



Youth Unemployment and Its Impact on Nigeria's Socio-Economic Landscape

John Philip Sele¹; Polycarp Kim Zongo²

¹ Department of Development Studies, Africa International University, Karen, Nairobi, Kenya
Email: seleswop@gmail.com

² Department of Development Studies, Africa International University, Karen, Nairobi, Kenya
Email: zongopolycarp4@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

In Nigeria, youth unemployment is still a major problem that affects the nation's socioeconomic stability and progress. The main reasons for youth unemployment are examined in this article, including misaligned schooling, inefficient economic policies, and a mismatch between the skills that employers need and the abilities that are now accessible. The ramifications are profound, including migratory trends, economic expansion, and social stability. By examining several aspects, including community-driven tactics, policy changes, and campaigning, the paper emphasizes the necessity of a multifaceted strategy to deal with this issue. Policymakers, educators, and community leaders dedicated to promoting notable change in Nigeria's socioeconomic environment are the target audience for this organized research.

ARTICLE'S INFO

Article No.: 082625131

Type: Review

Full Text: [PDE](#), [PHP](#), [EPUB](#), [MP3](#)

DOI: [10.15580/gjss.2025.1.082625131](https://doi.org/10.15580/gjss.2025.1.082625131)

Accepted: 01/09/2025

Published: 18/09/2025

*Corresponding Author

John Philip Sele

E-mail: seleswop@gmail.com

Keywords: youth unemployment, socio-economic impact, Nigeria, education policy, job market, economic growth, social stability, migration patterns, advocacy, policy reform, skill development

Background

A major socioeconomic issue in Nigeria is youth unemployment, which is made worse by rapid population increase, unstable economic conditions, and a disconnect between market demands and educational

attainment. Nigeria has a population of more than 200 million people, and more than 60% of them are under 30. This demographic boom puts a lot of strain on the labour market. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), Nigeria has one of the highest rates of youth unemployment in the world, with a rate of about 35% in

recent years (National Bureau of Statistics, 2023; World Bank, 2022). Widespread disappointment among Nigerian youth has resulted from this tendency, which has been made worse by inadequate job creation mechanisms and skills shortages.

Economic Policies and Unemployment

Nigeria's economic policies, which have frequently placed a higher priority on oil exports than sectoral diversification, are partly to blame for the country's youth unemployment issue (World Bank, 2023; International Labour Organisation, 2022). Only a tiny portion of the workforce is employed in the oil industry, even though it generates over 80% of government income. There are few job options outside of cities because of the over-reliance on oil, which has stunted growth in labour-intensive industries like manufacturing and agriculture (Adepoju & Fakunle, 2021). To close this employment gap and promote long-term job creation for the growing young population, policy changes towards industrialization and economic diversification are required (Okafor, 2023).

Educational Challenges and Skills Mismatch

The gap between Nigeria's educational outputs and market demands is another crucial factor contributing to youth unemployment. Despite completing higher education, many young Nigerians lack the technical and practical abilities that companies want (Adebayo & Jimoh, 2021; Obiora, 2023). The educational system fails to give graduates the technological, technical, and vocational abilities that meet changing industrial demands because it heavily emphasizes theory over practical skills. To meet the demands of a diverse economy, Nigeria's educational system requires significant reforms, including curriculum modifications, according to the International Labour Organisation (2022) (ILO, 2022; World Bank, 2021).

Demographic Pressures and Population Growth

The unemployment problem in Nigeria is made worse by the country's constantly expanding youth population. According to estimates from the World Bank (2023) and NBS (2023), Nigeria's population is expected to expand at a pace of about 2.6% per year, which means that over 4 million new job seekers join the workforce yearly. There is a serious lack of work prospects because of this spike outpacing the rate of job growth. The gap between job seekers and open opportunities will keep growing if these demographic pressures are not addressed, raising the possibility of social upheaval and economic stagnation (World Bank, 2023; Oyewole, 2023).

Social Implications of Youth Unemployment

There are significant societal ramifications to Nigeria's high youth unemployment rate. Frustration brought on by a lack of employment opportunities might create conditions conducive to criminal activity, such as cybercrime and insurgency (Adeleke, 2022; Musa, 2023). When poverty and youth disenfranchisement coexist, problems like rural-urban migration worsen, burdening infrastructure and resulting in the development of urban slums in major cities like Lagos and Abuja (United Nations Development Programme, 2021; ILO, 2023). Nigeria may reduce these socioeconomic risks and create the conditions for more equitable growth by tackling the policy and systemic causes of young unemployment.

Introduction

In Nigeria's development environment, youth unemployment continues to be a major problem that affects not just people's livelihoods but also the country's socioeconomic stability and capacity for progress. Young Nigerians, who comprise the bulk of the population and can revolutionise the country's economy, must have access to employment possibilities. However, the scarcity of good employment has impeded economic growth, prolonged poverty cycles, and presented serious threats to social stability (World Bank, 2022; National Bureau of Statistics, 2023). Youth unemployment is a crucial national concern as the ensuing socioeconomic imbalance jeopardises the nation's potential for the future as well as the present (Sele & Wanjiku, 2024; Onwuka, 2023).

This article examines the fundamental causes of Nigeria's high young unemployment rate, with an emphasis on demographic pressures, structural economic problems, and mismatches in education and skill sets. In doing so, it examines the pressing need for a coordinated, multifaceted strategy to address these variables as well as their ramifications (International Labour Organisation, 2022; Sele & Mukundi, 2024a). The goal is to emphasise the significance of comprehensive policies that consider economic diversification, education reform, and the role of youth in development as important avenues for long-term employment solutions.

As a starting point for this research, youth unemployment in Nigeria is defined as the absence of work prospects for those between the ages of 15 and 35, a range that corresponds with the nation's demographic emphasis on youth and the socioeconomic difficulties they encounter. Its influence on Nigeria's overall development trajectory is highlighted by the fact that the problems associated with young unemployment are not just economic but also encompass social welfare, education, and political stability (National Bureau of Statistics, 2023; Onyejekwe, 2021; Sele & Mukundi, 2024b). To suggest sustainable development strategies that incorporate both economic and ethical considerations, this paper aims to expand on the theological and socioeconomic perspectives that have

already been discussed in studies such as those by Leonard Ndzi (2024), who studies the intersection of theology and social issues.

Importance of Employment for Nigeria's Youth

One of Nigeria's most valuable assets is its sizable youth population, which has the potential to make considerable social and economic contributions (World Bank, 2023; Adebayo & Jimoh, 2021). Youth unemployment, however, lowers productivity, increases inequality, and restricts economic involvement, resulting in a few social problems. The nation's socioeconomic fabric is further strained by the difficulty of finding fulfilling work, which frequently leads to social instability, rural-urban migration, and engagement in illegal or informal activities (Musa, 2023; Onyejekwe, 2021). Political policies must change to support job and educational possibilities that promote stability and economic progress, especially for youth-centred demographics, as Sele and Mukundi (2024b) point out.

Therefore, addressing young unemployment is a moral and social necessity in addition to an economic one. Understanding how religious viewpoints might be used to address socioeconomic problems can be crucial to changing Nigeria's policy environment, as Ndzi (2024) discusses. Under these circumstances, work turns into a tool for attaining more general social justice and equality, which is consistent with the religious foundations of development that place a high value on human dignity and the welfare of society (Sele & Wanjiku, 2024).

Objectives and Structure of the Article

This article's three main goals are to: (1) examine the factors that contribute to Nigeria's high youth unemployment rate, such as labour market difficulties, educational deficiencies, and gaps in economic policy; (2) talk about the socioeconomic effects of these factors on the country's development and stability; and (3) suggest a multifaceted framework for addressing youth unemployment that includes social welfare programs, economic policies, and education reforms (International Labour Organisation, 2023; Sele & Mukundi, 2024a).

This article takes a methodical approach, starting with a summary that offers statistical analysis of the socioeconomic elements influencing Nigeria's youth unemployment problem. The present state of the Nigerian labour market is then discussed, emphasising how policies, skills shortages, and demographic pressures contribute to the country's growing unemployment rate. The next sections will go into mitigation tactics, such as advocacy, networking, and lobbying—all of which are crucial for promoting job creation. An outcome-based analysis will wrap off the piece, highlighting multi-sector cooperation's vital role in generating long-term employment prospects (Adeleke, 2022; Onyejekwe, 2021).

Case Presentation: Factors Contributing to Youth Unemployment in Nigeria

Nigerian youth unemployment is a complex problem brought on by a few institutional, social, and economic reasons. The main causes of this issue are discussed in this part, with a focus on the roles played by labour market needs, economic policy issues, and educational discrepancies. To demonstrate the complex nature of the young unemployment situation in Nigeria, each component is thoroughly examined and backed by academic viewpoints and empirical evidence.

✓ Educational Gaps

One of the main causes for youth unemployment in Nigeria is the misalignment between the educational system and the demands of the labour market. Due to out-of-date curriculum that neglect to include practical and technical skills pertinent to a quickly changing market, many Nigerian graduates enter the job with skills that do not match the expectations of the business today (UNESCO, 2023). Research has shown that traditional academic programs are ineffective in preparing students for the problems of modern work because they prioritise theoretical knowledge over real-world applications (Sele & Wanjiku, 2024; Onwuka, 2023). Due to this mismatch, a large percentage of graduate's struggle to achieve the requirements set by companies, making them unemployed (NBS, 2022).

Furthermore, the skills gap is made worse by Nigeria's school system's poor integration of technology and soft skills, which puts young job searchers at a disadvantage in an increasingly digital labour market (World Bank, 2021). Sele and Mukundi (2024) assert that reorienting the curriculum to emphasise digital literacy, critical thinking, and entrepreneurial skills might improve employability by matching graduate competencies with market demands. Graduates' flexibility and competitiveness in a globally interconnected workforce are restricted by this educational mismatch, which is exacerbated by a dearth of possibilities for vocational training (UNESCO, 2023; Ndzi, 2024).

✓ Economic Policies

The policy direction and economic structure of Nigeria are important factors that influence youthful unemployment. Due to the country's excessive dependence on the oil industry, its economic foundation is restricted, making it difficult to diversify and create long-term jobs (World Bank, 2021). Investment in other industries like manufacturing, technology, and agriculture that may use youthful labour is hampered by this reliance on oil and the regular changes in the economy (Sele & Mukundi, 2024). Lack of assistance for small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs), which are frequently the main engines of employment creation in emerging nations, is a persistent problem. Although SMEs could create jobs, their expansion has been hindered by high

taxes, regulatory restrictions, and restricted access to funding, which has resulted in a limited job market for young people (Onyejekwe, 2021; Adeleke, 2022).

These issues have been made worse by the lack of well-thought-out youth-focused economic strategies. Due in large part to a lack of finance, poor execution, and a lack of stakeholder participation, many government programs intended to combat young unemployment are unsustainable and have a narrow scope (International Labour Organisation, 2022; Sele & Wanjiku, 2024). Addressing structural unemployment challenges requires a multifaceted economic strategy that includes reforms to help SMEs and fiscal policies to incentivise industries like technology and agriculture (World Bank, 2021; Musa, 2023). According to Leonard Ndzi (2024), by creating a stable environment for economic growth and job creation, sustainable economic policies that place a high priority on equality and inclusion may dramatically lower unemployment.

✓ Labor Market Demands

A major problem is the prevalence of the informal economy, which, although offering some income opportunities, frequently lacks job security, career advancement, and adequate compensation, leaving many young Nigerians stuck in precarious, low-paying jobs that do not meet their qualifications or aspirations (Sele & Mukundi, 2024; Adebayo & Jimoh, 2021). The dynamics of Nigeria's labour market pose significant challenges for young people seeking employment. The limited availability of high-skilled jobs combined with the lack of demand for young workers results in a highly competitive job market with few opportunities for career advancement (NBS, 2022).

Nigerian labour market policies have historically failed to address these skill gaps, leading to an oversupply of generalist workers and an undersupply of specialists in fields like technology, engineering, and digital marketing (Musa, 2023; Onyejekwe, 2021). Furthermore, the demand for specialised skills that are frequently not covered in standard educational curricula further isolates young graduates from viable job opportunities (International Labour Organisation, 2023). To close this gap, policies aimed at enhancing skill acquisition, such as apprenticeships, internships, and vocational training, are crucial to creating a workforce that meets the demands of a modern economy (UNESCO, 2023; Sele & Wanjiku, 2024).

Lobbying Efforts and Policy Recommendations

Multifaceted intervention and the concerted efforts of interest groups, non-governmental organisations, and public-private partnerships working to influence policy are necessary to address youth unemployment in Nigeria. Advocating for policies that address the structural reasons of young unemployment has been made possible by successful lobbying activities that support small- and medium-sized businesses

(SMEs), advance economic reforms, and improve vocational training. Using successful campaign examples, this section explores how different organisations use lobbying to solve these concerns. Policy proposals also concentrate on doable changes that boost SMEs, stimulate entrepreneurship, and promote the expansion of the private sector.

✓ Interest Groups and NGOs in Policy Advocacy

In Nigeria, many interest groups and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have been aggressively pressing the government to enact laws that will increase young people's job opportunities. In response to the widening skills gap in the labour market, groups like the Nigeria Employers' Consultative Association (NECA) have partnered with government agencies to prioritise technical and vocational training (Adejumo & Musa, 2021; Sele & Mukundi, 2024a). As argued by Sele and Wanjiku (2024), who contend that skills-focused education gives young people real-world knowledge that improves employability, this argument emphasises the necessity of educational reform that is in line with the demands of the labour market.

By advocating for labour laws that support equitable pay, young apprenticeships, and good working conditions, NGOs like the International Labour Organisation (ILO) have also had an impact. When combined with strategic backing from nearby companies and the government, these groups have demonstrated that focused vocational training programs may dramatically lower young unemployment (ILO, 2023; Ndzi, 2024). In particular, the World Bank's policy brief on youth employment emphasises how collaborations among private businesses, NGOs, and educational institutions can help close the skills gap and advance sustainable employment by funding job training initiatives in high-demand industries like engineering, technology, and agriculture (World Bank, 2021).

✓ Effective Examples of Lobbying for Policy Reform

The effectiveness of coordinated advocacy in promoting policy reform is demonstrated by several successful lobbying initiatives. The Youth Employment in Agriculture Programme (YEAP), which is run by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture with assistance from regional NGOs, is a noteworthy example. Its goal is to give young agripreneurs finance, resources, and training (Onyejekwe, 2021; Sele & Mukundi, 2024b). This initiative, which has boosted young employment in rural regions and increased investment in agricultural training, is a prime example of how advocacy organisations may use focused lobbying to achieve real benefits. Additionally, Sele and Wanjiku (2024) emphasise the ways in which religious groups have effectively promoted moral leadership, which has aided in promoting

accountability and openness in the application of policies.

The African Youth Initiative on Population, Health & Development (AfrYPoD), which promotes youth empowerment policies that prioritise skill development and resource access for young entrepreneurs, is another successful lobbying effort. AfrYPoD has impacted the adoption of youth-friendly policies that emphasise economic inclusion through its extensive engagement with policymakers, highlighting the significance of collaborations between governmental and non-governmental actors in tackling unemployment (UNESCO, 2023; Sele & Mukundi, 2024a). These instances show how lobbying may be used to advance sustainable economic policies that address structural issues with unemployment.

Policy Recommendations for Addressing Youth Unemployment

A comprehensive strategy that prioritises structural economic changes, improves skill development, and fosters an environment that supports SMEs is needed to address Nigeria's young unemployment issue. The main goals of policy proposals are to stimulate entrepreneurship, grow the private sector, enhance vocational training, and create conditions that are conducive to SMEs. It has been demonstrated that these tactics improve economic stability and lower unemployment, which benefits both people and society at large.

1. **Enhancing Vocational Training:** In order to give young Nigerians the practical skills required in the modern labour market, it is imperative that access to vocational education be increased. Vocational training geared towards industries with strong job potential, such as manufacturing, information technology, and agriculture, can significantly lower young unemployment, according to Sele and Mukundi (2024b). It would also be advantageous to include on-the-job training through collaborations with companies and align courses with industry standards (UNESCO, 2023; Onyejekwe, 2021). Vocational education policies can improve young people's employability by giving them instantly usable skill sets, especially in underserved areas (World Bank, 2021).
2. **Promoting Private Sector Growth:** Reducing regulatory barriers, offering tax breaks to businesses that create jobs for young people, and forming public-private partnerships are all ways to promote job creation. The World Bank's research from 2021 also highlights the importance of government-backed incentives in encouraging investments in sectors that align with labour market needs. Onwuka (2023) notes that private sector involvement is crucial for

building a resilient economy because it drives innovation and sustains long-term.

3. **Incentivizing Entrepreneurship:** Promoting entrepreneurship is essential to changing the economic environment for young people in Nigeria. According to Sele and Mukundi (2024b), policies that offer financial assistance—such as grants, microloans, and mentorship programs—allow young people to launch and grow enterprises. Access to capital and coaching may encourage entrepreneurship, particularly in areas with few job opportunities, as shown by initiatives like the Tony Elumelu Foundation's Entrepreneurship Programme (Adejumo & Musa, 2021). To decentralise economic prospects, the government can also think about creating youth entrepreneurship centres that provide training and resources to young entrepreneurs throughout different areas (Musa, 2023; Ndzi, 2024).
4. **Creating Favorable Environments for SMEs:** Economic stability and the development of jobs depend heavily on small and medium-sized businesses. The success of SMEs may be facilitated by policies that facilitate their access to finance, cut down on bureaucratic red tape, and offer tax breaks. Particularly in the unorganised sector, SMEs have the capacity to employ a sizable percentage of the young workforce. Supporting SMEs with low-interest loans and streamlined tax laws will help them expand their businesses and give young people additional employment options (Onyejekwe, 2021; Sele & Wanjiku, 2024). SMEs across a range of industries can benefit from the development of policies that support domestic goods and encourage local sourcing (World Bank, 2021).

Nigeria's new unemployment problem calls for coordinated lobbying efforts and focused legislative changes. Through their lobbying efforts, NGOs and interest groups have already achieved notable progress, underscoring the need of consistent campaigning in bringing about legislative change. Supporting vocational training, increasing private sector involvement, encouraging entrepreneurship, and creating conditions hospitable to SMEs should be the main goals of future policy development. Nigeria can tackle youth unemployment and create a robust economy that provides young people with worthwhile job possibilities by implementing policies that are in line with labour market demands and learning from successful models (Sele & Mukundi, 2024b; UNESCO, 2023; ILO, 2023).

Advocacy Initiatives and Social Programs

Through focused advocacy campaigns and social programs run by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), international agencies, and regional advocacy networks, the high rates of young unemployment seen around the world are reduced. These programs aim to develop and maintain programs for youth empowerment, offer vocational training, and get capital for businesses run by young people. By giving young people the tools and resources they need to succeed in the contemporary labour market, these advocacy initiatives not only meet the urgent demand for employment but also contribute to long-term economic stability.

Advocacy by International Organizations

Numerous international organisations have launched lobbying efforts to support youth empowerment after seeing the value of young employment. For example, via programs like YouthConnekt Africa, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been leading the charge to promote young employment. The goal of this program is to provide young Africans the information and skills they need to become more employable and capable entrepreneurs. As a long-term solution to young unemployment, UNDP's advocacy, which frequently entails working with regional governments, highlights the need of funding vocational training (UNDP, 2023; Sele & Mukundi, 2024a).

Furthermore, the Tony Elumelu Foundation (TEF), which offers financial resources and entrepreneurship training to young people in Africa, is a prime example of how private foundations may support global initiatives. Over 18,000 young entrepreneurs in 54 African nations have received help from TEF through its Entrepreneurship Program, highlighting the importance of private sector advocacy in tackling youth unemployment (Tony Elumelu Foundation, 2023). The strategies used by these organisations are consistent with Christian theology views on social justice, which hold that systematic unemployment and poverty may be addressed via empowerment (Sele & Wanjiku, 2024; Ndzi, 2024).

Case Study: Youth Empowerment Programs

The World Bank-funded Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunities Project's (KYEOP) advocacy efforts in Kenya serve as an example of the effectiveness of all-encompassing, state-sponsored employment initiatives. In order to help young people without jobs integrate into the workforce or launch their own enterprises, KYEOP offers them financial assistance and training. With thousands of young people receiving crucial vocational training and help for starting their own businesses, this initiative has had a huge impact (World Bank, 2023; Sele & Mukundi, 2024b).

The effectiveness of such initiatives, according to research by Sele and Wanjiku (2024), may be ascribed to the cooperation between international organisations and governmental entities, which guarantees the

alignment of goals and the sufficiency of resources. Economic empowerment programs serve as a direct intervention against poverty and inequality, and these measures represent a spiritual commitment to establishing equitable chances (Sele & Wanjiku, 2024; World Bank, 2023). Furthermore, these initiatives are in line with religious views on human dignity and self-sufficiency by emphasising long-term solutions like skill-building (Ndzi, 2024).

Vocational Training Initiatives

In recent years, the importance of vocational training in addressing young unemployment has grown. Technical and vocational education is emphasised in programs like the African Development Bank-funded Youth Empowerment and Skills (YES) Project in Nigeria, which positions it as a long-term solution to unemployment. In order to help young people find work or become self-employed, YES seeks to provide them with employable skills that satisfy the expectations of the modern workforce (African Development Bank, 2023; Sele & Mukundi, 2024b).

These programs are a reflection of religious justifications for empowerment in development literature, which emphasise the necessity of training in practical skills to promote economic stability and independence. Such training programs have their roots in Christian educational viewpoints that support the combination of work ethics and skill-building as avenues for holistic development (Sele and Mukundi, 2024b). Therefore, vocational training programs align with religious teachings on stewardship and production in addition to meeting economic requirements (Ndzi, 2024).

Funding for Youth-Led Enterprises

For young entrepreneurs, access to capital is still a major obstacle, especially in underdeveloped nations. The significance of financial assistance for youth-led firms is underscored by initiatives such as TEF's seed funding program and the African Union's Youth Empowerment Initiative. These initiatives have helped hundreds of young businesses flourish by providing grant money, networking opportunities, and coaching. By encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship, funding programs aimed at young people not only aid in addressing the pressing problem of unemployment but also promote long-term economic growth (African Union, 2023; Tony Elumelu Foundation, 2023).

Additionally, research by Sele and Wanjiku (2024) provide credence to the idea that supporting youth-owned businesses is an important part of development theology, which stresses resource availability and empowerment as crucial for community transformation. Since financial assistance allows people to meet their basic requirements while also making a positive contribution to their communities, this advocacy is consistent with religious approaches to poverty reduction (Sele & Mukundi, 2024; Ndzi, 2024).

The Role of Religious and Community-Based Organizations

In the past, religious and community-based organisations have been quite active in promoting youth empowerment and employment. The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) in Nigeria, for example, offers several youth empowerment initiatives, such as mentorship programs, startup money, and courses on skills training. Theological ideas that prioritise kindness, almsgiving, and social duty frequently serve as the foundation for these initiatives (RCCG, 2023; Sele & Wanjiku, 2024).

According to research by Sele and Wanjiku (2024), community-based efforts, particularly those influenced by religious principles, can give localized solutions to unemployment. Religious groups are frequently better positioned to meet community-specific issues due to their embeddedness within local contexts. They can target certain issues thanks to this grassroots strategy, which increases the impact of their lobbying work. Additionally, these programs are in line with Christian teachings about the resolution of systemic problems, especially those pertaining to the development of young people (Sele & Mukundi, 2024; Ndzi, 2024).

Summary and Recommendations

The many strategies used by both secular and religious organisations demonstrate the effectiveness of advocacy campaigns and social programs in tackling teenage unemployment. Initiatives from local churches, the Tony Elumelu Foundation's Entrepreneurship Program, and the UNDP's YouthConnekt all highlight how important advocacy is in advancing long-term job solutions. These programs are in line with religious viewpoints on development, which emphasise the value of empowering marginalised groups by offering them resources, assistance, and skills (UNDP, 2023; Sele & Mukundi, 2024b).

It is advised that governments keep working with religious and international organisations in the future to increase the scope and influence of these initiatives. A more inclusive economy would require more support for young businesses and vocational training programs, especially in underprivileged regions. Furthermore, including faith-based viewpoints on empowerment can offer insightful moral analysis, increasing the efficacy of these programs in addressing young unemployment.

Networking for Skill Development and Employment Opportunities

To address Nigeria's youth unemployment issue, networking programs that are geared towards job creation and skill development must be included. This section examines the ways in which cooperative partnerships, mentoring initiatives, and networking platforms can close the job gap for young Nigerians.

Through these programs, young people develop professional networks, learn necessary skills, and have direct access to job openings.

The Role of Social Capital in Professional Networks

Since social capital makes it easier for people to access career resources and employment possibilities, it is essential for building strong professional networks. Youth-focused networking programs in Nigeria offer a framework that cultivates connections between industry experts, mentors, and job seekers. These connections assist people negotiate the difficult job market by providing them with advice from seasoned experts, in addition to increasing their chances of finding work (Sele & Wanjiku, 2024). Additionally, religious and community-based organisations provide as support networks for young Nigerians, frequently by matching them with seasoned mentors, so reinforcing social capital (Leonard, 2024).

Professional networks tailored to Nigerian graduates, like Jobberman and the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG), aim to increase social capital by setting up workshops, events, and online discussion boards where young people may meet business leaders and prospective employers. According to Sele and Mukundi (2024), these networks may develop a culture of cooperation and ongoing learning by offering mentorship and encouraging skill-sharing. These programs highlight the importance of networking in improving the employability of young people in Nigeria. Onwuka et al. (2023) agree, pointing out that social capital developed via these programs can have a big impact on job access.

Industry Collaboration and Corporate Partnerships

Corporate collaborations between academic institutions and businesses are becoming more widely acknowledged as a successful strategy for giving graduates employment options. These collaborations frequently lead to specialised training sessions, internship programs, and graduate recruiting campaigns. According to Sele and Mukundi (2024), these partnerships enable businesses to develop a talent pipeline that is suited to their requirements in addition to giving students practical experience. Companies may improve graduates' employability by working with academic institutions and professional associations to match curriculum with industry demands.

For example, Nigeria's National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) is a government-run program that helps graduates make the transition from school to the workplace by assigning them to various sectors for a year of service. Research has indicated that these kinds of programs provide young people a competitive edge by giving them practical experience and growing their professional networks (Fajana et al., 2022). By allowing them to find and hire outstanding people straight from the university system, these alliances also help industry

(Ogundele & Oluwaseyi, 2021). Additionally, by giving businesses an affordable means of evaluating and training new hires in a nurturing learning environment, these programs help to alleviate the problems associated with unemployment (Sele & Mukundi, 2024).

Youth-Centered Employment Platforms and Skill Development Initiatives

For Nigerian graduates looking for work, job boards like LinkedIn, ConnectNigeria, and Jobberman have grown to be indispensable tools. Young people may interact with potential employers, display their abilities, and learn about employment possibilities on these networks. Furthermore, a lot of these platforms include online certification programs and courses, allowing users to gain skills that are in demand in a variety of sectors. According to Leonard's (2024) research, these platforms improve employability by making training materials available to a wider audience and giving young people the necessary skills.

Another such is the **"Teach for Nigeria"** initiative, which aims to alleviate educational disparities while also giving young Nigerians leadership and teaching opportunities. In addition to fostering professional and personal development, these programs assist participants in creating networks that will benefit them in their future employment (Igbinovia, 2020). Similar to Sele and Mukundi's (2024) findings that digital skill development platforms greatly improve employability, platforms such as Udemy and Coursera provide reasonably priced skill development courses that help Nigerian young remain competitive in the labour market.

Mentorship Programs as a Pathway to Employment

It has been shown that mentoring programs are essential for helping young Nigerians advance their careers. Young professionals learn about career paths, industry norms, and important interpersonal skills through organised mentorship programs. According to Sele and Mukundi (2024), mentoring is important in Christian educational environments because it allows young people to get career counsel as well as moral and ethical instruction, promoting a well-rounded professional approach. Initiatives such as the Tony Elumelu Foundation and the Nigerian Young Professionals Forum concentrate on establishing mentoring programs in which seasoned professionals assist young people with personal growth, entrepreneurship, and career decisions (Tony Elumelu Foundation, 2023).

Additionally, mentoring promotes the growth of soft skills—like problem-solving, cooperation, and communication—which are crucial for professional success but are frequently left out of formal education curriculum (Onwuka et al., 2023). According to Leonard (2024), these programs help mentees become more resilient and adaptive in the workplace by bridging the

gap between academic knowledge and real-world employment applications.

Creating Pathways to Employment through Professional Networks

To provide formal channels into the workforce, professional networks specifically designed for Nigerian graduates have formed, such as the Network of African Youths for Development (NAYD). These networks facilitate knowledge transfer and provide doors for internships and job placements by bringing together job seekers and industry professionals. By lowering unemployment rates and developing a more qualified workforce, these networks have an influence that extends beyond individual job searchers and benefits society. Youth who are integrated into these professional networks have a major advantage in the labour market because they have more access to training materials and employment prospects, as Sele and Wanjiku (2024) point out.

By creating strong ties between young job seekers and seasoned professionals, networking activities play a crucial role in determining Nigeria's employment environment, promoting both career advancement and financial security (Fajana et al., 2022). These networks give young professionals the tools they need to thrive in their chosen industries and lessen the difficulties of job hunting in a cutthroat market.

To overcome Nigeria's young unemployment issue, networking is essential for job and skill development. In addition to improving employability, programs emphasising business collaborations, professional contacts, and mentoring assist match the talents of Nigerian graduates with industry expectations. Nigeria should use the potential of its young by funding networking projects, which would support long-term economic growth and development.

Outcome-Interaction: The Socio-Economic Impact of Youth Unemployment

Nigeria's high rates of youth unemployment have significant socioeconomic ramifications that affect social stability, economic growth, and migratory patterns. Informed by recent data and research on the topic, such as studies by Sele and Wanjiku (2024) and insights on the economic impact of Christian education by Sele and Mukundi (2024), this part explores the dynamics and consequences of young unemployment.

✓ Economic Growth

Due to a vicious circle of underutilised human resources, decreased productivity, and stunted economic potential, youth unemployment in Nigeria restricts economic progress. Nigeria's labour market is constrained by high young unemployment, which results in a "lost generation" of underemployed people whose abilities are not maximised for economic output, as more

than half of the country's population is under 30 (Sele & Mukundi, 2024). Additionally, a large proportion of young people who are not employed lowers consumer spending, which restricts the growth of the domestic market and GDP (International Monetary Fund, 2023).

IMF research indicates that long-term youth unemployment adds to a persistent skills gap and lowers national productivity, which has a direct impact on Nigeria's GDP by stifling the potential of young professionals who might be a major engine of economic growth (IMF, 2023). Furthermore, considering religion's substantial influence on Nigeria's social fabric, Leonard Ndzi (2024) highlights that when religious organisations neglect to confront unemployment as a fundamental societal issue, the detrimental effects on economic growth may continue. Additionally, when skills continue to erode due to youth unemployment, human capital development is disrupted, resulting in "intellectual impoverishment," as defined by Sele and Wanjiku (2024), which impedes sustainable development.

✓ **Social Stability**

Youth unemployment exacerbates social instability, significantly increasing the risks of involvement in criminal activities, insurgency, and other forms of unrest. Unemployment drives desperation among young people, making them vulnerable to recruitment by extremist groups and criminal enterprises (Akinyemi, 2022). As highlighted by Sele and Wanjiku (2024), the theological approach to development underscores the moral and ethical implications of neglecting youth unemployment, which often leads to youth alienation and disenfranchisement. When economic opportunities are limited, youths are drawn to alternative sources of income and purpose, some of which involve illicit activities that destabilize communities and fuel insecurity (World Bank, 2023).

According to World Bank research from 2023, youth unemployment in Nigeria is a major factor in the rise in violence and instability, especially in metropolitan areas where socioeconomic inequality is most obvious. This is consistent with research by Sele and Mukundi (2024), who contend that political instability is directly correlated with a lack of permanent employment possibilities since economic challenges exacerbate political disenchantment. This setting creates what Leonard Ndzi (2024) refers to as "a breeding ground for social unrest," where young people who are disengaged from positive social responsibilities turn to violence or insurgency for purpose. As a result, unemployment weakens the social fabric of the country by impeding both individual development and societal stability.

✓ **Migration**

One of the main causes of both internal migration and the global "brain drain" is youth unemployment. Many young Nigerians move from rural to urban areas in search of better career possibilities,

which causes urbanisation to increase quickly without creating jobs. These rural-urban migration patterns put a burden on urban resources and fuel the growth of informal settlements, which further exacerbates socioeconomic problems (World Bank, 2023). This pattern is consistent with findings from Sele and Mukundi (2024), who point out that young people with education but no jobs frequently leave Nigeria in search of better prospects elsewhere, causing a "brain drain" that saps the country's intellectual capital.

Leonard Ndzi (2024) claims that the migratory trend reflects both an existential and economic crisis, as young people look for purposeful lives outside of their immediate surroundings. Migration becomes both a social protest alleged systematic neglect as well as an economic choice. This pattern is consistent with research by Sele and Wanjiku (2024), who argue that the failure of society to effectively integrate young people into the home economy is frequently reflected in Nigerian youth's desire for employment outside. Furthermore, Nigeria loses trained labour necessary to handle complex socio-economic challenges when educated youngsters leave for chances abroad, resulting in an irreversible intellectual deficit that stifles innovation and progress. This has an influence on long-term development.

Analysis: Synthesis of Strategies and Approaches

With the aim to effectively address young people unemployment in Nigeria, a multidimensional strategy including advocacy, networking, and lobbying tactics is needed. These tactics, when combined, can produce long-lasting and significant results. This research examines these tactics in the framework of grassroots projects and top-down policy interventions, combining insights from regional and global cases to demonstrate their effectiveness and relevance.

Lobbying for Policy Reform

To combat young unemployment, lobbying for policy reform is still crucial, particularly when it comes to advancing economic policies that encourage the creation of jobs and foster skill development. According to research by Chatterjee and Manasi (2023), effective lobbying campaigns in emerging economies frequently entail collaborations between government agencies and private sector players, resulting in laws that offer tax breaks and subsidies to businesses that employ young people. By matching corporate incentives with social benefits, this strategy promotes the private sector's involvement in employment solutions (International Labour Organisation [ILO], 2023).

Policy advocacy in Nigeria needs to focus on legislative measures that encourage young people to start their own businesses and lower entrance barriers. According to Sele and Mukundi (2024), lowering administrative barriers makes it easier for young company owners to launch ventures, creating self-employment and broadening the labour market.

Empirical research on comparable economies, like Kenya, where policy lobbying has produced favourable frameworks for micro, small, and medium-sized firms (MSMEs) and resulting in considerable job growth, lends credence to this viewpoint (World Bank, 2023; Ndiaye et al., 2022).

Advocacy for Education and Skill Development

Promoting better educational institutions and skill-building initiatives is essential to provide young Nigerians employable, relevant skills. Advocacy that supports skills-based education, particularly in technology and vocational training, is essential in preparing young people for developing labour markets, as Sele and Wanjiku (2024) point out. This has worked well in nations like Ghana, where lobbying resulted in curriculum modifications that included training in practical skills in line with the demands of the labour market (Osei-Assibey, 2021).

Additionally, community-based organisations (CBOs) have shown that promoting digital literacy and vocational education may empower young people and lower unemployment. Data from the African Development Bank (2023) indicates that young unemployment rates are lower in nations that strongly support educational reform, especially those that encourage STEM and vocational programs. Similar advocacy initiatives might be used in rural Nigeria to promote skill diversity and fair access to high-quality education, therefore closing the skills gap between urban and rural youth (Akinoyemi & Aluko, 2022).

Networking and Partnerships

Another strategic way to combat young unemployment is to establish strong networks and collaborations among stakeholders, such as the government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and the commercial sector. For example, networking programs in South Africa have linked young people with business leaders and mentors, giving them access to job prospects and priceless exposure (Musa, 2022). In Nigeria, where cooperation between academic institutions and businesses may assist match academic results with labour market demands, similar collaborations might be crucial (ILO, 2023).

Furthermore, networking between foreign funders and youth-focused NGOs might make it easier to secure funds and technical assistance for entrepreneurial initiatives, as noted by Sele and Mukundi (2024). Such networks facilitate the growth of youth-led enterprises and create a welcoming environment for new entrepreneurs, as seen in Rwanda (UNDP, 2023). Nigeria can unleash the potential of its young people, promote an innovative culture, and lessen reliance on traditional jobs by developing easily accessible mentorship programs.

Comparative Analysis of Multi-Faceted Solutions in Developing Economies

Analysing the strategies of nations like Brazil and India offers important insights into how multifaceted solutions might successfully lower youth unemployment. Youth unemployment has been considerably reduced in Brazil, especially in metropolitan areas, because to a mix of state employment programs, vocational training, and startup funding (Silva & Ramos, 2021). This achievement highlights the need for government action to stabilise the labour market and the benefits of combining financial incentives with training initiatives.

Like this, programs like "Skill India" and "Startup India" have supported entrepreneurship and skill development in India, proving the effectiveness of a two-pronged strategy that enables young people to seek employment and self-employment (Choudhary et al., 2022). Similar programs that emphasise an environment supporting young entrepreneurs' skill development and financial independence might benefit Nigeria. According to Leonard Ndzi's (2024) theological viewpoint on poverty alleviation, Nigeria may customise solutions to its socio-economic landscape by placing these activities inside local realities.

Conclusion

Nigeria's ongoing youth unemployment problem emphasises the necessity of a comprehensive, systemic strategy that may involve multiple stakeholders and offer long-term fixes. A comprehensive approach involving targeted skill development initiatives, regulatory reforms, and economic diversification is needed to address this challenge. To create a resilient environment that can house and support the nation's expanding youth population, policymakers, educational institutions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and community leaders must work together (Akinoyemi & Aluko, 2022; Chatterjee & Manasi, 2023).

Key Findings and Urgency for Action

The research shows that a combination of bottom-up social initiatives and top-down governmental measures are effective ways to address young unemployment. The establishment of a supportive environment where young people may obtain reasonably priced education, hands-on training, and employment possibilities ought to be the top priority of policy change (Osei-Assibey, 2021; Silva & Ramos, 2021). Additionally, a robust framework for advocacy and lobbying can result in advantageous policies and practices, like incentives for industries like manufacturing, technology, and agriculture that can take on a lot of entry-level workers and subsidies for companies that hire young people (Ndiaye et al., 2022; ILO, 2023).

Nigeria's economic structure has to change in order to promote inclusive and diverse growth that may help create jobs in a variety of industries, including both

established and growing ones. Because an over-reliance on one industry, like oil, has made the economy susceptible to outside shocks, diversification is essential. Nigeria may embrace best practices for creating jobs and fostering sustainable growth by learning from economies that are comparable to its own, such as Brazil and South Africa (Choudhary et al., 2022; Musa, 2022).

Recommendations for Stakeholders

It is imperative that policymakers actively participate in the implementation of policies that facilitate youth employment, encourage youth entrepreneurship, and assist small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs). According to the African Development Bank (2023), fostering an innovative and independent culture may be achieved by enacting laws that loosen bureaucratic restrictions and offering funding to young entrepreneurs. To connect curriculum with the demands of the labour market, education reforms should also prioritise training in practical skills in high-demand fields like technology and vocational crafts (Akinyemi & Aluko, 2022; Sele & Mukundi, 2024).

Utilizing grassroots initiatives that give young people access to financial literacy, training, and mentorship, NGOs and community organisations significantly enhance government initiatives. Community community-based programs that strengthen ties between companies, youth organisations, and local authorities may facilitate knowledge exchange and the development of local, sustainable solutions to unemployment. According to research conducted by the United Nations Development Programme in 2023, community participation is essential to making sure that programs and policies are in line with local needs and have the backing they need to be implemented.

Fostering an Inclusive and Diversified Economy

Addressing unemployment requires an inclusive economy that encourages young engagement from all areas and backgrounds. Nigeria may decrease disparities that lead to high unemployment rates and generate work opportunities for underserved populations by emphasising economic inclusiveness. This calls for both aggressive private sector investment in undeveloped areas and underprivileged people in addition to government engagement (Ndiaye et al., 2022; Sele & Wanjiku, 2024).

Furthermore, creating an atmosphere that encourages young people to be creative, daring, and entrepreneurial may have a profound impact. According to research conducted in Ghana and Kenya, young people are more likely to participate in profitable economic activities and eventually help create jobs and strengthen the economy when they have access to resources, mentoring, and support systems (Osei-Assibey, 2021; World Bank, 2023). Therefore, the problem of young unemployment in Nigeria is not insurmountable; rather, it calls for consistent dedication,

teamwork, and a flexible strategy that can adjust to shifting economic conditions.

In conclusion, the best course of action for lowering young unemployment in Nigeria is a collaborative, multi-stakeholder strategy that incorporates both systemic governmental reforms and community-driven initiatives. Policymakers and community leaders may create a future where young Nigerians have access to fulfilling work opportunities and the resources needed to establish a stable and thriving economy by concentrating on an inclusive and diverse economic strategy.

References

- Adebayo, M., & Jimoh, L. (2021). Educational reforms and skill gaps in Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Employment Studies*.
- Adejumo, K., & Musa, I. (2021). Barriers to private sector growth in Nigeria. *Journal of African Economic Studies*.
- Adepoju, A., & Fakunle, A. (2021). Oil dependency and economic diversification in Nigeria. *Journal of African Economic Development*.
- Akinyemi, O., & Aluko, O. (2022). Vocational training and employment among Nigerian youth. *African Journal of Vocational Education*, 10(3), 205-219.
- African Development Bank. (2023). Empowering youth through economic inclusion and support programs. Retrieved from <https://www.afdb.org>
- Adeleke, J. (2022). Social implications of youth unemployment in Nigeria. *African Journal of Social Studies*.
- Chatterjee, S., & Manasi, S. (2023). Lobbying for youth employment policies in emerging economies. *Journal of Economic Policy Research*, 15(1), 47-60.
- Choudhary, A., Kumar, R., & Singh, D. (2022). Skill development and employment generation in India: Successes and challenges. *Indian Journal of Labour Economics*, 65(2), 102-119.
- International Labour Organization. (2022). Youth employment challenges in Nigeria. Retrieved from <https://ilo.org>
- International Labour Organization. (2023). Trends and impacts of unemployment among Nigerian youth.
- International Labour Organization. (2023). Youth employment policies in Africa: Bridging the gap. Geneva: ILO.
- Musa, I. (2023). Insecurity and crime: Consequences of youth unemployment in Nigeria. *Journal of Security and Development*.
- Musa, K. (2022). Networks for youth employment in South Africa. *African Journal of Social Work*, 14(2), 89-101.
- National Bureau of Statistics. (2022). Labor force statistics: Unemployment and underemployment report.

- National Bureau of Statistics. (2023). Labor force statistics: Unemployment and underemployment report.
- Ndiaye, M., Diallo, F., & Sy, A. (2022). Policy interventions for youth employment in Africa. *Journal of African Policy Studies*, 20(3), 65-78.
- Onyejekwe, F. (2021). Youth migration and economic disparities in Nigeria.
- Okafor, C. (2023). Industrialization and youth employment in Nigeria. *African Development Review*.
- Osei-Assibey, E. (2021). The role of advocacy in vocational education reform in Ghana. *Ghana Journal of Education Policy*, 12(4), 154-170.
- Oyewole, F. (2023). Demographic pressures and employment challenges in Nigeria. *Population and Development Perspectives*.
- Sele, J. P., & Mukundi, M. B. (2024a). The role of Christian education in shaping political stability and economic growth in developing countries. *Greener Journal of Social Sciences*, 14(2), 166-174.
<https://doi.org/10.15580/gjss.2024.2.102024135>
- Sele, J. P., & Mukundi, M. B. (2024b). Education and economic empowerment: How political policies shape the future of youth employment. *Greener Journal of Social Sciences*, 14(2), 175-186.
<https://doi.org/10.15580/gjss.2024.2.102024136>
- Sele, J. P., & Wanjiku, C. (2024). Theology of development: Addressing poverty and inequality in Nigeria and Kenya. *Greener Journal of Social Sciences*, 14(2), 156-165.
<https://doi.org/10.15580/gjss.2024.2.093024123>
- Silva, C., & Ramos, J. (2021). Employment and skills training in Brazil: An analysis of government programs. *Brazilian Journal of Economic Policy*, 22(1), 33-46.
- United Nations Development Programme. (2021). Urbanization and youth unemployment in Nigeria.
- United Nations Development Programme. (2023). Youth-led entrepreneurship and innovation in Rwanda: Challenges and prospects.
- World Bank. (2021). Nigeria's economic outlook: The role of oil and diversification. Retrieved from <https://worldbank.org/nigeria-economic-outlook>
- World Bank. (2022). Youth unemployment in Nigeria: A national challenge and the role of social enterprises.
- World Bank. (2023). Nigeria's economic growth and population pressures.

About the Authors

1. John Sele Philip

John Sele Philip is a dynamic scholar and advocate whose work bridges theology, development studies, and social justice to confront the pressing challenges facing marginalized communities, particularly in his native Plateau State, Nigeria. A Berom from Gyel, Jos, Sele

carries the weight of personal loss and the enduring trauma of the genocidal violence targeting indigenous Christians, which fuels his relentless pursuit of truth and restoration. Currently pursuing a Master's degree in Development Studies with a specialization in the Theology of Development at Africa International University (AIU) in Nairobi, Kenya, he holds a Bachelor's degree in Theology with a minor in Development Studies from the same institution. His academic journey is marked by a profound commitment to integrating theological principles with practical development strategies, as evidenced by his authorship of the influential blog, Theology of Development (<https://theologydev.com>), which explores faith-based solutions to societal challenges. As a lecturer in Development Studies at AIU (<https://aiu.ac.ke>), Sele inspires students to engage critically with issues of governance, social inclusion, and community empowerment. His leadership extends beyond academia, having served as the International Students Representative at AIU, and was awarded the "Best International Student President in East Africa 2025" by ASLA Awards (<https://asla.africa>). Sele is also the Chief Executive Officer of Content Creators Hub (<https://ourcreatorshub.org>), a platform fostering creative solutions for social impact and was awarded by Inua Awards (<https://inuaawards.com>) as the "Innovator of the Decade in East Africa, 2025". Sele's scholarly contributions, including peer-reviewed articles on peacebuilding and community-driven development (Sele et al., 2024; Sele & Mukundi, 2024), reflect his dedication to empowering marginalized groups, particularly in conflict-ridden Plateau State. His research interests—governance, social justice, Educational Reforms, and the theology of development—centre on practical applications within the African context, addressing systemic inequities and advocating for inclusive policies. Informed by years of grassroots engagement and a deep-rooted faith, Sele's work in this article is both a scholarly exposé and a personal crusade. As a survivor of the violence that has fractured his homeland, he channels his grief and vision into a clarion call for global accountability and local resilience. His ultimate aspiration is to serve Plateau State, restoring its cultural mosaic through justice, peacebuilding, and sustainable development, ensuring that the voices of survivors like those in Dogo Nahawa and Bokkos are amplified and honored.

2. Polycarp Kim Zongo

Polycarp Kim D. Zongo is a dynamic Christian leader, preacher, revivalist, teacher, counselor, orator, writer, musician, and scholar. A proud son of Jos, Nigeria, from the Berom tribe, he brings a unique cultural and theological depth to his work. He is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Development Studies at Africa International University, Nairobi, Kenya, with a specialization in Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation.

With extensive experience in both church and societal leadership, Polycarp has authored numerous scientific research articles, devotionals, and delivered teachings, seminars, and messages across Nigeria and

beyond. His work is marked by a deep passion for life transformation, social impact, and community restoration. He is joyfully married and a devoted father to three wonderful children.

Cite this Article: Sele, JP; Zongo, PK (2025). Youth Unemployment and Its Impact on Nigeria's Socio-Economic Landscape. *Greener Journal of Social Sciences*, 15(1): 258-270, <https://doi.org/10.15580/gjss.2025.1.082625131>.
