



OPPORTUNITY
International

UPDATE

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FOCUS ON — YOUTH



YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT THE GLOBAL CRISIS OF OUR TIME

Youth unemployment is an increasing challenge for many countries across Africa. With a rapidly rising population this is set to get worse, leaving a whole generation trapped in poverty. But with the right resources, tools and financial access, jobs can be created and the crisis turned into an opportunity. This update highlights how our programmes are helping communities combat youth unemployment by providing the business skills and financial training that builds secure pathways out of poverty.

Young people need effective education, practical business skills and employment opportunities. Our work with local community schools provides this. Alongside teacher training and loans to improve school facilities and resources, we are supporting school enterprise and business clubs that prepare students to be the business leaders and entrepreneurs of the future. Find out how on page 4-5.

Sheila is a remarkable, tenacious young lady, determined to work hard and support her siblings. As part of our Youth Apprenticeship Programme, Sheila is training to be a caterer and hopes to one day run her own catering business. Read her inspiring story on page 6-7.

We want to see a world where all people, young and old, have the opportunity to work their way out of poverty. Thank you for helping us.



Edward Fox

EDWARD FOX, CEO

AN OPPORTUNITY TO WORK

The global population is getting younger. Worldwide there are over 1.2 billion young people aged 15-24 years, which accounts for one out of every six people. But for the majority of these young people there are not enough jobs available to them.

Youth unemployment and population growth are the most critical issues of our time. The situation is particularly pressing in sub-Saharan Africa, where 12 million young people enter the labour market each year but only 3.1 million jobs are created. Many countries are struggling to provide education, productive employment and decent work for all. As the population increases, this challenge is becoming more acute – by 2050, Africa's population is set to double.

Ensuring all young people, including the most marginalised, can unlock their potential through access to decent work is

crucial to breaking the cycle of poverty on an individual and country level. Improving education and training, combined with increasing access to finances are all part of the solution.

This is where we come in. Throughout our programmes, we work with a number of partners to provide access to finance, training and support that enable people to thrive. And this includes young people. Equipping young people with employable

skills and business knowledge enables them to work towards a more secure future. Our Youth Apprenticeship Programme in Ghana and our work with schools in Tanzania are two illustrations of how we are doing this...



Highlights from our school business and enterprise clubs in Tanzania...



← ↑ Jewellery making

Girls and boys make jewellery.

Students learn about accessing markets and selling, as well as saving and budgeting. They say that participating in the club has given them confidence.



↓ → Baking classes

Students bake buns and donuts. Girls and boys share the roles of baking, selling and marketing.



FOCUS ON: YOUTH 5

↓ Basic gardening skills

Students learn basic gardening skills in sewing, growing, harvesting and selling. These good agricultural practices teach children the skills to make agriculture a viable career option. Being in the club also helps their academic learning, particularly in science and practical work.



ENTREPRENEURS OF THE FUTURE

With 75% of young people in sub-Saharan Africa officially unemployed, the need for business and life-skills training in children's education is increasingly important. To survive the challenges of a huge increase in population growth, young people need practical business skills.

As part of our Education Finance Programme, we are working with local partners to ensure that students can access a quality education fit for life in the working world. Alongside teacher training, and loans to improve school facilities and resources, we are supporting school enterprise and business clubs – sustainable initiatives that prepare students for the world of work.

Students taught these essential business and enterprise skills are less likely to stay in poverty. They develop independence, confidence and self-esteem. Academic results improve and vocational skills for running small enterprises are established. Girls in particular are benefiting from an increased self-belief in their ability to support themselves and be the business leaders and entrepreneurs of the future.



Meet Sheila

Sheila is an orphan. Her mother passed away two years ago, leaving her and three younger siblings.

Living in a rural village in northern Ghana, job opportunities were scarce and Sheila was unable to find work – despite completing high school. With the pressures of supporting herself and her siblings she travelled south to Sunyani, a city known as the ‘Food Basket’ of Ghana, in the hope of finding work. When she arrived she heard

about our Youth Apprenticeship Programme and signed up to a three-year catering apprenticeship. The apprenticeship enables her to learn a trade and develop a business that will provide security for her and her family.

Although it takes her an hour and a half to walk to work every day, Sheila enjoys the apprenticeship, particularly the business and health workshops. Sheila now feels confident to begin her own business when she finishes the programme.

“ I hope more youth will have an opportunity like this. ”

↑ Sheila (right) with her mentor Patience (centre) and fellow apprentice Janet (left)



THE YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME



A three-year initiative for young people to learn the skills and knowledge of a trade by working with an experienced mentor.



Includes workshops that teach apprentices about good business management, health and social issues.




Provides a start-up loan at the end of the programme for the apprentice to begin a business in their new-found expertise.

MEET BETTINA



Photo: Allison Kösser

 Bettina with members of her Youth Loans Group

Bettina is 24 and currently expecting her third child. She left school after primary school – primary education is free in Malawi but secondary school is not and her parents couldn't afford to send her.

Living in a remote village in Malawi, Bettina had little access to education, skills training or finance. **When Opportunity International visited her village and offered a new programme focused on**

empowering young people, Bettina knew that this was her big opportunity.

She joined a Youth Loans Group and received financial training, a business loan and group support. Bettina started a grocery business, which is now thriving. With a secure income she has been able to furnish her home. She is also saving for the future and hopes to send her children to secondary school.



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