



09 June 2014

Youth perceive employment opportunities to be threatened by corruption, survey reveals.

A Corruption Watch survey conducted via Mxit and online reveals that youth identify corruption as one of the limiting factors that negatively affect their employment opportunities and access to basic services.

Out of over 6 000 respondents between the ages of 14 and 34 who participated in the survey, seven in 10 admitted to having been affected by corruption in some way or another. About 26% of respondents claimed that they were denied basic services because of corruption in their areas, and 22% claimed that corruption affected their employment prospects.

“Unemployment is generally perceived to be our most challenging social and economic problem. Our survey reveals that the youth believe that their employment prospects are compromised by corruption. This perception is borne out by the jobs-for-pay scandal in the education system and by the consistent reports of nepotism in appointments that we receive,” said Corruption Watch executive director, David Lewis.

Corruption Watch has received over 300 complaints alleging corruption in employment since the organisation was launched in 2012. Bribery, nepotism and irregularities in the appointment of candidates for positions are the most common forms of employment-related corruption that the public has reported to the organisation.

A staggering 84% indicated that they were worried about corruption in South Africa. Over half of the respondents expressed interest in taking part in an anti-corruption campaign, with the unemployed making up a significant proportion of these.

The respondents were fully representative of the population of the popular social media app, although to a lesser degree of the country’s population. Most of the young people were drawn from KwaZulu-Natal (22%), Gauteng (19%) Eastern Cape (14%), and the remaining provinces.

The organisation also conducted an additional online survey mostly targeted at university students and young professionals who also shared similar views as the ones on Mxit.

In both surveys the police and the transport licensing department were recognised as the most corrupt sectors in South Africa. Young people also indicated that public education on corruption; naming and shaming the corrupt and tougher penalties for offenders were the most effective ways to fight corruption.

Sbusiso Leope, popularly known as DJ Sbu, has written a blog urging young people to acknowledge the bravery and courage of the 1976 students and to be active citizens in dealing with the issues that plague South Africa today. You can read the entire blog on Corruption Watch's online platform, corruptionwatchconnected.org, and also join a community of corruption fighters.

The organisation is launching a campaign on 16 June aimed at involving young people in the fight against corruption.

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