

Caritas in Korea joins to help Ghana tackle youth unemployment

ACCRA, Ghana (CNS) – Caritas, the Church's charitable aid agency, is tackling unemployment in Ghana, especially for young women.

The Korean branch of Caritas has donated more than \$54,000 to the agency in Ghana, a country faced with 12% youth unemployment and more than 50% underemployment, both higher than overall unemployment rates in sub-Saharan African countries.

Launching the partnership in a virtual ceremony June 16, Bishop Joseph Osei-Bonsu, episcopal president of Caritas Ghana, thanked Caritas Korea for support and noted, "Youth unemployment has been a major challenge in Ghana and has been made worse by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Many casually employed youth in the informal sector were completely displaced, while the collapse of businesses further threw many others out of employment," he said.

Father Paul Sunghun Choo, executive director of Caritas Korea, said "Young people must have had hopes and dreams and, I am sure, all of them are trying to cherish and develop their hopes and dreams with confidence in the belief ... 'dreams come true.'"

"And yet, as they are, literally, fighting to survive in this given situation, their hopes and dreams are getting forgotten and rapidly fade away, especially in the pandemic," he said. He added that Caritas wanted "not to merely give them funds but to support and help young people in Ghana so that they can come closer to their life goals with the very tiny

contribution of Caritas Korea.”

Bishop Osei-Bonsu also announced that Pax Garment, a Catholic industry based in Sunyani Diocese, is a beneficiary and partner for the alternative skills training of young girls in garment making. Another beneficiary is Caritas in the Tamale Archdiocese, where young people who have left cities have been mobilized for plastic and electronic waste collection.

During their 2019 plenary meeting, the bishops of Ghana expressed worry about the steep rise in youth unemployment in the country, describing it as “a veritable national security threat, which has to be addressed immediately and urgently with a well-articulated program.”