

At Youth's Crossroads

Amadou Sanogo's speech

Young people in my country feel like they are wearing leg-irons. Any little thing we're looking for, we often cannot reach. I mean at least to have a part-time job so that we can contribute to expenses in our family.

Talking about education, new graduates do not have any access to the job market. First of all they tell us they are looking for people with experience. They have to give us a chance first though! And then, you absolutely have to have parents or close family members to be accepted. And last of all, the biggest problem, if you want to do an internship in a company, they don't even accept you so you can be trained.

Though faced with all these problems, young adults also have other difficulties. There's no one to take care of them. For example, once you have finished school, that's it; no one is there to help you out.

And the worst in all this is that people don't even listen to us. Whether you're in school or not, there are always lots of problems. And when we talk about them, they tell us to stop complaining.

That's exactly what is forcing young people to do what they have to do to survive. And they end up being both homeless and robbers.

When there is nothing left in your country, despair that is called "diguitani" in our language and poverty make young people leave for foreign countries. And of course that pays a heavy toll on the development of my country. But it's because of despair. For example: one of my friends got his high school diploma. He tried to make a living here, but there was nothing. He ended up leaving for Spain. They sent him back once. He left again. And they sent him back a second time. Now he's back here at home. He has to start from nothing at all. And he'll be 29 this year.

And then there is rural depopulation of girls who come to town to find work. Hardly any of them live in acceptable conditions. When they earn only 6,000 CFA per month, which isn't even the legal minimum wage, many of them are forced to go to the streets.

So the only thing that helps them overcome these hurdles is to have friends. Friends you can count on, that will be with you come thick or come thin. There's a saying here "when you have friends, you have everything."

Nothing beats friendship.