

FOR YOUTH BY YOUTH COMMUNITY-CAMPUS WORKSHOP

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Country: Rwanda

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INTRODUCTION

This workshop (conversation) took place in university of lay Adventist of Kigali (UNILAK) Kigali campus with 11 youth and student who are pursuing their master's studies in various program including masters of environmental education, masters of project management and masters of law. The workshop lasted for one hour and half on Sunday June 3rd 2023 from 11:30AM to 1:00PM Rwandan time (+2GMT) in one class within the campus.



The main objective of this workshop was to gather insight about the issues young people see, firsthand, as the most pressing problems in the world by thinking backwards about a failed world, and what could have led to that failure.

WORKSHOP METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this discussion is guided focus group discussion. I have started this workshop by introducing myself to them, introducing the Talloires network leadership of engaged university and for youth by youth concept and its genesis.

WORKSHOP FINDINGS

As result of discussion we had, the following are the four highlighted issues young Rwandan community see and reason led to such failure:

1. Unemployment issues and increase of cost of living

The discussion highlighted the issue of exponential increasing of rate of unemployment in Rwandan community especially youth who count more than 60% of total population and it revealed that this is expected to increase in future.

- We've discussed on advantage and incentives that government put in creating many jobs for youths. Yes, we have found that those initiative are helping but for developing country like Rwanda, its capacity is not enough to satisfy jobs to thousands of students/youths graduating each years in higher schools, higher learning institutions and universities.
- For some youths who secured their jobs in various institutions and those who managed to run their business; they are also afraid of cost of living which are increasing. They are doubting that their income will no longer be able to facilitate them to afford all necessary needs and future plan. The increase of cost of living are associate with global inflation caused by various wars, climate change effects, etc;
- for instance, income some youth are getting are not securing their future, this can be related to limited financial literacy among them.

2. Quality of education

The youth also raised the issues of quality of education. Despite the facts that the number of students graduating each year are increasing, there are a huge gap between students graduating and their capacities/skills at job market. The skills of youth graduating in schools and university don't really fit with job available. These are associated with limited teaching methodology, limited career guidance and employability services to youth.

Note: To address this, the government is putting much effort in vocational and technical skills by increasing the students attending such schools and reducing the number of students who attend social educations. This will also result to increase of graduate students who are able to create their own jobs.

3. Mental health and depression

In our dialogue, we discussed the trends of social behaviors leading young people into depression. We have found that depression in youth of our country pointed at addiction to social media platforms as one of the major causes of the illness. We found that excessive use of social media leads to self-isolation, which makes some youth to lose their social connection eventually. Those are exacerbated by unemployment, lack of parental care and worsened by covid-19 pandemic and increase of youth addict to drugs.

4. Social issues

Other pressing issues identified for our fellow youth in our discussion include laziness, use of drug abuse, prostitutions and increase of unwanted pregnancy among other problems.

- The problems of increase of unwanted pregnancy among youth are caused by Lack of information about sexual and reproductive health and rights, inadequate access to services tailored to young people, Family, community and social pressure to marry and Sexual violence and prostitutions.
- Our fellow youth also are exposed to drug abuse and laziness, we found that the causes are pointed to peer pressure, lack of self-esteem, lack of self-determination and resilient. Some of those issues are also rooted to family conflicts.

CONCLUSION

Regardless of time constraints and long day schedule of our workshop participants and myself, we had a very brilliant discussion. As youth, leaders and professionals in various fields, they believe in their ability to addresses the real issues youth face and they optimist of the impact that this planning grant will bring to youth and community as well.

