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UMA forms youth employment lobby group

BY STEPHEN OTAGE
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KAMPALA. Uganda Manufacturers Association (UMA), together with 80 non-government organisations, has formed the Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship Network to lobby for jobs.

Speaking at the launch in Kampala on Tuesday, Mr Joseph Kyalimpa, the training manager at UMA, said the lobby group will be carrying out research in different thematic areas that will be addressed to employers so as to create jobs for the young people.

"We have groups dealing with incubation and acceleration of youth projects, skills development, resource mobilisation, collaboration, research, policy and advocacy," he said, adding that each of the groups will have the mandate to carry out research in those areas so as to advise employers on what is required to be done to create jobs and employ the youths.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Rate. In Uganda, the unemployment rate for young people ages 15 to 24 is 83 per cent. The rate is even higher for those who have formal degrees and live in the urban area. This is due to the disconnect between the degree achieved and the vocational skills needed for the jobs that are in demand for workers. (Wikipedia)

"If it is internship, we know that there are few factories and work places in the country so we want internship to run throughout the year not according to University calendar because many students miss out on internship," he explained.

Internship

According to Mr Benjamin Lubogo, a management consultant from Strategic Engagement Consultants, part of the task that they have been given by UMA is to find out why its members are not taking up many interns thus depriving them the experience which employers usually ask for when taking on young people for jobs.

"We want to know whether the problem is with the universities or the work places so that we can advise them appropriately. If it is the University, we shall be able to tell them to change the curriculum because we shall be having the facts," he said.

Mr Mubarak Bachu, the vice chairman Uganda Small Scale Industries Association, who closed the ceremony, noted that with 45 universities in the country churning out almost 500 students each academic year, it is very difficult for the few industries available in the country, to provide internship and employment to all the graduates.

"It is wrong for universities to send students for internship at the same time because we do not have all these spaces to place the students for internship," he said.

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