

Job seekers keep searching for years

About a quarter of the country's unemployed have been looking for work for over five years, according to a survey released on Wednesday (30 January).

"The chances of finding work after being out of the workplace for more than five years, or perhaps having never worked, are likely to be slim in a labour market saturated with low and unskilled workers," said SA Institute of Race Relations researcher Lucy Holbron.

She says 4.5m people are classified as officially unemployed because they would like to work and had been actively looking for jobs but can't get work.

The figure did not include about 3.2m discouraged people who had given up looking for work.

"All of this suggests that there may be large numbers of people who are simply unemployable," Holbron says.

Solutions to the problem would need to include the provision of education and skills to provide a better match between what the labour market needed and what it was being offered.

"In the meantime, relaxing labour regulations to reduce the cost and risk of hiring people could help to dent levels of unemployment that have been persistently high for over 10 years," said Holbron.

Source: *Sapa* via I-Net Bridge