

### III. Strengthening youth education to harness the employment benefits of globalization

Globalization has contributed to the creation of millions of new jobs, most of them in Asia (ECA, 2005). Africa has the lowest share of the jobs created from globalization. Governments in Africa therefore need to deliberate on approaches that will help African young people to experience the opportunities and challenges of national and regional development in a globalized world system.

In order to benefit from globalization in the long run, African countries need to diversify their economies. This requires investment in human capital and the reduction of obstacles to exports and foreign direct investment, especially in infrastructure. Only then will African young people have a chance to participate fully in global markets.

Foreign direct investment is on the rise in Africa. Several countries are seeing the proliferation of foreign firms, entrepreneurs and investors in different sectors. For local firms and local people this can be seen as both a threat and an opportunity. Some governments have expressed concern about the numbers of foreign workers employed in these foreign companies at the expense of local labour. The Government of Angola, for instance, has tightened its immigration policies and raised the cost of securing long-term working visas for foreign workers as a way of encouraging foreign companies to utilize local labour.

Foreign direct investment, which is rising as result of globalization, has the potential to create jobs for African young people. However, besides putting in place policies, laws and strategies that limit the number of foreign workers, African governments should also make local labour competent and relevant for the kind of investment needed in the country. The counterpart to the potential of foreign direct investment to create jobs for young people must be a youth sector having the skills demanded by foreign companies and investment ventures. The existence of an increasingly skilled young labour force will help countries to reap the potential offered by economic liberalization.

In addition to specific skills in fields such as IT that are often demanded by foreign companies, the acquisition of literacy, numeracy and other basic technical skills such as the ability to drive and operate machinery will lead to a fall in the number of foreign workers brought in to perform basic tasks.

One lesson that can be learnt from experience in Asia is the importance of emphasizing the quality of education as well as enrolment numbers, including attention to the vocational skills essential for technological change and growth (Asian Development Bank, 2004). East Asia's experience shows that sustained export-led growth requires investment in secondary and tertiary education. In 1960, workers in East Asia and the Pacific had less than three years of schooling, which was less than in Latin America and the Caribbean. By 1990, countries in the region had the highest average number of years of educational attainment in the developing world, with a marked improvement in the educational attainment of girls, and consistently improved teacher-pupil ratios (International Labour Organization 1999). Asia gave attention to the quality of education, expanded girls' education and improved vocational skills essential for technological change and growth. All these factors are essential in improving productivity and competitiveness. In Africa, lower enrolment rates, coupled with low completion rates, low quality of education and a failure to align curricula with the needs of the private sector have contributed to the mismatch of young people's skills with the demands of labour markets. Limited work experience and a lack of general hard and soft skills also put young Africans at the end of the hiring list.

Several African countries, including Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa, have introduced apprenticeship programmes that integrate theoretical learning with working experience. They involve partnerships between governments, service providers and the private sector and are a good example of the kind of feedback mechanisms needed to address the skills mismatch in Africa. A similar system where the skills profile needed by the private sector was integrated into educational curricula contributed to the economic success of the East Asian countries.

Further, new ICT systems are dramatically changing the tradability of information-related services. Large companies are increasingly outsourcing ICT functions. The global market for such outsourcing is estimated in the hundreds of billions of dollars. Africa's share in this market, though meagre, is rising. Ghana, Mauritius and Senegal have received investment linked to offshore services that require semi-skilled workers. These workers must display proficiency in written and spoken English, familiarity with the culture of the client countries and social skills. Overall, the skills for these jobs, though low in Eu-

rope and North America, are above African national averages, and the entry into information processing could be a building block for future upgrading.

In addition, East Asia's experience shows that investment in public health systems to improve child survival and health in general, the widespread availability and social acceptability of family planning; rapid and steady declines in childbearing, improvements in educational enrolments and quality and stable economic conditions conducive to growth and job creation have paid off. A strong educational system and sound economic management in Asia made it possible to absorb a large generation of young adults into the workforce. From 1965 to 1990, growth in gross domestic product per capita averaged more than 6 per cent per year.

African countries must therefore strategize to find ways in which they can harness their resources, including young people in ways which create specific production capacities that are globally competitive. This implies, *inter alia*, improving access to and the quality and relevance of secondary and post-secondary education and continuing to work towards universal primary education.

## A. Harmonizing education and employment

Education investments have been said to bring about returns in employment in Africa. However, increasingly experience from other regions like the Caribbean and now Africa have shown that a good or high level of educational attainment does not guarantee increased employment opportunities. Young people today have to do more than just have an education in order to succeed in life.

Among the MDGs, education is a key priority for many African countries, and there has been a growing tendency for African governments to liberalize education by encouraging both local and foreign private higher education to grow rapidly. However, there has been a gap in quality control by private providers [Naidoo, 2004].

Investment in education must be geared towards providing students with the knowledge needed to compete in the job market, whether locally or globally. In particular, there is a need to ensure that educational provision is aligned with and tailored to the needs of both the local and global economy. Providing specific technical skills in high demand in the private and urban setting as well as in rural areas is also an important consideration for successful youth employment policies.

Education systems are providing basic literacy and numeracy, overlooking the skill sets needed for value addition of natural resources, among other skills required for the labour market. It is for this reason that youth unemployment in Africa is higher amongst those who have actually acquired some form of education, but do not have the skills most sought after in the labour market, making them unattractive to employers.

A recent study conducted by the Youth Employment Network and the International Youth Foundation showed that a lack of life skills and initiative and insufficient literacy skills were seen as the primary obstacles to recruiting young workers in Ghana and Senegal. Those who were able to access education did not get the relevant career guidance to make adequate career choices. Very few institutions provide career guidance to enable students to make informed decisions about the various career options and paths.

High returns on private investment in education in Africa reflect the acute scarcity of educated workers at various skill levels to satisfy the demand for labour in economies that are continuously growing. Rather than privatizing educational institutions, governments should conclude public-private partnerships with a view to expanding investment in education. The financing of secondary education in private schools in areas where there is insufficient capacity in government schools is an efficient approach to expansion. It would make use of existing infrastructure and systems with qualified teachers already in place. Experience so far indicates that public funding for such schools provides a predictable positive revenue stream, allowing for expansion and improved quality. Increased inspection of private schools will assist in ensuring that quality norms are met. In addition to encouraging private investment in education, it is necessary to expand public training opportunities to provide better access to marginalized urban and rural youth, the less educated and girls.

The need to link secondary and post-secondary education to the demands of the labour market is increasing. This does not imply that governments should focus more on secondary education at the expense of primary education. Illiteracy remains a significant obstacle to livelihood expansion in many African countries, and addressing it through expanded primary education and literacy training is an important part of the development equation.

The youth employment challenge confronts all countries in Africa, regardless of their stage of socio-economic development, but the socio-economic context has a significant impact on the nature and extent of the problem. As they consider measures to help young people make the transition into the labour market and obtain work, policymakers are hampered by limited information on the status quo and scenarios and options available. Consequently, there is

a need to collect data on education, employment and other factors affecting young people in the region within short periods of time. Often, the data used for policymaking are for the most part outdated and do not necessarily provide an accurate picture of the present or future.

Another intricacy is the high demand for child labour, which reduces employment opportunities for young people. Child labour, also an illegal phenomenon, has forced many children out of school. Entering the workforce too soon prevents children from gaining an education, leaving them ill equipped to succeed in the workforce in later life. Child labourers often become young people with poor employment prospects, and therefore achieving “decent work” is part of the eradication of child labour and the promotion of decent work opportunities for youth by means of a variety of approaches. Here we see the education and employment dimensions increasingly linked and intertwined. A wide range of learning options, including formal and non-formal education, literacy instruction, job skills training and lifelong education, should be made available to meet the learning needs of young people in different situations.

## **B. Addressing the education and employment needs of vulnerable young people**

In harmonizing education and employment to improve access to and the affordability, relevance and quality of education, the education and employment needs of vulnerable groups of young people should be addressed.

Some young people are excluded from fully taking advantage of educational opportunities as a result of physical and non-physical barriers, and are consequently also excluded from employment opportunities and social and community networks.

### **1. Young people with disabilities**

While discussing the youth education/employment nexus in Africa, it is important to discuss the situation of young people living with disabilities and the challenges and opportunities they face. One of the essential routes out of poverty is formal education, especially where it improves the quality of employment. However, in a number of African countries the chances that a young person with a disability will access education and employment are restricted.

According to the UNESCO 2010 *Education for All* report, disability is recognized as one of the least visible yet most pertinent factors in the educational

marginalization of children and young people. In Malawi and the United Republic of Tanzania, disability doubles the probability of children never having attended school. Similarly, in Burkina Faso, children with disabilities are 2.5 times as likely to be out of school as children without disabilities. In Uganda in 2002, 39 per cent of disabled young people aged 17 to 22 had fewer than four years of education, against a country average of 26 per cent. (UNESCO, 2010b) Children and young people with disabilities have lower educational attainments, as they are more likely to leave school earlier and with fewer qualifications (DFID, 2010).

The 2006 United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities reaffirms that all persons with all types of disabilities should enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with others, and identifies areas where adaptations have to be made to enable persons with disabilities to exercise their rights effectively. The Convention places emphasis on both education and employment. Article 27 stipulates that access to general technical and vocational guidance programmes, placement services, vocational and professional rehabilitation, job retention and return-to-work programmes for persons with disabilities must be ensured. In the field of education, article 24 calls upon States parties to ensure that persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability, and that reasonable accommodation of individual's requirements is provided in order to maximize academic and social development with the goal of full inclusion (Schulze, 2010).

Ensuring that children and young people with disabilities go to school and receive high-quality education benefits not only the recipients, but the whole of society and the economy. Educating persons living with disabilities reduces their dependence and frees other household members from caring responsibilities. It also increases the potential for productivity and wealth creation.

Improvement of the educational sector as a whole is crucial to the improvement of education for children and young people with disabilities. In areas where teachers are not well trained, the teacher-pupil ratio is too high and educational materials are not available, it is even more difficult to address the learning needs of young people with disabilities. Vocational education and training is a crucial path for further educating people with disabilities, since it is a highly flexible and accessible means of education. However, care should be taken when devising policies and strategies to address the educational needs of disabled young people so as not to push them systematically into a certain educational field and thus limit them to specific employment sectors. Instead, strategies should be put in place to ensure that young people with disabilities can achieve their aspirations and become successful in the fields

of their choice. Putting children and young people in special needs schools or institutions can reinforce stigmatization and segregation that is likely to continue even when they join the labour market.

In a number of countries the level of unemployment among people with disabilities is two or three times higher than that of people without disabilities. If not unemployed, persons with disabilities are often involved in low-paying jobs with minimum social and legal security, usually segregated from the mainstream labour market. Among persons with disabilities, ILO reports that men are almost twice as likely to be employed as women, indicating that there is a gender dimension that puts disabled females at an increased disadvantage (ILO, 2007b). A study conducted by ILO in 2009 shows that the economic losses related to the exclusion of people with disabilities from the workplace amounted to 4.35 per cent of GDP in Namibia and 7 per cent of GDP in South Africa for the year 2006, corresponding to US\$ 99 million and US\$ 17.8 billion respectively (Buckup, 2009). The exclusion of people with disabilities from the workplace results in an annual loss in GDP worldwide of an estimated US\$ 1.37 trillion to US\$ 1.94 trillion (ILO, 2007b).

In many instances persons with certain categories of disability are confined to particular occupations or the production of certain goods, hindering them from realizing their full potential and from engaging in decent, productive and fulfilling work. To enable young people with disabilities to engage in productive work and gainful employment, barriers to employment must be removed. This includes physical barriers such as transport, housing and facilities at the workplace, for which policies and laws exist, but with little enforcement. Governments should enforce and promote flexible and alternative work arrangements that accommodate the needs of disabled workers. Other ways through which governments can actively support the integration of persons with disabilities into the labour market are incentive-oriented quota schemes, facilitated training and technical or financial assistance to enterprises employing workers with disabilities. The use of new technology and the development and production of assistive devices should also be supported.

Furthermore, in their capacity as employers, governments should create favourable conditions for the employment of young people with disabilities in the public sector.

It is imperative that disability-disaggregated data should be continuously collected and used in the planning of education and employment reforms. Some countries in Africa have already integrated the issue of disability in their national development and poverty reduction plans. The United Republic of Tanzania's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) states that "The proportion

of children with disabilities that are enrolled in and attending and completing school should increase from 0.1 per cent in 2000 to 20 per cent in 2010". Ghana's PRSP emphasizes access by requiring that buildings and other physical infrastructure in schools should be made accessible to people with disabilities.

## **2. Displaced young people and young people living in conflict-affected areas**

Displaced young people are a vulnerable part of the population, as they are obliged to adapt to a new way of life while also undergoing crucial developmental changes. Results of research conducted by the Women's Refugee Commission between 1999 and 2005 show that displaced young people have fewer opportunities for secondary schooling or for developing skills that enable them to be employed. In Africa, conflicts and disruption in various countries across the continent have caused a large number of people, many of whom are young, to be displaced internally and across borders.

Young people who are displaced or live in conflict-affected areas have few opportunities to realize their aspirations. They often fall victim to sexual and economic exploitation and become vulnerable to recruitment into armies and militias, or into prostitution. The majority of refugees and internally displaced people stay in a state of limbo for many years, with an average of 17 years of displacement because of conflict (UNHCR, 2005). Consequently, many young people never go to school. They have scant opportunities to acquire skills that could help them make a living, and therefore risk spending their entire childhood and youth in these settings.

When addressing the education-employment nexus, governments and development stakeholders must take into consideration young people in conflict-affected areas, refugee camps and camps and settlements for internally displaced persons and find ways to meet their needs. It is imperative to identify key gaps in their basic education and livelihood development skills. Interventions should go beyond ensuring survival needs and handling emergencies; rather, they should aim at improving outcomes for a better future.

Young people living in conflict-affected areas and those who are displaced should be provided with a holistic service including formal and/or non-formal education as well as skills and vocational training based on identified labour market needs. The types of skills training and educational opportunities available must be diverse and demand-driven to avoid saturating communities with too many young people trained in the same skill. Certificates that are awarded upon completion of training for young people in conflict areas should be stan-

standardized, aligned and recognized by educational and hiring institutions. Accelerated learning programmes are another option in addressing the educational needs of young people who have dropped out of schools or have missed parts of their schooling as a result of displacement. Such programmes should be instituted to condense the years of traditional primary schooling into shorter components, enabling older students to complete their education in a timely manner. Examples are those being provided by the Ministry of Education of the Sudan to assist students to catch up with their schooling in Darfur.

While addressing the education and employment needs of young people affected by conflict, the gender dimensions should be considered. Experience shows that gender dynamics play an integral role in war and post-war educational and training programmes, as young men and women have different social roles (Sommers, 2006). Therefore, when the education and employment needs of young people affected by conflict are addressed, the gender dimension should be considered, as girls and young women experience even greater difficulties in accessing both primary and secondary schooling and training in conflict-affected areas than their male counterparts.

Young people are important actors in the rebuilding of tolerance and peace in communities after conflicts. They show incredible resilience in such situations, and during resettlement they often serve as the link between the new host community and their families. Hence nurturing their potential is of the utmost importance.

### **C. Cultivating entrepreneurship and self-employment in formal and non-formal education**

Even if the skills mismatch is ameliorated by better-oriented and demand-driven education that responds to the needs and absorption capacity of the labour market, the size and growth of the young population of Africa makes it very difficult to provide decent work for every young person who joins the workforce. This means that entrepreneurship and self-employment are further areas which governments need to prioritize when addressing youth employment challenges. Especially in countries where there is a large gap between demand and supply in the labour market, it has become important to prepare youth for self-employment and enterprise development.

The introduction of youth enterprise policies, strategies and programmes has in some instances helped to reduce the level of youth unemployment in Africa. Youth enterprises have several aspects: They can move young entrepreneurs

into self-employment, promote the development of enterprising skills and attitudes and create linkages between young entrepreneurs and other economic actors, for example through subcontracting and franchising. By engaging young women and men in productive economic activities, a new resource for innovation and change can be accessed. Young people can present alternatives to organizational change through the transfer and use of technology and offer a new perspective on the market.

Various advantages can be gained from developing enterprise-based youth employment policies, including:

- Developing new skills and experiences that could be applied to many other challenges in life.
- Creating employment, both for the young person who owns the enterprise and for those employed in it.
- Providing valuable products and services for the country and promoting innovation and development – this encourages young people to find new solutions, ideas and ways of doing things.
- Promoting social change and cultural identity through youth enterprises and engendering a stronger sense of community, where young women and men are valued and better connected to society.
- Shaping a person's identity and encouraging others to treat him or her with respect.

The promotion of youth enterprises cannot alone provide the solution for youth unemployment. They must be complemented with a broader youth employment policy, one that places enterprises within the context of education and training, industrial relations, skill development, apprenticeships, traineeships and other vocational opportunities.

## **D. Utilizing ICTs to improve education and employment opportunities for African youth in the global economy**

ICTs can be harnessed in cultivating and utilizing the productive potential of young people. New technologies can be used to unleash creativity, better education, entrepreneurship and decent employment among young people. Young people worldwide have shown that they are reliable and effective agents of

technological change and forerunners of the information age. They can play an important role in bringing technologies into their communities or into sectors that lack access to information and technology. African governments and development stakeholders must acknowledge that equipping young people with ICT skills and creating enabling environments for ICT-related innovations, as well as promoting the utilization of technology in policy formulation, production and consumption, greatly contributes to efforts to push Africa into the global information society and make its young people more competitive in the global market. In addition, ICT-based education systems and facilities will revolutionize the education and training sectors by narrowing the digital divide and increasing cooperation among learning institutions within and outside the continent.

In addition, advances in ICT infrastructure have made it possible for young people to be employed in global markets without leaving their home countries. ICT has facilitated linkages between international labour markets, reducing the need for migration by creating jobs in source countries. This creates new opportunities for developing countries in export services, and thus it is important that African countries should seize their chances. A study published in April 2010 by A.T. Kearney, a United States consultancy in the field of strategic and international studies, shows that in 2009, seven African countries were among the world's top 50 destinations in the offshore business. Although Asian countries still dominate the outsourcing industry, the report shows that the African continent is rising in the rankings as Egypt, Ghana, Mauritius, Morocco, Senegal, South Africa and Tunisia are among the preferred destinations (Gerard, 2010). Now that a new fibre-optic cable has been laid across the Indian Ocean to East Africa, making broadband internet more available and affordable, this subregion has the potential to be a hub for outsourcing, helping to create jobs for many young people.

To be successful in outsourcing and reap the benefits it brings, African countries need an effective regulatory framework, a skilled workforce and the necessary technological infrastructure, such as broadband Internet access.

While progress in ICTs and new technologies is imperative, it should go hand in hand with enhanced human capital and movement towards a more educated workforce. Capital investment and the introduction of new technologies without having a skilled and educated workforce and infrastructure in place to support ICT means that local young people will be ill equipped to take up emerging jobs. By restructuring secondary schools and universities to equip graduates with the skills demanded by multinational corporations, African

countries can create more competitive workforces and reap the opportunities that globalization presents.

Another benefit of ICT which African governments can utilize in cooperation with the private sector is flexible working arrangements, including working from home. In the last decade, working from home has become a common and acceptable way to work around the world. Because of the progress and expansion of technology, more people can link to their employers from their home computers and telephones. Several big multinational companies and organizations have been offering such flexible working arrangements to their employees. General Electric, which employs 300,000 people in more than 100 countries, is noteworthy for encouraging its employees to fulfil their work commitments while balancing their own personal responsibilities through flexible work arrangements. World Vision, an international non-governmental organization, is also known for its work-from-home opportunities.

For African countries, such arrangements offer bright potential. In today's globalized world, flexible work arrangements are fast becoming part of the working landscape. Such arrangements can create jobs for young people in small towns and cities where few companies and organizations are located and employment opportunities are scarce. These young people can be employed through flexible work arrangements without having to relocate to capital cities, as is often necessary in many African countries. To make this a reality, improved and affordable technological infrastructure is needed, as it is the biggest driver of such opportunities. In addition, governments should encourage and provide incentives for the private sector to incorporate such arrangements increasingly in their organizational landscape, since remote work and part-time and customized schedules constitute an inexpensive way of creating more jobs for more young people.

## **E. The creative economy**

In the creative economy it is possible to consider activities such as the arts, the media or design as the driving force of an economy, which has far-reaching effects in providing new avenues of employment, as well as leading to rapid economic growth. This has great potential to act as a development strategy in Africa, to drive forward a new kind of development that would entail the inclusion of all the population to the fullest, especially young people, who are bursting with various talents, creating a new generation of youth employment.

Five countries in Central and West Africa - Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Congo and the Gambia - have incorporated culture in their poverty reduc-

tion strategies, to strengthen other development sectors, such as the promotion of cultural tourism or traditional health care.

Ghana, Mali, Nigeria and Senegal have integrated culture in their PRSPs as strategic pillars or major axes. This gives culture the opportunity to stand out as a major contributor in its own right to poverty reduction. In the case of Ghana, emphasis is placed on the development and promotion of the music and film industries as potential sources of employment generation, wealth creation and human skill development. Mali's PRSP links culture with religion, social harmony and security as a major axis in the country's poverty reduction strategies, in recognition of the potential of Malian culture in promoting traditional and religious values with a view to creating a climate of social harmony and security. In Nigeria, in recognition of the tremendous potential of Nollywood, the country's home video industry and traditional health care for the national economy, the Nigerian PRSP programmes included culture as a major axis. Senegal too has recognized the potential value of crafts to the national economy and programmes.

## F. Green jobs

Green jobs span a wide array of skills, educational backgrounds and occupational profiles. They occur in research and development; professional fields such as engineering and architecture, project planning and management, auditing, administration, marketing, the retail sector and customer services, as well as in many traditional blue-collar areas such as plumbing or electrical wiring. This shows the great potential of job creation through the expanding green economy. As African governments strategize and plan on ways to reduce youth unemployment and underemployment, they should give significant focus to the creation and expansion of green economies and green jobs.

There are a range of options available for governments to finance or invest in the creation of green jobs. Among them is the phasing out of fossil fuel subsidies, taxing "windfall" oil profits, adopting carbon taxes and auctioning pollution allowances

Even though the Kyoto Protocol created a platform for the creation of a carbon market to monetize carbon credits, the bulk of documented growth in the green economy has so far occurred mostly in Europe and Asia and some Latin American countries like Brazil. Currently, some African and Asian countries that have participated in the Kyoto process have done so through the Clean Development Mechanism, where countries have implemented projects in dif-

ferent sectors designed to reduce or eliminate greenhouse gas emissions within their territories.

To date, Africa's participation in the Clean Development Mechanism has been quite limited. In fact, according to documented sources, only 32 out of approximately 2,200 project activities registered since 2005 have occurred in Africa, primarily because of limited awareness of such opportunities and a substantial lack of skills to operate such complex projects.

Green jobs are now perceived as offering an opportunity to address unemployment and underemployment. For example, in India, an initiative to replace inefficient biomass cooking stoves in 9 million households with more advanced ones could create 150,000 jobs (Green Jobs Initiative, 2008). Viable options for Africa currently include forestry and renewable energy, because of the assumption that forestry projects will continue to attract investment despite the limited spread of training in tree-planting techniques.

Very few stakeholders in Africa are aware of the outcomes of the fifteenth and sixteenth conferences of the parties to the United Nations Climate Change Convention - for example, the decision to disburse US\$ 10 billion per annum from the Adaptation Fund to developing countries, with an allocation of 40 per cent to Africa during the period 2010-2012. This will call for a trained workforce to engage in projects that will make use of the funds, and hence countries will need to train personnel in areas of sustainable development to equip them with the skills required for the green economy.

Additionally, because of the quest for more green energy globally, Africa needs to focus on producing skilled manpower which can boost the green economy within the region, between the regions and between continents. This will require expertise in hydroelectric, solar and wind platforms, among other disciplines, and in the establishment of interconnection links and grid systems. Activities on this scale could potentially garner the amounts needed to raise Africa's energy profile, while reducing unemployment and producing skilled people who could be competitive globally.

According to Greenpeace Africa's 2010 report on an energy revolution scenario for South Africa, not only will energy evolution and revolution mitigate climate change, but will also create 78,000 new jobs by 2030. Policymakers should therefore remember that initiatives that are aimed at making the environment green and mitigating the causes and consequences of climate change are major sources of job creation. For example, items of energy-efficient equipment often require more skilled labour than their inefficient counterparts, thus leading not only to more jobs, but to higher-skilled, higher-paying

ones. Improvements in natural resource management also have green employment potential.

Progress towards creating green jobs should be complemented by equal efforts in making training and education available and accessible. The transition to a green economy will create demand for workers who are skilled in specific areas, and filling these positions will require adequate training programmes. Governments need not only to train new workers, but also to retrain those workers who are moving from older industries to new ones.

Jobs created by the new economy should not replicate the discriminatory procedures present in "regular" labour markets. Access to the new green economy should be available in particular to those who have had difficulty finding decent employment, including the disabled and other socially excluded young persons.

## **G. Brain gain and utilizing the potential of young people in the diaspora**

African countries educate students through an elite system, only to lose them to other regions once they have completed their education. A case in point is the number of African doctors and engineers residing in Europe, Australia and North America. Irrespective of the reasons for human capital flight, whether conflicts, limited opportunities or health hazards, countries should harness the potential contributions of international migration for sustainable development. Currently, there is huge acknowledgement of the contribution of remittances to countries' GDPs. However, other investments, skill transfers and diaspora networks can help in expanding employment by engaging all sectors. This can serve as a good basis for enhancing intellectual capital, promoting transnational networks and increasing the financial resources and business acumen of the African countries.

In addition, knowledge networks and centres of excellence should be developed to make use of the intellectual capital existing in the African diaspora. For this purpose, governments need to create an enabling environment, including political stability, that will attract the diaspora to participate in the overall development of the continent.

In the past two decades, Africa has increasingly become a breeding ground for human capital for Europe and North America. This can be seen in the negotiations that have taken place between a number of African countries

and the European Union with the aim of offsetting labour deficits in the latter. In response to the sharp increase in the migration of skilled personnel and serious domestic human resource constraints, the governments of Mali and Senegal have created Ministries of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs, which focus on managing and facilitating relations with nationals living abroad. Furthermore, a number of other countries in the region such as Liberia, Rwanda and Sierra Leone have already held several diaspora conferences to explore ways in which the diaspora can contribute meaningfully to development at home.

## H. Volunteering

Even with the varied opportunities which arise through creative economies and green jobs and enterprises, there will still be more young people in need of some form of employment. Young Africans should also be given an opportunity to develop their life skills through volunteering. Given the numerous emergencies, disasters and conflicts on the continent, volunteering is a way in which skills can be obtained and shared at minimal cost.

In addition, volunteering can improve youth participation and harness the energy and vigour of young people so as to contribute to the realization of national, regional and global development plans while enhancing their life and work-related skills. Among the benefits of volunteering are increased chances of employability and the "feel-good" factor that comes with assisting others and helps to develop well-founded social capital. Volunteering increases young people's awareness of the needs of different groups in society while enhancing their personal and political efficacy.

At a time when university leavers face the toughest job market for more than a decade, graduates need more than their academic degree to stand out from the competition. Volunteering can help young people in this regard by giving them work experience that can assist them on the journey towards employment.

Through volunteering, many young people gain career benefits. Firstly, volunteering can help them to identify a career they have a passion for and would like to pursue. Secondly, through volunteering they can acquire essential technical and non-technical skills. Besides skills and work experience, it gives young people an indication of the expectations of future employers. Thirdly, volunteering serves as a way to network with people in the industry in which they want to gain employment, and at times, volunteer positions lead directly to paid ones.

Understanding the benefits of volunteering for future employment prospects as well as its value as a means of equipping young people with social skills to help them engage in the development process, African governments must take initiatives that support and encourage volunteering. Young people should be provided with easy access to volunteering opportunities. If they can identify such opportunities easily in their local communities, they are more likely to volunteer. Accordingly, with assistance from civil-society organizations, small and medium-sized enterprises and other stakeholders, African governments should facilitate volunteering opportunities that are visible and attractive for young people. ICTs could be used to connect youth with organizations locally, nationally and regionally. Furthermore and most importantly, a culture of volunteering and service culture (service above self) should be instilled in young people starting at an early age. Schools and training facilities should motivate and encourage them to volunteer in their communities.

There are several organizations and initiatives in Africa that are run using the contributions of young volunteers. The Young Men's Christian Association is one of the oldest and largest movements for youth in the world, with chapters in 17 African countries. The Association empowers citizens, especially young people and women, to take increased responsibilities, assume leadership at all levels and work towards an equitable society.

## **I. Service corps**

Besides volunteering, momentum is growing internationally for the establishment of National Youth Services, as more countries around the world are developing or expanding civic engagement programmes and policies for young people. There is growing recognition that the solidarity and creativity of young people can be harnessed to address critical social, political and economic issues. Among the success stories of such national service arrangements is the Nigerian National Youth Service Corps.

Governments have used service corps to provide young people with skills and instil in them a sense of service for their nation. The Nigerian Corps was established in 1973 to engage Nigerian youths in the development process and foster integration among the estimated 250 ethnic groups in the country through the cross-posting of university and polytechnic graduates for national service away from their home States and regions. The programme is compulsory for all citizens aged 30 and under on completion of their first degree. Recruitment usually takes place three times a year, and Corps participants earn a monthly allowance slightly above the national minimum wage while in the programme.

Following registration, the year-long programme begins with a three-week orientation period where Corps members are mobilized in a camp, where they participate in various activities including an endurance trek and attend daily lectures from guest speakers on topics ranging from HIV/AIDS to entrepreneurship and the environment. "Corpors", as they are usually called, are then given a posting to a place of primary assignment that is typically relevant to their discipline and placed within the public or private sector. Each one is also assigned to a Community Development Service project, giving them an opportunity to participate in the development of their host communities.

These projects, which include mass literacy, public health education, sanitation, road safety, horticulture and tree planting, have contributed to many areas of human and social development in Nigeria, including the pursuit of the MDGs. Participants engaged in mass literacy projects may serve as volunteers teaching basic functional literacy skills in primary and secondary schools within their localities. The programme also collaborates with some international, national, regional, non-governmental and local agencies, including Legal Aid and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Through Legal Aid and other human rights groups, Corps members from relevant disciplines provide legal aid services to widows, children and other vulnerable persons who fall victim to denial and violation of rights. In the area of reproductive health, UNICEF collaborates with the programme by using Corps members as peer educators in secondary schools.

Many positive socio-economic developments have been attributed to the Service Corps programme. Aside from providing entry-level jobs and work experience for recent graduates who might not otherwise have access to them, it fills gaps in under-resourced sectors such as health and education through postings in government-owned hospitals and schools, particularly in rural and remote areas.

The structure of the service also encourages interaction between ethnic groups, as members acquire new language skills from interacting with other ethnic groups and also gain an understanding of the host community's culture.

Outstanding Corps members who distinguish themselves in community development activities and perform excellently in their primary assignment are usually given recognition at an honours award ceremony chaired by the Nigerian President. In December 2010, President Goodluck Jonathan granted Masters and PhD scholarships to 51 outstanding Corps members and offered them automatic employment in the Nigerian Federal Civil Service.

While there is room for improvement in its implementation, the programme is laudable for its attempt to create a culture of service, social maturity, career exploration, patriotism and cultural integration among Nigerian young people.

At the continental level, the AUC launched the Youth Volunteer Corps in 2010 as a way of harnessing the skills of young people for development purposes. The project will facilitate the deployment of African young people between the ages of 21 and 35 living in Africa and elsewhere to serve as volunteers, interns or junior professional officers.