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The center for social progress

The youth and the employment situation in Togo.

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Since 1993, when Togo got into the democracy process, the economic and the social conditions were affected by the political crisis that emerged from the lack of democracy and respect of human rights by the Togolese authorities. The young people unemployment is one of the major problems that the country is facing. They seem left to themselves. Most of them who are University graduates have to ride Taxi Motorcycles Called “**ZEMIDJAN**” (in the local language) to survive. What are the causes of the problem? And how can they be tackled? These are few questions we shall try to answer in this small article.

Objective: This article is intended to give a brief review of the unemployment problem in Togo, determine the causes, and give remedial approaches to the problem.

The causes of young people unemployment in Togo.

Six major causes can be highlighted. These are:

1-Corruption

This a major cause that is blocking the government to create more jobs for the young people. The financial resources allocated to cope with unemployment are misused. They are used for personal expenses.

2-Lack of efficient employment policy.

Since Togo got into democracy process, the country got into a deep political crisis that is seriously aggravating the social conditions of the young people. The governmental authorities seem to be weak in resolving the unemployment issue. The National Direction for Employment Policy is a service created by the government to handle the employment issue since the 80's. But it seems that it does not function any more, as the government is no more allocating financial resources to the Direction for its running. In most of the public services there is a need of qualified personnel, as most the workers have retired. There is a need for the government to organize recruitment tests for the young people who have completed their education, and give them the opportunity to work in the public services. The young people are the future of the country. If the government lacks to provide work for them, then the country is surely going backward. The youth have their part to do in the development of the country so they must be given the opportunity or they will be hopeless and will try to go to other countries. That is how the country is losing its labor force.

3-The European Union Commission suspended her cooperation with Togo.

Since 1993, the EU commission suspended her cooperation with Togo for lack of Democracy and non respect of Human Rights. Togo got then into financial difficulties. Development programs to help Togo cope with poverty were delayed. The situation of the economy is aggravated by the suspension. The major economic sectors (Industries, Companies, Financial Institutions, even the informal sector) are running slow. The suspension is still on until Togolese authorities prove to be a true democratic system and a State that respects Human Rights.

4-The education system does not take into account the reality on the employment market.

Since the independence, the education system remained the same. There is no change in the habits. The education system does not enable the students to be functional when they complete their education. They need to have a professional or a technical training. That is extra financial costs for the companies, enterprises and industries. It is indeed for that reason that they prefer to recruit those who have got already professional experiences. There is a need for the government to review the education system to make it more efficient so that it does not produce unemployed. In order to enable the youth participation in the nation's development there is a need to give them a practical education that takes into account the country's reality.

5-Lack of initiative from the young people.

There is one thing that one can be sure about is that the government has its limit in the employment issues. It cannot provide work to all. That is why the private sector exists. It is the result of initiatives.

The young people should learn from their elders who have set up their own enterprises and are self-employed. They should not rely on the government to provide them with work or they will be deceived. They must start thinking about setting up a small business. May be some have the idea of starting a small business, but the financial means are lacking. This should not be an obstacle. They must keep on looking for investments from particular or from the financial institutions. That is the only way they can make it.

6-Discrimination

In some public dept even in some private dept, the recruitment is based on the ethnic, the family relations, friendship and sex background. On the sex background the female are privileged.

Tackling unemployment in Togo.

A country without employment policy is surely going backward. A nation cannot develop when his people are hopeless about employment issues. The government should be the first to feel concerned about this frustrating situation. People are eager to work for not only their benefit, but also for the benefit of the whole nation. It is time for the government to take serious measures against corruption and discrimination the main obstacles for the young people to get jobs. Some of the measures are the following:

- **Promote good governance,**
- **Setting up efficient employment policies,**
- **Fighting corruption and discrimination by all means,**
- **Reviewing the educational system,**
- **Promoting initiatives by helping financially the youth in setting up small businesses.**

These are few measures that can be fully developed for the purpose of alleviating unemployment.