

**“ HELPING TO CREATE MORE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT
THROUGH LOCAL INVESTMENT” FORUM HELD ON
SATURDAY 23RD JULY 2005 UNDER SMALL ISLAND VOICE
PROGRAMME (SIV)**

Introduction

A forum on “Helping To Create More Employment Though Local Investment” was held on Saturday 23rd July 2005 at the National Institute of Education (NIE). The workshop involved participants from a previous forum that was organized last year and also unemployed youths. There were a maximum of 75 participants.

The forum was an introduction of the project proposal and gave the participants the opportunity to voice their concerns relating to unemployment issues. The invited youths stated that they wanted to continue to participate in the future activities as it was a good initiative and there are local investors (SEnPA, CKD) that can help in the implementation of the projects.

The delegates from the Mauritius meeting also attended the forum and Ms. Thyra Faure gave a presentation about our participation in the Mauritius meeting. We also had a small exhibition on Small Islands Voice from its beginnings in 2002 to date. There were pictures displayed from the Palau meeting 2002 and Mauritius 2005. We also set up some SIV Global Internet forum posters and we also had books on display.

Objective of the forum

- Feedback from Youth Visioning meeting in Mauritius.
- Explanation on how to start their own business / what do they need.
- The implementation of our upcoming activities for the coming month as we want it to be successful.
- Get the maximum number of unemployed youth working

Summary

The facilitators for the forum were Mrs. Rosie Deny from Center for Skill Development in the Ministry of Economic Planning & Employment and Mr. John Payet from Small Enterprises Promotion Agency (SEnPA), an organization that helps young people to set up their own business.

We also saw the participation of the new Coordinator for Youth Services Bureau, Mr. Bernard Frichot, within the Youth Department and Mr. Alain De Comarmond, Department of Environment

Some important points that were raised in the forum

➤ From Center for Skill Development:

There are available two training schemes:

- Skills Acquisition Programme (one year)
 - Project and Small Business in collaboration with SEnPA
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- Over 2500 youth are unemployed
 - The training is scheduled for one year
 - The applicant can choose their own training places
 - The training is for youths from the age of 15yrs and over
 - A regular assessment is done
 - They receive an allowance of SR 1300.00

It was said that they still have over 200 youths waiting to be placed on training. Mrs. Deny also said that the applicant does not only need on the job training but also educational training (extra lessons).

After the training the applicant is automatically qualified for a job as they will receive a certificate in the field that they have been trained for.

➤ From SEnPA

There are available two schemes in SENPA:

- Youth Enterprises Scheme (YES)
- Cottage Industry

It was said that nowadays the cottage industry is gradually improving, as it is a way for the applicants to start their small business either in crafts or snacks at their home.

For the cottage industry the applicant can also apply for a loan up to a maximum of SR 10,000.00 and repay it in a 24 month period and with YES up to SR50,000.00 (without interest) is available.

The objective of SEnPA is to

- Promote small enterprises
- Promote training for small enterprises

After the application has been done, a visit is made by representatives from the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Environment, to certify the approval of the project. It was noted that for the cottage industry the applicant doesn't need a licence to run their business but only a certificate.

There is also training in management done by SEnPA, available only for the applicant. At the end of the programme they are presented with a certificate.

Some priority issues that were raised in the forum:

- Lack of job opportunities
- Lack of education on job opportunities
- Lack of training opportunities
- The employers look only for applicants with academic qualifications
- Some posts have already been filled before being advertised
- Sometimes the youth do not have a response from the employer when applying for the post
- Some Unemployment Relief Scheme (URS) participants (another training scheme) stay on the job training too long before they get employed (even more than five years).

Remarks

The explanation given by our two facilitators were followed by questions. The participants participated actively by asking lots of questions and lots of suggestions were also proposed.

At the end, Mrs. Deny from the Employment Department took the names of the unemployed participants to do follow-up work with them.

Conclusion

After the forum, some participants had left their names and addresses as they want to continue in our future activities. We have seen that we youths have the obligations and responsibility to bring to the attention of the community the main

issues and concerns affecting our youths, which is mainly lack of job opportunities.

We would like to point out that the forum was the start of our project. The participation of the youths, gave us hope that our project would actually work. Just by looking at the statistics and what we heard from the forum, we could tell that unemployment is still a concern for all young and old.

Working with those youths is actually quite complicated, but we wanted to support them and make them believe in what they really want to achieve in life.

We hope that our project will be a great success.

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