

Economic Impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic on the Youth in Ghana

A Master's thesis by Abdul Latif Anas
Culture, Communication and Globalization, Aalborg University



Which SDG does your project relate to?



Ultimately, quality education (SDG 5) has been severely challenged in Ghana due to the pandemic. This has impacted people's future labor participation, which poses new risks of increased poverty and its spillover effects for those who are affected? Of the 300,000 projected graduates yearly in Ghana, only about 80,000 get employed and the remaining are left on their own. This exclusion could pose a major national security threat if the youth fail to secure employment. Due to the pandemic, about 770,000 workers have had their salaries slashed and about 42,000 workers employees lost their jobs during the peak of the covid-19 partial lockdown in Ghana.

What is the concrete problem you have worked with?

It is projected that 45.5% of the Ghanaian female youth is pre-disposed to underemployment compared to 38.4% of their male counterparts.

Questions asked during job interviews – such as questions directed at the woman's marital status, number of kids the woman has, or intend to have, and her maternity leave plans – are discriminatory and affects women's employment prospects. With women's labor market participation negatively affected, SDG1, 5 and 10 might be difficult to realize.

The pandemic has deepened the inequalities between men and women, and cultural norms that assert divisive gender roles in homes and households back this discrimination and development. As an example of this, a section of the Ghanaian public claims that woman's place is in the kitchen. With this mindset, the SDG5 of ensuring gender equality might be a mirage, and SDG1 focusing on reducing poverty might be troubled as well.

Moreover, over 1.5 billion students and youth across the globe have had their schooling or university education affected by the covid-19 pandemic. In Ghana, 35% of the children in primary schools and 28% of the senior high school students were not engaged in learning activities from March to December 2020. Access to basic technology tools such as computers, smart phones and internet used in remote learning was a challenge during the pandemic because schools reverted to online teaching and learning. This meant that only the elite and affluent were able to afford internet services, gadgets and computers for their children's education. But kids from deprived homes and communities, attending public schools, could not afford to have a computer and internet service at their disposal. This deepened the gap of inequality between children from public schools and children from private schools.



What is your conclusion and/or solution that can be applied in the 'real' world?

I recommend that the unbanked youth and women without collateral should be given special financial packages. The unbanked people are those not having access to the services of a bank or other financial institutions. Collateral, on the other hand is an item of value that lenders seize from defaulting borrowers. Lack of collateral denies women access to loans and other finances. Therefore, waiving off the requirement of collateral could promote access to credit facilities for unbanked youth and women in Ghana. Hopefully, this initiative could form part of reducing poverty and inequality experienced by women and as is advocated in the UNSDGs. Additionally, it will secure women's livelihoods, create resiliency for children and youth, and a better security network in the events of future pandemics and/or other global financial shocks.