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Employment Crisis in Comoros and Importance of Training: Analysis and Prospects

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ABSTRACT

Over the past two decades, the employment situation in Comoros has deteriorated. The country has a very young population, but its labor force participation rate remains one of the lowest in the world. This paper proposes to review the root causes of the employment crisis in Comoros and to propose solutions that could help limit the waste of its human capital. During this study, we made use of a methodological triangulation by employing both qualitative and quantitative methods. Thus, we had to conduct surveys by questionnaire, interviews, mostly semi-directive, with the target population, and other techniques such as focus groups and life stories. Our study population includes 251 active young people (workers and unemployed), 16 government officials and 43 Comorian employers, given their importance in the planning and implementation of employment policies. At the end of our analyses, it should be noted that the employment crisis is generally explained by the cyclical socio-political crises that the country has experienced since its independence, in addition to the global financial and economic crises. Moreover, its educational system, inherited from the colonial model, hardly meets the country's needs in terms of manpower training. It should also be added that the country does not give itself enough means to develop its education, the main tool to fight against chronic unemployment. It is in this sense that a diversified technical and vocational education should be put in place as well as a formal curriculum favorable to entrepreneurship education.

INTRODUCTION

With the capitalist mode of production, work is the sine qua non condition that an individual member of a society must fulfill in order not to be marginalized. It is therefore a vector of social identity and recognition. The global financial crisis of 2008 and the recent health crisis related to the Covid-19 pandemic, have led to the shredding of the employment situation worldwide. Hundreds of millions of workers have lost their jobs (BIT, 2022). The recovery of economic activity in the aftermath of the health crisis has not been sufficient to remedy this damaging situation. Efforts are still needed to restore some normalcy in the world of work.

Like many developing countries, Comoros have been facing an exponential rise in unemployment for many years now, affecting mainly young people according to studies conducted by the National Institute of Statistics and Economic and Demographic Studies (INSEED). Graduates are not spared, as a large proportion of Comorian education system graduates are currently unemployed. Before the arrival of the Covid-19, the country experienced stable economic growth, but this was not always accompanied by job creation. As a result, a large part of the working age population is involuntarily inactive. It is in this sense that we undertook this research work in order to reflect on the main causes of the persistence of unemployment in the country and to contribute to the implementation of an employment policy that is based on education.

Indeed, education is essential for the social and economic

development of a country. It should be remembered that since the independence of Comoros, the problem of the adequacy of educational programs with the realities of the country has never ceased to arise. National and international experts have not failed to point out the inadequacy of Comorian education with the country's manpower needs. So, how can a formal curriculum be put in place that is conducive to the country's social and economic development?

The latter must be able to instill in the population a culture conducive to the fight against growing unemployment. In order to carry out our analysis, we will first give a brief overview of the methodology adopted before reviewing the results and discussions of our study.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Methodology is essential to ensure the rigor of research in the social sciences or in any other field. In our study, we adopted a mixed methodology using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. This section briefly presents the main methodological elements used to conduct our study on the employment crisis in the Union of Comoros. Before presenting the different techniques and methods used during the research, we will give a brief presentation of the Comoros, our research site.

Presentation of Comoros

The Union of Comoros is a Small Island Developing State (SIDS) located in the Indian Ocean, on the eastern coast of the African continent, at the northern entrance

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to the Mozambique Channel, northwest of Madagascar. Composed of three islands, the Union of Comoros has a population of 742,287 according to provisional data from the latest General Census of Population and Housing (RGPH 2017) and 72% of which resides in rural areas. The country's natural growth rate is around 1.8%, which means that population growth remains relatively high, implying a rapid increase in the country's needs. There is therefore a strong social demand for education, health, transportation, housing, and above all, work and employment. Despite this, the country is experiencing an exponential increase in unemployment, which is largely affecting young graduates. The unemployment rate has risen from 8.1% in 2019 to 9.4% in 2021.

Despite the deep recession of 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Comoros has been able to resume steady economic activity. The economic growth rate increased from 0.2% in 2020 to 2.2% in 2021. In addition, the country has seen a decline in inflation from 3.7% in 2019 to 0.1% in 2021 (Banque Centrale des Comores, 2022).

The country faces a significant macroeconomic imbalance in the contribution of the various sectors of activity (primary, secondary and tertiary) to national wealth, with an increased dominance of the tertiary sector, which is characterized by activities such as trade, the hotel industry and public and private administration (especially banks and insurance). The latter alone will contribute more than 50% of GDP in 2021, according to data from the Central Bank of the Comoros. It is therefore clear that the service sector is the most developed in the country and absorbs the majority of the workforce. In addition, the weak development of the secondary sector, which can be described as embryonic and which is essentially dominated by manufacturing industries, including local handicrafts and the extraction of perfumes and essential oils, is a sign of a poorly qualified workforce.

Phases of the Research and Tools used

Throughout this research, we have triangulated our methodology, combining both qualitative and quantitative research methods and techniques. This methodological choice was made in order to compensate for the weaknesses of one with the strengths of the other. Each of the two methods has its weaknesses. Each stage of this research is subject to a variety of techniques, both for data collection and for data processing. However, before beginning the observation phase, which is the main step in data collection, we first conducted some preliminary work on an exploratory basis. The following paragraphs show the different tools used in the course of this research and the level at which they were used.

Phase 1: Exploration

This exploratory phase refers to a preliminary analysis of the employment problem in Comoros. This so-called "exploratory" phase helped us to see clearly how to conduct this study. Some preliminary data collection techniques were used. These include:

- **Documentation**

These reading operations helped us to learn about the research already conducted on the subject. During this reading phase, we very carefully selected a fairly reasonable number of articles, books and reports, and we organized ourselves to get the most out of them.

- **Exploratory Interviews**

The main objective of this technique is to bring to light aspects of the studied phenomenon that we would not have thought of spontaneously ourselves and thus to complete the avenues of work highlighted during the documentation. Thus, we were able to conduct free interviews with some teachers from the University of Antananarivo and the University of Comoros who are considered specialists in the subject.

Phase 2: Observation

The observation phase consists of deepening the analyses made during the exploration. Observation is a fundamental step in the research process, as it allows the researcher to confirm or refute all or part of his or her hypotheses and to answer the research problem. During observation, we used the following techniques:

- **Participant Observation**

In the course of the field trip, it is possible that some information (embarrassing, it is said, for some) is impossible to receive formally. We need to proceed differently in order to find it. Thus, we used the technique of participant observation, according to which we were obliged to be part of the community in which the survey was intended. We conducted a survey that can be described as "informal" without the respondents feeling that they were in the presence of an interviewer.

- **Questionnaire Survey**

During the observation, we submitted to the selected Comorian assets constituting our sample, a series of questions previously written on the theme treated. This series of questions constitutes what is known as the survey questionnaire or research protocol. The research protocol was submitted to young Comorian workers, both employed and unemployed, in order to better understand the relationship between education and paid work in Comoros. Because many people were to be interviewed and in order to facilitate the quantification of information, the answers to most of the questions were pre-coded in such a way that respondents had to choose their answers from among those formally proposed to them.

The development and validation of this questionnaire followed a three-stage process. A preliminary stage consists of formulating the questionnaire items on the basis of the research objectives, concepts and theories mobilized. These enable us to set up an initial questionnaire which is submitted to experts and specialists on the subject. This leads us to the second stage, which involves validation

by experimentation. Once we had received the responses from the experts and specialists, we proceeded with a data analysis that led us to the final stage, which is the development of the final version of the questionnaire. The final version of the questionnaire takes account above all of the aspects identified by the experts and specialists during the validation by experimentation; this implies modifications to the initial questionnaire.

• Semi-structured Interview

The semi-structured interview consists in letting the respondent express himself as much as he wants, but with reference to a series of predetermined questions constituting the interview guide. It is semi-directive in the sense that it is not entirely open-ended, nor channelled by a large number of precise questions. Here, the researcher has a series of relatively open-ended guiding questions about which it is imperative that he or she receive information from the interviewees. During the observation phase, we conducted semi-structured interviews with employers and organizational leaders as well as government officials. This technique was able to provide additional information to that gathered through the questionnaire survey and participant observation.

Phase 3: Treatment

This is the last phase of the research. It was a question of carefully analyzing the information obtained in the research field. We therefore used content analysis and statistical analysis of the data.

• Content Analysis

Here, we proceeded to a methodical and systematic transcription of the interviews conducted during the observation as well as the data from the participant observation. This is a qualitative data analysis.

During the content analysis, we adopted the method of Combessie J. C. (2007), which consists of:

- Cut the text into extracts such that, to the question “What is this passage about?”, we can answer using one of the key words identified;
- Isolate the various themes and sub-themes;
- Choose the key word(s) that best summarize each theme or sub-theme;
- Write down all key words indicating themes and sub-themes in the margin of the extract analyzed;
- Note the document reference and the position of the extract in the text;
- Classify these extracts in the corresponding thematic folders, themselves organized into sub-themes.

Once the keywords had been identified, extracted and classified into themes and sub-themes, we carried out a cross-sectional and longitudinal analysis of the data, comparing the different extracts contained in each folder in order to identify differences and similarities, and analyzing each of the elements in the extracts according to their order of appearance, development, sequence and the presence of recurrences and co-occurrences, and so on. The themes developed during the content analysis are listed in the following table, along with their respective sub-themes.

Table 1: Themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes
Education/employment relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education’s role in employment • Training through practice • Workforce efficiency
Technical and vocational training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combating school wastage and inequality of opportunity at school • Economic operators’ requirements • Importance of vocational skills
Regulatory framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Validation of Acquired Experience (VAE) • Legal loopholes • Conditions of access to technical and vocational training
Entrepreneurship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Favorable abilities • National context
Entrepreneurship education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneurial culture • Advantages and disadvantages of entrepreneurship education • Financial success
Business environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties associated with setting up a business • Mobilizing resources

Source: Author, 2022

This type of analysis aims to give a numerical appreciation of the phenomenon studied by expressing it through variables and formal relationships between these variables (dependence, correlation, etc.). We therefore proceeded according to statistical techniques applied to the social sciences such as explanatory, inferential, descriptive statistics, etc.

To facilitate the statistical data analysis and processing, we used processing and analysis software such as Sphinx or SPSS Statistics. We used statistical analysis to process data from the questionnaire survey. It was also used to transcribe and interpret data from other previous studies used in our study for comparative and/or indicative purposes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Union of Comoros is among the countries with the lowest labor force participation rate in the world. In 2020, this rate was estimated at 44.4% while the African average was 63.5%. In addition, there is a large gap between the activity rates of men and women; while the former was 50.8%, the latter was estimated at 37.9% during the same year, which means that women are more affected by the phenomenon of inactivity than men. Paradoxically, Comoros had a higher youth activity rate (15-24 years) than the regional average; it was estimated at 51.7% in 2020, while the African average was 44.4% (BIT, 2020). Despite the shortcomings that could be raised, Comoros has made strides in improving the labor situation at the national level.

Chronic Unemployment

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), unemployment characterizes the situation of a person of working age who is unemployed, available for work and actively seeking employment. The unemployment rate is therefore the ratio of the number of unemployed to the total labor force (employed and unemployed). Persons outside the labor force (the not in the labor force) are not included in the unemployed. However, the difficulties associated with classifying the unemployed in Comoros, especially in terms of knowing exactly who is actively seeking work and who is not, who is available for work

and who is not, often lead to the inclusion of part of the potential labor force among the unemployed. It is worth mentioning that the 19th International Conference of Labor Statisticians, held in Geneva in 2013, adopted a Resolution concerning labor, employment and labor underutilization statistics. This Resolution has a particular interest in this category of inactive people (the potential labor force) by identifying situations of inadequate absorption of labor supply, beyond what is captured by unemployment. The definition of the potential labor force, according to the Resolution, proposes to cover people who have shown an interest in employment, but who are currently counted outside the labor force. Thus, a distinction can be made between three mutually exclusive groups: a) job seekers who are not available, that is, unemployed persons who are looking for a job but are not available; b) potential job seekers who are available, that is, unemployed persons who are not looking for a job but are available; and c) potential job seekers who are willing to work, that is, unemployed persons who are not looking for a job and are not available but want to have a job.

The chronicity of unemployment can be measured with indicators such as the length of time spent unemployed; the unemployment rate can also be used as a complementary indicator. For the purposes of our study, we have focused our analyses on the duration of unemployment for the individuals we interviewed. To do so, let's consider the following table.

Table 2: Unemployment duration by socio-professional category (SPC)

Duration SPC	< 1 month	1-6 months	6-12 months	12-24 months	24-36 months	≥36 months	Total
Skilled Agricultural	0	0	1	0	3	5	9
Merchant	0	2	0	3	5	36	46
Managers	1	0	0	1	6	22	30
Professionals	0	9	4	0	6	0	19
Clerical Support Workers	0	1	0	0	3	40	44
Craft and Related Trades Workers	0	1	3	0	7	5	16
Volunteer*	0	0	0	0	2	19	21
Apprentice/Trainee	0	0	5	0	3	0	8
Unemployed	2	5	0	7	9	20	43
Other	0	0	0	4	11	0	15
Total	3	18	13	15	55	147	N=251

Source: Personal surveys, 2022

* The Comoros civil service also includes voluntary workers employed in public services on a disinterested basis. The volunteer system used in the Comorian Public Administration consists in granting assignments to unemployed people so that, when vacancies arise, they can obtain civil servant status. They are not paid and generally obtain no prerogatives as civil servants. Their only advantage is the privilege they enjoy at recruitment time, as they will be the first to be considered. They have to work like normal civil servants, respecting working

hours, ethics and so on. The major problem with this system is that no volunteer knows how long he or she is expected to work as a volunteer.

Based on this table, we can see that the average duration of unemployment exceeds 36 months (i.e. almost 3 years), representing 58.6% of our sample (i.e. 147 out of 251 individuals). Moreover, it should be pointed out that some respondents (such as jobseekers) were still unemployed during the survey period, even though they had already been unemployed for more than 3 years. This

phenomenon affects graduates and non-graduates alike. Over 75% of those who had spent more than 3 years looking for work had a university degree. This explains why higher education does not necessarily protect the individual against the phenomenon of chronic unemployment currently experienced in Comoros. Furthermore, the relatively high number of jobseekers in our sample (17.1% of the sample) and volunteers (8.3%) suggests that unemployment is very high in the country. This is confirmed by the country's official employment data. It is in this sense that we need to lay the foundations for an employment policy that will help to combat this harmful phenomenon of unemployment, which is becoming chronic and damaging the country's social and economic development.

Indeed, in countries such as Comoros where there is little infrastructure for active job search, the definition used is that of extended unemployment which excludes active job search. Thus, the unemployment rate in the extended sense in Comoros, was 24.8% in 2013. The islands making up the Union of Comoros are unequally affected by this unemployment phenomenon, with a record level on Anjouan island (40.7%), which is, if one can say so, the most politically unstable. Moheli island has an island-wide rate of 26.2%, compared with 18.3% in Moroni (capital of the Union of Comoros), while in the rest of Grande Comore island, the rate was only 7.1%. In the strict sense of the ILO, this rate was estimated at 9.4% in 2021 against 8.1% in 2019 (INSEED, 2015a) & (French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022).

Chronic unemployment in the Union of Comoros stems from the fact that for a long time the country has not experienced political and institutional stability. In terms of overthrow of power by putsch or just political and institutional instability, Comoros is well known in the Indian Ocean area. The last two crises only reinforce this point of view. These include the separatist crisis of 1997-2001 with the secession of Anjouan island and the institutional crisis of 2007-2008 with the tug of war between the federal government and the executive of the autonomous island of Anjouan. In addition, the unattractive business climate does not encourage job creation.

The Doing Business report, which gives the ease of doing business index, ranks the Union of Comoros at 160th out of 190 countries in 2020, whereas in 2017 the country occupied 153th (a loss of 7 places in three years). Out of 54 African countries, Comoros occupies 35th. This situation is also accompanied by a poorly diversified economy caused by the virtual absence of quality infrastructure, poor road conditions, means of transport too expensive and less plentiful (especially air and sea), permanent lack of energy (especially electricity) and water (in many regions), very little investment in information and communication technologies, and undoubtedly a less developed human capital. The employability of the latter is relatively limited in the country, which favors the rise and persistence of the phenomenon of unemployment;

this should in no way be strange insofar as the training systems for trades, qualifications and skills are less efficient. In addition, recurrent natural disasters make the population vulnerable and weaken economic activities. The overemployment of young people can be explained by the fact that, on the one hand, young people do not value small profitable jobs and no incentive policy has been put in place by the government to encourage youth entrepreneurship. On the other hand, the absence of a support system for professional integration, which makes it difficult to access information and services regarding employment, and the lack of formalization of the recruitment system push young people who are already more vulnerable in the labor market, into a situation of very long-term unemployment.

The education system does not help to alleviate this phenomenon insofar as it does not take into account the country's needs in terms of manpower. Technical and vocational training is not able to divert school dropout because it is very selective, very expensive and has a very limited range of vocational tracks. In addition, it is important to add that higher education is not as successful. More than half of the graduates of the University of Comoros are now unemployed and only 9% have a qualified job, according to the General Planning Commission (2017).

A predominantly informal labor market

In our survey, very few people claimed to benefit from social protection measures while working in the formal sector. This would mean that it is possible to work in the formal sector and still have an informal job. Out of 251 people surveyed, only 97 work in the formal sector (see Figure 1). And 93 of the 97 formal workers (i.e. 95.8% of formal workers) benefit from absolutely no social protection measures. This situation is all the more important as it has spread throughout the country, affecting almost all workers.

Informal employment accounts for 99.4% of all jobs in Comoros. By informal employment we mean employment where the worker has no social protection. Almost all Comorian workers do not have this luxury. It should be noted that nearly 97.4% of those employed in formal production units do not benefit from contributions to the National Social Security Fund. In addition, the Comoros National Institute of Statistics and Economic and Demographic Studies has reported that around 74.9% of jobs on the labor market are in informal production units. This situation is all the more disturbing given that social protection policies in Comoros are almost non-existent. Indeed, a social protection process has been initiated in the country since 2007, but through these distressing figures, we see that this can only be sycophancy.

The services currently provided by the Comoros Pension Fund and the National Solidarity and Social Insurance Fund are very limited and only reach a very small proportion of workers in the formal private sector, civil servants and contractual state employees (INSEED,

2015b). However, the Comorian government plans to establish an “Universal Social Protection Floor” and to regulate the informal sector so that its workers also benefit from social security measures. The government aims to extend its social protection policy to all categories of workers, especially the poorest and most vulnerable, so that they have access to a minimum of essential services and social transfers. The objective would be to promote a reliable and economically viable contributory social insurance system to address risks related to health,

occupational diseases and accidents, old age, death, disability, maternal protection and care of children’s needs. Unfortunately, despite some achievements, all this remains utopian until now.

The informal sector, the main source of employment in Comoros

The majority of employed people in our sample work in the informal sector. To get a better idea of the data from our survey, please see the following figure:

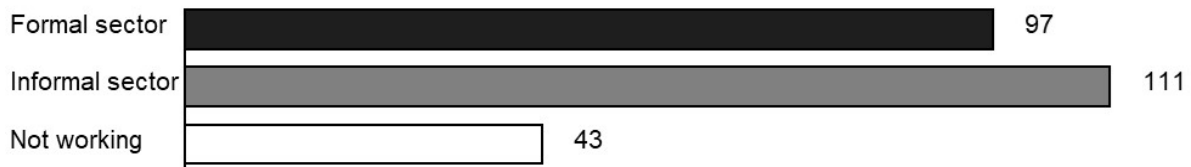


Figure 1: Activity sector. (Source: Personal surveys, 2022)

This figure shows that out of 251 individuals surveyed, 111 (or 44.2% of the population studied) claim to work in the informal sector, compared with 97 individuals working in the formal sector. After cross-referencing activity sector and education level, we can see that all those with less than university education work in the informal sector. However, a large proportion of those with university education (78 individuals) also work in the informal sector. This situation can generally be explained by the population’s standard of living, household poverty, the country’s general economic situation and regulatory framework, the difficulty of accessing credit and economic resources, and so on. This result is much less severe than data from other studies.

With nearly 74.9 percent of jobs generated in the labor market, the informal sector remains the main provider of employment in Comoros. Often, due to a lack of job opportunities in the formal labor market, people engage in small informal activities to support themselves and their families. Sometimes, the desire to be one’s own boss, investment in a family activity, or the need to obtain a better salary, pushes individuals to launch their own economic activities independently of any external factor. In 2013, the country had about 64,975 informal production units that employed nearly 137,523 individuals (INSEED, 2015a). Despite this, the informal sector is subject to a large number of vulnerable and precarious jobs. The large presence of women in this sector requires the improvement of working conditions in order to provide them with normal living conditions and thus emphasize the promotion of the emancipation of the female gender. Women must be empowered through the informal sector because it is in this sector that many of the initiatives for women’s entrepreneurship originate. In addition, there are many job opportunities for youth in this sector.

The informal sector is the main driver of occupational integration in the Union of Comoros and related economic activities deserve to be supervised, structured and better

organized. Young people are concentrated in many branches of activity, including retail trade, agriculture, transport and other services. Informal activities are developing strongly in the primary (agriculture, livestock, forestry, fisheries, aquaculture) and tertiary sectors (motor trade, motorcycles and related trades, wholesale and retail trade, industrial and other repair services, hotels and restaurants, transport, construction, etc.) and very little in the secondary sector (food processing industry, manufacture of clothing, mining and quarrying). In fact, the informal sector is full of all the branches of activity supporting the Comorian economy and employment. It is more important than the formal sector as it develops activities not found in the formal sector.

Underutilization of Comorian labor

On the one hand, we can distinguish between the composite underutilization of the labor force, which includes the unemployed, the underemployed in terms of working time and the potential labor force. And on the other hand, for a deeper and more complete analysis, the Resolution on labor, employment and labor underutilization statistics, provides for the complementary use of other indicators, namely skill-related underemployment and income-related underemployment in accordance with relevant international statistical standards. Indeed, time-related underemployment consists of assessing the underutilization of the labor force in terms of volume of work. Thus, any employed person whose effective working hours do not exceed 35 hours per week is considered underemployed. As for inadequate employment, it helps to understand the under-utilization of the workforce in terms of labor productivity; any individual earning less than the minimum hourly wage in force is considered to be in a situation of inadequate employment in the sense that the performance obtained does not correspond to the results expected with the volume of work mobilized. This last indicator takes into account the qualifications, the level of income or, if applicable, the working hours.

In line with our survey data, we found that the under-utilization linked to working hours was exclusively confined to the informal sector. All participants working in the formal sector (97 out of 251) answered that they work more than 35 hours a week. On the other hand, only a very limited number of informal sector workers responded that they work less than 35 hours a week, 3 out of 111 (1.2% of our overall sample). In short, only 1.2% of the employed in our sample work less than 35 hours a week. We can therefore say that underemployment linked to working hours is a very rare phenomenon in Comoros. On the other hand, the phenomenon of inadequate employment linked to qualifications and inadequate employment linked to income is very marked in our survey data. As many as 79 individuals (or 31.5% of our sample) felt that they held a job that did not match their qualifications, while 87 individuals (or 34.7% of our sample) felt that they received a salary below their work output and diploma. This suggests that underemployment in Comoros is linked more to qualifications and income than to actual working hours. This situation is very similar to the country's overall situation, as estimated by the National Institute of Statistics and Economic and Demographic Studies.

In Comoros, underemployment linked to working hours is very low; only a very small number of workers are concerned (5.3%). The phenomenon is more prevalent on Anjouan island, where 7.2% of workers are affected. The formal sector (public and private) rarely experiences this type of situation; less than 3% of employees in this sector work less than 35 hours per week against their will (INSEED, 2015b). This can be explained simply by the fact that in the formal sector, working hours are regulated and governed by specific legal provisions, unlike in the informal sector where the bosses make the rules.

Still according to INSEED (2015a), Comoros has nearly 25% of its working population in inadequate employment. These people, it should be remembered, earn less than the minimum hourly wage in force in the country. Labor productivity varies by industry, with workers in commerce being the least productive.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to remedy the phenomenon of chronic unemployment, which largely affects young people in Comoros, it is essential to tackle the education system, which plays a major role in improving the living conditions of the population and the country's economic and social development.

Our first proposal is to diversify technical and vocational training by offering a wide range of technical and vocational courses, with the aim of improving the employability of the workforce produced. Given that children from working-class backgrounds do not have the same chances of success at school as those from affluent backgrounds for a variety of reasons - their cultural capital, their language, the difficulty of internalizing the school culture, which is, among other things, a bourgeois

culture - everything points to a kind of bias in the current education system, favoring one social class to the detriment of another. The main aim of technical and vocational training is to help children who are unable to keep up with general education (the majority of whom come from working-class backgrounds) by providing them with essential knowledge for their future integration into the job market. The technical and vocational training program would take into account the needs of the labor market; this must take into account the legislative and legal framework relating to technical and vocational training.

Comorian technical and vocational training should be developed at the intermediate level (secondary 1 and 2) and not just at the higher education level. Training provision must not be static, but must continually keep pace with the country's economic needs and the manpower requirements of economic operators. Training establishments must institute a floating (or flexible) system of training provision. Above all, they must target priority sectors, notably those defined in the Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Sustainable Development, i.e. agriculture and fisheries, tourism, energy, information and communication technologies, cultural industries, handicrafts, etc. In addition, training establishments and centers must play the role of business incubators and self-employment promoters. A support system needs to be set up, as well as a mechanism for agreements between training establishments/centers and the professional world, to enable students to take part in internships and apprenticeships.

The diversification of technical and vocational training must also take geographical factors into account. Community-based vocational training should be given priority, with the aim of improving the employability of young people from rural areas. This stems from the fact that many rural dwellers would like to develop their professional skills, but are unable to do so because they lack the means to move to another locality. Training establishments therefore need to be decentralized. This would help to diversify the economy, which until now seems to have been weakened by little or no human capital.

In addition, the government needs to put in place a policy to promote youth employment and socio-professional integration. This policy must take into account the underground economy, which accounts for the vast majority of employed workers in Comoros. It must therefore lighten the burden of setting up a business or income-generating activity, while creating a business environment conducive to the development of a prosperous formal sector. If the country is dominated by informal activities, this is the result of a lack of measures on the part of political leaders to facilitate the development of the formal sector. A suitable legislative and legal framework therefore needs to be put in place, with bodies responsible for monitoring and evaluating current programs and policies, as well as the related standards, and the financial and human resources required

for their proper operation.

It should be noted that the legal standards governing the technical and vocational education sector are lacking in Comoros. Even those that do exist are not applied as they should be due to a lack of resources, especially financial. As a result, the sub-sector is not well known among young people. In addition, access is very limited due to a very restrictive selection system, and the cost of education is very high. We propose to remedy all these shortcomings by regulating the sub-sector through laws, application decrees, ministerial orders, etc. The Law n°13-007/AU on the orientation of Technical and Vocational Training is not sufficient on its own to regulate the entire sub-sector; its application must be the subject of numerous decrees and orders in order to facilitate its intelligibility and to fill in the legal gaps.

For example, article 24 of this law provides for the determination of the sections of the vocational baccalaureate by joint ministerial decree; article 25 also provides for the determination of the conditions of access to technical and vocational training as well as the conditions of passage between cycles by ministerial decree; and, without wishing to be exhaustive, article 66 also specifies the determination of the modalities of management and utilization of the resources of the sub-sector by legislative or regulatory means. We note that the technical and vocational training sub-sector is far from being regulated and lacks precision in terms of its organization, the national classification of professional qualifications, the definition of the general reference framework for professional diplomas, the organization of the validation of acquired experience, etc.

The technical and vocational education sub-sector is characterized by the absence of effective steering and coordination, the lack of human and financial resources which makes training very costly, the poor structuring of training offers, the absence of training engineering and coordination with the world of work. Political decision-makers must make this a national priority in order to restore the reputation of technical and vocational training. It is important to remember that we can only reduce school dropouts and improve the level of qualification of the products of the education system through technical and vocational training if the standards in force are clearly defined. Our final recommendation is to promote an entrepreneurial culture conducive to the economic and social development of the country through entrepreneurship education.

We note that the number of graduates is increasing exponentially and that employment growth is relatively low in Comoros. To overcome the problem of the loss of value of the diploma in Comoros, it will be necessary to forge a new formal curriculum that gives a fundamental place to entrepreneurship education. This would lead graduates to create jobs for themselves and for others. Indeed, it is clear that in order to reduce the chronic unemployment of young graduates, the promotion of

entrepreneurship is paramount. The curriculum must, in addition to general subjects such as mathematics, history-geography, physics-chemistry, philosophy, etc., integrate technical subjects related to business creation and/or self-employment. Entrepreneurship should be taught from secondary grades (1 and 2). It is important to remember that less than half of the students enrolled in primary school manage to enroll in the second cycle of secondary school; this simply means that less than half of the students do not manage to obtain the Undergraduate Studies Certificate and leave the educational system without any useful knowledge for their insertion in the labor market. Teaching entrepreneurship teaches students to be innovators and to take initiatives to create their own jobs. This type of education requires the use of a special pedagogy designed to develop students' entrepreneurial skills and related personality traits such as creativity, curiosity, persuasiveness, leadership, problem-solving skills, decision-making skills, critical thinking skills, self-confidence and risk-taking.

CONCLUSION

Comoros is facing a continuous deterioration of the overall employment situation, generally due to recurrent socio-political and economic crises. The inadequacy of educational programs to meet the country's needs also contributes to this phenomenon. The geography of the Comoros also exposes it to an increased risk of natural disasters that hinder the development of economic activities. In addition, the economic recession of 2008 followed by the health crisis due to the Covid-19 pandemic have completely disrupted the social and economic development of the country, resulting in a decline in salaried work throughout Comoros. Comoros has one of the lowest activity rates in the world, with an ever-increasing unemployment rate. Unemployment is persistent and affects a large proportion of young graduates, often resulting in involuntary inactivity. Moreover, apart from the underutilization of the labor force produced, more than half of the jobs created in the country come from informal production units. This means that a large proportion of the Comorian workforce works in precarious conditions; no social protection measures are taken to protect these workers. Growing unemployment, however, forces people to work at the expense of their professional well-being. In order to overcome the lack of employment in Comoros, we propose to diversify technical and vocational education with a wide range of training courses. In this sense, it is important to institute a legislative and legal framework guaranteeing access for all to education, particularly to technical and vocational education, and ensuring that educational programs are in line with the country's needs. Finally, the formal curriculum needs to be reformed to instill a culture of entrepreneurship. The question remains as to the type of pedagogy to be applied so that the new reformed system will be able to meet the goals set for it.

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