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Youth Employment Summit



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Key Messages from the Summit

A Youth Employment Summit was organized by the UKAid funded PDFII in collaboration with FEPAR on the 3rd of December 2015

The summit which brought together a range of stakeholders including government, private sector and donor agencies sought to provide a platform to learn lessons from past job creation schemes and explore new innovative ideas that will help generate employment and raise incomes. Key messages drawn from the event include:

- Successive governments in Nigeria have implemented job creation schemes to tackle the

problem of youth unemployment. Statistics however show that the problem of youth unemployment is too huge for the government alone to solve with 2 million graduates joining the work force yearly

- Most of the job creation initiatives of the past did not achieve what they were set up to do primarily due to poor design and implementation.



- Economic growth is the ultimate solution to tackling youth unemployment particularly in the formal sector
- Government needs to tackle the binding constraints to economic growth (**access to finance, poor infrastructure, shortage of skilled staff, poor investment climate and bureaucratic procedures**)
- Evidence also points to the fact that underemployment is also a problem



Economic Growth is the ultimate solution to tackling youth unemployment

that needs to be tackled alongside unemployment. More than 33% of the youth surveyed by FEPAR were underemployed¹, 82% of them were not satisfied with their current jobs

- An assessment of past government job creation initiatives like NAPEP, SURE-P, YouwiN!, and YEAP was carried out by FEPAR and presented during the event. Lessons learnt from these past job creation initiatives are very important in planning for the future to avoid mistakes of the past and accelerate or replicate the gains. The lessons learnt are summarised as follows:
 - Programmes have to be properly conceptualised and not put together in a hurry
 - Programmes must be designed to be sustainable and to have multiplier effects to create more jobs

- Programmes and processes must be implemented in a merit based, transparent way in order to minimise corruption and improve credibility
- Implementation has to be carried out in a robust and detailed manner
- Proper monitoring and evaluation mechanisms have to be built into the design of programmes to ensure they deliver what they were designed for
- Programmes have to be adequately funded in a way that is sustainable
- Youth employment programmes will not solve the BIG problem of **unemployment** and **underemployment** which young Nigerians face; but can be used as palliatives in specific areas and for specific groups.

Other key messages from the event are:

- Skills gap needs to be bridged. The problem is not limited to the school curriculum but the approach to teaching and learning – students only reading to pass an examination rather than to know and understand. Career counselling centres need to be set up in schools, and students need to be able to access the service early in their secondary school careers
- Skill acquisition centres also need to be set up with clearly defined standards of what makes for an employable Nigerian.
- In tackling unemployment and underemployment issues it should be borne in mind that there are also regional dimensions that should be considered. What would apply to one region may not apply to another.



Government needs to tackle the binding constraints to economic growth

- Therefore strategies, programmes and plans need to be customised by region. In the north, 60% of the labour force is employed in the informal sector, which hardly provides what the person will eat in the day. The peculiarities of the north require a comprehensive and holistic employment strategy. When developing a framework for the north, it is important to take their daily realities into consideration. It should not only be about creating new jobs but improving existing ones for increased productivity and growth
- The informal sector constitutes a very important aspect in solving employment issues. There is therefore the need to work with the informal sector not necessarily to formalise it but to make the best of it without stifling their businesses
- In addition to efforts geared towards agriculture, industrial efforts should be deployed into other sectors such as entertainment, technology and advertising, as these have proven potentials to create massive employments