

## Call for research papers

EPRN 8<sup>th</sup> Students' Conference

Theme: **Youth Employment and the School-to-Work Transition/ Opportunities and challenges**

Deadline to submit papers: **November 25<sup>th</sup> 2024**

Conference date: **December 05<sup>th</sup> 2024**

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### 1. Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 calls for delivering “full and productive employment and decent work” to young people. This requires providing adequate education and training, enhancing access to formal employment, and opening business environments, including access to finance to young people.

Rwanda is a member of the International Labor Organization (ILO) and subscribes to the values and principles of ILO’s constitution, which provides for “the prevention of unemployment and underemployment, and provision of ad- equate living wage”<sup>1</sup>.

In Rwanda, youth unemployment is relatively high at 25.6% among youth population aged 16-30 years as compared to the adults (aged 31 years and above) which is at 17.1%. Nonetheless about 60% of employed Rwandan youth work in nonproductive jobs such as subsistence agriculture, retail, and construction. Basically, Rwanda has a considerable number of unemployed and underemployed youth. The youth unemployment patterns in Rwanda show that 12.2% of unemployed youth have no education, 39.4% have achieved secondary education while 32.4%. are university graduates.

#### ***What’s is alarming?***

This number of unemployed youth cannot be ignored considering that above 70% of Rwanda’s population are below 35 years of age. If left unchecked it is likely to lead to serious social repercussions including intergenerational cycle of poverty, juvenile delinquency, forced migration, and social unrest.

Youth delinquencies in the country caused by drug abuse, prostitution, alcoholism, informal streets vending, begging and vagrancy is at large in local communities and townships.

Rwanda has maintained an impressive macroeconomic performance since 2000<sup>2</sup> with GDP growth averaging 7.5 percent and per capita GDP more than doubling from US\$404 to US\$818<sup>3</sup>. Despite of this, the economy has not generated enough formal and decent jobs to absorb the country’s large

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<sup>1</sup> GoR (2014). Design of Five-Year National Employment Programme (NEP) for Rwanda

<sup>2</sup> IMF (2022). IMF World Economic Outlook database, October 2022 edition

<sup>3</sup> NISR (2022). Rwanda Fifth Population and Household Census

and growing youth population<sup>4</sup>. In response to lack of formal jobs, many youths have turned to self-employment, though three in four youths are employed informally with over 75 percent of youths in informal sector<sup>5</sup>. Between 2019 and 2022, youth unemployment rate averaged 23.41 percent far above the global average of 13.6 percent (ILO, 2020a).

## **2. Objectives**

The overall objective of this students' conference is to reflect on the current youth employment policies, best practices, challenges and opportunities to explore. The conference will enable youth at universities to share knowledge from research papers and discussions on the current dynamics including the role of artificial intelligence and its effect on the future of job.

## **3. Research themes**

Interested students may send papers under one or more of the themes here below:

- Human capital development in Rwanda
- Youth employment opportunities
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its effect on the future of job
- Linkage of educating to industry, best practices and gaps

Papers from one or a team of researchers are acceptable. Female students are highly encouraged to submit their papers.

## **4. Conference organization**

The conference will attract more than 3,000 students from universities in Rwanda and abroad. During the conference selected papers will be presented. Partner institutions will also present their reports or papers related to the conference theme. After the conference, EPRN will summarize conference recommendations and share them with concerned stakeholders (Public institutions, Private Sector, Universities, Development Partners, Financial Institutions and Ngo/INGOs).

## **5. Paper Submissions**

All interested students at bachelor and master' programmes; are encouraged to submit their papers through [info@eprnrwanda.org](mailto:info@eprnrwanda.org) by not later than 25<sup>th</sup> November 15<sup>th</sup> 2024, 5pm Kigali time (GMT+2).

Authors of the selected papers to be presented during the conference will be notified by not later than November 30<sup>th</sup> 2024.

The conference is scheduled on December 05<sup>th</sup> 2024 in Kigali (the exact venue shall be communicated).

Contact us through: [info@eprnrwanda.org](mailto:info@eprnrwanda.org) or call/WhatsApp: +250788357648.

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<sup>4</sup> NISR (2022). Rwanda Fifth Population and Household Census

<sup>5</sup> NISR (2020). Statistical Report on "Trends of Labor market performance indicator in Rwanda