several participants illustrated what recent research has shown: that more young people around the world are in a situation of working poverty, rather than are out of a job and looking for work. However, the majority of participants on the e-discussion platform understood "working poverty" in a broader sense (than the International Labour Organization definition). For young people such as Jimmy from Zimbabwe, for example, *"Youth are [...] facing working poverty because they are involved in jobs which are not in line with what they are qualified for."*

Indeed, a thoughtful comment regarding the pressures of being "a youth" was posted by Akampa: *"Youth are a vast resource but are often treated as a constituency that needs to be managed, instead of engaged and supported to play an influential role in their respective countries to develop the globe."* This theme of youth as potential threats will be picked up in the following chapter.

In order to tackle the pressures of unemployment and lack of work experience, many young people, such as Ayshah, 26, from Kenya and Fortune from Nigeria, are seeking internship or volunteering opportunities in order to develop their workplace skills. This echoes the voices we heard during week II on the platform. It also suggests that, not only are internships and volunteering opportunities being used as part of a young person's educational development, but also as a mechanism for direct job searching and networking.

There was however, no overall consensus as to whether globalization (as represented by such factors as use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) or working abroad, etc.) is, in general, positive or negative. However, there was a general consensus that through ambition, perseverance and gaining experience, many youth will eventually reach their career aspirations. Farhana, with Relations in Motion in Bangladesh, posted this inspirational comment on the International Year of Youth Facebook page:

"Let's change the world by innovative ideas along with YOUTH POWER. Focus on Quality, not quantity. Think of Construction, not destruction. Work with Motivation, not depression. Search Originality, not piracy. Unite for Unity, not partiality. Finally, go for Creativity and remove disparity. That's our Motto. Join us and develop YOURSELF."

CASE STUDY

Enass, 25-year-old woman from Jordan

In 2008, I graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in information technology (IT), and now I work in the IT and software development industry. I think globalization has had a great positive effect on my employment and hiring experience, because there are many international companies and investors opening new businesses and investing in – as well as outsourcing to – Jordan, particularly in this field. Jordan has a highly-skilled population and lower labour costs than Europe and many other areas, which provide for a huge number of jobs for local workers and recent graduates like me. Jordanians are very proud that their country has been called the Silicon Valley of the Middle East. In light of this, since my university days, I prepared myself very well for the job market. I took many relevant courses and obtained certificates, and also got technical experience by serving as an intern and trainee in three companies while in university.

When graduation approached, I prepared a long list of all IT companies I had ever heard about, compiling their websites and contact information. I also prepared my CV and sought advice on it from some employed friends. Then I sent my CV to all of the company e-mail addresses on my list. Without the internet and other information and communication technologies, I would not have been able to learn about many of the companies in my field, or to prepare a strong CV and share it with those companies. In less than one month, while still in the final exam period of my last semester, I got two interviews and received my first job offer to be a software developer. Less than one month after that, following graduation, I got many other interviews and better offers, so I accepted my first official job contract with another company.

Two years later, although I was satisfied with my current employer, I wanted to develop new experience and so began to apply for jobs in different companies. After a few months of interviews and scanning offers, I got my second job with a bank in Switzerland, working in its offshore office in Jordan and also outsourcing with another European company. Over more than one and a half years, I gained important software development experience in that company. Currently, however, I am working for my third employer, doing the same job in the same field, but with an Emirati investor who has a company in the United Arab Emirates but who is investing in Jordan because of its high-calibre work force.

Based on my personal experience, I can say that there are a lot of opportunities available in my country, especially in the IT sector, with many start-up enterprises and significant external investment. Yet new graduates need to be aware of what companies are looking for, because there is a lot of competition out there. Young workers should distinguish themselves to employers by developing good distinctive competencies, being knowledgeable about their candidacy, and being able to prove themselves. Of course, that is not an easy task! But it is definitely doable.

Additional resources

International Labour Organization, Youth Employment Programme (YEP). Information available from <http://www.ilo.org/employment/areas/youth-employment/lang--en/index.htm>

International Labour Organization and United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Fact sheet on youth employment. Available from <http://social.un.org/youthyear/docs/youth-employment.pdf>

Ramdoss, Santhosh, Ashleigh Mullinax and Lara Storm (2011). Financial inclusion of youth – reaching the next generation. Screencast of presentation to the United States Agency for International Development Microenterprise Development Office’s After Hours Seminar, No. 55. Washington, D.C., 1 September. Available from <http://microlinks.kdid.org/library/financial-inclusion-youth-reaching-next-generation-presentation-and-screencast>

Columbia University, School of International and Public Affairs (2008). Market Assessment Toolkit for Vocational Training Providers and Youth: linking vocational training programmes to market opportunities. New York: Women’s Commission for Refugees and Children. Available from http://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/docs/ug_ysl_toolkit.pdf