

EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF YOUTH IN AGRIBUSINESS RURAL AREA: LIVINGSTONE, ZAMBIA



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The population of youth in Zambia is about 4.8 million aged 15-34. Africa's youth population expected to double to over 830 million by 2050, and 10-12 million youth enter the work force each year in Africa. Youth unemployment is estimated at 23%. Many unemployed young people are also unproductive, i.e. not engaged in any activity that contributes to their personal livelihood, or that of their family and community. However, there are scant employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for young women and men. Young people have successfully called for leaders' commitments to youth employment in both formal and informal sectors. Governments must create conditions that promote greater value addition and deeper linkages between agriculture and other productive sectors and that encourage and support innovation in the processing industry and food-related services. Creating jobs for these young people requires urgent government intervention at the policy level. However job creation has proved to be a problem given the general trends of low economic growth across the region. The number of job seekers far outweighs the number of job opportunities.

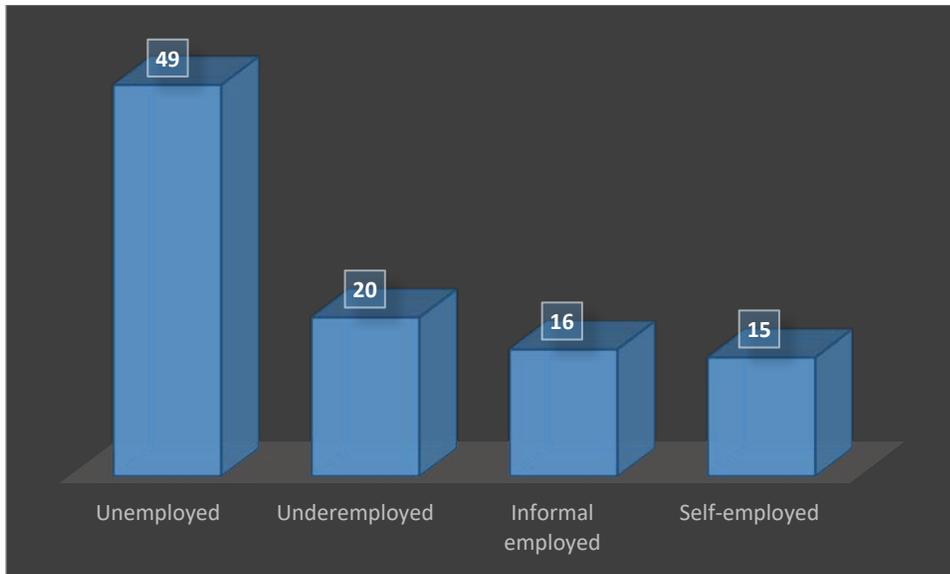


Figure 1: Employment status of Youths in rural areas of Livingstone, Zambia

Agriculture is the main sector that will be able to create meaningful and gainful jobs for the large number of young people entering Africa’s job market in the next few years. The agribusiness sector has created a significant number of jobs for youth through diversifying the types of produce that it farms and sell. Encouraging youth to engage with the agricultural sector also requires that they have access to resources, including finance, markets and land, and the opportunity to engage in policy and decision-making. While jobs are clearly being created, the agribusiness sector faces multiple challenges in getting young people to take up these roles, related to access to infrastructure and land. A key focus should be on young agribusiness entrepreneurs, who combines the skills and talent, personal ambition, willingness to take risks and resourcefulness needed to set up businesses that create much-needed jobs and improve the welfare of farmers and the wider community.

Policy action needed

- Government programs targeting youth specifically are also crucial to promote long-term, sustainable growth in the agricultural sector.
- Government to make policy measures that provide financial and tax incentives for new, youth-led agricultural companies are essential.
- Governments should provide opportunities for youth-led enterprises to showcase successful agriprenurship and businesses.
- Policy-makers should provide incentives to improve the quality of education and skills-based learning.

- Governments should develop training programmes for financial management skills, credit-worthiness checks and provision of access to capital for young farmers and entrepreneurs, in conjunction with funding bodies and financial institutions.
- Governments to invest in infrastructure considering number of jobs are being lost in the agribusiness sector due to power outages and weak infrastructure such as irrigation, storage, and internet. Improving existing infrastructure and continued investment would make agribusiness more competitive and reliable.
- Policy-maker to strengthen evidence-base to ensure that all stakeholders have data on the numbers of young people who are unemployed, skilled, unskilled, reside in rural areas, have access to land.