

## Skills for Success: Paving the Way to Youth Employability

By Evi Michael



*Image source: LEAP Africa*

It is no news that young people are currently faced with the challenges of finding jobs. However, we hardly hear about the issues they face when it comes to maintaining those jobs and fitting into the organization's culture. This is a big deal, and there's no better time to discuss it, especially when the "Gen Z" generation are currently not "gree-ing" for anyone.

Let's break it down:

Imagine you graduate from a tertiary institution and you cannot wait to begin your life after school. You envision your career making lots of money especially as you graduated with a first class in your department. However, the job market is not as seamless as making 'A's in school, as you actually have to work with people, communicate with them, lead them and exemplify other relevant interpersonal skills that you had not focused on while in school. Frustrating, right? This is a common problem for many young people.

First, we need to acknowledge that the skills demanded by employers are evolving. It's not just about acing exams; it's about possessing a toolkit of practical abilities. Critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and adaptability are the new currency in the job market. These are skills that empower



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young people to tackle challenges head-on, innovate, and collaborate effectively. We need to focus on ensuring young people have these skills to not only land great jobs but also thrive in their roles.

The truth remains - young people should invest more in training and programmes that teach useful employability/ interpersonal skills. These skills make a real difference when one is searching for jobs as they bridge the gap between what is learned in school and what is needed to excel at work. On the flip side, organizations could team up with other organizations focused on building these skills amongst young people. For example, the [iLEAD programme](#) being cascaded by LEAP Africa is focused on ensuring young people transition successfully with relevant knowledge and skills that will enable them to thrive in the workforce. In collaborating, young people get the skills they need, and these organizations get talented individuals ready to contribute effectively. It's a win-win!

Mentorship is also another aspect that can be harnessed to influence the knowledge and employability skills of the youth. Having someone who has been there and has possibly amassed a wealth of experience working in organizations can be a game-changer. Mentors can guide and inspire young people while supporting them to build the skills necessary to navigate a successful career.

In conclusion, investing in youth employability skills is an investment in the future. It's a commitment to empowering the next generation with the tools they need to succeed in an ever-evolving job market. We must prioritize initiatives that nurture academic excellence and the practical, adaptable, and innovative skills that will propel our youth toward fulfilling and successful careers. The future workforce is waiting to be unlocked; let's ensure they have the keys to success.