

The Database and the Sustainable Development Goals

The Coronavirus has left no aspect of human life untouched, from the clearly visible such as the way we work, study, play and even worship to the less visible such as domestic violence, unemployment and even the realization of the SDGs.

Just as we have had to restructure our businesses, places of worship, schools, etc., we also have to re-evaluate our approach in addressing complex resilient societal issues such as those posed by the UN Sustainable Development Goals. As such, we as The Database Kenya sat down to assess how best we can contribute to the social and economic betterment of the world starting here at home in Kenya. We are a business that is not only designed to help in the fruition of the SDGs but to do so in a Post-COVID19 world.

In light of the above, we saw that the following are the SDGs we are best-equipped as a young organization to handle:

SDG 1- End Poverty in All its Forms Everywhere

According to the United Nations, as of 2019, the world was already off-track to end poverty by 2030. This situation was further aggravated by the unforeseeable pandemic which has caused the first increase in global poverty in decades. Over 70 million people all across the globe have been pushed into extreme poverty as a direct or indirect result of the pandemic.

It should also be understood that this poverty disproportionately affects the population; hitting vulnerable groups harder. Inequalities experienced by the youth, women and children have been worsened with young workers being twice as likely to be living in extreme poverty as adult workers.

Numbers as terrifying as those cited above are the motivation behind the creation of The Database because unemployment and poverty are inseparably tied together. We are youth-centred and youth-led, the best positioned organization to understand the complexities of youth unemployment and to provide effective solutions to it.

Aside from the other forms of work offered on the platform, we primarily focus on The Gig Economy as a plausible answer to youth unemployment. It was already projected to be worth Kshs. 34 billion by 2023, employing over 100,000 Kenyans. However, the economic implications of COVID19 have only further necessitated this form of work with employers being forced to downsize or revise salaries downwards just to stay afloat. Workers on the other hand need to work more flexible hours in order to work more than one job just to make ends meet. The Gig Economy is the perfect in-between for employers and workers, offering the former an alternative to downsizing and the latter the opportunity to work and earn more and us as The Database Kenya are at the centre of it all.

SDG 8- Decent Work and Economic Growth

One of the most reliable indicators of global economic performance is GDP and what it demonstrated even before COVID19 was that the global economy was already slowing down. According to the UN, the world reported an average of 2.0% GDP per capita annually in the years between 2010 and 2018. In 2019, this reduced by 0.5 percentage points to 1.5%. Remember that this is before the onset of the pandemic, when that is factored in, conservative estimates expect the world economy to decline by 4.2% as the world faces the worst economic recession since The Great Depression.

These numbers are made a reality when we add the human element. The impact of this slowdown is that over 1.6 billion workers in the informal sector risk losing their livelihoods during the pandemic. This is only worse for Kenya as close to 80% of its labour force is in the informal economy. It is estimated that 400 million people lost their jobs in just the second quarter of 2020. In fact, in Kenya, it is estimated that about 1 million people have already lost their jobs with larger proportion falling into underemployment.

Mr Guy Rider, the International Labour Organization (ILO) Director-General already outlined the importance of involving all the relevant stakeholders in the employment sector in finding a lasting solution to the effects of COVID19. That is exactly what we aspire to do by engaging not only employers and job seekers but even institutions of higher learning, the Government of Kenya, religious institutions and even non-governmental organizations in finding an effective solution to youth unemployment.