

Chapter 1

A Scoping Review on Exploring Job Search Strategies for Unemployed Youth: Implications for the Agro Sector in Sub-Saharan Africa

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ABSTRACT

This scoping review examines job search strategies of unemployed youth in sub-Saharan Africa's agro sector, highlighting its importance in addressing regional youth unemployment. Strategies include networking, leveraging career services, internships, and skill acquisition. The review identifies obstacles such as limited market-relevant skills, inadequate support services, and a mismatch between youth aspirations and available opportunities. Findings suggest a multifaceted approach is needed, emphasizing skill enhancement, resource access, and entrepreneurship support. The study offers insights for policymakers and stakeholders to connect unemployed youth with job opportunities, promoting agricultural development and economic progress in sub-Saharan Africa.

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INTRODUCTION

The Sub-Saharan African Agro-sector encompasses a wide range of activities, from subsistence farming focused on household food security to large-scale commercial agriculture producing export crops (Pawlak & Kołodziejczak, 2020). Understanding this diversity is crucial for targeting a specific niche within a sector through stakeholder engagement of all stakeholders (Yami et al., 2019). Navigating the diverse Agro-landscape addresses such questions as "Is there a growing demand for organic produce in your region necessitating expertise in organic farming methods"? Perhaps the rise in vertical farming in urban areas presents new job opportunities (Boye et al., 2024). Identifying areas that align with your interests and skills will allow you to focus on your job search efforts and to tailor your qualifications to specific industry demands.

For university students preparing to enter the world of work in the agro-sector, post-graduation, or undergraduate sector, courses provide a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to develop economic literacy and thinking. Undergraduate students may eventually pursue professions in business, banks, academia, or government. To be successful in the agro-sector, job seekers need relevant information and well-developed job-hunting skills that allow them to be strategic in their job search. Whether one is looking for an internship, job, or making a career change, the principles and processes of conducting a successful job search are the same.

Studies indicate that youth unemployment is a significant challenge in sub-Saharan Africa [4] [5] [6]. This is a chronic problem that disproportionately affects the rural people in the region. For young job searchers, the agro-sector, a cornerstone of many regional economies, presents both a complicated terrain and possible answer. Although a sizeable percentage of young people without jobs find employment in agriculture, several systemic and personal issues prevent this from happening (Betcherman & Khan, 2018a). There is no denying that the agro-sector can provide young people with a living space. This industry, which is loosely linked to both food security and economic expansion, provides a variety of opportunities, ranging from value addition and agribusiness to agricultural production and processing (Fox & Thomas, 2016). However, achieving this potential requires a diversified strategy that considers the supply- and demand-side constraints. The mismatch between the abilities that young people possess and the demands of the agro-sector presents significant difficulty (Boye et al., 2024). Many youths lack the technical and entrepreneurial skills needed to succeed in this fast-paced industry (Babu & Shishodia, 2017; Johnson, 2018). The skills gap is further worsened by a lack of exposure to agricultural methods and restricted access to high-quality education and training (Mehrotra, 2020). To succeed in the competitive agro-sector employment market, youth without jobs must develop effective job-search tactics. Online and

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