

Economic Contribution of The Non-Profit Sector to Youth Employment in Africa: A Southern Africa Perspective

Eleanor Meda Chipeta , Dr Wycliffe Ouma , Dr Dennis Osei

University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

Abstract

The nonprofit sector has emerged as a critical yet understudied actor in addressing youth unemployment across Africa. Despite its growing prominence, there remains a paucity of empirical research quantifying its economic contributions, especially within Southern Africa, where youth unemployment rates exceed 50% in several nations. This study investigates the role of nonprofit organisations (NPOs) in creating dignified and fulfilling employment opportunities for young people in Southern Africa. A quantitative analysis was conducted using a sample data of youth from South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Mozambique. Findings reveal that the nonprofit sector contributes significantly to youth economic empowerment through three primary pathways including skills training, entrepreneurship support, and volunteering opportunities. However, direct employment generation remains limited with a few of participants securing formal, paid roles within NPOs. Crucially, perceptions of dignity and fulfilment in work exhibited substantial variability, correlating with factors such as gender, educational, extent of marginality. These results have refined understanding of the economic contribution of the NPO's sector and the related dynamics that contribute to overall wellbeing of the youth in the region. These results have crucial implications for future research.

Keywords: Economic contribution, dignified and fulfilling work, Non-profit sector, Youth, Africa.