

JOBLESS GROWTH, THE 'ACTIVE POOR' PHENOMENON AND YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA: Learning Points from 'Europe 2020' Flagship Initiative 'Agenda for New Skills and Jobs'**Uwem Essia**Department of Economics
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Cross River StateEmail; ndemayara@yahoo.comAccepted 22th August, 2012**ABSTRACT**

Many young people belong to households where the members live on less than USD2 per day; such persons constitute what is referred to here as the 'active poor' population. They are 'active' because of the immense youthful energies at their disposal, and are 'poor' because they are either jobless, or have jobs that pay much less than is adequate for decent living. Globally the 'active poor' phenomenon thrives alongside healthy macroeconomic performance, popularizing the paradox of 'jobless growth'. Based on demographic data obtained from Cross River State, Nigeria, the paper argues that 'active poor' phenomenon is the product of a demographic misfortune whereby many youths, due to the early death, morbidity or poverty of their parents, become orphaned, neglected or abandoned too early in life and grow into adulthood without adequate nutritional nourishment, parental love and nurturing, and sound education and healthcare, and therefore lack the emotional and technical competencies and connections to get high flying jobs or startup new businesses for themselves. The 'active poor' population is highly vulnerable to sundry criminality, illegal rent seeking, vileness, and hooliganism, which unabated can snowball into a Malthusian-type catastrophic retrenchment. Drawing on lessons from the efforts of other countries to create more jobs, the paper observes that new jobs in the private sector and self employment are key areas to focus on for sustainable employment generation. Job search and improving labour market information can reduce unemployment, and the mismatch between skill sets and labour market demand requires periodic revision of school curricula and strong education-business partnerships. Equally, a macroeconomic and business environment conducive to enterprise development is essential and while governments are responsible for developing macroeconomic policies, effective dialogue with relevant non-state actors is essential.

KEYWORDS: Active Poor, youth unemployment, business environment, jobless growth, entrepreneurship, Malthusian thesis**JEL Classification:** J11, J13, J21, J24, J64, I25**INTRODUCTION**

This paper sets out to argue that many unemployed youths in the age brackets 14-24 years in Cross River State, Nigeria, and other parts of the world fall into the 'active poor' population. They are considered as 'active' in the sense of having physical energies, potentials, and drives that can be put either way - for creating useful value or vices and criminalities - and are classified as 'poor' either because they lack the mental and emotional resilience and social capital for actualizing their dreams or they are engaged in jobs that pay them far less than what is required to make them live normal lives. ILO (2011:1, 2011:2) calls some of them the

'working poor', meaning those who belong to households that live on less than USD2 per day. Whether they are called 'active poor' or 'working poor' is a matter of nomenclature, this paper believes that the phenomenon is the re-emergence of the Malthusian trap, particularly in less developed countries like Nigeria with weak education and social security systems. The paper believes also that the 'active poor' in Cross River State, Nigeria are first and foremost victims of a destructive demographic contraption, namely; high birth and child survival rates existing side-by-side with high morbidity rate and low average life expectancy at birth. They are also victims of growing individualism and information explosion. On the one hand, individualism has rendered the extended family system and community self-help mechanisms economically illogical, while on the other hand explosion of information technology has popularized and reified materialism at the expense of reasoning or critical thinking. More seriously, the education system has not responded to the need for more action learning and deepening of emotional and entrepreneurial intelligence.

This paper further believes that In Nigeria particularly, the 'active poor' population is doubly victimized by an education system that fails to take into consideration the initial conditions or entry behavior of pupils/students, and their psychological make-up and world view. Yet it sets the same destination for all to reach, regardless of differences in early orientation, capacity, and aptitude. The remaining 7 Sections of this work address the following issues: 2 explains the paradox of jobless growth in Cross River State; 3 attempts to link the active poor phenomenon with the Malthusian trap thesis; 4 reviews the causes and dimensions of youth unemployment in selected countries and regions; 5 discusses the impact of unemployment on the society and why sometime must be done urgently to check it; 6 draws lessons from the 'Europe 2020' flagship initiative 'agenda for new skills and jobs', and 7 concludes the paper.

Youth unemployment is a global problem affecting both developed and developing countries alike. But while the developed countries are taking the threat seriously and restructuring their education and social security systems to abate its growth and escape the eminent catastrophic retrenchments, Nigeria seem not to be doing enough. Among

other things, the paper calls for more dialogue and communication among the various stakeholders - government, academic institutions, businesses, non-state actors, and donors to ensure that young people continually learn what is relevant, there are more business start-ups, and additional job are created in the private sector.

2.0 THE PARADOX OF JOBLESS GROWTH

Over the past fourteen years (1999 - 2012), Cross River State has leapfrogged to prominence as Nigeria's fastest growing tourism destination and conference capital thanks to the commitment and creativity its people as inspired by the wisdom and patriotism of successive Governors. The quality of governance is exceptionally high and appointments to public offices are largely based on merit. Strategic planning has been institutionalized to the extent that nearly all public and civil servants know what strategies, initiatives, and activities are. Budgets are

increasingly plan-based and the Governor rarely approves projects that were not in the medium term plan, and while many States and the Federal Government seem to have abandoned the NEEDS reform agenda, Local Government Councils in the State are currently implementing LEEDS 2 (2012 -2015), while the State Government is concluding implementation of CR-SEEDS 2 (2009 -2012), and documentation of SEEDS 3 (2013- 2016) is gathering momentum. Cross River State equally has its Vision document, CR NV2020 (2010 - 2020), from where the medium term SEEDS are derived. Table 1 shows the major macroeconomic performance indicators for the period 2007 to 2011. Services and agriculture contributes the majorly to the Gross State Product (GSP).

Table 3 shows the trend for total unemployment and youth unemployment for 2009 to 2011. Youth unemployment was high especially in the rural areas and increasing year-on-year.

Table 1: Cross River State; Selected Sectoral Growth Indicators (2007-2011)

Indicators	Share in GSP (2007-2009)	Growth Rate (%)					Growth Rate % (2007- 2009)
		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	
Agriculture	48.05	5.71	6.90	6.10	6.20	6.24	6.23
Services	50.93	25.84	5.55	4.35	5.12	6.02	9.38
Private Services	14.01	6.96	10.96	11.96	12.07	14.15	8.96
Government Services	2.00	49.41	8.43	3.11	3.87	3.88	13.74
Electricity & Water	0.02	40.00	1.67	1.21	2.30	2.33	9.50
Oil & Gas	34.90	7.83	1.13	1.12	1.30	1.26	2.53
Manufacturing	0.003	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.004	0.004	0.001
Quarry & Mining	0.02	16.67	0.002	2.00	3.6	4.12	5.28

Source: Cross River State Bureau of Statistics (SBS), June 2012

But the private sector has grown rather slowly and business start-ups by Cross Riverians are quite few. The share of manufacturing is largely insignificant. The contribution of the quarrying & mining sub-sector where one would have expected much indigenous involvement (due to the huge solid mineral deposits) is also insignificant. The solid mineral resources are sold off in their raw form with very little value-added (SBS, 2012; SPC 2010:1, 2012, 2010:2, and 2009). The average growth rates for the five year period (2007-2011) were 6.23% and 9.38% for agriculture and services respectively. Growth in services was driven largely by private services, particularly in the hospitality sub-sector (hotels, tourists visits, conferences, etc.), and in agriculture the major source of growth was improved marketing of produce occasioned by substantial investment in road

infrastructure leading to improved access to local markets. Value addition through agro-processing has remained quite insignificant, and the major produce merchants are from other States. Clearly the capacity Cross River people to pull down the impressive macroeconomic performance of the State by starting new businesses has been very weak, and additional jobs created by the private sector have been quite few (SPC, 2010:2, and 2009). It remains worrisome also that growth the agriculture and services sectors have not led to significant reduction in unemployment in the State. Table 2 compares unemployment rates of youths 15-24 years in Cross River State with the national figures; youth unemployment in Cross River State was 35.9% while the national was 23.9%.

Table 2: Unemployment rate of Youths 15-24 year-old

	Cross River State (%)	Nigeria (%)
Rural	37.3	17.1
Urban	31.5	25.6
Composite	35.9	23.9

Sources: SPC(2012), and NBS (2011)

Table 3: Youth Unemployment in Cross River State (2009 - 2011)

Youth Unemployment Statistic in Cross River State		2009	2010	2011	
Total unemployment rate	Male	18.4	19.5	20.8	
	Female	21.6	22.7	23.4	
	Both	20.0	21.1	22.1	
Unemployment rate of Youths 15-24 year-old	Rural	Male	31.5	34.0	36.7
		Female	33.5	36.6	38.0
		Both	32.5	35.3	37.3
	Urban	Male	29.6	30.4	32.2
		Female	28.9	30.1	30.9
		Both	29.3	30.3	31.5
	Both	Male	32.7	34.9	35.6
		Female	33.0	35.7	36.1
		Both	32.9	35.3	35.9

Source: State Planning Commission, 2012

Table 4 shows distribution of unemployed persons in Cross River State by Senatorial Zone for 2010. It indicates generally that there are more female unemployed persons

than male, more importantly that the larger proportion of unemployed persons were in the Central Senatorial Zone.

Table 4: Distribution of Unemployed Persons in Cross River State by Senatorial Zone (2010)

Senatorial zone	Male(%)	Female(%)	Both(%)
North	29.1	22.29	26.96
Central	42.77	46.56	43.96
South	28.14	31.16	29.09

Source: State Planning Commission (2010:2)

Table 5 is distribution of unemployed persons in Cross River State by educational level. There are more unemployed people in the North senatorial zone with secondary education and above and most unemployed persons in the

South zone were those with not more than secondary school education. For the State, over 40% of unemployed persons had OND/NCE level education.

Table 5: Distribution of Unemployed Persons in Cross River State by Educational Level (2010).

Senatorial zone	Primary School (%)	Secondary School (%)	OND/NCE(%)	B.Sc/HND/M.Sc(%)
North	18.74	33.55	29.54	17.12
Central	8.20	29.89	56.34	55.46
South	73.07	36.56	14.12	27.41
State	7.97	28.55	42.98	20.50

Source: State Planning Commission (2010:2)

In addition to high youth unemployment, household characteristics for the State summarized in Table 6 indicated

generally low living standards, with several households living below the poverty line.

Table 6: Household Characteristics in Cross River State

Household Parameters	Value (per LGA)%
Age/Distribution (Male & Female):	
% of 0-14	47.06%
% of 15-25	24.54%
% of 25-39	19.2%
% of 40-54	59.5%
% of 55-above	3.24%
Average Household size	7 persons
Average income (monthly) (Standard deviation N14, 703.48)	N13, 194.88
Income/Household size	N1,884.98
Daily Average Household purchasing power	N62.83
Gini coefficient (0<Gini Coefficient<1)	0.53
Life expectancy at birth	53 years
Adult Morbidity Rate (> 40 years)	20%
% of young women aged 15-19 likely to be pregnant	18%

Source: Cross River State Economic Performance Review, SPC (2009), SPC (2010:2)

Table 6 shows that Cross River State has a fast growing youthful population, with almost 50% of the population below 15 years. With very few exceptions, the people below 15 years are dependants. Maintaining a very young people can weigh heavily on the rest of the society, and the returns take a little longer to materialize. There is huge pressure to expand nursery/day care services, and basic health and education facilities. The next largest group are those in the 15-39 age brackets (43.74%). This is potentially the most active demographic group. However, this group is equally vulnerable to criminalities, particularly when their energies are not put to productive work. The average household size of 7 persons and daily average purchasing power of N62 indicate that the average Cross Riverian feeds on about one-third of the baseline poverty benchmark of USD2 per day.

Low income per head also means low consumption and low savings, which feed a vicious circle of poverty. The Gini coefficient in this case measures equality of levels of income. A Gini coefficient of zero expresses perfect equality where everyone has an exactly equal income, and equal to one expresses maximal inequality. Accordingly, Gini coefficient equal to 0.53 indicates that income is fairly distributed equitably. Life expectancy at birth of 53 years means that on the average people born today will likely die on their 53rd birthday, and adult morbidity rate of 20% (for those aged 40 and above) means that there is likelihood that 20% of those aged above 40 years will become incapacitated to the extent that they are unable to move about by themselves or participate actively in the economy. Average life expectancy of 53 years and high morbidity rate implies that a man who marries on his 30th birthday and

had his first child when he is 32 is likely to die before the child is 25, or become too incapacitated and unable to support his child to adulthood. The major causes of incapacitation - stroke, hypertension, diabetes, vehicular accidents, blindness, and so on - are associated with poverty, poor living conditions, and ignorance. 18% of young women 15-25 years are pregnant suggest early pregnancy and high incidences of unwanted pregnancies as many within those age brackets ought normally to be in school.

SPC (2009) further indicates that fertility rate was only higher in Bayelsa (5.8%) than in Cross River (5.4%), while the national fertility rate was 5.7%. Equally infant mortality was reducing progressively with over 90% successful coverage of immunization, and more effective malaria prevention/treatment deployment. The dominant culture takes children very seriously and people generally care for their children than they do for themselves. This in part explains the high post birth survival rate, and the high population within the age brackets 0-14 years. But 16% of children younger than 5 years are underweight and 28% of those from 5 to 18 years have stunted growth arising from poor nutrition, and poor housing conditions of their parents. So while the survival rate of live births has remained generally high the quality of the children, in terms of optimal development of physical and mental attributes, is deteriorating particularly among those within the low income brackets. Table 7 summarizes some of the comparative data on demographic characteristics for Cross River State, other South-South States (Akwa Ibom, Edo, River, Bayelsa, and Delta), and Nigeria.

Table 7: Comparative Demographic Characteristics 2008

Demographic/Health Statistics	Nigeria	South-South	Akwa Ibom	Bayelsa	Cross River	Delta	Edo	Rivers
Literacy (Women)	54	78	80	72	70	77	76	84
Literacy (Men)	74	89	85	96	79	89	88	3.3
Fertility Rate	5.7	4.7	4.0	5.8	5.4	4.5	5.3	4.3
Use of Family Planning	10	16	18	8	16	15	19	14
Maternal Health Care (urban/rural)	58/39	70/56	67/44	35/22	68/44	78/62	91/80	67/64
Immunization Coverage	23	36	32	20	42	38	39	37
Stunting	41	31	28	29	32	35	38	29
Comprehensive knowledge of HIV Prevention (male/Female)	23/36	26/37	15/25	42/69	37/34	24/26	39/50	17/36
Household Drinking Water	56	59	65	27	26	72	60	69
Household sanitation Facilities	27	22	39	6	10	22	30	20
Access to Electricity	50	56	58	51	32	64	74	53

Source: Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey Fact Sheet (South-South Zone), National Population Commission (2009)

The combined effect of high fertility and low infant mortality sustains a high youthful population, while an average life expectancy of 53 years, high incidence of poverty, and high morbidity rate imply that many parents either die before their children are able to complete schooling, are too poor or too sick to give their children sound childhood nurturing and care. It also means that several poorly nourished and ill-nurtured children start too early to take charge of their lives, and take care of younger siblings and surviving parent (in situations where the father died prematurely) without the appropriate home training and emotional resilience (SPC,2010:2).

Successive Governments have taken steps to develop human capital through improved access to affordable educational

and health care facilities. Additional schools and healthcare facilities have been established, and several old ones renovated and equipped. More teachers and health personnel are being recruited and trained. But much more still needs to be done. Available statistics indicate, for instance, that the average distance to reach school - 1.5km - needs to be reduced to render basic education more accessible; as currently many children from poor homes trek long distances, which promotes absenteeism, poor concentration following exhaustion from trekking, high dropout rates, and sundry learning disabilities. Access to basic health services was improved substantially by establishment of at least five health centres in each LGA. But many of the health facilities are non-functional, and the

average population per health facility - 6,146.3 - needs to be reduced to render health services more accessible to rural dwellers.

The widespread explosion of individualism and breakdown of the extended family system associated with cultures of globalization has made things more difficult for many orphans and other disadvantaged children. In the typical African setting, the child or young person belonged more to the community or larger kindred, and not necessarily his/her immediate family. Children from poor parents or those who have lost either one or both parents prematurely were readily fostered by richer relatives as a matter of obligation. The concepts of father, mother, brothers, and sisters were extended beyond their English meanings to accommodate all family members, bonded associates, and kinsmen. But the notions of scarcity, thrift, and greed popularized largely by the received capitalist ideology and its narrow 'commonsense' of profit and competition have engulfed the African culture and broken down the social mechanisms for self-help, which Government has not been able to replace with viable social security products. Alongside the breakdown in African solidarity is the scare of witchcraft, which has engulfed most areas in many South-South States of Nigeria. Essia (2012:2) observes that orphans (those who have lost one or both parents), those whose family face one form of misfortune of the other, and children who are remarkably different from others (are deformed, handicapped, or stubborn) are easily labeled as witches. Once such suspicions exist (and it is now very rampant), even the closest family members and relatives would abandon the child or children so suspected or accused.

3.0 'ACTIVE POOR' PHENOMENON IN THE MALTHUSIAN CONTEXT

As rightly mentioned by Macfarlane (2012), dealing effectively with the unemployment and other demographic problems call for an eclectic approach that goes beyond the neoclassical economic treatment of the labour market. It is absolutely necessary to combine insights from history, anthropology, demography, political science, and medicine.

In that regard, the Malthusian theory provides the conceptual basis for that wholeness and cross-disciplinary teamwork. Malthus' theory in brief was that humankind is permanently trapped by the intersection of two natural tendencies, namely: the 'passion between the sexes' which will cause population to grow at a geometric rate; and the tendency to prefer leisure to work, which will cause food and resource production to grow more slowly, at an arithmetic rate. The conclusion was that humankind was trapped - populations would grow rapidly for a few generations and then be savagely cut back by catastrophic retrenchments that are most likely to act on the death rate - wars, epidemic, famine, and so on. Malthus believed that the trap was avoidable if there are preventive checks that could keep down fertility to a level that is in line with resource growth. In other words, Malthus believed that the biological drive could be checked by means of a cultural change that causes people to forego the delights of large families for other goals.

The unprecedented advance in science in the mid 19th century, the discovery of coal, and later petroleum oil in large quantities, and the fact that a few countries, notably England and Sweden seem to have escaped the Malthusian trap made it look as if it did not exist. Yet now as Macfarlane (2012) rightly argues, in the twenty-first century, as the resources reach their limits and the external costs of the massive use of carbon energy become apparent in pollution and global warming, it appears that the ghost of Malthus has arisen again globally. Likewise, as the supply of labour is increasingly unmatched by its effective demand, as education increasingly fails to guarantee good and stable jobs, the concern that population growth is outpacing food and resource production brings back the Malthusian thesis to the front burner. Malthus' realistic message that we can postpone the crises of war, famine and disease, but that they will almost certainly strike again in a much more serious way within an increased total population, again makes sense. Table 8 compares the situation in 19th century Europe when countries like England and Sweden escaped the Malthusian trap with the growing 'active poor' phenomenon and shows how it can set off the trap with catastrophic retrenchments

Malthusian Thesis 19th Century Europe	21st Century Cross River State, Nigeria
Malthusian Tendencies 1: The 'passion between the sexes' causes population to grow at a geometric rate.	
The Tendency was Weak: desire for children declined with mechanization, The wife's reproductive ability was of minor importance, and status of women did not increase with more children. There were no evidences of testing of female fertility before marriage. Indeed large proportions of both sexes never married; marriage was not a universal life-cycle state.	The tendency is very strong: desire for children is the main reason for marriages. The wife's reproductive ability is an indicator of success. The sex of children is also important, and having children provides psychological and religious satisfaction. Increasingly many youths resort to prostitution as a means of livelihood.
The 'Protestant Ethic' support industrial expansion in the late 18th century, which promoted material accumulation. The culture of work and service lead to late marriages leading to fewer children and the consequently slow population growth.	The influence and scare of the supernatural, particularly beliefs in witchcraft, have grown side-by-side with modernization. People want children for multiple reasons - economic, emotional, religious etc., and to continue the line, pray for them when dead or satisfy the gods, and as an insurance against sickness and old age.

Malthusian Tendency 2: As there is a trade-off between work and leisure, people prefer leisure to work, causing food and resource production to grow more slowly, at an arithmetic rate.	
The combined effect of mechanization of agriculture, establishment of factories, the use of electricity and other inventions, and discovery of coal and oil expanded production extensively leading to increasing return. Food and resource production grew faster than Malthus predicted.	Agriculture is still at the subsistence level and many young people see it as an inferior avenue for long term employment. Growth in manufacturing is stunted and there is high import dependence. The growing service sector has low capacity for employment. The economy is largely bio-mass dependent with production subject to diminishing returns which fits the Malthusian tendency for output growth to be much slower.
The Malthusian Trap: Populations would grow rapidly for a few generations, and then be savagely cut back by catastrophic retrenchments. But preventive checks can keep down fertility to a level that is in line with resource growth.	
The absence of adoption and fostering, popular use of contraception and abortion, the treatment of pregnancy as a time of unpleasant sickness, and veneration of material wealth accumulation, together, provided preventive checks to growth in population.	Preferences for early pregnancies and marriages (sometimes of more than one wife), limited use of contraceptives, celebration of child birth as a divine miracle, perception of pregnancy as a desirable development regardless of one's level of income, and take people in Cross River State, Nigeria closer to the trap; an expanding active poor population. Increasingly people see success as a miracle from God rather than a product of hard work, discipline, and prudence.

4.0 YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND THE ACTIVE POOR PHENOMENON IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

Recent data from the International Labour Organization (ILO) show that the number of young unemployed, between the ages of 15 and 24, reached 74.2 million in 2008, accounting for 40 per cent of total unemployment. The number was projected to reach 78-90 million by the end of 2009. The difficulties faced by young people in the labour market include not only unemployment, but also underemployment: working long hours under informal, intermittent and insecure work arrangements; working below their potential in low-paid, low-skilled jobs without prospects for career advancement; being trapped in involuntary part-time, temporary, casual or seasonal employment; and frequently working under poor and precarious conditions in the informal economy. Youth employment challenges however differ from one country to another and some countries face greater challenges than others (ILO, 2010, 2011:1, and 2011:2).

Youth unemployment and underemployment impose heavy social and economic costs, which result not only in

lost economic growth, but also in erosion of the tax base, increased welfare costs, and unused investment in education and training. It is very damaging for young people and for societies - sometimes being associated with social instability, conflict and greater poverty, crime and substance abuse - but it is also profoundly damaging for employers and economies. Figure 1 presents the virtuous cycle of youth employment; increase in youth employment leads to increase in capital stock on the supply side, and increase in aggregate demand on the demand side. The combined effect of both developments is business expansion leading to increase in demand for more workers, increase in youth employment, and growth of influential employment organizations. ILO (2011:2) indicates further that there is growing youth unemployment and inactivity globally, with many working youths (working poor) living in households where there is less than USD 1 per day. ILO's 'working poor' is synonymous with the 'active poor' phenomenon enunciated in this work. Table 9 summarizes current trends in global youth unemployment.

THE VIRTUOUS CYCLE OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

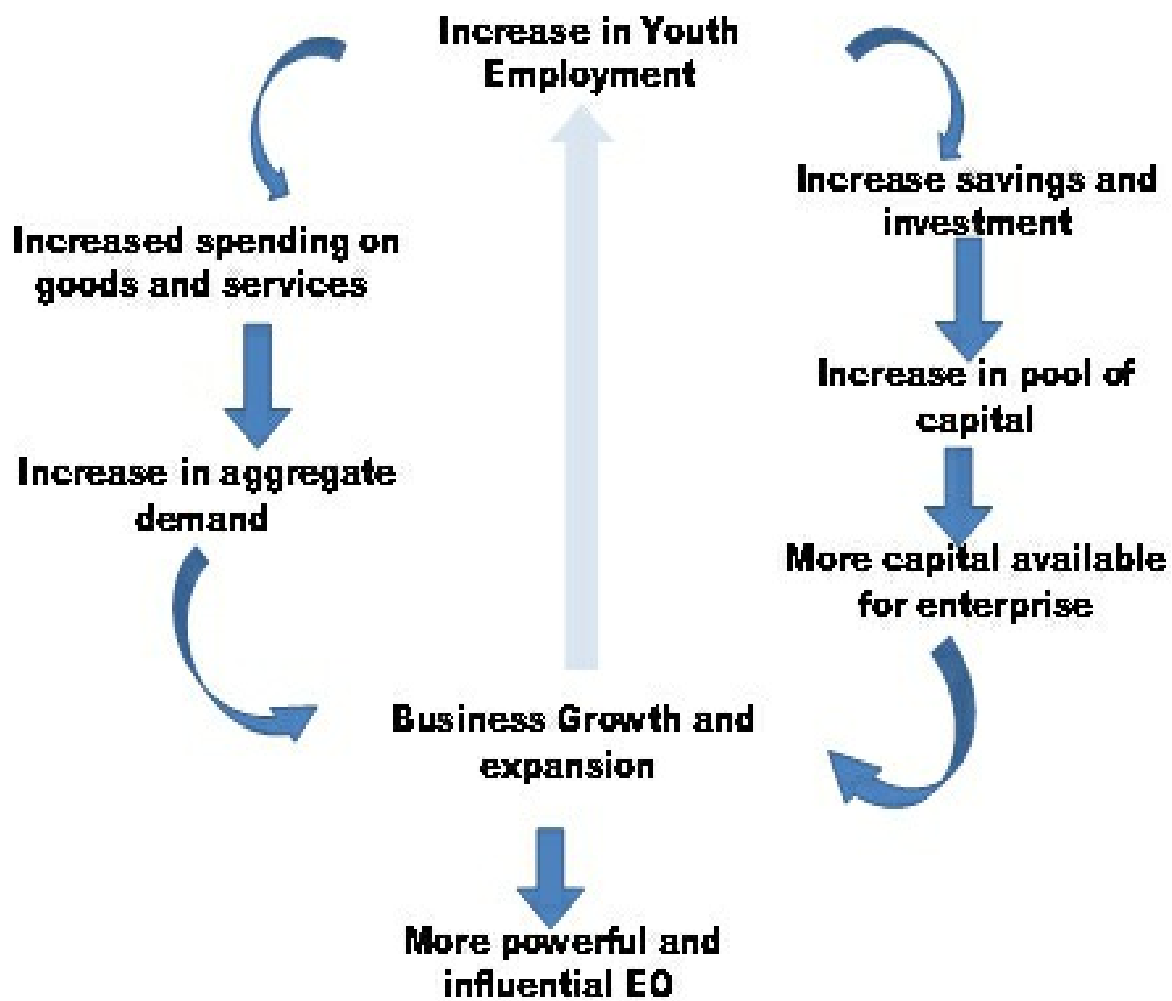


Figure 1: The Virtuous Circle of Youth Employment Source: ILO (2011:2)

Table 9: Current Trends in Global Youth Unemployment

1. More than 1 billion people today are between 15 and 24 years of age.	2. Around 40% of the world's population is below the age of 20.	3. The youth labour force grew from 577 million to 602 million over the last decade - an increase of 4.3%.
4. 70% of the global workforce works in the informal economy, representing an estimated USD 10 trillion of the global economy.	5. Youth labour force participation decreased from 54.4 to 51 % between 1999 and 2009, i.e. the youth labour force shrank relative to the youth population.	6. The youth unemployment rate stood at 13.4% in 2009, with a total of 82.7 million people unemployed, representing a 12.5% increase compared to 1999, when it was 73.5million.
7. The youth inactivity rate rose from 45.6% to 49% over	8. There are an estimated 125 million young working poor,	9. Among those employed, many young people are
the same period. Labour market participation among young people is low.	meaning more than 20% of employed youth live in a household where there is less than USD 1 a day available per head.	working long hours for low pay and/or struggling to get by in the informal economy. Many are classified as 'working poor' or 'Active Poor'.
10. The global youth labour force is projected to grow by another 55million to 657 million in 2015.	11. Unabated, the global youth unemployment rate will be 15.5% in 2015, with 102 million young people unemployed.	12. Youth unemployment is significantly higher than adult unemployment, making young people a particularly vulnerable group in the labour market.

Source: Summarized from ILO (2011, 2011:2)

In summary, Table 9 indicates that while the youth labour force worldwide is growing at a fast rate globally, 70% of the global workforce are engaged in the informal economy (which represents an estimated USD 10 trillion), under poor and precarious conditions in both rural and urban areas. More than 1 billion people today are between 15 and 24 years of age, and the youth labour force grew from 577 million to 602 million over the last decade, an increase of 4.3%. Both youth unemployment and inactivity are increasing over time, and youth labour force participation decreased globally from 54.4 to 51 % between 1999 and 2009, i.e. the youth labour force shrank relative to the youth population. The youth inactivity rate rose from 45.6% to 49% over the same period. Labour market participation among young people is low, but even among those with jobs many are classified as 'working poor'. There are an estimated 125 million young working poor, meaning more than 20% of employed youth live in a household where there is less than USD 1 a day available per head. The most obvious general labour market characteristic of youth unemployment is that it is significantly higher than adult unemployment, making young people a particularly vulnerable group in the labour market; compared to adults, young people are about three times as likely to be

unemployed. Future trends indicate that the youth labour force will continue to grow. The global youth labour force is projected to grow by another 55million to 657 million in 2015. If youth unemployment continues to grow at the current rate, the global youth unemployment rate will be 15.5% in 2015, with 102 million young people unemployed (ILO, 2011:2).

The majority (89%) of the youth labour force lives in developing economies, with Asia taking the lead. East Asia, South-East Asia and the Pacific and South Asia together account for more than half (55%) of the world youth population. Over the past ten years, the size of the youth labour force increased in all regions except Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS,) East Asia, and in developed economies and the European Union. Table 10 shows that youth labour force growth was highest in the Middle East (35%), sub-Saharan Africa was next (29%), followed by South Asia (16%), North Africa (10%), Latin America and the Caribbean (5%) and South-East Asia and the Pacific (2%). The youth labour force decreased in Central and Eastern Europe (non-EU) and CIS (-6%), developed economies and European Union (-4%) and East Asia (-12%).

Table 10: Growth Rates of Youth Unemployment

Region	Growth Rate
Middle East	35%
sub-Saharan Africa	29%
by South Asia	16%
North Africa	10%
Latin America and the Caribbean	5%
South-East Asia and the Pacific	2%
Central and Eastern Europe (non-EU) and CIS	-6%
Developed economies and European Union	-4%

Source: Summarized from ILO (2011:2)

The most dramatic increases in youth unemployment rates over the last ten years occurred in the developed economies and European Union, growing from 13.9% up to 17.7%, and in South East Asia and the Pacific where the rate increased from 13.2% to 15.3%. This phenomenon was in part due to serious economic downturns that led to a heavy increase in unemployment in general, but in youth unemployment in particular. Youth unemployment rates also increased in Middle East (1.8 percentage points), in Latin America and the Caribbean (1 percentage point) and in South Asia (0.9 percentage points). There was a slight decrease in youth employment in Central and South-Eastern Europe (non-EU) and CIS (-1.2 percentage points). Considerable decreases happened in North Africa (-2.6% percentage points). In sub-Saharan Africa the youth employment rate remained the same all over the period (12.6%). In almost every region the youth unemployment rate is more than double that of the adult unemployment rate, making young people a particularly vulnerable group in the labour market on every continent. Between 2010 and 2015 the youth labour force will continue to grow. The growth will be concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa, South East Asia and the Pacific, and in the Middle East and North Africa. The youth cohort will still make up approximately one-fifth of the total population by 2015 in these regions. Clearly, youth unemployment rates

are too high in every region, and this call for immediate action (ILO, 2011:2).

5.0 THE CAUSES OF HIGH YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

World Bank (2012) links high youth unemployment in sub-Saharan Africa particularly to poorly conceptualized, inadequate, and ill-delivered technical and vocational education and training (TVET), and reports that 3 out of 5 unemployed people in the SSA region are youth and an estimated 72 percent of these young people live on less than \$2 a day. Among other things, policy makers need to know how to align training curricula with the skills that young people need to gain employment. There is equally need to increase stakeholder ownership of training centers through innovative funding schemes, incentives for good performance, and using training centers as production units. In Nigeria, Salami (2011) attributes high unemployment to the disconnect between effective technical/vocational education and the development of an entrepreneurship culture, and proposes a drastic shift from incremental curriculum to a more dynamic and pragmatic one that will promote student-centered learning with input from the private sector to reduce the present mismatch

between labour demands and acquired skills. Unemployment rate for the age brackets 15-24 was 37.7% and overall 23.9% (NBS, 2011). In Uganda, the Young Leaders Think Tank For Policy Alternatives (2012) estimates youth unemployment to be at approximately 32.2%. Uganda labour force is estimated to be 9.8 million for person aged 14-64 years, of which 53 per cent are female. Close to 77% of the labour force had either no education or had attained only primary school education. In addition, about 75% of the labour force is below 40 years. This indicates that majority of the individuals entering the labour market had no skills considering that the primary schools do not offer vocational working skill training.

In South Africa, the National Treasury (2011) reports that unemployed young people tend to be less skilled and inexperienced - almost 86 per cent do not have formal further or tertiary education, while two-thirds have never worked. Employers look for skills and experience, and generally regard unskilled, inexperienced, jobseekers as a risky investment. Education is not a substitute for skills. Schooling is not a reliable signal of capabilities, and low school quality feeds into poor workplace learning capacity. Given the uncertainty about the potential of school leavers, employers consider entry-level wages to be too high relative to the risk of hiring these inexperienced workers. About 42% of young people under the age of 30 are unemployed compared with less than 17 per cent of adults over 30. Only 1 in 8 working age adults under 25 years of age have a job compared with 40 per cent in most emerging economies. The overall unemployment rate in Zimbabwe is over 95%, with youth unemployment being pegged at over 70% (Progressio, 2011). It was during the decade of long political and economic crisis that plagued Zimbabwe since 2000 that youth unemployment peaked. The unstable economic environment during this period led to the proliferation of the informal sector and parallel (black) market which absorbed most young people as agents and dealers.

The Tunisian economy is characterized by high unemployment (14.2 percent in 2010). In particular, there was high rate of unemployment among young graduates, which reached 47 percent in 2007 for individuals aged 23-29 years with a Master degree in law, economics and management. Graduate unemployment constitutes one of the key development challenges for the country. Mismatch between job characteristics and worker skills were common; it was recorded for 15 percent of individuals with a Masters degree and for 33 percent of vocational trainees. About half of those employed in the private sector declared to be looking for a better job, mainly because of the short-term or informal nature of their current employment. High unemployment rate in Tunisia is also driven by rapid expansion of the labor force caused in part by increasing participation of women in the labor market; although female labor force participation is still lower than should be expected given the trend in women's educational attainment and the decline in fertility (Stampini, M and A. Verdier-Chouchan, 2011)).

ChangeFusion, (2012) identifies obstacles when starting up a business, low entrepreneurship and self-employment among youths (particularly among those from disadvantaged groups) as key causes of youth unemployment in Thailand. Young people ages 15 to 24 comprise 16 % of the total population in Thailand and 28.5% of the total labor force. Youth unemployment rate among ages 15-24 is 5 %; which is relatively low when

compared to the average of 16.9% in Southeast Asia, partly because Thailand has an ageing population.

European Union (2011) reports that the major causes of youth unemployment in the EC region are mismatch between the qualifications of young people and labour market needs, rapidly changing labour market conditions, structural economic shifts and eroding public spending on integrated pro-employment strategies. The situation was further aggravated in 2008 by the economic crisis. On average, the number of young people aged 15-24 who are unemployed is 20.4% of the youth labour force; the unemployment rate among young people now exceeds 30 % in Estonia, Greece, Latvia, Lithuanian and Slovakia and reaches over 40 % in Spain, but is less than 10 % in Germany, the Netherlands and Austria. Low-skilled young people still show by far the highest unemployment rates. Youth unemployment in the UK is unacceptably high, with nearly one in five 16-24 year olds not in work. However, the financial crisis of 2008 exacerbated the problem. Unemployment rates for young people have remained static for nearly a decade. Currently 40% of people unemployed in the UK are below 25 years of age. 19.3% of economically active 16-24 year olds are not in work, and the number of NEETs has been consistently around 10% of 16-18 year olds since 1996. Many young people fail to gain the important soft skills that employers want through their mainstream academic education (Working Links, 2011).

5.1 Casualization of the Labour Market

ILO (2011:1, 2011:2) blames the recent surge in youth unemployment on growing casualization of labour markets. It estimates that more than 1 billion young people are between the ages of 15 and 24, and 85 per cent of them live in developing countries. Many of these young people are in the process of making, or have already made, the transition from school to work. The ILO further estimates that 160 million people in the world are currently unemployed. Many more subsist on the margins of the economy or have jobs that do not provide them with adequate means to ensure their survival. For those young people who are employed, many find themselves in low-paying temporary jobs with few protections. Technological advances and growing servicization of production is likely to lead to further "rationalizations" of labour demand, and more jobs need to be created to meet the growing population of young people. WYR (2003) observes that the current demographic trends suggest a huge imbalance between the supply of young workers and the demand for their labour. There is growing demand for flexible, temporary, workforce and jobs hardly provide an income sufficient to cover basic necessities. In developing countries particularly, a rising number of young people work in the informal economy, where they earn low wages and are often subjected to poor or even exploitative working conditions.

Many youths work in what WYR (2003) refers to as the 'intermediary zone'; they are engaged in casual employment, "get by" through enforced self-employment, are underemployed, or hold a variety of part-time jobs. Globalization and technological advances have had a profound impact on labour markets throughout the world, and young people, as new workers, have faced a number of challenges associated with these developments. The decline in skilled jobs in the manufacturing sector, together with the increased demand for professional specialists and

unskilled labour in the growing service industries, has led to a "hollowing out" of the youth labour market. New opportunities tend to cluster at the top end, in the professional and advanced technical sector, and at the bottom end, in the low-tier service industries. An increasing number of young people are also finding work in the informal economy, where jobs are usually characterized by insecurity and poor wages and working conditions.

In both the developed and developing countries, most young people, especially young women, are employed in the service sector. While employment in this sector ranges from routine unskilled services in retail sales and call centres to specialized professional services. Most young people work in the lower tier services characterized by poor working conditions and a lack of job security. This is perhaps best exemplified by the fast-food industry, and marketing and promotions in which young workers often comprise the vast majority of the workforce and are paid at minimum wage rates. Young workers are less likely to object to sub-standard working conditions in the service industry for several reasons. First, many of them think of their jobs as temporary, and only remain in them while they are continuing their formal education. In such circumstances, dissatisfaction is more likely to lead to a job change than to attempts to improve conditions through industrial action. Second, as a more vulnerable group of workers, young people are less likely to band together to demand better wages and working conditions. Third, many young workers have temporary or other precarious employment arrangements, which give them little or no leverage in pushing for improvements.

More young people frequently hold part-time jobs while they are pursuing a formal education, and there are also cases where part-time or temporary jobs are the only alternatives available, as there is an insufficient number of regular full-time jobs to go around. Part-time employment among young people is on the rise in many countries and can be regarded as an aspect of the casualization of the labour market. A major danger arising from holding part time jobs while pursuing a formal education is the divided attention between work and schooling and the lowering quality of education. Many researchers and commentators on youth unemployment have focused on how part time jobs have reduced the employers' willingness to offer full time stable employment, but not much is said about how working-schooling has lowered the standard of education in many poor countries.

5.2 Qualification Inflation

WYR (2003) reports further that at the top end of the labour market in many countries there has been an increase in the supply of professional and high-level technical jobs, but as a result of the growth in educational participation, especially at the tertiary level, competition for these jobs is intense. In both the developed and developing countries, more youths obtain university degrees, and the demand for educated workers lags far behind the supply, leading to qualification inflation. This is the situation where more certificates chase fewer jobs, leading to decline in the returns to higher credentials. Many qualified young people are now forced to "trade down" and accept inferior forms of employment. Aside from contributing less to the economy relative to their

education, young people may have to service graduate debt while working in non-graduate occupations, and after a lengthy subjective investment resulting in the development of a professional identity, compromises can lead to resentment and dissatisfaction. Many Nigerians work in occupations that do not correspond to their qualifications. Qualification inflation may also be caused by inappropriate matching of university degrees with demand occupations. Degrees are often conferred in traditional disciplines without regard for the changing structure of the labour market. As a result many students graduate in areas that may not apply directly anywhere, making it difficult for employers to consider them employable. But while there is abundance of unemployed graduates, the vacancies in skill intensive and high-tech jobs remain unfilled.

WYR (2003) also associates qualification inflation with growing informalization of labour markets. Most new job growth is in the informal sectors of the economy where young graduates hardly find jobs that correspond to their level of educational attainment. Around the globe, the boundaries between the formal and the informal economy are becoming increasingly blurred, and much of the economic activity of young people is taking place in the intermediary zone. The informalization of work is a global phenomenon, with an increasing number of new jobs in both developed and developing countries being created in the informal economy. The proliferation of informal sector employment is problematic in that these jobs tend to be characterized by lower wages and productivity as well as unsafe working conditions. According to the ILO, wages in the informal economy are 44 per cent lower than those in the formal sector. The reality, though, is that majority of young people worldwide work in the informal sector, and ILO has estimated that in Africa 93 per cent of new jobs are in the informal sector, while in Latin America virtually all new jobs for young people are being created in this sector of the economy. Acknowledging the concern over increasing informalization of employment, the ILO held consultations on this topic at the ninetieth session of the International Labour Conference, held in Geneva in June 2002.

5.3. 'Force' Entrepreneurship's

A desirable outcome of difficulties with getting jobs in the public and organized private sector is the new businesses started by young people. The incentive to become self-employed has been linked to a shortage of alternative ways of making a living, with a significant proportion being characterized as "forced entrepreneurs". However the entrepreneurship ecosystems in Nigeria and some other less developed countries are generally weak. Essia (2012:1) opines that entrepreneurship thrives in ecosystems (see Figure 2) in which multiple stakeholders play key roles. The key stakeholders are academic institutions, businesses, government ministries, departments, and agencies, and supporting individuals and other intermediaries. A supportive ecosystem that sustains collaboration and multi-stakeholder partnerships is necessary for growing entrepreneurship. There is need for continuous capability building within the entrepreneurial ecosystem. This is best done through partnerships and a "portfolio" approach, rather than through one-off initiatives.

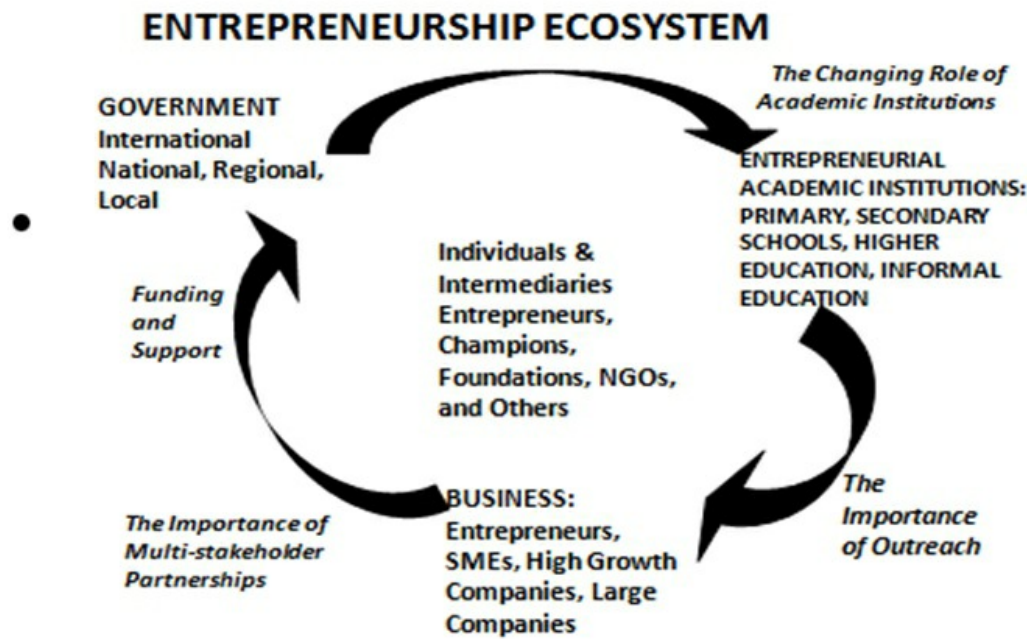


Figure 2: Entrepreneurial Ecosystem (Source: World Economic Forum, (2009), P. 16)

A major challenge to entrepreneurial learning and job creation in Nigeria is inadequate and weakly coordinated activities of self-help groups SHGs and other non-state actors (NSAs). In other climes NSAs form networks that sponsor training programmes, provide employment information to members, and support the effort of government in various ways. Other sources of weakness in the entrepreneurship ecosystem are the disconnect between the academia and businesses and between businesses and NSAs, and inadequate dialogue across the composite units and institutions within the ecosystem.

The foregoing review of country/region specific unemployment characterizations reveals that the major causes of youth unemployment can be grouped under supply-side and demand-side factors. The supply side factors are mainly low school-leaving age, skill gaps, and skills mismatches. The demand-side factors are unfavourable macroeconomic and business environment, excessive labour market regulation, and ineffective social security systems. Details of these are summarized in Table 11.

Table 11: Causes of Youth Unemployment

Causes of Unemployment	Brief Description
Low school-leaving age: The school-leaving age is the minimum age at which a person is legally allowed to leave compulsory education.	A low school-leaving age can increase the number of young people looking for jobs. We assume that a longer-educated population is more skilled making it easier to find jobs.
Macroeconomic and business environment: refers to how the economy of a country is faring as whole.	A business environment that eases job starts and doing business generally can make a substantial contribution to employment creation.
Excessive labour market regulation: The efficiency and flexibility of the labour market are critical for sustained job creation.	Excessive labour market regulations and hyper protective employment legislation can contribute to high youth unemployment level
Ineffective social security systems: In countries with a social welfare system, the unemployed are financially supported by the state	While longer job searches can increase labour market efficiency by leading to a better worker-employer match, they also reduce work incentives.
Mismatch between skills sets and labour market demands: A mismatch between the skill sets of the unemployed and the needs of employers is the key reason behind structural unemployment.	The mismatch comes about because the unemployed are unwilling or unable to change skills or to move to a location where their skills are in demand. As a result, it becomes very costly to match workers with jobs and unemployment is often prolonged.

Source: Adapted From ILO (2011:1, 2011:2)

6.0. THE IMPACT OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT ON SOCIETY

The Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development (1995) underlined the centrality of youth employment to social development, both through poverty alleviation and social integration, when it called for "developing and strengthening programmes targeted at youth living in poverty in order to enhance their economic, educational, social and cultural opportunities, to promote constructive social relations among them and to provide them with connections outside their communities to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty." It also committed to "giving special priority, in the design of policies, to the problems of structural, long-term unemployment and underemployment of youth", and called for "policies aimed to enhance employment opportunities and increasing ways and means of helping youth to develop the skills they need to enable them to find employment."

For every young person, a job offering decent work is an important step in completing the transition to adulthood, a milestone towards independence and self-reliance. For children and young people living in poverty and in other disadvantaged situations, employment is often the main means for attaining a better life, though such employment is often informal with poor or exploitative working conditions. For more fortunate youths, prospective employment influences their choice of education and training, and increasingly, their decisions regarding marriage, kinship and cohabitation. For the society, youth employment promotes social integration, intergenerational dialogue, citizenship and solidarity. Creating and fulfilling income-generating job opportunities for young people can have direct positive consequences for poverty alleviation. Youth employment thus benefits social development. It also benefits economic development by facilitating the entry of young skilled people into the productive sectors of an economy. It follows therefore that growing and persistent youth unemployment has negative impact on social development (World Bank, 2005).

Youth unemployment, can generate frustration and low self-esteem, and lead to increased vulnerability among some young people to drugs, disease and crime. Youth unemployment can also lead to the marginalization and exclusion of young people. There is evidence that unemployment can expose youth to greater risks of lower

future wages, repeated periods of unemployment, longer unemployment spells as adults, income poverty, and early morbidity and death. Unemployment rates are typically higher for young women than for men, while youth in rural areas face different challenges from their urban peers. In addition, young people with disabilities continue to face enormous challenges in the labour market. In some countries, ethnicity, particularly among young migrants, is a factor in their social exclusion and marginalization (Commission for Social Development, 2007).

Commission for Social Development (2007) observes further that while youth unemployment imposes large economic costs on society, policy makers ought also to take account of such things as the extent of underemployment, wage levels below the poverty line, inadequate labour standards and lack of social protection. Additionally, there is need to pay attention to out-of-school youth who are not actively seeking work, and are thus not in the labour force because of some physical or emotional disability, involvement in household work, or are simply discouraged from entering the labour force after unsuccessfully competing with a large pool of peers for a limited amount of vacancies. In this regard ILO (2011:2) cautions against the resort to the lump-of-labour approach where public authorities think that the solution lies in spreading existing work more evenly among the labour force. The lump-of-labour is indeed a fallacy because from the point of view of the economy as a whole, there is only a fixed quantity of remunerative work to be done.

7.0. FROM CAUSES TO POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

As observed earlier, the most dramatic increases in youth unemployment rates over the last ten years occurred in the developed economies and European Union, growing from 13.9% up to 17.7%. Arising from that the 'Europe 2020' has an agenda for new skills and jobs as one of its flagship initiatives (ILO,2011:2; Boeri, 2011; Vassiliou 2012; Scottish Government 2012; García 2011; European Union 2011; European Commission 2011:1, 2011:2, and 2011:3; ACEVO Commission 2012; and Working Links 2011). Table 11 summarizes the major causes of unemployment observed among the EC countries, the relevant Europe 2020 initiatives, and the learning points for Nigeria and Cross River State Vision 2020.

Table 11: Learning Points for Cross River State, Nigeria from 'Europe 2020' Flagship Initiative 'Agenda for new Skills and Jobs

Causes of Youth Unemployment	Europe 2020' flagship initiative 'Agenda for new skills and jobs'	Learning Points for Nigeria's Vision 20: 2020 (CR N2020)
Early school leaving: the major causes identified in 'Europe 2020' are dropouts caused by failure in promotion/qualifying examinations, and poverty.		
It is recognized that failure to pass some subjects in examinations can cause many to drop out and lose interest. 'Europe 2020' proposes	in Latvia and Greece pupils/students who have failed end-of-term exams are re-taught to ensure that they move on and not lose	Few institutional concerns for student who fail promotion/qualifying exams. Stringent conditions for qualifying for university
measures to ensure that a greater number of young people remain in school and obtain basic skills for further studies or for participation in the labour market.	interest. In Luxembourg there are 'second chance schools' for young people aged 16-24 years, and assessments of each student adopts a portfolio approach that considers the overall condition of each student.	admissions in public (subsidized) tertiary institutions (high cut of points, State of origin, credit passes in English Language and Mathematics ,etc). Average school drop out rate in Cross River State is 40%.

<p>Early school leaving is also found to be related to financial reasons and household poverty in some countries, such as Bulgaria, Romania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and France.</p>	<p>In France the 'Hope for suburbs' plan, targets young people from underprivileged areas; 200 schools are piloting an academic success programme that involves intensive training and individual support for pupils from underprivileged homes and those lagging behind.</p>	<p>Education at all levels is seen as private/merit good in Nigeria. But primary and secondary education are generally subsidized, or free in some States. However, there are few initiatives for targeting the poor to sponsor their education from nursery to university level.</p>
<p>Inadequate and inappropriate technical/vocational skills that render young people unemployable: In order to ensure that the vocational training system enables young people with only basic education to enter the labour market, several countries have reformed the structure of their vocational training systems.</p>		
<p>Vocational education and training considered derogatory and not essential inclusive in the mainstream formal education. 'Europe 2020' calls for mainstreaming of VET into formal education. This is intended to ensure that young people entering the labour market have appropriate basic skills and technical knowledge</p>	<p>In Hungary introduction of specialized and workshop-based education straight after primary education (in JSS), In Macedonia secondary education is being reformed to incorporate VET. In Germany an extensive system for VET, including; a one-year school based preparation programme for apprenticeship training, and a one-year occupational-based preparation particularly in technology and engineering.</p>	<p>The legal framework for VET exist in the National Education Policy, but implementation is generally weak. The framework for providing VET for drop outs of the formal education system needs to be developed.</p>
<p align="center">Insensitivity to the specific needs of young and vulnerable people who are unemployed</p>		
<p>In some countries, there are specific active labour market policies (ALMPs) for young people, which include the provision of information, and advice and guidance. In terms of social security, few countries make special allowances for young people and they are entitled to unemployment benefits under the same terms as older age groups. Some countries provide other forms of financial support, including support for</p>	<p>There are no ALMPs for young people in Nigeria. There are also no few social security products or allowances for young people. There are also not specific measures to support or encourage young</p>	
<p>those who participate in education/training opportunities. Some countries have implemented measures to promote and support self-employment which are specific to young people, or target young people through a broader scheme. These measures include, among others, financial support and loans to set up a business and entrepreneurship education/training.</p>	<p>people going into self employment. No financial support and loans to set up businesses or participate in entrepreneurship training.</p>	
<p align="center">Weak Capacity for promoting and recognition of non-formal and informal learning</p>		
<p>Young people who are still engaged in formal education and training are encouraged to pick up skills in a wide variety of activities that take place outside the classroom (e.g. voluntary activities or summer jobs). Young people at risk of leaving school without any type of qualification are also supported through recognition of prior learning and access to alternatives to formal education and training.</p>	<p>In Estonia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania and Slovakia there is already a system for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning in place. In Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Finland and Croatia a system is being developed. In the Netherlands there are plans to recognize the informal learning of 20,000 early school leavers aged 18-23. Finland is currently moving towards a personalized curriculum that recognizes non-formal and informal learning. In Spain professional certificates can be acquired through recognition of prior learning and in Norway it is possible to achieve a certificate of complete apprenticeship through validation of prior learning.</p>	<p>There are few legal framework for giving recognition to non-formal and informal learning. People have to go through formal school to be certified, and in many cases there are stringent but irrelevant pre-qualification requirements, such as; credit passes in mathematics and English language. Everyone is forced to go through familiar strait jacket. The certificate frenzy is quite strong.</p>

8.0. CONCLUSION

As ILO (2010, 2011:1, and 2011:2) rightly observe new jobs in the private sector and self employment are key areas to focus on for sustainable employment generation. Self-employment is a concrete path to career development, and policies that help create young entrepreneurs are an effective way to tackle youth unemployment. Equally the right mix of passive and active labour market policies is essential. Job search and improving labour market information can also be an effective way to reduce unemployment, especially frictional unemployment. The mismatch between skill sets and labour market demand is a frequent problem. This requires periodic revision of school curricula and strong education-business partnerships.

A good macroeconomic environment and a business environment conducive to enterprise development are the underpinning conditions for employment creation. An unfavourable macroeconomic environment increases unemployment, both for young people and for adults. Governments are ultimately the ones responsible for developing the macroeconomic policy that will maximize economic growth, control inflation and reduce unemployment. However, employers' views must be taken into account if governments are to formulate and implement macroeconomic policies leading to growth and job creation. Entrepreneurial activity has a direct impact on employment rates, including those of young people, by increasing job opportunities both directly and indirectly. But while the initial support for start-ups is important, there must also be support for the growth of these new businesses. The employment contribution of start-ups will be limited if survival rates of new businesses are low and growth of those firms that do survive is restricted. Effective development of dialogue and partnerships within the entrepreneurship ecosystem is essential.

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