GOV'T PLANS TO CREATE

By Jackie Nalubwama

Marie Kanyike, a 2023 Makerere University Business School graduate of Procurement and Supply Chain Management, has been looking for a job ever since she graduated to no avail. "Despite my qualifications, I found myself unemployed after graduation. I struggled to find opportunities in the job market," she said.

Kanyike is just one of several thousand youth who graduate from university into unemployment. With 45.9 million people and more than 73% of them below the age of 30, Uganda is under intense pressure to create pathways from school to skills, from skills to work and from work to stable incomes.

In a statement presented at the Uganda Media Centre ahead of International Labour Day on May 1, Minister of State for Labour Esther Davinia Anyakun outlined what government says it is doing to meet that challenge.

BUILDING EMPLOYABILITY

At the centre of the response is a shift from simply discussing unemployment toward building employability. One flagship initiative is the National Apprenticeship Programme, designed to equip young Ugandans with practical, market-relevant skills rather than classroom credentials alone.

Since 2022, government says it has supported 1,134 apprentices and 242 graduate volunteers. Most notably, the programme has recorded an employment transition rate of 71.73%.

That means roughly seven in 10 participants moved into work after the programme, a strong signal in a labour market where many graduates struggle to convert qualifications into jobs.

The Government says the scheme will expand placements across districts, cities and municipalities.

If scaled effectively, apprenticeships could help close one of Uganda's most persistent gaps: Employers demanding experience while job seekers cannot gain experience without first being hired.

Deo Kalikumutima, a lawyer, is glad that government is acting against unemployment.

"I was once a burgeoning professional and I know the emotional toll and weight that comes with being unemployed. Beyond financial instability, there is a sense of diminished self-worth and societal exclusion," he says. He adds: "This manifests in many ways – the sleepless nights after graduation – sending out countless applications, walking long distances to follow up on opportunities and facing systemic nepotism and 'experience traps' in entry-level hiring. It is a painful and dehumanising experience that too many young Ugandans silently endure."



The youth skilling programme has been rolled out to promote vocational and technical training

THE JUA-KALI PROGRAMME

Nearly 88% of Uganda's workforce operates informally, according to the ministry. That means that job policy cannot focus only on corporate offices or industrial parks. It must reach mechanics, tailors, welders, market traders, roadside manufacturers and family enterprises. That is where the Jua-Kali programme comes in. Named after the East African phrase associated with the informal sector, the initiative aims to help small, often unregistered businesses transition into formal growth. Formalisation can mean easier access to credit, training, markets and legal protections. For the government, it can also broaden the tax base and improve productivity.

DIRECT YOUTH SKILLING

Uganda's labour market challenge is not just a shortage of jobs, but a mismatch between available skills and employer needs. Technical abilities in construction, manufacturing, hospitality, ICT and services are increasingly in demand.

Kalikumutima echoes government's plan, saying Uganda needs to adopt a multi-pronged strategy anchored in sustainable industrialisation, skills retooling, and targeted investment in high-potential sectors such as agriculture, renewable energy, creative arts, ICT, and circular economy models.

The Youth Skilling Programme is intended to narrow that mismatch by giving young people practical capabilities that can translate into self-employment or wage employment. In a youthful country, vocational pathways may become just as important as university degrees.

THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

HEALTH SERVICE COMMISSION

CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA AND ALL UGANDANS ON THE OCCASSION OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR DAY CELEBRATIONS.





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MINISTER OF HEALTH



Dr. Henry Mwebesa
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Ms. Janet Apayi Okumu
MEMBER



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MEMBER

The Chairperson, Members and Secretariat of Health Service Commission wishes to congratulate H.E. th

MORE JOBS FOR YOUTH



Minister Esther Anyakun



John Walugembe

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Higher productivity often means higher wages, stronger firms and better export competitiveness.

PRODUCTIVITY

The ministry says it is implementing measures to enhance labour productivity for national competitiveness and human capital development. That may sound abstract, but productivity is simply how much value workers can produce with their time and tools.

Uganda's current productivity levels remain below both regional and global averages, making this a strategic issue rather than a technical one.

The Government also highlighted the National Labour, Employment and Productivity Reporting Programme, known as LEAP. Reliable labour data helps policymakers understand where jobs are growing, where gaps persist and which interventions work. Without data, labour policy often becomes guesswork. Social protection forms the final major plank. The ministry says it is working to expand social security coverage to boost national savings, increase investment and secure retirement incomes.

With millions working outside formal pension systems, broadening coverage could reduce future poverty among older citizens while mobilising long-term domestic capital.

VISION 2040

The broader policy direction links directly to Uganda Vision 2040, which seeks to transform the country into a competitive upper-middle-income economy.

However, plans alone do not employ people. Success will depend on implementation, scale, funding and whether programmes reach beyond Kampala into towns and rural districts, where underemployment is often most severe.

John Walugembe, the executive director of Small and Medium Enterprises Uganda, said government's initiatives will be handy in tackling employment challenges. "They are great initiatives that will create jobs for young people."

The initiatives will give young people like Wycliff Jean Kateregga a chance to work in the motherland.

"I studied at the Makerere University Business School and failed to find a job because I did not have experience. Three years ago, I joined my mother in Dubai and started building my life. I have learnt that there is much our country needs to do to end unemployment."

Fortunately, government has woken up to act and has adopted a broader strategy.



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The Board and Management of Uganda Electricity Distribution Company Limited (UEDCL) send warmest wishes to all workers in Uganda upon reaching this year's International Labour Day celebration.

This year's theme, **"Safeguarding Uganda's Progress: Empowering th Workforce and Promoting Decent Work for Competitive Enterprises,"** in line with the successful asset retransfer from Umeme to UEDCL in A 2025, which resulted in the creation of 2,712 direct and indirect opportunities, anchoring on the National Development Plan IV, the UE

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