

ID 017: A Paradigm Shift for ('I) earning-a-living' in a Post-Industrial World-of-Work of Mass Unemployment

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Abstract

'Mass unemployment' and 'poverty alleviation' have become the leading social problems in both the First World and Emerging countries in the 21st century. The Industrial Age concept of the 'Job' i.e. regular secure employment with a company until the pensionable age, as the primary mode of 'earning-a-living' has ceased to be the norm for the majority of workers. Global top down solutions proposed by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (1944)) as well as National 'Job-creation' strategies by Government and Business have been unsuccessful in addressing these problems. It is the thesis of this paper that these problems are so complex that they cannot be solved, solely by any single macroeconomic top-down approach. Rather there is not 'one solution-fits-all' but millions of micro-solutions which can only be discovered by the unemployed themselves through community-based grassroots 'chaordic' (Hock, D. 2003) networks enabled by Government, Education, Business and Civil Society. It is proposed that the concept of Workeracy™ i.e. a new life-skill, lifelong (L)-earning-a-living, be taught widely and implemented by means of a National 12-step process which has the potential to provide an alternative or complementary approach to addressing the mass unemployment problem.

Introduction

There cannot be an African Renaissance (Makgoba, M. 1999) without a Renaissance of the Mind and there cannot be a Renaissance of the Mind without a Renaissance in the way we 'think' particularly about complex and interconnected social problems such as 'unemployment reduction' and 'poverty alleviation'.

In this paper, it is argued that the solutions to the problem of 'mass unemployment' do not lie in any single, 'one-size-fits-all', top-down, hierarchical approach but rather there exists millions of micro-solutions which can only be discovered by the parties themselves, namely the 'mass unemployed through 'enabled' chaordic networks. The primary roles of Business, Government and Civil Society in this process are as 'enablers' to facilitate and support the creation and sustainability of such networks in the best interests of the 'mass unemployed'.

Jeffrey Sachs in his book 'The End of Poverty' (2005), has laid out an affordable blue-print for achieving one of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) namely, 'Cutting poverty and 'mass unemployment' by half by 2015. In particular, he has shown, through a detailed analysis how this goal could be achieved at a cost of a mere 0.7% GNP (Gross National Product) for each of the 191 UN member states who unanimously agreed to the United Nations Millennium Declaration in 2002.

The idea that 'mass unemployment' is a major cause of 'poverty' has been a central finding of poverty research over the past twenty years or so, and remains a perennial cause of poverty, particularly amongst the working age population (Saunders, P. 2006). A key finding of Peter Saunders relating to poverty in

Australia was that a full-time 'Job' is needed to produce sufficient income to raise people above the 'poverty line'. Yet, irreversible world trends in the structure of the 'world-of-work' in the 21st century indicate the demise of the Industrial Age concept of the full-time 'Job' as the primary mode of 'earning-a-living' and the increase of casualisation (i.e. contingent workers) and Alternative Work Patterns(AWP) of the workforce (Jenkins, C. and Sterman, B. 1979), (Rifkin, J. 1995), (Howard, A. 1995), (Bridges, W. 1996), (Barker, K. and Christensen, K. 1998), (Watson, I. et al 2003).

Table 1: Unemployment – The psychological destruction of a human being

UNEMPLOYED Duration of unemployment.	JOB-SEARCH WILL-TO-WORK	SELF-ESTEEM SELF-WORTH	EMOTIONAL STATE	MENTAL STATE	PROGRAMMES REQUIRED
First month	Job search (begins) CVs, Adverts. Interviews, tel, calls.	High self-esteem. Positive self-image. High expectation.	Anger, feeling betrayed. Humiliation. Determined.	SHOCK. Numbness. Major life crisis.	
2 - 3 months	Job search (intense) Daily activity. Networking.	High self-esteem. Everything normal. Keep up appearances.	Mixed feelings. Maintain social contacts. Maintain positive attitude.	DENIAL. Trying to understand. Coping with the situation.	Workeracy programmes to Maintain and Reinforce an ACTIVE “will-to-work’. positive - motivated.
3 - 6 months	Job search (reduced) Cost and effort problems. Increasingly difficult. Decreased motivation. Sleep patterns deteriorate.	Lowered self-esteem. Fear of rejection (job) Need of approval. Need a positive response. Need moral support.	Desperation. Fear of competitors (job). Problems with intimacy. Problems with communication. Conflict, stress increases. Tendency to drink, etc....	PESSIMISM. Financial worries dominate. Constant borrowing (debt). Constant anxiety. Loss of self - discipline. Difficult to plan or prioritise.	
6 - 12 months	Job search (periodic)	Low self-esteem	Poisoning of relations.	DESPAIR.	Workeracy programmes

	Repeated setbacks. Loss of energy. Less frequent attempts. Loss of motivation. Pointless waste of time and effort. Days filled with boredom and ennui. Consider any job.	Vulnerability. Losing self-respect. Feelings of inferiority. Losing self-reliance. Loss of self-confidence. Gradual loss-of-identity. Feeling a failure.	Unable to trust others. Loss of assertiveness. Unable to handle conflict. Unable to cope with stress. Difficult to socialise. Disorganised feelings. Increased dependence on substance abuse. Uncontrolled outbursts.	Value systems changing. Inability to relax. Inability to accept advice. Inability to think clearly. Inability to concentrate. Inability to change. Immobilising thoughts. Suicidal thoughts. Crushing anxiety.	to Revitalise and Re-energise a PASSIVE “will-to-work”. negative-demotivated.
1 year or more	Job search (ceases). No Job!!! Loss of purpose. Loss of energy. Sleep late. Habit of unemployment. Habit of Poverty.	Spirit broken. Loss of self-esteem. Loss of Independence. Loss of human dignity. Loss of self-efficacy. Totally demoralised. Totally dehumanised.	Emotionally drained. Fear of work. Socially isolated. Unable to forgive. Deep bitterness. Disabling guilt.	RESIGNATION. Loss of Hope. Loss of Anxiety. Irrational thoughts. Survive on fantasies. (Lotto) Unable to focus, indecisive. Job requires Heroic efforts. Learned helplessness.	Rehabilitation programmes needed to Restore and Nurture an OBLITERATED “will-to-work”. “ego-annihilated”
UNEMPLOYABLE.	Loss of will-to-work.	Feelings of worthlessness.	Loss of Motivation	Loss of competencies.	Loss of identity.

The remainder of this paper is an attempt to address these two issues namely ‘unemployment reduction’ and ‘poverty alleviation’ and to indicate a possible alternative approach to dealing with ‘mass unemployment’. Sections 2 and 3 focus on the nature, causes and current strategies for addressing these issues whilst section 4 reviews selected strategies which have made significant inroads in dealing with certain aspects of ‘poverty alleviation’. Section 5 proposes a radically alternative approach to ‘mass unemployment reduction’, namely Workeracy™, which places the primary responsibility of solving poverty and unemployment on the ‘mass unemployed’ themselves through the creation of an enabled (Government, Business, and Civil Society) ‘chaordic network’ of ‘Workeracy™ Empowerment Centres.

The Tragedy of Mass Unemployment

Learned Helplessness

Employment is an essential human activity, necessary for the normal growth and development of a human being, physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually and socially; in order to realise his/her full potential i.e. ‘to be the best one can possibly be’. This is true whether or not the employment is paid for by a third party (employer) or paid for by oneself (i.e. self-employed) to ‘earn-a-living’. Unemployment i.e. a state of voluntary or involuntary ‘idleness’, is undesirable at the best of times and almost certainly psychologically self-destructive at the worst of times (see Table 1) and is a condition which must be strenuously overcome by both the Individual and Society.

One of the key observations arising from studies of the unemployed is that a vast majority of the unemployed have been reduced to a state of ‘Learned Helplessness’ (Peterson, C., et al 1995). In this sense one can view ‘long-term ‘mass unemployment’ as a ‘social addiction’ and the methods for treating addiction may possibly be adapted to addressing mass unemployment’

The ‘cancer’ of ‘unrestrained credit’: Life-long debt-bondage

Any sustainable solution to Poverty Alleviation must inevitably involve a solution to the ‘money-creation’ problem both at the individual-level as well as at the National or Global level which is the root cause of both ‘Poverty’ and the gross inequality between the Rich and the Poor

Before the man-made invention of ‘money’, a ‘gift economy’ existed. Exchanges or Trades between people were often ritualised or accompanied by a ‘gift’ (‘money’, wampum) to promote emotional bonds or good relationships. As social life and trading become more complex a method was needed to facilitate trading or the bartering of objects of ‘unequal value’. Different forms of ‘money’ were then introduced depending upon the availability of various objects in that culture to represent a ‘unit of value’ of the objects being exchanged. The only requirement on what was to be used as ‘money’ was that it was generally accepted throughout the community of people as a common ‘means of exchange’ of value.

The ‘virus’ of ‘cancer’ in the Monetary System can be clearly identified as the extortionate rate of Interest or Usury charged by the Private Banks (George, S. and Sabelli, F. 1994), (McMurtry, J. 1997), (George, S. 1998). A reformed system is needed which, if adopted, would enable the First-World Creditor countries to cancel all the Third World Debt at the stroke of a pen and at the same time, release the long-standing yoke of bondage-Debt from the backs of the impoverished Poor.

The failure of top-down 'job creation' and 'SMME' strategies

A number of strategic institutions have been created since World War II to maintain the economic hegemony of the Richest First World countries at the considerable expense of the Poor countries. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (1944) was created to fund the rebuilding of nations ravaged by World War II at the Bretton Woods Conference (1944). By 1980, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) had established and implemented their 'one-size-fits-all' paradigm for the development of countries in the South through its Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) (Shah, A. 2007) based upon long-term structural reforms.

In 1999, after two decades of SAP failures, the IMF replaced Structural Adjustment by the Poverty Reduction Growth Facility (PRGF) and their Policy Framework Papers i.e. Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PSRP) as the new preconditions for loan and debt-relief (Sagnia, B. K. 2006). Joseph Stiglitz, former Chief Economist of the World Bank and a Nobel Prize Winner in Economics, who was forced to resign his position as Chief economist at the World Bank in 1999 because of his opposition to the policies and workings of IMF/WB, clearly stated that as far as Poverty Alleviation goes the IMF/WB policies just do not work (Stiglitz, J. 2001).

The success of community-based initiatives

Appropriate technologies

(Schumacher, E.F. 1973) considered that the 'Top-down' conventional wisdom of the IMF/WB towards Development i.e. requiring high skills and high capital investment, was futile to solve the 'mass unemployment' crisis of poor countries. He proposed that the concepts of 'Appropriate Technologies' may be a better approach which is now recognised as a generic term for a wide range of technologies characterised by any one of the following characteristics: -

low investment cost per workplace; low capital investment per unit of output; organisational simplicity; high adaptability to a particular social and cultural environment (context); sparing use of natural resources; low cost of final product; and high potential for employment. Since the formation of the Appropriate Technology Movement (ATM) literally thousands of projects have emerged and been implemented in most poor countries around the world (McRobie, J. 1982), (Beder, S. 1994), (Pearce, J 2001).

Grameen bank lending

The implementation of 'Appropriate Technologies', even though low-cost, will still require the poor to raise some 'money' no matter how small. This was the challenge facing Mohammed Yunus, a professor of economics at Chittagon University, in Bangladesh in the early 1970s as he confronted the problem of mass hunger on a daily basis in the village life of Jobra. Some 30 years later (2007) Mohammed Yunus was rewarded for his insight, initiative and persistence in bringing traditional banking to the poor who have no collateral for bank loans through the creation of the Grameen (village) Bank, by winning the Nobel Prize for Peace. (Yunus, M. 1999), (Mainsah, E et al. 2004).

Community currencies

A community currency is an interest-free currency (means of exchange) created by a local community when there is a scarcity of real 'fiat' money to benefit that community by facilitating the local trading of goods and services and thus increasing the 'local' economy. A local community can be defined as either a local group in a

specific geographic area or a virtual cyber-group of like-minded individuals living in the world-wide-web connected through the Internet. Over the past twenty years or so a proliferation of complementary (local) currencies (in excess of 4000) have emerged in all parts of the world, mainly through the efforts of concerned activists. (Lietar, B. 1997), (Schraven, J. 2001).

The three main complementary currency systems namely, Time dollars, LETS and Ithaca Hours have been widely implemented with varying degrees of success by communities all over the world to meet their social needs (Equator Initiative, 2003) (Wikipedia,2005).

Workeracy™ : A (L-)earning-a-living life-skill with a 12-step process

*‘The unemployed are not the problem, the unemployed are themselves the solution
if only they could be taught how?
Job security lies within yourself – not with any employer’.*

A paradigm shift

(Dalton, N. W. 1998), (Dalton, N. W. 2000), (Dalton, N.W. 2007).

Workeracy™ may be considered a ‘paradigm shift’ in that it represents a significant change in the paradigm for addressing the mass unemployment problem on a number of counts i.e.

- introduces a new core life-skill, Workeracy™, will-to- (L-)earn-a-living’;
- introduces a new term namely workerpreneur™ i.e. a person who is prepared to engage in any form of work as long as it generates some income to ‘put-the-bread-on the-table’;
- makes a distinction with the term ‘entrepreneur’ as originally intended by Schumpeter in 1942 (McGraw, T. K. 2007) i.e. a person who has a will-to- ‘Found-a-Kingdom’;
- makes a clear distinction between the ‘start-up’ ‘trial-and-error’ unforgiving ‘creative destruction’ phase of a business (first 18 to 24 months), during which most ‘start-up’s fail, and the subsequent struggle phase (three to five years) to achieve sustainability;
- views the long-term unemployed (greater than one year) as possibly being in a state of ‘Learned helplessness’ and a victim of a ‘social addiction’
- proposes that methods for treating other addictions may be adapted to addressing ‘mass unemployment’; and
- proposes a national 12-step process for the widescale implementation of the Workeracy™ concept.

A new (l-)earning-a-living life-skill

Relevant education is the means to ensure that a modified ‘curriculum’ is in place to create awareness amongst all students regarding Grass-roots approaches, but taught by teachers who themselves understand the Workeracy™ concept and process. Currently the Education system prepares students for a 21st century World-of-Work of extreme Job scarcity. Students are still being trained as ‘Job-seekers’. Furthermore, for

those who are unable to find a full-time 'Job' the Education system encourages students to become 'entrepreneurs' which focuses on the creation of a 'Business Plan' which is irrelevant for the 'start-up' phase of a business enterprise. Most students have no collateral or surety for 'start-up' capital and will not get any from the formal banking system. In addition, the majority of students of commerce and business have no aptitude or intention of starting their own business but see their business qualifications mainly as an entry passport to a good 'Job' in a large corporate environment.

The proposal in this paper is that every student, irrespective of discipline, should be taught a new 'core' survival Life-skill, 'Workeracy™', in addition to literacy and numeracy, to better prepare them for entry into the 21st century World-of-Work.

The concept of 'Workeracy™' is based upon Five Pillars (see Table 2) as a foundation for inculcating in all students the critical values essential for survival in today's world-of-work, i.e. self-reliance, work-ethic, resilience, perseverance and patience.

Table 2: The Five Pillars of 'Workeracy™'

No:	'Old' Mindset 'Employees'.	'New' Mindset 'Workerpreneurs'.
1.	'Employee' mindset. 'Job' entitlement. Dependency.	'Workerpreneur' mindset. Self-employment Self-Reliance
2.	Modern 'Jobs'. Diminishing. Scarcity.	'Work' opportunities Increasing Unlimited
3.	Fiat Money (Legal tender). Financial literacy. Shortage.	'Shadow -wage' Moneracy™ Unlimited currencies
4.	'Ego' (self). Linear thinking. Limited capacity. Self-help.	'Community' (Ubuntu). Non-linear / web thinking. Unlimited networking. Mutual self-help.
5.	Forget retirement.	Lifelong (L-) earning-a-living.

All students need to be aware that although they may not immediately get their ideal 'Job', it may take one or two years, they still have to find a way of 'earning-a-living' in the meantime (i.e. self-reliance). In addition, all students should also be taught about moneracy™ i.e. the meaning of money, which is not the same as the 'financial literacy' courses currently taught within the schools as part of various Life orientation programmes. Such courses, in my view, are basically marketing attempts by the banks to enslave young unschooled minds as early as possible into a lifetime of debt-Bondage. (Rowe, D. 1997), (Hutchinson, F. 1998), (Lietaer, B. 2001), (Kelly, B. 2015).

Table 3: Moneracy™ – The meaning of ‘money’

Level	Type	Agents	Cost of Access to ‘Money’	Comment
I.	Barter. No ‘money’.	Individuals.	No charges. Quid Pro Quo. Ukisasana.	First choice/ one-to-one/ Unemployed.
II.	Community currencies. Alternatives ‘monies’.	L.E.T.S / NPOs. Time dollars. /NPOs. Ithaca HOURS. /NPOS*.	Minimal fees/ No interest.	Coupon systems/ Book-keeping systems/ Community groups.
III.	‘Grass roots’ micro-finance. ‘fiat’ money.	Grameen Banking. Village Banking. Micro-finance.	Low Bank fees/ Low Interest charges No Collateral.	Established world wide/ Poorest-of-the-poor/ Muhammed Yunus (Noble Prize)
IV.	Financial Literacy. ‘fiat’ Money. Debt-money.	Formal Banking.	High Bank Fees/ High Interest charges Need Collateral. Beware!	Lenders of last resort/ Extortionate costs/ Bondage-Debt
V.	Cyber currency Bitcoins	Unregulated	Market-related	Speculative No transfer of charges

Workeracy™: A national 12-step process for mass employment

It is one thing to introduce and teach a new curriculum for a core subject such as ‘Workeracy™’ to classroom students within the current Educational System but what about those people outside the Education System, the poor, the marginalised, the largely-forgotten, who make up the millions of unemployed persons throughout the world. Most of these are the poorly-educated who have little incentive or opportunity to return to ‘schooling’ and yet are sorely in need of enormous assistance to enter, or re-enter, the world-of-work as productive citizens. A clue to how a suitable pedagogy for the unemployed may be developed is contained within the observation made at the end of section 2 that

*‘The longer a person remains unemployed
the more unemployable that person becomes.’*

This suggests viewing ‘chronic unemployment’ as a social or cultural addiction. This opens the possibility that methods which have been developed for successfully treating various forms of ‘addiction’ may also be adapted for treating mass unemployment e.g. a national 12-step approach. (Dalton. N. W. 2000).

The cornerstone of the AA 12-step method (AA (1939); AA (1952)) is that ‘Alcoholics’ assist other Alcoholics’ to overcome their Alcoholism through regular (weekly), mutual supportive meetings and persistence to

achieve sobriety. Thereafter they hope to remain sober throughout the rest of their lives. These meetings are managed through autonomous AA regional Centres or Chapters throughout the country but are linked to other AA centres through adherence to a common Code of Practice. The organisational form for the success of the AA is an example of a 'chaordic' organisation (Coveney, P. and Highfield, R. 1996), (Hock, D. 1995), (Beinhocker, E. 2007) i.e.

Chaordic: - the behaviour of any self-organising and self-governing organisation, organism or system that blends characteristics of Chaos and Order.

'AA is the best system ever devised for dealing with the problem of Alcoholism and is an example of a 'chaordic' organisation. Every Chapter of AA self-organises and self-manages its own affairs in accordance with a clear purpose, namely Sobriety and its common Code-of-Practice i.e. 'Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions'.

Dee Hock (2005).

In the case of the South African unemployment crisis (2008) with 4 000 000 job-seekers, a network of the order of 40 000 geographically dispersed centres to reach (on average) groups of 100 unemployed persons would be needed. Since there are approximately 25 000 public schools in South Africa and a comparable number of church halls and/or libraries it is not unreasonable that such a national network could be set up at minimal cost. This network would also provide part-time/full-time employment for 40 000 trained Workeracy™ facilitators the training for which could be paid for by 'Government and/or Business' through bursaries or grants.

Summary and conclusions

The problems of 'poverty-alleviation' and 'unemployment-reduction' are examined in terms of their inter-relationships, possible causes, and dehumanising effects (sections 1 and 2). 'Unrestrained credit' at extortionate interest rates has been identified as the root cause of many of the world's social skills particularly in the ever-widening gap between the world's Super-Rich (1%) and the Remaining-Poor (99%). An examination of 60 years of IMF/WB Top-down approaches to poverty-alleviation has highlighted glaring shortcomings and failures in those approaches and indeed have probably contributed more to worsening the problem rather than being constructive towards a solution (section 3). By contrast, a number of community-based approaches have emerged which have been very successful in achieving a significant degree of poverty-alleviation and unemployment-reduction. (section 4)

Drawing on the above experiences and developments in complexity economics an alternative approach to addressing these complex social problems is proposed (section 5) namely 'Workeracy™' i.e.

1. Teaching a new core Workeracy™ 'unemployment-survival' life-skill; and
2. Implementation of a national 12-step process by means of a chaordic organisation (i.e. self-managing and self-governing) in which the unemployed are enabled to discover their own solutions (i.e. millions) to local employment and poverty alleviation.

Post script

An early (2002) Workeracy™ project to introduce the Workeracy™ concept consisting of two groups of 50 unemployed persons was carried out in Pretoria (graduates) and Alexandra township (Johannesburg). The graduates had been unemployed for up to eighteen months whereas Alexandra persons (up to standard 8 education) had been unemployed for more than three years. After 12 weekly sessions and practice the graduates quickly internalised the principles and became very motivated whereas the Alexandra group needed much encouragement and had difficulty putting the Workeracy™ concept into practice for themselves.

A more extensive three-year project is currently underway in partnership with Mzansi Youth Leadership Academy (MYLA) and the Gauteng Department of Social Development with four groups of 150 unmarried mothers (16-24 years of age) as part of a Welfare-to-Work programme.

A chronology and history of the Workeracy™ concept can be found on the webpage Dalton (2007).

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