

EVENT REPORT

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

SOUTH AFRICA

TALENT HWATI

August 2015

www.kas.de/suedafrika/en/

GETTING GRADUATES TO WORK- REDIRECTING SOUTH AFRICA'S ECONOMIC FUTURE.

YOUTH LAB, UJ POLICY CONVERSATION: YOUTH ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION.

The 26th of August was indeed a vibrant night in the Library auditorium of Kingsway campus at the University of Johannesburg with a policy conversation organized by Youth Lab and funded by the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS). Quite a heated discussion in which the young people got to explore and brainstorm various ways graduates can access, create and own economic opportunities.

Approximately 47 students attended the policy conversation which coincided with the launch of UJ Student Lab. The policy conversation is a dynamic opportunity for young people to discuss about the South African youth's demographic experiences, factors that inhibit graduate participation in the economy and sustainable ways of creating employment. This event stems from the rising delinquent situation of growing youth unemployment, particularly young South Africans who are fortunate enough to enter and complete tertiary education however find themselves unable to secure employment.

It was a very informative discussion between students and the panelists. The panelists were given three main questions that they were supposed to prepare in leading the conversation. These questions encompassed: 1. what excludes young graduates from successful participation in the South African economy, despite their qualifications? 2. Along with their degrees, what tools do graduates need to succeed beyond college and university? 3. What are some of

the innovative and unique ways graduates can enter the economy?

The panelists included Thabang Sefalafala an economic sociologist who is also a PhD candidate; Motlalepula Mmesi who is an independent research consultant and analyst also an entrepreneur and Siyanda Siko an enterprise development specialist from the International Labour Organization (ILO).

KAS plays an active role in aiding students. The main aim of policy conversation is to empower students with vibrant opportunities and knowledge of something that they can look forward to when they complete their studies besides falling into the overall 75% of youth unemployment statistics in South Africa.

During the policy conversation, three panelists spoke about their professional careers and led the discussion about how to make exceptional future preparations in their curriculums in order to create or access economic opportunities at the same time reducing youth unemployment.

Thabang Sefalafala was the first speaker who spoke about why adding value to your qualification is important and calls for inclusion in economic participation. He further spoke about the critical issues that are important to note as reasons why the youth is not getting employment. These critical issues include that: 1. The South African economy is in shambles (the retrenchment of the mining sector, the crisis within trading partners and people's economic exclu-

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

SOUTH AFRICA

TALENT HWATI

August 2015

www.kas.de/suedafrika/en/

sion); 2. Lack of skill supply i.e. the incompleteness between student's academic qualifications and work available in different job sectors and 3. There is lack thereof in acquiring market capacities.

Thabang further elaborated the three things in addition to your degree that are important in order to get economic inclusion. These specifications include Curriculum Vitae, personal branding i.e. how one communicates, tenacity and passion and lastly the art of networking.

Motlalepula spoke about how instead of falling into the unemployment statistics as a graduate fresh from university, one can create their own work by figuring out what is needed in the economic market. And by doing that, one can create their own business in the economy. Further she also elaborated that one should create value in whatever job you find yourself in.

Siyanda spoke about the rigorous intervention in job creation by the International Labour Organization. He also spoke about gender studies, social protection and to recognize the need to invest in human capital. Most importantly he spoke about how universities should aim to try and transform university curriculums into entrepreneurship studies and ensuring that each graduate comes up with a proposal so as to bridge the gap of youth unemployment. His main advice was that "your focus should not be on finding a job but rather creating employment".

Finally, the policy discussion was an informative conversation encompassed with enthusiastic students and a great panel selection. This was well observed by the number of questions that were received from the students to the panelists.