JOBS, The Big Picture
A quick guide to Zambia’s employment landscape

The Youth Respond
Land, Zambia’s biggest economic weapon
Value addition is the route to profit making in farming
“Learn to do a job rather than learn to get a job!”

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WORLD BANK GROUP
In September 2013, the World Bank launched the second Zambia Economic Brief, entitled Zambia’s Jobs Challenge: Realities on the Ground. The intention of the brief was to present data and analysis relating to jobs and unemployment in Zambia, and in a manner that might stimulate further public discussion. The report was intentionally written more as a diagnosis of the problem than as a prescription of how that problem should be addressed. It highlighted the fact that whilst most Zambians are employed, a large number of them remain mired in poverty because their earnings from work are low. It drew attention to the low productivity evident in the agricultural sector as well as the fact that most of the unemployed are in fact urban youth from relatively better off families. In presenting these findings among others, our intention was to use the report to start a series of public discussions and debates that would endeavor to draw out Zambian solutions to the problems reflected in the data.

The response was overwhelming. The Universities’ television debate competition was not only exciting but it was also thought provoking. Equal to the task, was the nationwide writing competition whose results are featured in this edition of home-grown Zambian response to the facts and figures shared in the Zambia Economic Brief. The featured writers comprise students from across Zambia who were competitively selected as part of the ‘Think Jobs’ writing competition. They were trained to write articles that tackled economic subjects in a manner accessible to a public audience. They were then invited to write their own response pieces on the topic of jobs and unemployment in Zambia. The best writers have been offered an internship at the World Bank.

The views in these articles are those of the authors and do not reflect the views of the World Bank.

Kundhavi Kadiresan
Country Director for Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe

In reading these responses, you will find a broad range of discussion, often provocative, as to how Zambia’s employment challenges can be tackled. The conclusions are the authors’ own; there are those who find the core issue to be one of education and skills training, whilst others focus on policies that could improve productivity in agriculture. The study discusses issues as diverse as cultural mindset, absence of entrepreneurial training, weaknesses in labour laws and low investments in agriculture research and development.

In reading the articles, I am thrilled to see the level of engagement, analysis and passion that is demonstrated by this promising generation. They have taken the World Bank data, challenged it, drawn upon other resources and made conclusions that are deeply informed and considered. And in doing so, they remind institutions like the World Bank of the importance of bringing these innovative voices to the fore. Clearly, there is much to be gained by allowing Zambia’s youth to have a proactive voice in discussions of policy direction and development.

This edition is a small attempt on our part to do better at engaging a diversity of voices on critical development issues. My hope is that you will come away from it, as I did, with an impression of how much the solution to Zambia’s own development problems are in the hands of Zambians themselves. My heartfelt congratulations go to the students for their efforts and commitment. The partnership with the policy makers, the private sector, the CSOs and the students has made this a unique experience for the World Bank Group.
The Brief in Brief: The Big Picture

ZAMBIA’S JOBS CHALLENGE
REALITIES ON THE GROUND

THE ISSUE of jobs is important to all Zambians. People care about jobs because earnings from work are generally the biggest share of their incomes. For poor Zambians, improving labor earnings could be the route out of poverty.

DISCUSSIONS about how to create jobs and reduce unemployment pervade the media, policy documents and debates. In order for these discussions to be informed and relevant, it is important to understand the realities on the ground...

In the 2013 Afrobarometer survey “unemployment” topped the list of the most important problems facing Zambia that the government should address.

This is a product of the Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Unit of the World Bank Country Office in Lusaka. All the above data can be found in the second edition of the Zambia Economic Brief entitled "Zambia’s Jobs Challenge: Realities on the Ground". The full study as well as previous economic briefs can be found at www.worldbank.org/en/country/zambia
THE ZAMBIAN YOUTH GIVE THEIR VIEWS ON HOW THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR CAN CREATE JOBS ON A BROAD SCALE AND LIFT RURAL COMMUNITIES OUT OF POVERTY
Land, Zambia’s biggest economic weapon

By Mercy F Zulu

Land, Zambia’s biggest economic weapon

Approximately 8 kilometres off the road to Solwezi in the Copperbelt province, one is unpleasantly welcomed by a dusty gravel road that pilots them to a remote settlement deep into the heart of the province. Kansoka farming block in Lumwanyama is characterized by sparsely distributed mud huts, dense vegetation and tough terrain. There is no disputing that life in this area is hard, as it’s blatantly obvious from the lack of social amenities such as electricity, a clean and dependable water supply and the appalling state of infrastructure or rather, the lack of it, amongst other required services. This is an all too familiar scenario for several rural communities in Zambia; and while I surveyed my surroundings and quivered at the thought of permanent residence in this locality, I realised dismally that others undeniably call this home.

The main economic activity in Kansoka is agriculture. It’s the single most important livelihood for the locals, ranging from employment on private farms, to self-employment through subsistence farming and finally peasant farming. The average local lives by the soil, as do over 60% of Zambian citizens in informal employment. Agriculture is the only form of livelihood for the poor and is the main source of food and income for rural households. As such, it is an important sector to the country’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP), its complete potential has not yet been realised; additionally, despite being the chief employer in the country, it produces the poorest workers.

This sector requires ‘Smart Growth’, a policy that would address the pitfalls in this potentially lucrative industry and ensure that the benefits trickle down effectively to its participants. The initial vigour with which Kallamakungu cooperative began in 2005 seems to have dwindled over time and with this, the drive to provide a better standard of living for its members. Sadly the zest of the membership appears to have diminished to mere survival. As I listened to the challenges that this cooperative faced and upon further research, realised that I had collided with the classic example of adversity and how it affected small scale farmers in this country.

The first and most obvious grievance the farmers raised was the lack of sufficient finances. Food Reserve Agency (FRA) through the Farmer Input Support Program (FISP) has provided a better standard of living for its members. Although this is much needed assistance, it is still a far cry from the necessary requirements needed to ensure a good yield such as the farming equipment and transportation costs amongst others.

Over the years the government has steadily increased its expenditure on the agricultural industry and although this is appreciated, it is my strong conviction that ‘the bird needs to leave the nest’. Contrary to their plight, it is my view that Zambian small scale farmers need to be self-sustaining. In order to do this,
the industry needs to receive capital investment that provides for conducive farming environments which leads us to the subsequent grievance, of poor transportation and communication networks.

Travelling to and from these rural farming communities is an agonisingly long experience owed to the poorly structured gravel roads that become almost impassable in the rainy season. It’s through transportation costs, because of the poor road networks, that the farmers are exploited since they have no other means of hauling their produce to the market places. This also makes these areas unappealing for potential investors who could partner with the cooperatives and provide that aspect (finances) that they so desperately need.

‘Smart Growth’ simply means strategic policies implemented to translates into the lives of citizens’ and it’s long-term investment such as, providing regular training workshops to the rural farmers that will equip them with additional knowledge and enhance their skills of efficient and resourceful crop production. Furthermore, these workshops could also serve to marketing skills for their products. Moreover, the training could educate them on financial management to guarantee re-investment and business discipline. Smart growth requires smart minds.

Additionally, and most importantly pursuing agricultural R&D (Research and Development) aggressively will provide solutions of superior farming techniques and equipment. It will also delve into uncharted territory such as food processing. There needs to be a paradigm shift from being a raw material producing nation to one that manufactures out of its own agricultural products on a mass scale. The last fifty years have been characterised by maize production; the next fifty should be characterised by cornflakes production and possibly exportation.

Recent reports have shown that Western Province, one of the least developed regions in Zambia has enormous potential to grow and export cashew nuts, as well as export cattle. Shangombo Cashew Corridor has the prospect of producing 250 000 tons per year with a turnover of approximately US$106 million and creating roughly 30,000 farm jobs. Additionally, cashew nuts are distinguished from other nuts because they are reputed to be highly nutritious, heart-healthy and have precious allied, cashew nuts are distinguished.

There needs to be a paradigm shift in the attitudes of farmers to the cattle ban it has basically been seen as heart-breaking and has plagued the minds of Zambian farmers. Kansoka, but several other rural farming communities all over the country that attest to a similar situation, there has not been substantial investment in the development of the livestock farming sector. However, it is timely to note that cattle production and possible exportation is a BIG economic weapon and it’s time to think of it as such.

There is a need to rethink the way Africa is being perceived in the world. Africa’s increasing population coupled with the climate change has made the continent to become a haven for investments particularly in agro-processing. For example, in the last sixty years, Africa has been characterised by maize; albeit, nine years in existence, there has been a shift in the production and possibly exportation of vegetables such as cabbages, tomatoes and beans which are high in demand in Europe.

Organic, healthy food which is highly sought after by nations beset by health related diseases; this could serve as one of the dimensions of advertising that may also lead to expanding the export base. As the saying goes, ‘be the best at your trade and sell it’; agriculture is Zambia’s trade and in my view the nation’s ‘El Dorado’.

Mercy F Zulu

Mercy F Zulu is 1st prize winner of the ‘Think jobs’ writing competition. Mercy an Economics student from the University of Zambia, believes that policy making is key to tackling the problems faced by both Zambia and the world at large. Mercy is looking to pursue a career in international development with a specific focus on policy analysis.

Ngosa Chungu

I think that mobile money credit building to then facilitate micro-lending is the way to go. This model is already working in Africa, most notably in Kenya, the paradigm for mobile money empowerment especially in the rural areas. We already have facilities like Zoona here, let’s build on that and offer a choice of (mobile) micro financial services that can offer different solutions to the various types of financing issues people have raised.”

Mutoba Ngoma

...the free trade economy and the lack of proper regulatory policy makes it difficult to get value for your products or services.”

Paul Nyambe

“Starting up your own business in Zambia is generally a viable path to take. However, there are considerable challenges hindering sustainability in this endeavor...There is more that needs to be done in areas of creating and reinforcing entrepreneurial support structures. This is reaffirmed in the recently released Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Report for 2012 which highlights Zambia to have the highest Total Entrepreneurial Activities (TEA) ratings especially among the youth in the Sub Saharan Africa region, but at the same recording very low business sustainability ratings...my simple solution to this in general terms is embracing the notion of the entrepreneurial imperative. The need to support and encourage entrepreneurial activities at all levels of our society.”
THINK JOBS |
the industry needs to receive capital investment that provides for conducive farming environments which leads us to the subsequent grievance, of poor transportation and communication networks. Travelling to and from these rural farming communities is an agonisingly long experience owed to the poorly structured gravel roads that become almost impassable in the rainy season. These poor conditions add to the already high transport costs, because of the poor road networks, that the farmers are exploited since they have no other means of hauling their produce to the market places. This also makes these areas unappealing for potential investors who could partner with the cooperatives and provide that aspect (finances) that they so desperately need.

'Smart Growth' simply means 'strategic policies implemented to ensure that economic growth translates into the lives of citizens' and it's the key to increasing employment in the agricultural industry. This can be achieved by embarking on long-term investment such as, providing regular training workshops to the rural farmers that will equip them with additional knowledge and enhance their skills of efficient and resourceful crop production. Furthermore, these workshops could also serve to familiarize them with modern farming techniques, as well as improve marketing skills for their products. Moreover, the training could educate them on financial management to guarantee re-investment and business discipline. Smart growth requires smart minds.

YOUTH SPEAK!

IN ZAMBIA.

WHAT SOME OF YOU HAD TO SAY ABOUT EMPLOYMENT

Through our Think Jobs Online Platform, we have been seeking your feedback and here is what some of you had to say about employment in Zambia.

Louise Mulomba

I think the reason why Zambia has very high unemployment rates is, as citizens we have been brought up with the mindset of only wanting to work for others. The current school curriculum does not encourage a person to realise their potential and aspire to do something of their own. I think everything starts with a person’s mindset, hence it would be very important to realise a person’s capability whilst they are still young. Zambia is vested with people who have very good capabilities that if put to use can help improve the economy.

Agness Banda

“Zambia's job challenge is too big... Unemployment rates are high. When jobs are created, they are usually casual ones.”

Value addition is the route to profit making in farming

Agriculture plays an important role in human development. According to the 2013 Zambia Economic Brief published by the World Bank, the agricultural sector accounts for 81 percent of the working poor and 43 percent of the non-poor. Therefore, the sector is not only a major employer, but also a means of livelihood for the majority of the Zambian people.

According to the 2013 Technical Report for the Post-2015 Development Agenda published by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, “Agriculture refers broadly to the cultivation of animals, plants and other life forms for the production of food, fibre, biofuels, raw materials, drugs and other purposes, including aquaculture and agroforestry.”

The 2009 Agricultural Sector Development Strategy (ASDS) document produced by the Republic of Kenya says: “the agricultural sector comprises of six major sub-sectors, namely: food crops, industrial crops, livestock, fisheries, horticulture, and forestry.”

The 2006 Zambia Vision 2030 document produced by the Republic of Zambia says: “Zambia is endowed with 42 million ha of arable land. And about 36 percent of the fresh water resources in the SADC region are in Zambia, which if effectively utilized, could make agriculture a mainstay of the economy.”

The current position in Zambia is that little or no value is added to agricultural products. This means our agricultural sector is the producer of primarily raw materials.

In order for the agricultural sector to create jobs on a broad scale and...
It is important that we change the systems in which smallholders operate. The best way to support smallholder farmers has less to do with things they can do to improve their farms and more to do with the systems in which they operate. We need to take a broader approach to developments that target the entire market system. Through the market systems approach, more jobs will be created and rural communities will be lifted out of poverty.

Connecting farmers to markets holds the greatest potential for transforming the agricultural sector insofar as job creation is concerned. Farmers require reliable local and international markets for their produce. The agricultural sector should focus on increasing production and on how those products will be processed, packaged and marketed throughout the year. Increasing productivity is an entry point for creating more jobs and entering domestic and export markets.

Increasing production through the introduction of labour intensive innovations will allow the same amount of agricultural labour to cultivate more land, or through the introduction of better seed varieties, improved soil fertility and irrigation that raise land productivity, will create more jobs and lift rural communities out of poverty.

In the case of food stuffs, we need food processing industries to process and package agricultural products. For example, we need industries to process groundnuts, soyabeans and sunflower into cooking oil, pineapples, mangoes, oranges and guavas into local juice, maize into mealie meal, cassava into cassava meal, flour, chips and starch and wheat into flour. These industries will create jobs on a broad scale, as more people will be employed to process and package the products. Markets for food are booming in urban areas due to urbanization. I believe this is an opportunity for smallholders in rural areas to bring their farm produce to urban markets. This will certainly put more money in the hands of farmers and lift them out of poverty.

Improving rural infrastructure and access to resources for food production will increase production, raise smallholder incomes and create more jobs.

We need to locate smaller, labour-intensive plants near farms in rural areas that can operate at a lower cost, produce high quality products and create a reliable market for farmers. These smaller, labour intensive plants will create more jobs for the local people.

In case of industrial crops such as cotton and tobacco, we need factories to process and add value to these crops. For example, for cotton we need firms involved in spinning, weaving and dying of cotton garments and for tobacco we need cigarette factories. These factories will employ a lot of people, therefore, creating jobs on a broad scale. There is need to inject more money in Mulungushi Textile for example for it to rebound if we are serious about adding value to cotton and create more jobs.

The demand for livestock products (milk, meat and egg) has increased both in Zambia and the region. Increasing livestock production and adding value will certainly create more jobs and lift rural communities out of poverty. Fish is the primary source of protein for many people in the world. Therefore, fish farming can be a profitable business. Establishing fish farms country wide will create more jobs for farmers.

The horticulture industry has potential to create more jobs. However, the current position in Zambia is that once farmers produce flowers, they are cut and packed in boxes for export. Processing and packaging is done abroad. This way we are exporting jobs. Cutting, processing and packaging the flowers in Zambia will create jobs on a broad scale as more people will be employed at each level of the value chain.

The agriculture sector must focus on new skills, younger and more entrepreneurial farmers, who will be able to compete at global scale. They must be well versed in business, to be able to run sound agribusinesses that will make agriculture modern, commercial and profitable.

The role of government in these areas is to provide incentives for the private sector to add value to local farm produce and unlock market opportunities for farmers along the value chains.

The government should develop special tax incentives that will motivate the private sector to invest in rural areas. Such investments will create jobs directly to the people in rural communities and lift them out of poverty.

The private sector must be supported by securing low interest rate financing that will allow them to set up factories to process agricultural products.
Agriculture, the untapped job creator

By Ipyana Chiundinundi

“My name is Zinji,” the woman I met in Mbila said to me. Mbila is a rural area located in Itizhi-Tezhi – a small but fascinating town located 115km off Mongu road. The town is closer to Choma town than Namwala, the bordering town to the south east. I found myself here because I was taking part in a maize destruction exercise under the Food Reserve Agency (FRA).

Zinji and her husband are subsistence farmers who grow crops mainly for home consumption. Being the mother of the household, Zinji works really hard in order to see to it that there is food for her entire family. This is the norm in most rural areas. Old people are left to man villages while the young go to cities in search of jobs. This, however, is a great drawback to development in these areas because most of the aged people cannot make use of their farmlands effectively. This has resulted in high levels of poverty experienced by many households.

It is ironic to learn that even if young people were around, poverty would still besiege many households. This is so because most of the youths are not interested in doing agricultural jobs. This reminded me of many of my colleagues in the school of Agricultural Sciences whose preferences of jobs after school are dominantly Banks and NGOs and many city-based work places. Most jobs within the sector are not the kind most graduates prefer because they are synonymous with a lot of physical labour and are said not to be ‘smart’.

Research carried out by the Institute of Development Studies in 2012 revealed that agriculture in Africa has a lot of untapped potential to create jobs, both directly and indirectly.
This idea reminded me of how coffee is actually grown in our country and then exported in its raw state then later imported at higher prices. If well-known brands such as Nestle would be encouraged to open plants in Zambia and go on contract farming with local farmers this would improve farm productivity and ultimately create jobs for many local people. The virtue of this improvement would be an increase in agro-raw materials leading to low input costs of raw materials but high creation of jobs. This was the basis for setting up the pineapple plant in Mwinilunga, tea processing in Kawambwa and sugar processing in Mazabuka.

To ensure that the required amounts of raw materials are produced, farming has to match with the processing industries’ requirements and the assessed market for the processed goods. With the availability of local raw materials, productivity of processing companies becomes high and costs of production are likely to be lower translating to profits for companies and more jobs for local people. Moreover, the buying of raw materials means more income will be generated to local farmers this would improve industries such as fruit processing companies would not need to spend so much on importation of fruits such as mangoes that are in abundance in this country and are wasted yearly. Therefore it is evident that value addition is the highest contributor to job creation in the sector as it also tackles the issue of rural poverty. The location of these plants in the areas of high production e.g. cotton plants in the eastern province would contribute greatly to the locals.

The improvement of the sector in order for job creation to occur would be incomplete without incorporating research. It is through breeding programs that climate smart crops are developed and as a result jobs are created for researchers.

My chat with Zinji made me understand things from a more realistic angle and from the perspective of one who is actually experiencing the woes of unemployment and poverty. All in all, I feel improved road networks as well as good marketing policies should be a great start to solving the two problems in the nation that may seem separate but are in every way intertwined.
Agriculture, more than just a part-time job

By Gavenius M'hanje

Agriculture is for the uneducated, for those who have failed to make it in the corporate world or the retired. That was my way of thinking as a child; okay to be honest, that was my way of thinking until I started to figure out how the agriculture sector could create jobs and lift rural communities out of poverty. Most of us have a wrong perspective about agriculture and we don’t realize how crucial it is to economic growth. I read in one of the World Bank reports that “young people don’t want to be the farmers their grand-parents were; hoe in hand, tilling the soil in the scorching sun, breaking their backs, harvesting barely enough to feed their families.” None of us want that life, we all want white collar jobs, sitting in a fancy office, enjoying hot coffee while we make orders and watch things get done. Beautiful life that is, but as a people we must come back to reality. Think of it like this, how many of these white collar jobs are available on the market right now? And what role are they playing in helping create more jobs and lift rural communities out of poverty?

I changed my perception about agriculture for a very simple reason. Firstly I realised that agriculture is important for economic and social development in Zambia, this is because the majority of the population resides in rural areas and more than 80% of the total employment for both formal and informal jobs is in agriculture. So clearly this is the sector to target in order to lift rural communities out of poverty. The plan is simple, the government should transform the agriculture sector and empower peasants to farm as a business and bring commercial value to their endeavours. This can be done by providing markets for the farmers, one way is by promoting commercial farm operations need labourers. There is however a problem as most of the labourers are paid minimum wages and that does very little in reducing poverty. This problem can be tackled by enforcing minimum wage laws, the government should for instance increase the minimum wages for agriculture workers, monitor the implementation and make sure that farms adhere and make sure that farms adhere. With more than 64% of the population living on less than a dollar per day and agriculture being the major employer in the Zambia, this will lift rural communities out of poverty.

Secondly I realised that agriculture has ripple effects, this means an improvement in agriculture brings about benefits in other sectors. Let us take the manufacturing industry as an example; it heavily depends on raw materials from agriculture. Hence when agriculture is improved, there will be an upsurge in raw materials and consequently the manufacturing industries will be boosted. I believe as a country we have no excuse to be importing certain commodities such as food when we have the capacity to produce our own. Think about it, Zambia has a total area of 42 million hectares which can be used for agriculture production and rainfall ranging between 800mm to 1,400mm annually. These are perfect conditions for production of a broad range of crops, fish and livestock. So why not produce our own?

Frankly I don’t understand why as a country we choose to export raw materials and then buy them back as finished goods when we can process them locally. We should look at engaging in agro-processing, this will not only help the country save money used on imports but also create a lot of jobs. Agro-processing industries avail employment opportunities regardless of whether one is suitably qualified in the agriculture profession or not. We can take Zambeef as an example; it currently employs over 5,500 staff from various professions.

Thirdly I noticed that agriculture helps families save a higher portion of their earnings; it reduces money spent on food. The thing is native agriculture produce like cassava, sweet potatoes and rice are enjoyed in Zambia without the need for extra additions like relish or sauce. Therefore this helps families channel their funds to other needs. While others would deem this as a sacrifice of fine dining, we should look at engaging in agro-processing, this will not only help the country save money used on imports but also create a lot of jobs. Agro-processing industries avail employment opportunities regardless of whether one is suitably qualified in the agriculture profession or not. We can take Zambeef as an example; it currently employs over 5,500 staff from various professions. We should look at engaging in agro-processing, this will not only help the country save money used on imports but also create a lot of jobs. Agro-processing industries avail employment opportunities regardless of whether one is suitably qualified in the agriculture profession or not. We can take Zambeef as an example; it currently employs over 5,500 staff from various professions. We should look at engaging in agro-processing, this will not only help the country save money used on imports but also create a lot of jobs. Agro-processing industries avail employment opportunities regardless of whether one is suitably qualified in the agriculture profession or not. We can take Zambeef as an example; it currently employs over 5,500 staff from various professions.
for most they are great meals and not only that, they can sustain for breakfast, lunch and supper. It is evident that agriculture is the primary livelihood source for most Zambians, thus the government must increase their investment in agriculture. Improving the growth conditions for agriculture is critical for improving the livelihood conditions of most Zambians.

So if agriculture is so wonderful, why have successive governments failed to prosper the nation through it? The answer lies in our mindset as a nation; we have a wrong perspective about agriculture. Dependence on rain fed crops does not do us any good. Diversification will not only create more jobs, but also reduce the risk in the case of crop failure and poor market conditions. In this regard, Zambia should do more when it comes to agriculture activities, for example, we should engage in Bio-fuel manufacturing. Let me use Nakambala sugar estates as an example; it is the single biggest cane sugar milling operation in Africa. Due to its large sugar cane production the estates can venture in the production of ethanol which will lead to creation of jobs and growth in the economy.

However, to fully enjoy the fruits of agriculture, local farmers must be protected. Most of these farmers are poor, and worse off they have no access to financial assistance. The government should give them land rights and title deeds as this will help them when in need of capital. Furthermore, women participation in agriculture must be encouraged as they are essential for food security. It is evident that Zambia has the potential to create more jobs and lift rural communities out of poverty using the agriculture sector. Like Arthur Keith said, the employment of agriculture is the first big step towards a civilized life.

Lastly I discovered that Zambia has the potential to be a dominant force on the international scene when it comes to agriculture produce. All that is needed is diversification, dependence on rain fed crops does not do us any good. Diversification will not only create more jobs, but also reduce the risk in the case of crop failure and poor market conditions. In this regard, Zambia should do more when it comes to agriculture activities, for example, we should engage in Bio-fuel manufacturing. Let me use Nakambala sugar estates as an example; it is the single biggest cane sugar milling operation in Africa. Due to its large sugar cane production the estates can venture in the production of ethanol which will lead to creation of jobs and growth in the economy.

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Bio-fuels, the Zambian agricultural sector’s cash cow

by Mukuka Mulenga

The tragedy grabbed national and international headlines, confirming a fact the 2013 Afrobarometer survey had stated all along – that unemployment is the most pervasive socio-economic problem facing Zambia today. Question is: how severe a socio-economic burden is it?

If Central Statistics figures are anything to go by, unemployment is a more serious problem amongst youth age groups. The peak is in the age-groups 15-24. Given that young people (under 25 years) in Zambia comprise about 63 percent (roughly 6 million) of the total population, youth unemployment must be an exceptional apprehension for Zambian policy architects. In fact, every year, over 240,000 school leavers are entering the labor market without hope of finding a job. This hopelessness is exacerbated by a decision by government – the largest employer in the country – to sanction a jobs freeze.

Desperation is driving Zambia’s jobless youths to the brink of despair, forcing them to clench to the straws. In 2012, thousands of them turned up at Great Lakes Products, a local fisheries enterprise in the fishing town of Mpulungu that wanted only a handful of casual workers. Media reports placed their number at 5,000, which was absurd, considering that the town has a population of about 8,500 people.

In the stampede to enter the company’s premises and get even a whiff of a chance at a job, 11 people died, including pregnant women and children. Six others were seriously injured.

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The tragedy grabbed national and international headlines, confirming a fact the 2013 Afrobarometer survey had stated all along – that unemployment is the most pervasive socio-economic problem facing Zambia today. Question is: how severe a socio-economic burden is it?

If Central Statistics figures are anything to go by, unemployment is a more serious problem amongst youth age groups. The peak is in the age-groups 15-24. Given that young people (under 25 years) in Zambia comprise about 63 percent (roughly 6 million) of the total population, youth unemployment must be an exceptional apprehension for Zambian policy architects. In fact, every year, over 240,000 school leavers are entering the labor market without hope of finding a job. This hopelessness is exacerbated by a decision by government – the largest employer in the country – to sanction a jobs freeze.

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Employment analysts reason that the Zambian economy must create over 400,000 new jobs per year to ensure that the unemployment rate does not rise. To absorb new entrants into the labor market, the economy should create over 600,000 jobs per annum. Such a mammoth task requires simple, yet bold solutions.

Zambia is home to about 40 per cent or more of Southern Africa’s fresh water; with quality arable land in excess of several European countries put together. In fact, she has a land mass of 752,000 sq km; of this, more than half (420,000 sq km) has medium to high quality arable potential. Statistics such as these scream that Zambia’s agricultural sector possesses noteworthy potential to create thousands if not millions of jobs if correctly exploited. Any responsible government would do well to capitalise on this—especially if incidents similar to the Mplungu stampede are to be avoided.

The million dollar question then is, how would the agricultural sector facilitate job creation? There is a jobs cow that is waiting to be milked in the biofuel sphere. The use of agriculture to produce biofuel is an innovative, 21st Century path that government can take in its quest to exponentially reduce unemployment. If agriculture is to be a significant driver of the economy, lifting millions out of joblessness and destitution, then radical ideas which stray from the traditional, small-scale, hoe to ground, and subsistence notion of farming must be given primary.

Exploring the use of biofuels as a cleaner alternative to fossil fuels not only creates jobs capacity in the agro-sector, but it results in a spillover of jobs in sectors such as energy and manufacturing. In this regard, Zambia would be following the example of Brazil which is the second largest producer of ethanol – an important biofuel – in the world and the only country with a fully-fledged “green economy.” Brazil has an ethanol fuel program based on the most efficient agricultural technology for sugarcane cultivation.

Crops such as sugarcane, sweet sorghum, maize, soya beans and plants such as jatropha are the bedrock of biofuel. Ethanol for example can be produced using cheap sugarcane. A sugarcane plantation is labour intensive hence creating jobs for poor indigenous people. World Bank data points out that more than 80 per cent of sugarcane production takes place in Southern provinces. An assumption may therefore be made that, alongside the reputable Nakomala Sugar Estates, an ethanol production plant could be set up in the Southern province town of Mazabuka.

Government possesses the capacity to facilitate the transfer of technology by partnering with private and international agricultural research firms that have a keen interest in the production of biofuel.

In 2002, the Government of the Republic of Zambia proposed to have at least one productive farm block per province. A farm block is envisioned to be a large agricultural area where basic infrastructure for agriculture such as roads, electricity, etc., are provided. The farm block enterprise involves areas of not less than 100,000 hectares per block. The general idea of the farm block comprises a core venture, small-scale, medium, and large farms operating under an out grower arrangement similar to Nakomala Sugar Estates.

As a way of incentivising local and international green energy companies, government can, through an Act of Parliament, oversee the establishment of “Green Energy Economic Zones” (GEEZ) across the country. These would be similar to Special Economic Zones (SEZ) save for the fact that the incentives of the zone will apply exclusively to green energy corporations.

The farm block concept can be used as a guide. As opposed to farm blocks where the crops grown are predominantly for export as well as food security, the crops in GEEZs will primarily be for biofuel production. Since adding value to the product is significant for biofuel production, a link between agriculture and related industries will be created implying that GEEZs would not just be large expanses of land with crops but would also be home to manufacturing plants and energy corporations.

Conducting business in a GEEZ implies that a company will receive tax incentives and the opportunity to pay lower tariffs. Government can take this a step further by signing Memorandums of Understanding with companies that intend on setting up in GEEZs to allocate at least fifty per cent of jobs in the company to Zambian professionals. Therefore, UNZA students from the School of Agriculture, School of Engineering (Agricultural engineering), students from The Copperbelt University, NRDC, etc., will have an immediate source of employment upon completing their studies.

Green Energy Africa is a Ndola based bioenergy company that seeks to provide reliable energy in an environmentally responsible way. This company is the mastermind behind Zamlasha – an environmentally friendly variation of “malasha” which is made from biomass such as bamboo, farm waste, maize husks and grass. Zamlasha is purported to burn two to three times longer than normal charcoal, according to the company website. The Post newspaper ran an article in December 2013 stating that the company had invested over US$500,000 to set up a bio-mass plant to manufacture charcoal. Green Energy Africa exemplifies how agribusiness alongside bioenergy is a goldfiedd teeming with nuggets of opportunity.

It is an awful frustration for a parent to fail to provide for his/her family due to unemployment. It is equally demoralising for young people to find there is no work waiting for them when they leave school, college or university. Employment is the dividing line in several families between a decent existence and a vile life. Agriculture and agribusiness vis-à-vis biofuel presents itself as a viable solution to a problem that has eluded Zambia for generations.
Since the 1990s, high unemployment has been a major economic and social concern in labor market agendas, as such success in pursuing employment for the Zambian people requires long term concerted actions, spanning a wide range of policies and programs. To this effect, an overarching guideline for addressing the employment challenge is the need for an integrated strategy for rural development, growth and job creation. A population national analytical report of 2013 indicated the agriculture sector contributed 66.5 % to the working population (12 years and older) as compared to the mining sector whose contribution to direct employment, accounted for less than 2% of the total labour force and about 8% of total formal sector jobs according to the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM) assessment report of 2013.

Mr. Fackson Shamenda, Minister of Labour in a presentation made at the GRZ-ILO-IMF national conference on economic growth strategy for employment, decent work and development in 2012, in Lusaka said despite some initiatives under successive Governments, there has been a lack of a well-coordinated approach when addressing the unemployment problem. The former could be attributed to attention given to politically and economically
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influential industries such as mining, manufacturing and other industrial production. Nevertheless, supplementing on the existing job creation policies, that do not fulfil their implemented purposes, the agriculture sector can create both quantity and quality jobs on a broad scale. It can transform Zambia’s agriculture into a profitable, commercially-oriented and internationally and regionally competitive economic activity that provides high-quality, gainful competitive economic activity that provides high-quality, gainful employment to Zambians by generation. It can promote the dissemination of knowledge to rural dwellers, that entrepreneurship is the best practice for promoting decent employment which leads to increased food production and economic participation so as to improve livelihoods of the rural people through income and empowerment.

The sector can further create jobs when incentives such as greater access to both domestic and external markets create an enabling environment for private investment in marketing, farm input supply and agro processing but of course, farming itself must be strengthened. In addition, enhancing farmers’ access to inputs and financial services is also an option that can create jobs for Zambians. The development of policies and legislation are ways which can address the restructuring of ministries and departments by creating directorates and units to facilitate coordination of policy development. Reviving of small and big agricultural companies like Mununshi banana scheme, Kavambwa tea and Chipata cotton ginney are yet other ways in which agriculture sector can create jobs on a broad scale.

Having extended the subject to the public domain, a Copperbelt province based youth, Masuzyo, Nyrongo contributed that agriculture can create more jobs if government intensifies the Fertilizer Input Support Programme (FISP) to stimulate better yields so the country’s farmers can export the produce and realize foreign exchange. A student at Monze School of Agriculture, Major Chiombo also contributed that the government sector can also create jobs by starting to train extension workers to empower farmers and other stakeholders to take greater control of their potential. They should be enabled to see sustainable uses of crop production using their own efforts, resources of manpower and materials, with sufficient assistance from the government. Mrs. Monica Chola, a small scale farmer from Mpongwe also added that a joint promotion of home garden and small animal rearing including goats, chickens, pigs and fish is required.

In accordance with 2014 national budget K130.8 billion or 7.2% of the budget, was allocated to the agriculture sector as compared to other sectors like transport which had an allocation of K65.7 billion or 14.2%. The budget allocated to agriculture sector was insufficient to address the challenges faced by the sector. This suggests there is no consensus on the issue of whether agriculture is the most appropriate sector to lift rural communities out of poverty through the job creation on a broad scale or to aggressively diversify the economy to other sectors like agriculture as outlined in the Six National Development Plan (SNDP) for 2011-2015.

Despite several approaches under successive governments, the agricultural sector remains strong and has positive impact on poverty often significantly greater than that of other economic sectors according to Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) report of 2004. Therefore, the agriculture sector can help lift communities out of poverty through many ways among which include raising the incomes of smallholder farmers by promoting the growth of smallholder agriculture. The sector can further help lift communities out of poverty by increasing the earnings of working people, raising the level of job creation and strengthening public investment programs in large-scale agricultural programs. They should focus on what work can generate very high agricultural growth rates, in turn contributing to poverty reduction.

To end on a more serious note, agriculture in Zambia does not only play an overwhelmingly important role in the economy but it is an important livelihood activity for many small holder farmers thus, the best strategies that can be used to satisfy poverty alleviation measures include; raising exports, improving skills development, lowering the costs of living for the poor, investing in a competitive infrastructure, reducing the regulatory burden on small businesses, facilitating private investment and improving the performance of the labour market to reduce tension and ease access to young, unskilled work seekers.

WINSTON MULEBA

Winston Muleba is a Fisheries and Aquaculture student from the Copperbelt University. Driven by his need to contribute to the country’s economic growth, his dream job is to be the Chief Executive Officer of his own agribusiness, media and charitable organizations.
Agriculture is a critical pillar of rural growth

By Kelvin Chileshe

Zambia’s recent Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) views the agricultural sector as a critical pillar for rural growth and poverty reduction. Agriculture is given the highest priority in the PRSP for diversifying production and exports, creating employment, increasing incomes, and improving food security (World Bank, 2002). What can be done to stimulate broad-based agricultural growth that would create employment on a large scale and lift 78 percent (IMF, 2012) of people out of poverty?

Generally, rural residents are farmers who derive most of their income from agriculture, mostly through farming. In view of the fact that subsistence farmers are the majority in the agricultural sector and among the rural poor throughout the country, the impact of public actions on subsistence farmers determines the effectiveness in reducing rural poverty. Implementation of proper policies in the agricultural sector plays an important role in alleviation of poverty as in the cases of China (1980s), Vietnam and some Sub-Saharan countries (Zambia economic brief, 2013).

Mlimo and Shiito (2003) identify the main constraint to poverty reduction in rural communities being lack of non-farm employment opportunities. Taking investment to rural communities would play a significant role in creating job opportunities other than depending on farming only. This can be done through massive infra-structure development such as good road networks throughout the country connecting rural areas to the manufacturing industry. Good road networks would link farmers with national and international markets create an enabling environment for agricultural technologies, which would help in stimulating better yields so the country would lead to the creation of quality jobs in rural areas. Additionally, this would increase their chances of finding decent work, thus, reducing the poverty level. With an educated population, it would be easier for rural communities to adopt new technologies, which would help in improving extension services and pave way for high-value, labour-intensive activities thus boosting economic activities.

Subsistence farmers do well when they are in organised groups usually known as cooperatives. These cooperatives if well organised may lead to economies of scale. The understanding is that agricultural inputs are usually cheaper for farmers in cooperatives than for those who make their purchases individually. This is because in cooperatives there is combined effort. Since the Zambian agricultural sector is dominated by subsistence farmers, forming strong groups would give them a collective voice in voicing out their grievances and more importantly encourages them to become more productive and market-oriented. Thus, there is need to sensitise people on the importance of having cooperatives. This will require engaging experts to carry out the sensitisation programs. The government should also attract Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to rural areas to help facilitate the organisation and implementation of activities in the cooperatives.

The spread of information and communication technologies (ICTs) can also help to stimulate rural employment. The underutilised resources both human and natural can be realised effectively if tele-centres can be formed in the rural areas to provide access to internet, market information and other services. Remote areas like Shang’ombo, Mbozoma etc should be targeted first in order to make sure they are also connected to the world. These centres can play a significant role in boosting rural employment and helping farmers and others gain better access to markets (rationally and internationally). Furthermore, women are the majority suppliers of the labour force in the agriculture sector. If significant reduction in the poverty level is to be witnessed, there is need to provide more equal opportunities for women as...
s those available to men. It must be ensured that women are provided with equal access to the technologies and services currently available to men and the same levels of control over productive resources. Reducing the gender gap would help women to increase their output, become more involved in agricultural value chains and gain access to new job opportunities, equally on and off the farm.

Crop diversification should also be encouraged among the rural farmers in order to broaden the variety of commodities for market and ultimately increase their sources of income. Farmers should be able to diversify through growing different kinds of cash crops such as sunflower, cotton, soya beans, as well-embracing livestock farming as this generally helps in the reduction of income shocks in households. Furthermore, people need to acquire essential skills that would help them diversify in their sources of income. Training programmes that would promote the underutilised natural resources.

For instance, Zambia is endowed with vast fertile land and rivers which can be utilized effectively if the government comes up with programmes that would promote farming in general. About 523 thousand hectares can be economically developed along the Zambezi River which will create employment (FAO, 2005). Zambia is blessed with rivers like Luangwa, Katobe to mention which are not fully utilized. If only the potential of these rivers are fully utilized so that farming on a large scale throughout the year can be source of employment.

Livestock and fish farming is another area that can be a major source of employment in the agricultural sector in the country. If people in agriculture acquired skills that would help them utilize the available land for keeping cattle, goats, and pigs, this will help reduce and even avoid reliance on importation of meat products. People in rural areas must be encouraged by government officials to do fish farming by construction of small dams or rather fish ponds in the unutilised river streams. This is possible if there is improved land tenure and the moment people realise that the solution to poverty does not necessarily lie in wage employment alone.

In a nutshell, there is need to turn the idle land into a more productive economy. The government should introduce policies which stimulate growth in the rural and non-farm sectors. These should be focused on increasing investment in education and vocational training in rural areas, more especially among the youth. Policies should ensure that women, who represent a major workforce in rural areas, receive the same benefits and support as men. Small-scale farmers should be encouraged to work in cooperatives as this is more likely to improve their productivity and access to markets as compared to individual efforts. Additionally, large-scale investments are needed in research and extension and capacity financial support, and adequate information among farmers should be prioritised or else the fight against poverty among the rural farmers shall be a debacle.

The Zambian youth give their views on how the agricultural sector can create jobs on a broad scale and lift rural communities out of poverty.

Kelvin Chileshe

Kelvin Chileshe is a student of Economics and Maths at the University of Zambia. Kelvin dreams of one day becoming the Bank of Zambia Governor, believing that a stable currency and an enabling environment for business and investment play an important role in the development of any nation.

The year 2011 went down in the annals of Zambia’s economy as a year when the country was declared a lower middle income country by the World Bank. According to Africa Economic Outlook, the economy has experienced strong growth in recent years, with a real GDP growth of 7.3 percent in 2012 from 6.8 percent in 2011. However, despite Zambia experiencing strong economic growth in the recent past, the agriculture productivity continues on its downward spiral. Perhaps that is why rural poverty keeps accelerating.

According to the World Development Report pro-poor agricultural growth is centred on the smallholder sector. This growth reduces poverty directly, by raising farm incomes and generating employment.

By Pamela Lubasi

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"The level of poverty is three times higher than that in urban areas. In 2010, rural poverty was estimated at 77.9 percent compared to urban levels at 27.5 percent. Many Zambians have continued to live in poverty. Results from the 2006 and 2010 Living Conditions Monitoring Survey, show that poverty levels have remained high despite recording a decline between 2006 and 2010.

Development of the agricultural sector is the key to economic development and poverty reduction in Zambia. Simply put, agriculture development through diversification, infrastructure, access to finances and investment opportunities lagging business can create jobs on a broad scale and reduce poverty. It is one’s posit that for all this to be achieved the smallholder sector should be competitive and sustainable.

Maize is produced by the majority of smallholder farmers and remains to be Zambia’s dominant food crop. Not until recently, maize farming has enjoyed subsidies. However, the removal of subsidies was taken as a bitter pill by various sections of the Zambian society; student groups, the civil society and opposition political parties who held a black Friday campaign.

On the other hand, this was not a bad move by the government as it seemed. In the long term, it will encourage smallholder farmers to diversify and grow other crops. For example the Times of Zambia newspaper reports that with high prices, maize can be replaced with cassava production since cassava is more drought resistant than maize but at present cassava is under commercialised. All this will not only create jobs on a broad scale but also increase smallholder incomes and minimize income fluctuations.

Not long ago, many Zambian farmers experienced the affliction caused by the army worms. These worms ate up the maize but they did not eat up the soybeans. So what farmers could have lost from maize, they could have gained from soybeans. Farmers should not only diversify in the kind of crops they grow but should also diversify in the livestock they rear, since agriculture is not about growing crops only.

Fortunately, Zambia boasts of about 40% of Southern Africa’s water resources at its disposal. Even with this, however, agriculture in Zambia still faces challenges of enhancing production in a situation of dependence on rain-fed agriculture. Therefore development of irrigation techniques will make agriculture specifically farming to be an all-year round activity thereby minimizing seasonal unemployment.

It is in this vain that we have seen the allocation of K1.1 billion from the 2013 national budget to irrigation development and other agricultural programs. The World Bank also approved a US $115million credit for an irrigation development and support programme to enable Zambia to enhance its irrigation subsector.

Of all of Zambia’s economic sectors, agriculture is thought to hold the promise for growth and development, as well as the potential to reap significant foreign exchange earnings. This is according to the 14th edition of the Zambia Review Magazine. Many sub-sectors of agriculture of high value activities such as horticulture and dairy farming are labour intensive and generate substantial employment.

Biotechnology has led to the development of seeds that are disease and drought resistant which are normally used in this case. Allowing agri-business innovators to build and grow new businesses would, therefore, create new jobs, and entirely new opportunities, bolster economic growth and ultimately improve the quality of life for people across the country. Innovation is important in every sector that contributes to the economy. Through this interaction with other sectors is a niche for broad scale job creation. For example, in an instance of increased cotton production from our local farmers, more jobs will be created in the textile industry. In this way agriculture provides jobs indirectly.

However, development is a cumulative process, with success in one area opening up new opportunities in others. Agriculture development is intertwined with a lot of other things such as trade, fuel, education and others. In other words, agriculture alone cannot relieve rural poverty; rural nonfarm employment is, therefore, also important. This interaction with other sectors is a niche for broad scale job creation. For example, in an instance of increased cotton production from our local farmers, more jobs will be created in the textile industry. In this way agriculture provides jobs indirectly.

Let’s face it; the low levels of technological advancement continue to impede productivity in many sectors of the Zambian economy, manufacturing and agriculture most importantly. Agriculture will continue to provide jobs in our economy but this cannot be on a broad scale for as long as the challenges faced by the sector are not dealt with accordingly.

PAMELA LUBASI

Pamela Lubasi is a University of Zambia student pursuing a degree in Development Studies and Economics. She hopes to one day become an Economic Policy expert helping in the fight against poverty.
We ploughed profits back into the community

By Austine Wamunyima

On our continuous search for farming land a soft downy morning it was, we landed in Zambia. Everyone looks rural with hut like houses on 3ha lands.

A mighty country it is, people are so friendly like Christ and it seemed everyone went to church. Mum was thirsty, I was pressed, and we just needed a lay bay. Upon the bits of time, a man with a walking staff advanced towards my father, Dad realised the man could be from a royal background, “excuse me”, he said, “We are looking for farming land”. The royal stranger was amused directed us to the chief and 3ha piece of land.

The land brought jubilation to my father. Apparently mum was sad, she said to us, “Central Statistics Office says 81% of the farmers are peasant, how unique are we to make it from small scale farming?” She did not understand the mystery of success folded in the land. Dad asked, “Son look, we have a small piece of land; to address food security, job and wealth creation in this rural community what do we do?”

“Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has projected the increase in human population around the globe by 50% by 2030 and 70% by 2050 striking 9 billion and 15 billion respectively, from the current 7 billion. This entails that “more food” is needed to be produced on marginal land using improved farming technologies which are economically and ecologically friendly such as agro forestry, conservation farming and many more.

A rainy season called, it marked the beginning of our success, a much talked about conservation farming we used to grow crops reduced the cost of fertilizers and saved income to hire labour for weeding. My father was a man of lesser education but his work astonished me, “Intensification on this trivial land is our goal.” Dad added, so we grew a variety of crops ranging from cereals and vegetables to tubers and nuts.

At harvest, Dad went round the community to invite loading youths to work at the farm; it was a first land-mark towards creation of employment. Little did I know that my father had aspirations of being ‘My own boss’, how strange it was! The men were harvesting and lifting the produce from field to shelter while the women were rinsing and knitting carrots, groundnuts and cassava tubers. I did not understand want was happening. “Father, what is happening here?” I asked, “Value addition Son”, he replied.

Actually Dad was gender sensitive, he sent two men and three women to survey the best market for processed and packaged raw carrots and cassava. Each of these youths went home with a gallon of maize. Our products gained reputation and value, thus called for a high price. We made a lot of money as quick as the big bang theory. Later, it marked the collapse of the season.

Flourishing as previous season was, our preparation for the coming season was intensive particularly on input side i.e. supply of fertilizers, supply of various mechanization technologies and supply of high yielding and disease resistance varieties. The achievement of these aspects was facilitated by access to credit which was offered to us by a Smallholder Farmer Support Organization. The simple mechanical machines for making peanut butter were scouted for and the produced groundnut was processed into peanut butter on far-side of the farm, irrigation equipment and other simple planting equipment were also sourced. These required a huge labour both skilled and unskilled to ensure the inputs are mounted on the farm.

We produced green fresh vegetables throughout the year which were cut in different sizes and sealed on a disposable plate with a small red chilly on the side and later stored under cold climate ‘the common cooler box’ before head to market.

Every time I woke up and glanced through the back window, I would see a huge crowd of people; the old and the young, the me and the humble, all at edge of our wooden fence, agony being not realizing that we had become serious employers. A total of twenty youths were employed by the end of the year two, this was a milestone.

One morning Mum went to town, there she met the manager of Spar Soweto. He was a hulk giant of a man, with bald head and sprouting moustache. The manager was amused when it came to light that our products ‘the knifed variety vegetables’ had stormed the greater market of Soweto. He requested mum to sign a contract to supply Spar with vegetables and peanut butter, an offer not even the president would reject. Our market base expanded coherently. However, satisfying the demand for our products was a challenge as land limitation arose. Discussing with neighbouring land owners for possible encroachment proved futile. How solemn a situation was, I knew my father for having a second plan for every situation. He said to
us, ‘Though the fouls may threaten, stormy winds may blow but for the love and aspirations of uplifting people from abject poverty, onward we shall go’.

As preparation for super drew near, Mum said, “what if we started fish farming on these laggards lands”, Dad replied, “brilliant idea”. “Will they agree?” I asked. “Which tree can a Caterpillar fail to uproot, Son,” he said boldly.

At seven o’clock, Dad had already knocked at three houses, deliberated with them for a joined ownership of ponds to be constructed on their pieces of land. This initiative cheered up the inhabitants and hoped for the best. Each house hold contributed two individuals for manpower thereby reducing labour cost of digging fish pond hole. What started as a simple idea grew to the heights of creating jobs; the pond engineers and the water analyst were hired. Spontaneously fish bred in the pond. Being the major shareholder, Dad ensured equal distribution of resources among workers and ploughed back profits into the community.

People’s livelihood improved drastically, not only on income side but also on nutrition since fish became their major source of proteins. Individual responsibility was enhanced both at household and community level. Mum influenced the formation of a cooperative group in the community so that they could have easy access inputs from Farmer Input Support Program.

Indeed, Zambian economic brief states 62% of the working Zambians are poor because they have concentrated on agriculture. In addition other authors have indicated that agriculture is a multi-dimensional form of slavery through which the poor feed the rich. Though opposite sentiments have been issued, the pencil remains in our hands to answer the question; if agriculture did not have the potential to create job and improve rural livelihood, why then have majority of Zambians continued to farm on less than 3ha lands till today?

Austine Wamunyima is an Agro-forestry student representing the Copperbelt University. Austine’s ambitions extend to him working on agriculture in government on small scale farmer capacity building and agricultural policy formulation. His dream job is one that involves him working very closely with small scale farmers.

THE ZAMBIAN YOUTH GIVE THEIR OPINIONS ON HOW AN IMPROVEMENT IN THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION CAN LEAD TO JOB CREATION IN ZAMBIA

AUTHORS:
ESANU MASEKA | CHOTA MPPU | JESSEN JAY SIAMUTWA
“Learn to do a job rather than learn to get a job!”

By Esanju Mascula

The effect, a large number of unemployed graduates. This idle human capital could instead be utilised to enhance economic development. But how can we bridge the gap between academia and employment? The answer lies in realigning the educational system such that it will increase the employability of students.

What is job creation all about? Job creation, according to the Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, is the “process of providing new jobs, especially for people who are unemployed.” This often comes in the form of government policies intended to reduce unemployment and may take a variety of forms, including educational reforms.

A look at the existing educational systems shows that it is failing the Zambian citizens in that it falls short of enabling citizens to meet the demands of society. On a brighter note, a move was recently made by the Zambian government to develop the Zambia Education Curriculum Framework (ZECF). The new curriculum aims at equipping learners at all levels with vital knowledge, skills, positive attitudes and values right through from Early Childhood Care Development and Education to Tertiary Education and Adult Literacy. Skills development will be enhanced through vocational subjects such as Agricultural Science, Design and Technology and Home Economics, to name but a few.

At junior secondary level, pupils will have an option of taking either a vocational or academic path. Pupils who follow the vocational pathway will be awarded a Level Three trade certificate by TEVETA recognising their skills development. Thus, students who are unable to finish 12 years of school and opt to take the vocational path will be more equipped to live productively in society and fend for themselves in the world of work, leaving them better off than they would have been with the other system.

The increased flexibility and focus on skills development at an early age may be just what the former school curriculum needed. For basic education is supposed to ensure that individuals are given a chance to develop their potential and thus lay the foundation for employability. Failure to meet demands that will arise alongside the change may result in a total flop of the new curriculum; a situation described as “new wine in old skins.”

The next stage of education, known as the initial training stage should instil industry-based and professional competencies that facilitate the transition into the job market through tertiary institutions. Careful consideration must be given to align skills development with the needs of the market. Appropriate skills development will ensure “the quality and relevance of education and training for women and men fuels the innovation, investment, technological change, enterprise development, economic diversification and competitiveness that economies need to accelerate the creation of more jobs, but also more productive jobs.” (International Labour Organisation (ILO) 2008 International Labour Conference (ILC)).

The Zambia Economic Outlook by the African Development Bank (2014) recommends that in order to harness the strengths resulting from the country’s economic growth, reduce poverty and aid job creation, diversification of the economy must be a priority. This must be done by harnessing the potential of non-copper minerals and other natural resources. The most likely way of doing so, they suggest, will be determined by the manufacturing sector, which is controlled by the private sector, but is linked to these natural resources.

In this regard, vocational schools are instrumental. The quality of education at vocational schools should be improved to put special emphasis on technical, vocational and entrepreneurship skills to support sustainable national economic growth that can bring rise to the proposed diversification. Focus should not be put on the quantity of young people that receive vocational training but on the quality or relevance of the training received.

Employers, particularly in the manufacturing sector, can be identified throughout Zambia who can be
No one told me that university would be easy but they also seemed to forget to tell me that I need three hours of sleep as I struggle to cram knowledge into my brain and meet deadlines on back to back assignments while I survived on a diet of noodles and cheap biscuits. Its unhealthy I know, but I persevere and with good reason. It is because I believe I have ideas and if I ever want to see them come to fruition I need to be guided, I need an education.

When it comes to my ideas why do I put my faith in education? Apart from my parents telling me I have to, I realize that education is a key component to development. Is it a coincidence that the top five most educated countries are also among the world’s richest? According to OECD statistics Canada, Israel, Japan, United States and New Zealand rank highest with over 40% of their population gaining degrees. Even locally receiving an education does have an impact, according to the Zambia Economic Brief in 85% of students that gained a post-secondary technical degree received employment. So there can be no harm in promoting education in a developing country like Zambia. In fact promoting quality education, that is accessible to everyone, equips
students with basic skills (numeracy, literacy and behavioral skills), has a focus on diverse skills training, allows for creativity and is modern and relevant, will be beneficial in all aspects of a country’s development. Let me focus on one aspect that I believe education has the greatest impact on, jobs. Most people insist on getting an education with the hopes that they will receive a well paying job in the future, so people pursue an education in order to gain skills they can use. Which is where education has the most impact when it comes to jobs, acquiring skills.

An improvement in the quality of education will equip people with a diverse range of skills, improve the quality of the workforce and improve the economy. But how will an improvement in skills create jobs? Foreign investors may be attracted to Zambia for its abundant natural resources but a workforce that has a diverse range of skills, improve the quality of the workforce and improves the economy. How will an improvement in skills create jobs? Foreign investors may be attracted to Zambia for its abundant natural resources but a workforce with the proper skills of course. Quality education will encourage entrepreneurship, which in turn will create jobs. Struggling to believe this? According to a Crunchbase data set of 6150 technology companies founders it’s found that Stanford University tops the list of Universities that have released entrepreneurs into our world, with 296 founders having enrolled there. It was followed by Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) with 171, University of California, Berkeley with 156, Harvard University with 122 and to round off the Harvard Business School with 112. These are schools that are known to provide a sub par education, proving that graduating from any one of these schools could give you the right opportunities in all the right places. So promoting a quality education will promote entrepreneurship and encourage job creation.

I realise that I am one of the fortunate few when it comes to receiving a quality education, let alone any education at all. A lot of people are held back by factors like location, gender and poverty. Facts like these are hard to see and even harder to bear but as an optimist would say at this point, it only means we have more to improve. We have seen the positive picture that education has painted, it gives people the skills that give confidence to investors and creates future investors of its own by promoting entrepreneurship and who knows maybe investing in a quality education may yield the same for Zambia. Maybe the next big technology company will see potential in our growing number of computer scientists, or maybe a local entrepreneur may start that next big company it may be founded by someone who understands poverty, it may be me, it may be a man or it may be a woman? Who knows? With education the possibilities are limitless.

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The Brief in Brief: Education

BASIC EDUCATION, THE FOUNDATION OF SKILLS, IS WEAK...

ENROLMENT IN SCHOOLS has grown rapidly but outcomes are poor.

ENROLMENT IN GRADES 1–12

2004  3.6 MILL
2010  2.6 MILL

QUALITY OF BASIC EDUCATION is poor as compared to other countries.

But roughly 30 percent of youth have no education at all or have not completed the primary level.

AND ACCESS TO BASIC EDUCATION IS UNEQUAL

POOR, RURAL YOUTH, AND GIRLS have the odds stacked against them.

Learning outcomes are poorer for these groups.

Half of youth who dropped out before completing school identify financial constraints as the main reason.

Girls face steeper barriers to staying in school.

EDUCATION ENROLMENTS are skewed in favor of the rich, particularly for secondary and tertiary education.

EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES for youth depend on opportunities. A rural girl with little education from a poor household has over 90% likelihood of ending up farming whereas an urban and educated boy from a nonpoor family has only a 2% likelihood of doing the same.

Those who are poor, rural or female are likely to have strikingly worse employment outcomes.
Learning how to think and not what to think is the key

By Jessen Jay Siamutwa

Living in a country where unemployment is high and whose economy is not stable calls for stringent measures that result in the creation of jobs.

Investment in quality education is one measure that could deliver tangible and far-reaching results.

A system of learning that produces well-educated individuals who can handle matters of concern within their area of study proficiently, enabling them to develop all of their attributes and skills to achieve their potential as human beings and members of society is the solution to Zambia’s joblessness. It should teach us rather how to think rather than what to think so as to enable us to think for ourselves, than to load the memory with thoughts of men, and allows for a liaison between learning institutions and all industries to exhibit innovation and creativity.

For instance, information on skill needs from the manufacturing and mining industries may provide an opportunity for higher learning institutions to offer training in textiles, engineering and copper production respectively. Employers are awash with applications but complain that they cannot find candidates with the right abilities. The lack of proper linkages among various principal actors like the Ministry of Labour and learning institutions has led to job mismatches between the employer’s requirements and individual skills.

A Labour Force Survey statistical data by the Central Statistical Office (CSO, 2008) of unemployed persons by educational attainment shows that University degree graduates were the lead with the per cent share of 0.5 per cent. A-level students were at 4.1 per cent, following those who attained grades 10 to 12 with a per cent share of 16.5 per cent. Grades 8 to 9 and grades 1 to 7 shared a percentage of 19.0 and 44.4 per cent respectively. A percentage share of 15.4 per cent was allocated to those who neither had a degree qualification nor any form of educational attainment. This percentage distribution especially for degree graduates was mainly due to mismatches in job qualifications and skills needed by the employers.

Informing education and career choices through relevant, timely and reliable learning and labour market information systems will contribute to a successful matching of skills to address and prevent current and future skill shortages. A strong link that provides information about the needs between the academic circle and all types of industries such as; agriculture, manufacturing, services, tourism and mining industry is cardinal in bridging the mismatch between jobs and skills in the labour market. Such information is needed to build a relevant academic curriculum that will expedite the creation of jobs.

Furthermore, an entrepreneurship spirit must be instilled in every learner so that they could create their own employment, without necessarily depending on established industries for employment. The successful entrepreneurship programs should involve providing basic business skills and linking would-be entrepreneurs to mentoring, finance, and market opportunities. These integrated approaches are needed to assist young people in their transition from school to work and to tackle the multiple constraints and drivers of informality in the labour market through policy packages that promote a gradual transition to formal activities.

This education should be made in such a way that it does not only provide knowledge in programs such as Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences but also provide practical skills in their areas of profession to allow them to earn a living as writers, artists, and designers.

It should help in building a virtuous circle that fuels the innovation, investment, technological change, enterprise development, economic diversification, and competitiveness that economies need to accelerate the creation of jobs. This is the way for Zambia’s economic miracle.

However, quality education is not just at the higher level. It comes all the way from early intervention which helps to prevent long-term unemployment and reduce job losses. It needs to be addressed at all levels—from home to university level. It has a chain effect. The university professor may be blamed for dearth of proper skills and knowledge imparted in students.
required by the job industry, but he or she will blame the high school teacher who in turn puts the blame on the primary school teacher too until it reaches the parents at home. A common proverb goes, “If you want to grow a straight tree, correct it whilst it is still small.” Therefore, it is from this point that quality education takes its roots of changing individual attitudes by being ethical, morally upright, and selfless.

Such will bring a positive transition for a generation that has been born into entitlements, poor work ethics, pursuit of instant gratification and whose needs are to fuel constant narcissism. Without this intervention, such a broken society that favours short-term values is never going to recover or build a stable society no matter how many vocational schools can be set up.

It is important to note that the problem with every society has and always will be its values. These are what allow it to thrive or fail.

In addition, it is sad that decision-making processes for students and parents in selecting higher education institution continue to be based on affordability rather than on quality. Young people are made to believe that any field of study from a registered institution will automatically send them off to their dream job. Clive Staples Lewis just puts it right, “You never know how much you really believe anything until its truth, or falsehood becomes a matter of life and death to you.” All learning institutions should be able to provide quality education in terms of relevant curriculum that meets the demand of the labour market.

While competition in the emerging markets is fierce, the real potential of Zambia will begin to be realized if there is an improvement in the quality of the education system. The fight for social and economic justice in form of quality education for the Zambian citizens must be kept alive in order to grow the economy from a tiny acorn to a mighty oak through the creation of jobs.

Liaising with labour market principle actors and academic circles will provide an opportunity to train citizens for the proper needs of the industries, and impart skills for them to become employment creators rather than being ready to be employed. This should not sideline instilling an entrepreneurial spirit to the citizens to enable them become innovative and become new labour market principle actors to accelerate economic development.

Zambia needs to address unemployment with renewed seriousness, vigour, and tenacity by learning lessons from countries like India, Costa Rica, and South Korea which made quality education broadly available and introduced mechanisms to match supply to the current demand for skills, often by means of linking training providers with employers at sector and local levels.

Pan African is right in the statement, “A nation that waits for her government to create jobs will wait for eternity.” It is therefore, important that the Zambian education system should be able to “create employment creators” instead of preparing young people to be employable since formal employment jobs are scarce, and not everyone may get absorbed into the labour market.

THOUGHTS FROM THE ZAMBIAN YOUTH ON WHY, ACCORDING TO THE ZAMBIAN ECONOMIC BRIEF A LARGE NUMBER OF WORKING ZAMBIANS ARE POOR

AUTHORS: MUMBI MULENGA | PATRICIA TEMBO | LUMELA LUMELA
Tackling productivity is the key to improving earnings

By Mumbi Mulenga

Working Zambian adults are more likely to be poor than the nonworking. In fact, a large number of working or employed Zambians are poor.

It is worthwhile to establish the basis and source of such a gloomy assertion that a large number of working Zambians are poor. The World Bank has developed a reputation of delivering bad news. Be that as it may, and in stark contrast to some brooding omnipresence in the sky, the World Bank carried out a research and published, in Zambia’s Economic Brief, the realities on the ground of Zambia’s jobs challenge.

Job earnings are generally the biggest share of people’s incomes; the higher the incomes, the lower the poverty levels. The majority of Zambia’s employed are concentrated in the agricultural sector. However, the levels of productivity are so close to the ground that the earnings derived from such farming-based livelihoods are nothing short of meagre. Statistics show that in 2010, 4.5 million Zambians were employed, with about 68 percent of those in farming, including fishing and forestry. Of the 4.3 million Zambian employees, more than 80 percent are in nonwage employment.

Coincidentally, or maybe not, low levels of productivity are also found in nonfarm self-employment and the formal sector. To be fair though, Zambia lacks the necessary conditions to ensure that “work pays off better” in agriculture and as well as nonfarm self-employment such as the technology in which the more developed countries pride themselves.

Those that shun, or are otherwise unable to engage in agriculture find themselves in home businesses (nonfarm) or microenterprises. Analysis shows that, like Zambia, her peers in Sub-Saharan have a stable cohort of home business owners, willing to leave agriculture but unable to find wage employment. The common commercial activities of home businesses and microenterprises include producing charcoal, milling, roof thatching and producing iron and wood products. The service sector comprises activities such as vending and personal services. Unfortunately, like their counterparts solely living off the land, the more business and service provision oriented Zambians have not been able to side-step the sweeping claws of poverty, also because of low productivity and the low wages common to the private sector.

Rapid growing economies are often accompanied by structural change where the non-agricultural labour force grows faster than the agricultural force. However in Zambia, this structural change has come unhurriedly, keeping one too many Zambians detained in the agricultural sector. The creation of formal jobs has been sluggishly slow. A 2008 Labour Force Survey revealed that between 2005 and 2008 inclusive, net employment increased by 475,000 but only 3.3 percent was formal employment. Referring to such a statistic as a mere “drop in the ocean” is a generous sugar-coat. Notwithstanding, with unity of purpose and continued effort, the future is not completely bleak.

To every problem, there is a solution or a way of minimizing its effects. In order to adequately ameliorate the consequences of a problem, one must know exactly what it is and where it stems from. The problem staring our beloved mother Zambia in the face is that a large number of the employed population is mired in poverty, with 81 percent engaged in farming.

In conclusion, and as earlier alluded to, this cannot be over-emphasized, the problem stems from the incredibly low levels of production. Many of our farmers lack the necessary education, access to input-output markets and infrastructure. A forward step in securing all these for farmers would lead to increased productivity and invariably, to an increase in earnings and freedom from the unabated shackles of poverty. However, an improvement in land rights would be a good starting point to end this agonizing saga.

Mumbi Mulenga is a Law student from the University of Zambia. Mumbi has a strong passion for law and social justice thus he dreams of one day becoming an advocate of the High Court.
“Tizakawina liti” (when will we get fat) is the title of a song by the late Zambian musician Daddy Zimus. The song’s lyrics echo the frustrations of many hard working Zambians who work so hard to provide for their families, yet still have little or no money to even support themselves.

“Tizakawina liti” (when will we get fat) is the title of a song by the late Zambian musician Daddy Zimus. The song’s lyrics echo the frustrations of many hard working Zambians who work so hard to provide for their families, yet still have little or no money to even support themselves.

Worst still, this poverty has no age limit. Consider the impact of the ripple effect of poverty on the children of the working, yet so poor adults. Eleven year old Suzyo, for instance, has hands as rough and hard as my 72 year old grandfa ther who has been farming for half a century.

“I break stones and sell them at K1 per 5 litre container,” he said, as we shared a sugarcane on a day when he should ordinarily have been in school. The excuse he gave for absconding school for nearly a year was that he fears that the classroom may collapse on him.

Suzyo is one of approximately 12 percent of children aged between 5-14 years who are working, about 20,000 of whom are living and working on the streets (UNICEF Zambia Fact Sheet -2013). The infant stone breaker lives with his parents and three siblings, some where in Chiawa area on the Copperbelt.

Suffice to say, there ought to be a picture of this house hold on the definition of the word poverty in the dictionary. I felt so selfish for having a whole room and bed to myself.

According to the Zambia Economic Brief (EBZ) compiled by the World Bank in 2013, Zambia’s economy has grown relatively when compared to other Sub-Saharan African countries. However, most working Zambians are still asking, “Where is my share?” The Zambian economy may be growing but the wallets of the average working Zambian are shrinking.

So why sow so much yet reap very little? You may be familiar with Nathan Nyrenda’s 2005 hit song ‘Mwamakuti Yandi Mwirutundu’ (my knees, do not give up in which the song writer expressed his despond ency on the notion of working so hard but with little or no gain.

The man was so puzzled that he questioned, among other things, whether it is our skin that is too black or perhaps our initiative that is too little. Well, needless to say, this song did not sit well with the then current government, though for obvious reasons, it was quite the favourite of the opposition, especially during campaign period.

“My government has taken an unprecedented painful step of curtailing subsidies on fuel and maize,” President Michael Sata said, “thereby releasing much needed resources for programmes that specifically target poverty alleviation.” This was in his statement during the opening of the United Nations General Assembly’s General Debate on the 24th of September, 2013, in New York.

Not to be political, but one can hardly ignore the government’s role in not only combating poverty but also preventing it. The central economic role of government is to assist in the socially desirable allocation of resources; to distribute the desirable ‘fertile soil’, to facilitate opportunities and create enabling environments for people to sow their seed. Only then can we objectively judge who is lazy or hard working.

Take for instance Joseph Musukwa (not real name), who works for a Chinese company based in Ndola, that specialises in selling building blocks- of course made using materials obtained within Zambia.

He is one of 62 percent of adults in the 36-64 age group who are working but still poor (EBZ 2013).
“Tufola ama five zale sisteke” (we are paid K500 my sister), said Ba Joze, when asked what his monthly salary is. This is a 37 year old man with a wife and five children to take care of. He did confide in me however, that he puts aside some extra cement for his ‘special customers’, the proceeds of which he puts in his own pockets. This is like ‘stealing’ those tomatoes that the stranger has planted in your yard. How ironic!

Most Zambians have a perception that a good job is one where one has gone to college or university and is working in an office, regardless of how much such a person earns in that office job. Youths accordingly express interest in working in the public sector, largely because of perceptions of job security and higher pay. Most of those who are in self-employment do so as a last resort (Zambia Institute for Policy Analysis and Research- 2013).

The reasons why a larger number of working Zambians are poor cannot be exclusively explained using statistics as statistics cannot reflect the physical, mental and psychological pain of perpetual poverty even in the face of hard work. To use the illustration of the sower, it may thus be said that they cannot access the fertile soil on which to plant their seed, they are friendly enough to ‘lend’ the fertile soil to foreigners for whom they are comfortable working, or are too smart and educated to do anything other than a white collar job. Unfortunately, these current circumstances equally blur the fate of future generations as they are left with a poor foundation and little aspiration.

And so Zambians continue to complain while the Masai, resident in Zambia, earn a fortune plaiting hair at ridiculous prices. Perhaps what Zambians need is a change of attitude; after all, it is all about survival of the fittest. Clearly, some foreigners do seem to be more fit than the indigenous, thus eliminating the weaker and leaving them destitute in their own territory.

THOUGHTS FROM THE ZAMBIAN YOUTH ON WHY, ACCORDING TO THE ZAMBIA ECONOMIC BRIEF A LARGE NUMBER OF WORKING ZAMBIANS ARE POOR

Patricia Tembo is a Law student from the University of Zambia. Patricia is working towards a position as legal counsel for a large international organisation. Her dream job however is to one day be partner in her own law firm.

By Lumela Lumela

THINK JOBS | ZAMBIA’S JOBS CHALLENGE
designed to improve the livelihood of working Zambians. The most relevant are the National Employment and Labour Market Policy aimed at the creation of adequate and quality jobs under conditions that ensure adequate income protection of workers and human rights. These policies are far from achieving their intended objectives.

Secondly, the 6th National Development Plan 2011-2015 raises issues related to constitutional capacity and building for effective policy management. It is aimed at promoting sustainable economic growth in order to reduce poverty, thus making Zambia ‘a prosperous middle-income country by 2030’. Yet poverty seems to be the order of the day in 2014.

It should be highlighted that although these laws and policies are in place, the practical reality reflected on the ground is below par and not many Zambian employees (including some employers) are aware of these legislative provisions and policies. In some cases, many know about the laws, but there are still challenges in accessing good conditions of service for a number of reasons, some of which are outlined later in this article.

According to the World Bank’s Economic Brief, most of the jobs in Zambia are predominantly informal. Unpaid family workers or engage ment in informal self-employment. These categories of workers have fewer prospects for raising their standards of living and constitute what is called ‘the working poor’. These are employed on fixed-term contracts without support from unions, earning low or no wages, no medical care schemes or housing allowance or terminal benefits. Basically, they have none of the benefits that would have accrued to them if they were employed on a contract of service.

A study conducted by an author in the Chisamba Area, Chibombo District of Central Province revealed that the highly paid casual employees popularly known as ‘general workers’ in the Agricultural sector earn about K800 per month. According to a report published on the 9th of January, 2014 by the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflec tion (JCTR) Basic Needs Basket, this amount is not sufficient to sustain a family. JCTR Executive Director Father Chiti stated that the food basket for an average family of six must be above K3, 500. The question is how does the general worker feed his or her family?

Most Zambians are employed and according to the World Bank, about 85 percent of the working-age group reported themselves as unemployed in the year 2010. Majority of these depend entirely on the working Zambians for their survival as they still await to be engaged in wage employment. However, irrespective of receiving low wages, the working Zambians are still required to send their children to school and fend for their families.

Moreover, the World Bank reports that only a few working Zambians are paid higher wages. These consist of those employed in the public sector and form about 17 percent of the total employed Zambian population. Nevertheless, they too are not able to meet their needs. Majority of them live in urban areas and urban-life requires them to pay very high rates of rentals, electricity and health care bills, including transport to and from their place of work. The situation is even worse with the recent removal of fuel and maize subsidies. Consequently, they remain poor despite receiving higher wages.

It is also important to note that Zambia has ratified a number of International Labour Organisation Conventions whose principle aim is the improvement and supervision of world labour conditions through the adaption of protective and promotional instruments. However, domestication of these instruments has not been a priority. For instance, the Minimum Wage Convention, No. 13, which is relevant to the issue of fair or equitable wages has not been domesticated. There are clear reasons why it is not practically viable to domesticate these conventions and later to adhere to them.

The problem regarding the issue of minimum wages is due to the fact that once new minimum wages are effected, there is no follow up mechanism and compliance is therefore at the discretion of the employer. Joint monitoring by Trade Unions and employers is provided for by the law but the Labour office under the Ministry of Labour and Social Security does all the monitoring at present. Lamentably, the State lacks resources to effectively regulate conditions of service, much to the disadvantage of employees. Certain employers even threaten to lay off the employees when they lobby for a salary increment.

In all these circumstances, most working Zambians are poor because the labour market in Zambia is faced with various challenges such as poor conditions of service and non-compliance to labour laws. Most Zambians are employed and 8.5 percent of the working-age group reported themselves as unemployed in the year 2010. Majority of these depend entirely on the working Zambians for their survival as they still await to be engaged in wage employment. However, irrespective of receiving low wages, the working Zambians are still required to send their children to school and fend for their families.

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The Brief in Brief: Population

TAKE A LOOK AT OUR ‘BRIEF IN BRIEF’ SERIES, A HANDY VISUAL GUIDE TO THE ZAMBIA ECONOMIC BRIEF'S

THE POPULATION AND LABOR FORCE ARE YOUNG AND GROWING FAST

Zambia’s population and labor force will stay young for the foreseeable future, presenting both challenges and opportunities.

TWO OUT OF THREE
Zambians are aged 24 or younger.

THE TOTAL POPULATION is estimated to continue growing quickly.

ZAMBIA IS NOT ALONE as several peer countries have young and fast growing populations.

FORMAL JOBS ARE BEING CREATED SLOWLY

Formal employment is growing slowly and accounts for a small fraction of total employment.

STRUCTURAL CHANGE IN THE ECONOMY has been slow. In the last 20 years, the combined share of industries and services has only seen a 10% increase.

SO WHERE DO JOB SEEKERS GO?
Due to limited job opportunities, non-wage employment absorbs the majority of new entrants to the jobs market

This is a product of the Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Unit of the World Bank Country Office in Lusaka. All the above data can be found in the second edition of the Zambia Economic Brief entitled “Zambia’s Jobs Challenge: Realities on the Ground”. The full study as well as previous economic briefs can be found at www.worldbank.org/en/country/zambia
Despite repeated promises from the PF administration that more jobs are coming, employment prospects for many Zambians, especially youths, remain dismal. Current estimates show that over 300,000 young people enter the Zambian labour market every year. This is set against the foreboding backdrop of a severe job market, a growing population and economic uncertainty.

According to the 2012 Labour Force Survey, the total number of employed persons in 2012 was 5,499,670 and the unemployed were 466,526. The Central Statistics Office reported that of the employed population, the majority (52.2 percent) were working in the Agricultural sector. The percentage of the employed population who were in the formal sector was 15.4 percent compared with 84.6 percent who were in the informal sector.

Out of the employed persons in the formal sector, 58.7 percent had attained grades 8-12. The majority of the persons employed in the informal sector were engaged in Agriculture related activities (59.9 percent), while the majority of the persons employed in the formal sector were engaged in education activities (16.0 percent). This shows that the formal sector is not a viable option for increasing job creation in our economy, especially with the rate at which the labour market is growing.

Though only estimates, these figures provide us with a clear and accurate diagnosis of what ails us: an increasing youth population, a rapidly expanding informal sector, and most importantly, a growth trajectory that has not been creating new jobs for over a decade now.
The cloud is not too heavy to spot one of the top growers in its list of in 2014, with a projected growth of 7.9 percent. The World Bank Group almost echoes this by projecting an 7 percent between 2013 and 2015. This is simply because Zambia keeps recording continued Foreign Direct Investment inflows in different sectors, especially mining.  

Now in 2014, mining remains the backbone of the Zambian economy. The Ministry of Finance reported an all-time high in copper production in 2010 with 767,000 metric tons mined, resulting in a GDP growth of 7.6 percent. The mining industry contributed about 9.5 percent to the GDP in 2011, with an indirect contribution of up to 50 percent in the same year according to the Zambia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI).

As Zambia’s Economic pendulum takes another upward swing, there is a need for the government to improve the employability of those left behind by previous economic growth cycles. But, in order to tap the full job creation potential of this growth, there are key areas the government must aggressively focus on: diversification of the economy, investment in infrastructure development, manufacturing and construction, as well as the promotion of entrepreneurship and private sector investment. Perhaps with this focus, the revenue from our billion dollar mining industry will put smiles on many Zambian faces.

Jobs are key to lifting people out of poverty and ensuring that prosperity is shared by all. A good job has the potential to transform the socio-economic wellbeing of individuals and families by improving access to food, education, health care, decent shelter, clean and safe water and other basic needs. While diversification is not the easiest leap to make, it is the only way to achieve long term and sustained economic growth, as well as the achievement of inclusive job creation strategies. Particularly, manufacturing and construction are like beacons on the hill of Zambia’s economic challenges, promising new jobs and an increased combined contribution to the nation’s GDP. According to the World Bank’s 2013 second edition of the Zambia Economic jobs challenges, these two sectors contributed a combined 20.8% to the total national gross domestic product between 2004 and 2008.

Government must further invest in the growth of the agriculture sector. This sector is Zambia’s largest employer. And the many years that Zambia has recorded bumper harvests have left no mark in fostering sustainable employment tapping potential of this sector as a niche for creating sustainable employment. It is time to see this sector as part of the solution as it offers high returns to capital, especially the informal urban sector.

Organising and recognising the informal sector can improve the capacity of informal sector workers to meet their basic needs by increasing their incomes and strengthening their legal status. This will be good for the economy. Further, creating a good business environment such as increased access to technology and good infrastructure are strong incentives in formalising a growing informal sector. Government policy pundits must ensure that the formalisation costs are dearly reduced in order to ensure that sectors like agriculture, manufacturing and construction play a significant role in recycling growth for new and sustainable formal jobs.

Zambia’s economic growth trail may be “great” now, but it won’t be this way forever. One remains optimistic that this upward swing of the economic pendulum will soon favour job creation. It is also one’s hope that Zambia’s positive economic outlook will not be negatively affected by the vicissitudes of the election calendar as political tensions rise in preparation for the 2016 general elections.
Lately there has been a lot of talk about Zambia experiencing high levels of economic growth for the year 2013 being projected to stay strong above 6%. In addition, the speech for the official opening of the third session of the national assembly by His Excellency Mr Michael Chilufya Sata stated that government attaches great importance to employment creation as the top most strategy for ensuring the stability of society and overall growth of the economy in all sectors.

Let’s snap out of the economics mumbo jumbo for a second and get to everyday life. What is this economic growth that is being spoken of to the peasant farmers such as my grandmother who make up for most of the economic activity in the country or to my cousin who runs a ‘ka Ntemba’ (small grocery store) or to my aunt who braids hair in her back yard? For these are the common Zambians most of whom haven’t gone beyond primary education (under 50% according to the Zambia economic brief) so wouldn’t be able to understand these figures.

Also, before we make the mistake of assuming the truth of what has to be proved is: how accurate are these figure and how effective are these policies?

Speaking of accuracy in the calculations of growth indicators, one would encounter one too many gaping holes for information. To begin with, there is a lot of revenue that is not recognised as being part of the gross domestic product. An example in plain sight is the burst in the construction sector. Many Zambians are beginning to

By Esther Phiri
venture into real estate; do we know much of these people (particularly those operating on a small scale)? Also, there are several professions which are not acknowledged or taxed, who takes into account the revenue generated by entertainers some of whom make money way more than pocket change. Also a great controversy with these figure is that supposing it were true that there have been high levels of economic growth why then has it failed to translate into job creation? The latest innovation by government in relation to job creation is the ‘strategy paper on industrialization and job creation’. Its main aim is that the ‘strategy paper on industrialization in relation to job creation is the latest innovation by government’.

To achieve the goal of creating the desired number of decent jobs, there is need to make some major changes in various sectors of the economy. There is need to strengthen the legal framework such that investments made in the country are not only to reap the resources and leave, but to provide sustainable jobs and long term benefits for the economy. Law making bodies need to put up stronger legislation insuring that Zambians are given first priority for employment opportunities and are protected from unfair practices.

Coming to the financial sector, interest rates for private lending institutions are as high as 16.5%. Where ever you may be in the world this is way too high as most businesses do not have a turn over this high. So, unless you are growing gold, you will experience difficulties in paying back the loan. Paying back loans may prove to be so difficult that the few who are able to access the funds and invest are left in a position worse than they were before they decided to borrow the money. This is a major limiting factor for small scale investors.

As mentioned earlier in this article, more than 50% of Zambian youth have a primary education or less. This means that their skills are limited. In turn, this has an effect on the kind of jobs that they can be provided with. Many of the kind of jobs that they can be employed in nowadays do not require minimum qualifications. Many of these people are left in a position worse than they were before they decided to borrow the money. This is a major limiting factor for small scale investors.

In my opinion, it is evident that the plan to create more decent jobs is more long term and to think that it can be achieved quickly is chasing waterfalls. Though I must mention since that it is a work in progress, no conclusive arguments can be made about its validity. So now the question that is pending is what can be done for now? I say let’s start with the basics.

To begin with, agriculture has always been a major part of the Zambian economy. In spite of this, most of the Zambian farmers are peasant farmers and unfortunately will remain this way for the rest of their lives because of the vicious cycle. At the end of the farming, small-scale farmers such as my grandmother, have to sell some of their produce in order to cater for their needs pay for inputs for the next season. The best prices are those offered by the food reserve agency but unfortunately they don’t have the best reputation in terms of paying farmers on time; this forces them to sell their produce at ridiculously low prices. This means that farmers affected by this plague will remain in the informal sector. This not only takes away their hard earned profits but also limits growth. Institutions like the Food Reserve Agency that are major stake holders in agriculture ought to begin to plan ahead and make structure as well as strategy changes in the way they handle the procurement process.

In addition to agricultural reforms, there is need to focus on empowering people in the areas where they are already focused before we can begin to think of moving them up the scale to the formal sector. This can be achieved through synergy and mainstreaming of gender.

The issue of gender equality cut across many sectors. In a society like ours where women are required to be the primary care giver, the gap between the sexes is wide. Though this may be the case, women continue to strive to contribute to sustaining their families through the backyard businesses. These initiatives may be small but their collective outcome is massive. For it is through a business that women help to educate and feed their families. These initiatives have the potential to create more employment if their efforts are brought together and formalised.

From the look of things, the beautiful ones are not yet born but Zambia is pregnant with potential. With brilliant ideas such as the private sector development reform programme that is making business easier and the Zambia decent jobs programme we are on the right path. Before we can get to the big picture of creating decent jobs, let start small by strengthening the roots we already have because society can only be changed over time.
The solution is in how we use public funds

By Francisca Mulenga

Zambia has experienced a robust increase in economic growth over the recent years. Huge amounts of revenue have been generated mainly from the mining sector, which contributed 11 percent (US$590million) of real GDP in 2010 and is expected to grow to US$1.35billion in 2015. Mining is a crucial part of the economy but Zambia owns none of the mines that make this money, relying only on taxes and mineral royalties which are low as things stand and have always been a bone of contention between government and the mines.

Mines generate approximately US$2.9billion annually depending on the fluctuations on the London metal exchange and government loses a lot of money because of tax avoidance by the mines. If government received the taxes it loses from the mines, jobs can be created for civil servants and more youths with business ideas can be empowered, hence reducing the high levels of unemployment. Government needs to review its tax policies on the mines because copper is the major source of revenue. Government should encourage the survey and exploration of minerals to be done by Zambians as this will make it easy to know what exactly is being mined and to what grade it is before calling on investors, hence, creating jobs for surveyors.

Value addition of copper should be encouraged in the country as this will boost the industrial and manufacturing sectors. Copper products like copper rods, copper wires and other copper products exported outside the country will generate more revenue in the country instead of just exporting raw copper. This can be achieved by engaging in a Public Private Partnership (PPP) with foreign or local investors in the setting up of this manufacturing company. This partnership will be better judging by the way that government has failed to handle the mining sector successfully.

Furthermore, the transport and communications sector is another sector that has a large real GDP percentage growth with projections of 13.4 percent in 2014. The current state of the railway system leaves much to be desired as it is in a deplorable state and needs life support. Zambia railway needs to be recapitalized and used as a mode of transportation for all goods including copper and other commodities in and out of the country. Government having noticed this is using the Euro bond to recapitalise the railway system. This will attract business from the mines that will pay a lot of money to have copper transported and people leaving alone the line of rail. The expansion of Zambia railways will lead to the employment of technicians, engineers, drivers of trains and contractors will also be employed to help with the construction works. With the use of this cheap mode of transport, goods and machinery for firms will be cheaper to buy for local Zambians and export to other countries.

The agriculture sector has the highest potential to generate huge revenue in the country. This sector employs 81 percent of the working population and 43 percent of the non working poor. This sector has very few commercial farmers and more subsistence farmers despite it employing a large number of Zambians. Most of the subsistence farmers in the rural areas are considered as the working poor because they are living on less than a dollar a day. Government should also increase taxes on agricultural imports that can be produced in the country.

Government should also increase taxes on agricultural imports that can be produced in the country. This will lessen the imports of products that are produced in Zambia and will increase the production capacity of commercial and subsistence farmers, hence, creating more jobs in the distribution,
goods on goods being exported. This will increase demand for local products and hence increase job creation and incomes. Value addition of agricultural products has to be encouraged. In Zambia, this is being done by foreign investors and in provinces like Northern Province, the drainage systems have been given to a Zambian contractor.

As much as the foreign investors are doing an excellent job, joint ventures and partnerships should be encouraged with Zambian contractors. This will help Zambian contractors gain exposure and experience. This will create both formal and informal jobs for the locals.

Apart from joint ventures, subcontracts should be encouraged stating that for every construction done 60 percent should be given to local investors and 40 percent to local investors. Most of the foreign investors come with their own man power like project engineers leaving the informal jobs like concrete mixing for the Zambians. But with joint ventures, subcontracts and partnerships, the Zambian contractors can involve their own engineers, architects and project engineers which will increase the exposure and experience of Zambian workers.

In a nutshell, the increase in economic growth in Zambia can lead to a lot of jobs if the policies stated above can be implemented. Each sector has the capacity to produce more and even contribute more to real GDP percentage of the economy. The dependence on copper mining has made it difficult to diversify the economy and create more jobs in other sectors. The World Bank, IMF, UN and other organizations need to advise government on which sectors to improve when giving them funding or loans.

Finally, another source of economic growth in the country is the construction sector with infrastructure developments as evidence. With more hospitals and roads to construct, Zambia is indeed a growing economy. Most of the big building contracts are given to foreign investors when local contractors have the capacity to do a good job as well. The current ongoing road development in all provinces is being done by foreign investors and in provinces like Luanshya which is a thing of the past, the agricultural sector is an ongoing investment and has a capacity to employ a lot of people.

Maize production should not just end at mealie meal but can be used to produce things like corn flakes which can be exported to other countries. The agricultural sector has the potential to increase the economic growth of the country because it’s a sector that, when expanded and products diversified, can keep on giving to the country and reduce the levels of poverty.

Unlike the mining sector which is unstable and minerals can be depleted like Bwana Mitiwba mine in Luanshya which is a thing of the past, the agricultural sector is an ongoing investment and has a capacity to employ a lot of people.

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According to the most recent Afrobarometer Survey, unemployment tops the list of the most important problems facing the nation that the government should address. With a population of 13 million, 14 percent are unemployed, that is almost one million people actively looking for jobs. The unemployed comprise of people from the marginalized groups such as the school dropout, least qualified, physically challenged, women and youth.

Considering the fact that over 300,000 young people leave higher education to enter the labour market, unemployment is a challenge and a concern that needs to be addressed. Unemployment stands in the way of efforts to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality. It undermines the achievement of sustainable economic growth, and erodes social cohesion. There is need for concerted efforts in the creation of jobs for many unemployed people. The creation of jobs is critical not only for the achievement of a better life for all people — employment is central even to the notion of human dignity, equality and justice.

The unemployment situation in Zambia calls for the involvement of all stakeholders including government, private sector, churches and traditional leaders. It is a known fact that government has no capacity to employ everyone in the country, but it has the potential to create an enabling environment for job creation opportunities. The government should create an investment-friendly climate to enhance the growth of various sectors which will create job opportunities. Zambia needs to nurture its SMEs.

Despite Zambia experiencing high levels of economic growth in recent years, this growth has not been inclusive enough to generate jobs for the nation’s fast growing and youthful population.

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attract domestic and foreign investors whose interest supports labour intensive technology industries.

A study by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) shows that Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) provide two-thirds of all formal jobs in developing countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and 80 percent in low income countries, mainly in Sub-Saharan Africa. With crucial help from the government, SMEs can create thousands of jobs in Zambia.

Firstly, government can ensure creation of jobs by adopting policies and fairly implement these policies to sustain SMEs that can create jobs. The government should support the implementation of labour intensive business ventures as well as sustain financing of existing small businesses in order to growth. The expansion and growth demand for more labour meaning to make the enterprises successful, Zambia’s significant economic development situation presents opportunities which can lead to the establishment of vibrant enterprises. The government needs to recognize the significant roles that SMEs play in an economy. Small and sustainable economic growth through job creation, development of entrepreneurial skills and the competitiveness and growth of new and small businesses.

It is important to note that through innovation, SMEs address challenges affecting communities through their business activities which are largely in training, manufacturing and service provision. Manufactured products for small and medium enterprises include textile products, wood products, light engineering and metal fabrication, food processing, leather products, handicrafts and ceramic. The service sector includes consultancy, restaurants, hair salons and barbershops, passenger and goods transport and cleaning services. The trading sector would be concentrated in consumable products, industrial products, agricultural inputs and produce.

Secondly, government can also address unemployment by promoting entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship presents great opportunities not only for individuals but society as a whole because it significantly contributes to poverty reduction and the nation’s economic growth. In addition, entrepreneurship is a key tool to develop the human capital necessary for the future, and promotion of sustainable growth. The government should play a role in addressing unemployment by incentivizing the training of youth; encourage job creation; support young entrepreneurs because new jobs are created by high impact, high growth entrepreneurs and start-ups. Government should ensure that it supports and fosters self-employment amongst people because entrepreneurship helps people earn a living. The government should develop the attitude and skills of entrepreneurship in realizing this sector is not only meant for job creation but also for national economic growth. This can be done through the establishment of entrepreneurship training hubs. The hubs can exist to train people in business start-up and management skills. The people can be trained through programmes like the International Labor Organization ILO’s Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB), a management-training programme with a focus on starting and improving small businesses as a strategy for creating more and better employment.

The business management training can last for three months after which the trained people can be put in groups. Each group would set up a microenterprise and then identify a business venture through which it could invest in.

The government can partner with already established microfinance organizations like FINCA to give financial support in form of startup loans to enable these microenterprises initiate business ventures in areas such as training, simple manufacturing, and service provision.

In conclusion, we need to concentrate our efforts on job creation by taking responsibility to contribute in every way we can to curb the problem of unemployment. We need to encourage the spirit of enterprise among young people and the general populace. We need to act together in a common purpose, that way we can ensure that all Zambians can enjoy the dignity, fulfillment and opportunity that comes with work.
“Don’t knock, kulibe nchito”

By Paul Mushya III

Normally, for most Zambians the issue of having more good paying jobs is hopeless and non-existent; well, considering Zambia’s 7.3 percent inflation rate at least. However, this may not be true.

Zambia’s Central Statistical Office’s January Monthly Bulletin observes that Zambia’s population is 13,092,666 as of 2010’s Census. This is approximately 26.6% of UK’s population whose unemployment rate is currently at 7.1 per cent. The latest Zambia Economic Brief by the World Bank however estimates that Zambia’s urban unemployment rate is 19.6 per cent bearing in mind that most of Zambia’s population lives either in cities or along major transport corridors.

It therefore, would not be surprising for one to think of the ‘why-factor’, why Zambia is not as populated as the UK but has fewer jobs. It is estimated that Zambia has a 7.3 per cent economic growth rate, why is the said growth rate not being felt as inclusive enough, or perhaps why it is certain that one would drive through Lusaka’s major streets and meet youths dressed in overalls loitering with huge brown envelops looking for jobs at factories as casual workers. People with the ‘why-factor’ also ask why homes in Lusaka have notices saying “don’t knock, Kulibe nchito” [translation from Nyanja to English: No Jobs]. They may also ask why homes in Lusaka have notices saying “why-factored”. The question of why the fact that the average undergraduate would think that employers have enough employees haunts them. It all comes to the hopeless assertion of no jobs in the country.

Economists have time and again argued that Zambia’s economy would have the ability to create more well paying jobs only if the Government reconsiders certain fiscal and economic policies. Policy Analysis Manager at the Employers Association of Zambia (EAZ), Hilary Chila Chizela explains that policies like the Minimum Wage have been detrimental to Zambia’s employment rate.

Renowned International Trade author, M.L. Jhingan defines a wage as a payment for a service of labour, whether mental or physical. In Zambia, the Minimum Wages and Conditions of Employment Act Cap 276 defines the minimum wage as the lowest wage which may be paid to an employee. The Act further allows the Ministry of Labour to set minimum wages as in the case of July 2012, when minimum wages were revised through the Statutory Instruments, Instruments 45 and 46 of 2012, effective 4th July 2012.

Hazele adds that, “Jobs are a result of growth of businesses.” He also says that hiking the minimum wage negatively impacts on businesses as the cost of production increases, further inducing job losses in order for employers to maintain or increase profits.

Another issue Hazele labels as hindering Job Creation despite Zambia’s economic growth is the Statutory Instrument (SI) number 55 (Bank of Zambia Monitoring of Balance of Payments Regulations, 2013) which empowers the Bank of Zambia to put in place the balance of payments monitoring framework. Stakeholders to implement this SI are financial service providers, Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA), Zambia Development Agency (ZDA), exporters, importers, foreign investors and any other person receiving or remitting foreign currency. In short, SI 55 regulates how much foreign exchange businesses make. He explains that most businesses obtain their capital outside the country and that such restraints negatively affect the provision of human capital, hence less jobs.

In many cases, the aspect of change agitates and sometimes irks most Zambians. Zambia went to the polls on the 20th September 2011 and little did they know that the party they elected would accommodate rampant by-elections. In June 2013, Forum for Democracy and Development Spokesperson, Antonio Mwanza quoted the Electoral Commission of Zambia that the country spends at least a minimum of K5billion (un-rebased) per by-election. The country has hosted over ten by-elections since 2011. In addition to this, the PF-led government as shown in 2014’s National Budget Speech allocated K44.2million (rebased) to the Constitution Making Process, of which the Technical Committee Drafting the Zambian Constitution has not yet released the Draft Constitution. Such a usage of resources is contrary to the PF manifesto which...
which strongly castigated the Movement for Multi-party Democracy (MMD) for spending a sum of over K135billion (un-rebased) in a failed constitution making process called the National Constitutional Conference (NCC). These costs would have facilitated the creation of well-paying jobs.

Correspondingly, a neutral stakeholder in the likes of the Zambia Episcopal Conference (ZEC) on 23rd January 2014 considered these frequent by-elections among other governance concerns as taking the country many years backwards in terms of development. Logically, one would prefer that these funds used for by-elections be utilized in skills training and youth incentives such as the country’s Citizens Economic Empowerment Commission (CEEC), the Ministry of Youth and Sports Youth Development Fund, ZDA and the Development Bank of Zambia (DBZ). These, basically promote the private sector and boost entrepreneurship, a vibrant conduit for job creation and sustainable economic growth.

Furthermore, the issue of government’s overspending has serious effects. This is usually caused by factors such as government’s stance on the Public Service Wage Bill, which is projected at 52.5 per cent worth of tax payers revenue in 2014 and of course, by-elections caused by defections through loopholes in Zambia’s laws. Economists claim that this has the potential of limiting funds in the country’s reserves hence reducing chances of job creation.

It would be unfair not to acknowledge government’s efforts in employment creation. This year alone, Zambia’s President Michael Sata states in his 2013 New Year’s address to the nation that his government will focus on developing labour intensive industries in key areas of agriculture, construction, manufacturing, tourism, science and technology through creating the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC), he adds that his government will also bring up Multi-facility Economic Zones thus creating employment.

Some critics however, disagree with the IDC idea claiming that Zambia’s current parastatals like the ZDA and the CEEC are ill and need reshaping. In the same vein, experts say that the IDC could crowd out the private sector hence disturbing the economic landscape mostly because of political interference. It would be fair to conclude that these ‘doubting-Thomases’ expect the IDC to be a failure as they relate it to a conglomerate called the Industrial Development Corporation (INDECO) which came as a result of the Mulungushi Reforms of April 1968 of which by 1971, became one of the largest companies in Sub-Saharan Africa but, later became disadvantaged due to government policies that based copper as their major priority. Unfortunately, copper prices eventually dropped in 1975.

Despite the ‘Why-Factors’ justifications, Zambia’s economy can create jobs. EAZ advises that government expenditure must be limited and has to engage itself in wide policy consultations. It also advises Zambia to highly invest in the agricultural sector, which is the country’s major employer as well as the booming Information Communication Technology industry.
The ‘Think Jobs: The Youth Respond’ Magazine is part of a nationwide ‘Think Jobs’ competition and features home-grown Zambian responses to the facts and figures shared in the World Bank’s Zambia Economic Brief. The featured writers comprise of students from across Zambia who were competitively selected as part of the ‘Think Jobs’ writing competition.

The Magazine has been compiled by the Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Unit of the World Bank Office in Lusaka. Funding for this project was provided by the World Bank, as part of their broader aim to facilitate public debate on issues of development. The World Bank project team included Ms Kundhavi Kadiresan, Ms Kate Bridges, Ms Victoria Cabral, Ms Hellen Mungaila, Ms Ngao Mubanga, Mr Mupuwaliya Mupuwaliya, Mr Praveen Kumar, Mr Asumani Guloba and Mr Jumbe Ngoma.

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