



Creating and sustaining successful school-to-work transitions



Generation Unlimited

Generation Unlimited works with a two-pronged approach- coordinating country level action through investment agendas and implementing cross-cutting innovations at scale. At the national level, Generation Unlimited will establish an in-country, multisector partnership group led by the government to undertake a comprehensive landscape analysis of the current ecosystem for education, employment and civic engagement of young people. The analysis will be the basis for a country investment agenda that will articulate a high-level roadmap and a portfolio of scalable initiatives for investments, and Generation Unlimited support sourcing of investment opportunities and mobilization of financial and political capital to execute on these priorities for young people aged 10-24. Where innovations are required, Generation Unlimited will also support co-creation of solutions, particularly with young people.

At the global level, Generation Unlimited will identify and scale innovations of greatest potential to address common challenges of young people, unlocking bottlenecks and brokering partnerships to deliver on the innovations.

Decent Jobs for Youth, the Global Initiative for Action

Decent Jobs for Youth is the global initiative to scale up action and impact on youth employment under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is a hub for catalyzing partnership, collaboration and coordinated action at country and regional level, grounded in evidence-based solutions.

Launched in 2016, with the endorsement of the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination, Decent Jobs for Youth brings together governments, social partners, youth and civil society, the private sector, and many more partners advancing the vision: a world in which young women and men everywhere have greater access to decent jobs!

Through the commitment platform and the Decent Jobs for Youth Knowledge Facility, partners identify what works, share innovations, and mobilize concrete actions – from green and digital jobs to quality apprenticeships, youth entrepreneurship, and the transition to the formal economy. With new spin-off initiatives in Namibia, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, and Kenya, and a regional and global convening agenda, Decent Jobs for Youth works with like-minded partnerships to translate fragmentation into synergy.

Acronyms and initialisms

ANAPEC	National Agency for the Promotion of Employment and Competencies (Morocco)
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CLEEI	Centro Latinoamericano de Estudios de Evaluación de Impacto (Mexico)
ETTWG	Education and Training Thematic Working Group (Jamaica)
HIC	High-Income Country
ILO	International Labour Organization
IT	Information Technology
LMIC	Low- and Middle-Income Country
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training
PTS	Passport to Success
RCT	Randomized Control Trial
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VET	Vocational Education and Training

INTRODUCTION

The current generation of young people – numbering 1.8 billion – is one-quarter of the world’s population¹ and a dominant force now and in the decades to come. However, investments in quality wage and self-employment fall short of young people’s aspirations, leaving a growing pool of young jobseekers with an insufficient number of decent jobs. Many education systems are struggling to prepare young people with skills which meet employer’s expectations. The COVID-19 pandemic and related global recession have further exacerbated the socio-economic challenges facing youth, which put at risk many of the gains made in recent years to advance young people’s opportunities.

Generation Unlimited and the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth are two multi-stakeholder alliances working together to mobilize action and foster skills, employment and the meaningful participation of young people across the globe. By bringing young people together with governments, social partners, the private sector, and a range of international and local organizations, they connect secondary-age education and training to a complex and fast-changing world of work, while easing the transition of young people into decent jobs. Efforts are also being made to foster youth-led entrepreneurship and empower a generation of young people to fully engage as part of their societies.



SECTION 1 THE STRATEGIC CASE

Millions of young people across the globe now find themselves outside traditional education systems and formal labour markets, unable to find productive livelihoods or decent work. In both high- and low-income countries, large numbers of young people are not in employment, education or training (NEET), or are employed in the informal economy.

For many, the transition from school to work can be long and arduous, characterized by cycles of unemployment, zero-hours contract jobs, unpaid internships and traineeships, and low-quality jobs with few legal rights or social protection. This has profound social and economic impacts in terms of lost productivity, the social cohesion of communities, and the mental well-being of individuals.

The ILO estimates that, worldwide, three out of four young people now work in the informal economy – and in developing countries this number reaches nineteen out of twenty.² The youth employment challenge and demographic ‘youth bulge’ have become the ‘big policy’ issues confronting governments across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), Latin America and the Caribbean, and southern Europe. Nor have higher-income countries been spared. Globally, around one in five or 267 million young people (aged 15–24) have the NEET status, with 68 million of them unemployed, a situation that not only presents economic challenges but threatens the social and political stability of nations.

Labour market disadvantages operate differentially across regions and have a gendered dimension.³ Globally, 31.2 per cent of females and 14 per cent of males are not in employment, education or training, meaning that females make up over three in four of all people falling into that category. The gender gap is even more pronounced in regions such as Southern Asia and the Arab States, where social and cultural norms prevent women from pursuing education or working outside the home.⁴

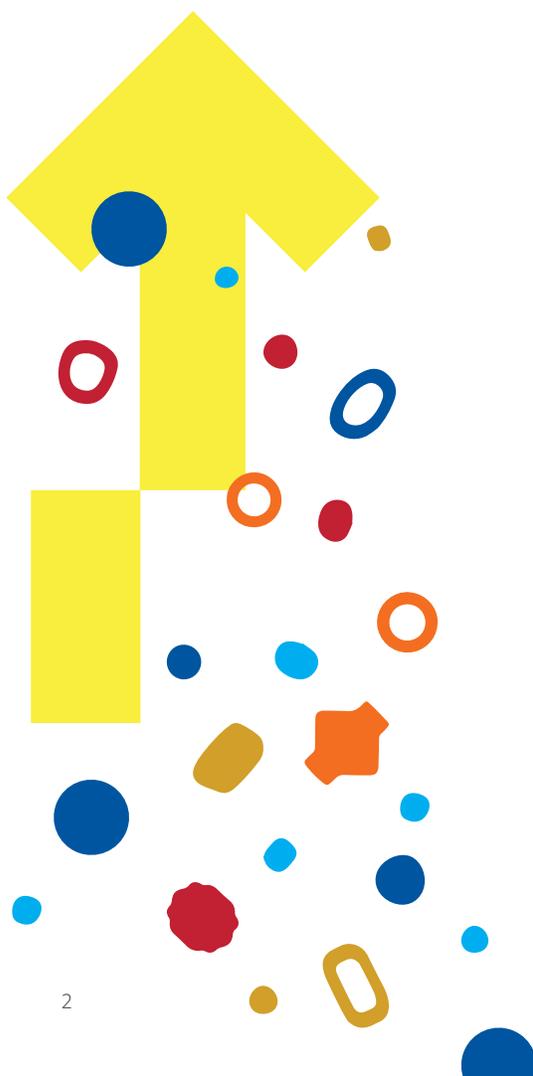
Even before the appearance of COVID-19, the rise of automation had been predicted to lead to an increase in unemployment and employment instability; with this trend now exacerbated by the pandemic, the situation facing young people leaving school is even more challenging. Recent ILO research confirms that young people are more likely than adults to be engaged in jobs subject to automation;⁵ in this fast-changing economic environment, education systems have become ever

more crucial, and the school-to-work transition process has emerged as a ‘pinch point’ which can help prepare young people for the social and economic challenges they will face. The ILO research shows in particular that young people entering the labour market from vocational training are prone to enter jobs at high risk of automation, highlighting the importance of modernizing active labour market policies and vocational education and training (VET) systems.⁶

Young people not only face challenges in successfully completing education, but also experience personal challenges such as mental health problems that have a significant bearing on their labour market trajectories. In particular, mental health and well-being are factors in young people’s ability to successfully move from school to work: research has shown that mental health issues are the primary reason why young people may find themselves with the NEET status.⁷ In high-income as well as low- and middle-income countries, mental health and well-being (or what are known as non-cognitive skills) have tended to be overlooked, yet they play an important role in the success of job searches and ultimately in whether young people move into decent work.⁸

Why does the school-to-work transition matter?

Education is a key determinant of individual social mobility and an effective remedy for unemployment and chronic poverty.^{9,10} It is clear that quality education is crucial for securing a successful transition to work,¹¹ yet across countries there are still significant deficits in education and school systems that translate into poor labour-market outcomes for young people: those with “no more than lower-secondary education account for over 30% of NEETs, and they are three times more likely to be NEET than those with a university-level degree.”¹² Similarly, the ILO’s School-to-Work Transition surveys show that 95 per cent of young people with no education are in informal jobs, and that the incidence of informality falls with increased educational attainment.¹³





The issue confronting policymakers and employers is that traditional approaches to education and training systems, which might be termed ‘vocationalization’, have not been able to keep up with the skill and knowledge demands of the new labour market, contributing to the development of a skills gap across global regions.^{14,15} The modern world of work requires individuals not only to have foundational ‘hard’ academic qualifications, but also a range of soft and social skills essential to navigate the challenges of an ever-changing labour market, fluctuating employer demands and a volatile macroeconomic context. In addition to years of formal education, young people need the opportunity to explore options beyond their immediate school environment, such as developing entrepreneurial skills and exploring routes to sustainable self-employment. In this respect, policy makers and researchers have become increasingly interested in how young people’s social capital and the social networks in which are embedded can be utilized to help them move into decent work.

How do we define a “successful” school-to-work transition?

The lack of cost-benefit analyses in interventions intended to facilitate the transition of young people from school to work means that it is difficult to identify their return on investment. A review of some of the benefits does, however, offer a good overview of the positive impacts on labour-market outcomes for youth. Such benefits vary from shorter transitions and a greater number of completed transitions, to improved decision-making power among youth and better matching between young job seekers and employers.

Traditionally, policymakers and practitioners have focused on employment matrices as the main indicator for determining a successful transition from school to work. This includes, for example, young people’s rates of employment and unemployment, activity and inactivity, and educational attainment, etc., with all this information being derived mainly

from labour force surveys or related questionnaires. In this approach, a low youth unemployment rate is the key indicator of successful transitions; however, a true picture of success must be more nuanced than this, and should include elements of work quality, young people’s aspirations, and skills mismatches.

Youth ‘labour market transition’ has been defined by the ILO as the passage of young people from the end of education to their first stable and satisfactory job. A ‘stable’ job is defined as work with at least a one-year contract, while ‘satisfactory’ is determined based on the young workers’ self-assessments on whether their education matched their current job. Based on this, a young person can be categorized into three different stages of transition: transitioned, in transition, or transition not yet started. This approach has already been used to measure school-to-work transitions in at least 35 developing countries across the globe and the results continue to support the design of policies and programmes for youth.¹⁶

SECTION 2 WHAT WORKS TO CREATE AND SUSTAIN SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITIONS?

Investments in skills development to support effective school-to-work transitions

Strengthening technical and core work skills is crucial to give youth strong foundations as well as resilience as they seek to transition into decent work.¹⁷ However, the degree to which these factors influence the success of transitions into the labour market is dependent on country context, macro-economic and local labour market conditions, as well as the type of employment sector. For example, a tech company may require very different levels and types of skills and competencies compared to a law firm or the medical profession. These factors do not operate homogeneously across contexts but will be more or less influential depending on the country.

The core elements of these skills include: (i) Foundational skills; (ii) Transferable skills, also known as life skills, soft skills or socio-emotional skills;¹⁸ (iii) Digital skills; and (iv) Job-specific skills, also known as technical and vocational skills.

i. Foundational skills

Traditionally considered the cornerstone of education systems, foundational skills include the basic literacy and numeracy skills that provide the basis upon which students are able to acquire new skills and knowledge. These form the ground upon which more advanced competencies and character skills are built, and are crucial for entering decent work. Job seekers without these core components of skills and knowledge face significant challenges in entering the labour market as well as barriers to social mobility. Digital skills are increasingly considered foundational, and include the ability to use technologies as well as the social and emotional skills needed to safely navigate the digital space.

Policy responses to the gaps in academic and human capital provided through formal schooling include offering access to alternative learning programmes, such as informal or non-formal community-based education. This can be achieved through ensuring that such alternative programmes lead to the same nationally recognized certification which young people in formal education would attain. The aim is to allow young job seekers to compete on an equal footing with those who have remained in mainstream education. Enhanced assistance can also take into account the social and economic disadvantages a young person may face, such as racial and gender discrimination, poverty and geographical location, the quality of their formal learning environment, and their own mental health and well-being. All of these factors have a significant bearing on labour market success.

ii. Transferable skills

Employers have increasingly been stressing the need for workers to have strong transferable skills – also known as ‘21st-century skills’ or ‘soft skills’¹⁹ – these being the skills needed in order to function effectively in a workplace, such as not being late, working in a team and making meaningful contributions to the work

environment. Such skills are not related to any one occupational area but can be applied in all work settings.²⁰

'Transferable skills training' can be delivered in formal or informal settings, whether in the classroom or on the job. Greater success in the transition to employment is possible when these skills are integrated with the teaching of technical skills, rather than providing a separate 'core skills curriculum'.^{21,22} While schools are increasingly introducing 'soft skills' or 'citizenship skills' into the core curriculum, this subject is often inadequately taught, and students often leave schools without the necessary social skills to function properly in the work environment.

iii. Job-specific, or technical and vocational skills

Vocational and technical skills comprise specialized skills, and the knowledge or know-how needed to perform specific duties or tasks in work. They are closely related to the demands of the labour market, and their relevance and upgrading relies heavily on connections and feedback loops between the education and training systems and the labour market. Strengthening the capacity of education and training institutions to adapt to the demands of the market, as well as to improve the quality of their technical education programmes, is crucial to speeding the school-to-work transition and improving its outcomes. Work-based learning is key to equipping young people with job-related skills, while boosting other transferable and soft skills critical for employment prospects. Work-based or work-integrated learning allows the development of vocational and technical skills in real or simulated work environments, and is increasingly recognized as an important element of effective vocational and technical skills development.

Investments in a supportive social and economic policy context

This section describes the social, economic and policy ecosystem which can help to facilitate successful and sustainable school-to-work transitions.

i. National youth employment strategies and strong government-wide coordination

The development of national youth employment strategies, cited in the SDG 8.b.1 indicator,²³ is crucial to secure effective coordination across ministries and agencies that have diverse yet interconnected portfolios – from education and skills development, to workforce readiness, job matching, job creation and legislation. Through national youth employment strategies, whether developed as stand-alone measures or integrated into other national policies,²⁴ governments can set out a single coherent policy framework and facilitate pathways leading to (i) skills recognized by employers country-wide and (ii) a machinery of job creation, so that skilled and educated youth find their way into decent work.

Strong coordination in the operationalization of national youth employment strategies, amongst other advantages, allows for the TVET

qualification framework to be integrated into the general education framework, thereby providing pathways into each other as well as into employment across industries and sectors. Jamaica's Education and Training Thematic Working Group (ETTWG) is an example of a coordination body which is well positioned to improve the transition of young people into work.

By recognizing the overarching nature of youth employment strategies, governments can also set the policy ground and incentives to strengthen the matching between skills and jobs through effective public employment services. Governments wishing to support young people's transitions to work also need to consider ways of improving targeting and profiling to provide individualized counselling services, as well as ways of encouraging greater involvement of social partners with a focus on engaging private sector and civil society actors, fostering youth networks and youth participation in decision-making bodies, and fostering an enabling climate for business start-ups.



ii. Strengthening labour market information and data systems

Acquiring 21st-century and technical skills is only one part of the transition-to-work process. It is also necessary to have knowledge about employers who might utilize these skills, along with their recruitment needs and processes.

Access to reliable and up-to-date or real-time labour market information and data is essential to support successful transitions to good stable employment. Within education systems, teachers can be trained to provide career support, and information can be developed and disseminated in schools. At the government level, the ministry of labour as well as job centre networks can be strengthened to provide the latest information on job opportunities, local employer demands and future skills gaps. These do already exist in many countries, but the data infrastructure on which they rely is often out of date and unable to react quickly enough to changes in employer demand. Within communities and local labour markets, links with local employers can be further supported to facilitate work placements and to encourage participation in the dissemination of information on jobs and vacancies.

iii. Recognition and use of social capital and social networks

Social capital can assist with economic integration by connecting individuals to better opportunities, or by supporting cooperation among groups in a way that allows for mutual prosperity. Individuals use their personal networks to secure information about job or training opportunities, which enables them to start businesses or to access professional advice and support. It is estimated that 60 per cent of jobs are acquired through these social networks. As with personal networks, with which they often overlap, these ties often work along lines of identity such as race or religion. Having more social capital (measured as larger and more diverse friendship networks) correlates with higher rates of employment.

iv. Improving the quality of geographic and labour mobility

Travelling for work to a distant city, or even abroad, entails shouldering the costs of doing so and risking the price of

failure. However, many have no choice but to move, either speculatively or through organized recruitment agencies such as those operating in south and south-east Asia which send workers to the Middle East. Migration, which occurs when there is an international mismatch between skills and available jobs, can be a positive experience for workers as well as their families and communities, raising household income through remittances and conferring additional skills and experience acquired overseas. Increasingly, government support is available both pre-departure and on arrival to ease the migrants' transition to a new job in a new country. However, there is also a well-documented potential for abuse, ranging from recruitment fraud to wage theft and human trafficking,²⁵ as well as the negative social impact which migration can have on families and communities left behind.

For those remaining within their own country, governments may consider providing bridging finance to facilitate the mobility of workers to locations where there are many job vacancies. Sometimes employers provide accommodation in host cities where living is more affordable for new recruits: this is a common practice in the ready-made garment industry in Bangladesh, which recruits women from rural areas.

Where mobility is restricted – due to social norms, infrastructural barriers etc. – digital platforms can provide work opportunities. Ensuring the quality of such jobs must be of high importance to governments in order to safeguard youth human rights, which include labour rights.

v. Improve youth access to quality education and skills development

While the global movement to improve access to education can claim significant successes, the number of children who were out of school prior to the COVID-19 pandemic still exceeded 258 million, and 62 per cent of these were of secondary school age.²⁶ Running in parallel to the crisis of access, there are also serious concerns about the quality of education for many who are enrolled in school. According to the World Bank, in many education systems there are poor learning outcomes. While the definition of the skills that are needed varies from country to country, the basic foundational skills are essential. For smooth transition to employment, higher-

order reasoning and creativity that builds on these foundational skills is required. Learners also need socio-emotional skills such as perseverance and the ability to work in teams, all of which are qualities of character. Nevertheless, many countries are not yet achieving these goals.²⁷

Countries and international actors need to prioritize both access and quality. After all, the purpose of education and skills development should be to equip students with the skills they need to lead healthy, productive and meaningful lives, and without access to quality education and training, as well as awareness about their rights at work, young people are unable to obtain decent and dignified employment.

Strengthening the connections between education and skills-development systems and labour markets is crucial to fostering successful youth transitions to work. Lifelong learning, quality apprenticeships and other work experience schemes can address skills mismatches while securing a path that leads to decent work. Similarly, businesses must work with learning institutions to ensure that students are being taught the skills that they demand. This should not be limited to foundational and technical skills alone, but should also include soft skills (competencies) and character qualities.

vi. Careers counselling

Setting up inclusive employment and careers counselling services, supported by up-to-date information and access to employers, represents an excellent opportunity to support young people in their transition to work. Careers guidance within schools needs to be strengthened. In order to facilitate robust careers counselling services within education and skills-development systems, it is necessary to provide training for careers counsellors and employment services workers, along with developing relevant careers materials. This can be supported by an online service whereby employer networks provide support through the provision of information and vacancy notifications. Such measures should also be complemented by initiatives that seek to introduce students to employers and the world of work as early as possible in secondary education. Employer visits to schools, employer mentors and workplace visits (separate to work-based learning) allow students to start developing their



own ideas about the world of work, and to make more informed decisions about subject and career choices.

Due to the nature of the labour market, the expectations of employers and, in many countries, the increasing numbers of young people searching for jobs, moving into employment has become more complex; as a consequence, the demands on careers counselling and job-matching services currently outstrip supply. Technological interventions have become important as a supplement to face-to-face provision and offer a blended service tailored to the individual's needs.

vii. Improve access to and quality of apprenticeship training and work-based learning

Traditional apprenticeships have provided a route to employment for many young people. This has been the case particularly for youth in Africa and South Asia, who find it difficult to escape the informal labour market due to the limited scope of training and lack of recognized qualifications. Creating pathways from the informal to the formal labour market in countries where traditional apprenticeships are common could bring huge benefits in terms of accessing decent work, boosting wages and increasing labour market mobility.



To facilitate this transition into formal employment, apprenticeships should be upgraded by strengthening the apprenticeship contract. Skills training, including in foundational skills for those who have no previous access to basic education, should also form part of apprenticeship programmes. Moreover, equality of access would also need to be improved.²⁸ Typically, such an intervention would require a range of tools, including trained assessors, off-the-job top-up training provision, accreditation of prior learning, training of trainers (perhaps by traditional experts in their crafts) and the involvement of community groups and associations. Work-based learning can take many forms, and includes formal and informal apprenticeships but also internships, traineeships and work placements, all of which have the objective of providing opportunities for students to be exposed to the workplace and the realities of the world of work. Without such exposure, traditional institution-based training will continue to struggle to provide the skills demanded by the labour market, and will constrain employment opportunities as a result of the weak links between institutions and enterprises.

viii. Establish alternative systems for the certification of skills

Although education systems are striving to develop the competencies and attributes considered crucial to navigate changing labour markets, assessment and certification systems have not always provided suitably flexible and relevant formal certification options. Employers look for evidence of both vocational competence and transferable skills, neither of which are easily demonstrated by qualifications and other systems of reporting achievements. There are incessant calls from employers for an alternative system to measure and to assess the suitability of individuals for a given job.

While learners are developing the 21st-century or transferable skills needed to prepare them for a lifetime of learning and to support a smooth transition to work, it would be helpful to scaffold this effort with a transparent reporting framework that integrates foundational literacies, competencies and personal attributes, so as to demonstrate the full set of skills and experiences of the learner. This would

enable learners to share the skills that they have developed in ways that traditional transcripts are unable to, and potentially demonstrate readiness for employment. This system would provide a trusted, universal way to represent their full range of attainments, including skills, experience and capabilities acquired within formal and informal education.

Technology can greatly improve opportunities to electronically document, authenticate and access information on a person's learning. Digitization has made it possible to transcend the limits of traditional credentials. A new certification system, building on work around portfolios and learning passports and integrated via blockchain technology, can transcend borders so that knowledge, skills and experience are better recognized and become transferable globally.²⁹

ix. Job creation and measures to stimulate labour demand

Fostering a faster and more effective school-to-work transition does not only rely on investments on the supply side or in intermediation. Economic growth and a

conducive environment for job creation is crucial to ensure that skilled young people do find their way into decent work.

An integrated policy framework to support young people in securing decent jobs is critical for future socio-economic progress. Macro measures include pro-employment macroeconomic policies such as a countercyclical fiscal policy, an instrument that is well suited to ameliorate youth unemployment in times of crisis. Similarly, sectoral policies are needed which are targeted both at creating new jobs in niche sectors (e.g., the digital and green economies) as well as protecting existing jobs in those sectors hardest hit by the pandemic.

There is further work to be done to strengthen the connections between education and employment through regular interactions of employers with learning institutions (including teachers, careers counsellors and students). Businesses need to create jobs and offer young people paid training opportunities, including apprenticeships, internships and work-based learning, particularly in their early career period. Regular interactions with careers counsellors and schools can help to ensure they are provided with relevant information.

Foster social dialogue and encourage employers' and workers' organizations to contribute to the school-to-work transition

Social partners have a key role to play in advocating for young people, especially the most marginalized, and ensuring they have access to relevant information that can help guide their transition from school to work.³⁰

Workers' and employers' organizations can offer important information to support decision making among policymakers and managers of school counselling services and training institutions. Trade unions, on the one hand, can help identify opportunities for reskilling and niche areas for young job seekers to transition into. They can also emphasize the need for greater advocacy concerning labour rights as young people prepare for their first job or embark on their job search.

Employers' associations, on the other hand, can capture information from employers about skills gaps and the opportunities for the engagement of employers and the private sector in the delivery of skills and the creation of jobs. They can play a key role in advising on skills-development curricula, identifying skills requirements within industries and sectors, ensuring that opportunities open to young people are up to date, and especially by creating decent jobs for youth.³¹

Strengthening the capacity of workers' and employers' organizations is therefore critical to ensuring their contribution to youth employment and the smooth transition from school to work. Supporting such organizations to gradually integrate young people into their structures and decision-making mechanisms could further help foster a more integrated and participative approach to social dialogue. At the same time, fostering social dialogue will create a strong basis for building the

commitment of employers and workers to joint action with governments.

Improving evaluation of policies and interventions: Measuring the distance travelled

Few evaluations of policies and interventions designed to facilitate the school-to-work transition have measured the development of personal and social capabilities as an outcome of effectiveness. Most impact evaluations examine supposedly 'hard' outcomes, such as rates of job entry and income; however, for an evaluation to be truly useful, it should also indicate the short-term and intermediate outcomes (including the cultivation of the various capabilities noted in this brief) as well as address issues such as mental health and well-being. This is essential for tracking the distance travelled by individuals and the development of work readiness.



Common features of successful solutions

There are a number of design and implementation features which are known to foster success, thus facilitating young people's transition to decent work. These include:

- A comprehensive and cohesive policy framework
- Inclusive, demand-driven and well-run education and skills-development institutions
- Sufficient, reliable and regular funding for institutions supporting school-to-work transition, including those delivering skills as well as those providing career guidance, mentoring and other employment services
- Employer engagement in the delivery of work-based learning
- Reliable and readily available information on education, skills and the labour market
- Case management and the recognition of multiple pathways to employment
- Strategic use of information technology (IT)
- Strong partnerships and cooperation

Potential Breakthroughs

Europass³²

In the EU, the Directorate General for Education and Culture created the 'Europass', an electronic credential that seeks to ensure that workers' skills and qualifications are clearly understood and recognized across EU countries, regardless of the differences in education systems. It has three objectives: help citizens communicate their skills and qualifications effectively when looking for a job or training; help employers understand the skills and qualifications of the workforce; and help education and training authorities define and communicate the content of curricula. The Europass provides a learning credential describing the owners' skills and learning outcomes through formal, non-formal or informal learning. It has a digital signature called e-Seal that guarantees its origin and integrity to prevent fraud. There are Europass centres in all EU countries, with information available in 27 languages.

Peru's Single Employment Certificate for Young People³³

The Ministry of Labour of Peru provides young job seekers aged between 18 and 29 with a free Single Employment Certificate which covers various types of credentials required by employers, including identity

data, educational and judicial records, and work experience. Employers can easily check the authenticity of these certificates because the relevant data are uploaded to the website of the Ministry of Labour.

Morocco's digital strategy for the promotion of youth employment³⁴

To increase the number of users (particularly young people) and improve the quality of services without incurring higher costs, Morocco's National Agency for the Promotion of Employment and Competencies (ANAPEC) has developed a digital strategy based on web-based, telephone and digital media tools. A web-based portal offers various services related to labour market intermediation, including registration of job seekers and vacancies, and personalized pages for employers and job seekers. There are sites providing general labour market information and more specific information on self-employment and on opportunities for job seekers to improve their employability. In addition to a text messaging service and call centres, ANAPEC uses various social media and mobile apps to disseminate information and e-learning materials.

STAR, the apprenticeship programme that pays

Supported by the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), ILO and UNICEF, the STAR programme provides an alternative learning pathway for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable out-of-school adolescents to bring them back into learning and work. It provides out-of-school adolescents with a six-month programme of training that includes on-the-job apprenticeships, and technical and soft-skills



training. It is linked to communities, job markets and to the national technical and vocational qualification framework, which means students receive an allowance and have access to formal learning pathways and certification.

The programme has reached 35,777 adolescents and a tracer study indicated that 77 per cent of the graduates have transitioned to employment. About 95 per cent of graduates secured jobs in relevant trades within one month of completion. Monthly incomes increased six-fold, with impacts being particularly high for young women: early marriage decreased by 62 per cent. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the government was working towards incorporating the national apprenticeship strategy for large-scale implementation with the aim of creating one million new apprenticeship opportunities by 2023 in partnership with the private sector.

Educate!³⁵

The Educate! intervention operates in Uganda, Rwanda and Kenya, and partners with schools to provide a supplemental curriculum that aims to give students the necessary skills for employment in the 21st century. The programme focuses on teaching the foundational skills, competencies and character qualities. As well as teaching critical thinking, budgeting, teamwork, market research, self-confidence and creativity, the programme provides mentorship on topics such as entrepreneurship and community initiatives. There is also training and information on labour markets, developing business plans and forming business clubs, and teacher training on these skills. The initiative actively partners with governments to integrate skills-based education into national education systems and support national curriculum reforms.

A randomized control trial of the programme showed significant positive change in business ownership, overall income, community project ownership, savings behaviour and self-efficacy in practical and soft skills. A quasi-experimental study of Educate!'s impact, conducted among programme graduates by BRAC's Independent Evaluation and Research Cell, demonstrated an increase in average income, a 44 per cent increase in business ownership, and a 50 per cent increase in employment. Programme graduates also showed a statistically significant improvement in public

speaking, leadership and the number of job-relevant skills. It was noted that girls experienced much larger relative impacts across most indicators.

International Youth Foundation³⁶

A global programme to prepare youth for employment, Passport to Success³⁷ (PTS) has been implemented in over 50 countries. Run in partnership with the GE Foundation, this programme provides youth with a solid foundation of skills that support their personal, academic and professional growth. PTS teaches what it terms 'life skills', which encompasses soft skills, social-emotional skills, essential skills and core or work-readiness skills. The programme is contextualized to each location so that the specific needs of each labour market are addressed. Not only does PTS support youth to find dignified employment in the job market as it currently is, but it also looks forward to the future of work by teaching the skills that would be required for the economy of the tomorrow. To this end, PTS develops what it terms 'future-proof' skills (critical thinking and problem-solving, creativity and innovation, conflict management).

An impact evaluation conducted by Centro Latino Americano de Estudios de Evaluacion de Impacto (CLEEI) in Mexico, where PTS was incorporated into the first year of high school, found that the effects of participation in PTS led to a 32 per cent reduction in the average rate of drop-outs between the first and second semester and a 3.8 per cent increase in GPA. A randomized control trial conducted by Nedicco Consulting on the Zimbabwe: Works programme found that participation in the PTS programme had strong positive effects on the well-being of participants (measured by a subjective well-being index), and that PTS was associated with increases in resilience, economic empowerment and the quality of relationships. Findings also demonstrated that participation in the programme was associated with an increase in overall business success (measured by monthly revenue and investment).

Education Development Centre (EDC)³⁸

Work Ready Now! and Work-Based Learning programmes have been implemented in 25 countries. Addressing the skills mismatch, these programs teach soft skills such as communication, leadership, workplace safety and financial literacy skills. In addition, the Work-Based

Learning programme provides youth with practical exposure to real workplaces. The Work-Based Learning curriculum supplements the Work Ready Now! training by actively supporting youth both during their classroom training, as well as when they have finished the training, by facilitating work experience activities in real workplaces.

A randomized control trial of the Akazi Kanoze youth livelihoods project in Rwanda (a USAID-funded project) demonstrated that youth in rural areas were more likely to gain work readiness and financial management skills and find employment after graduation than someone who had not undergone the training. Additionally, youth who were engaged with the programme were found to have had statistically significant positive gains in work-readiness skills, such as knowing how to apply for a job, improving their current position, understanding business plan development, and feeling comfortable with marketing and attracting customers. An expansion of this first project, funded by the Mastercard Foundation, to scale up the initial project nationally and integrate the two programmes into the national secondary school programme, demonstrated that youth who were taught the curriculum were 8 per cent more likely to be employed after graduating from secondary school than those who did not participate in the program. There were also statistically significant differences, with a 14 per cent increase in employment for youth compared to only a 6 per cent increase for those who did not participate in the program.

Matching people with disabilities to inclusive employers

National and international job boards now exist online for certain specialist or niche sectors of the labour market. Some of these support people with disabilities who are searching for work. They aim to ensure that (i) inclusive employers can reach and retain a skilled and diverse pool of talent; and (ii) candidates with disabilities can access jobs with employers they can be confident are inclusive and put talent first – this being of great importance given that 33 per cent of people with disabilities report experiencing discrimination in their job search. Examples of job boards for people with disabilities are Hanploi³⁹ in France and Evenbreak⁴⁰ in the UK – a social enterprise set up by and for people with disabilities.

SECTION 3 CALL TO ACTION

Young people

- Demand timely and better-quality information, advice and guidance on opportunities that can enable them to secure a positive school-to-work transition, as well as on labour rights and representation.
- Engage in school and training centres' governing bodies to advocate for work-based learning.

Political Leaders and Policy Makers

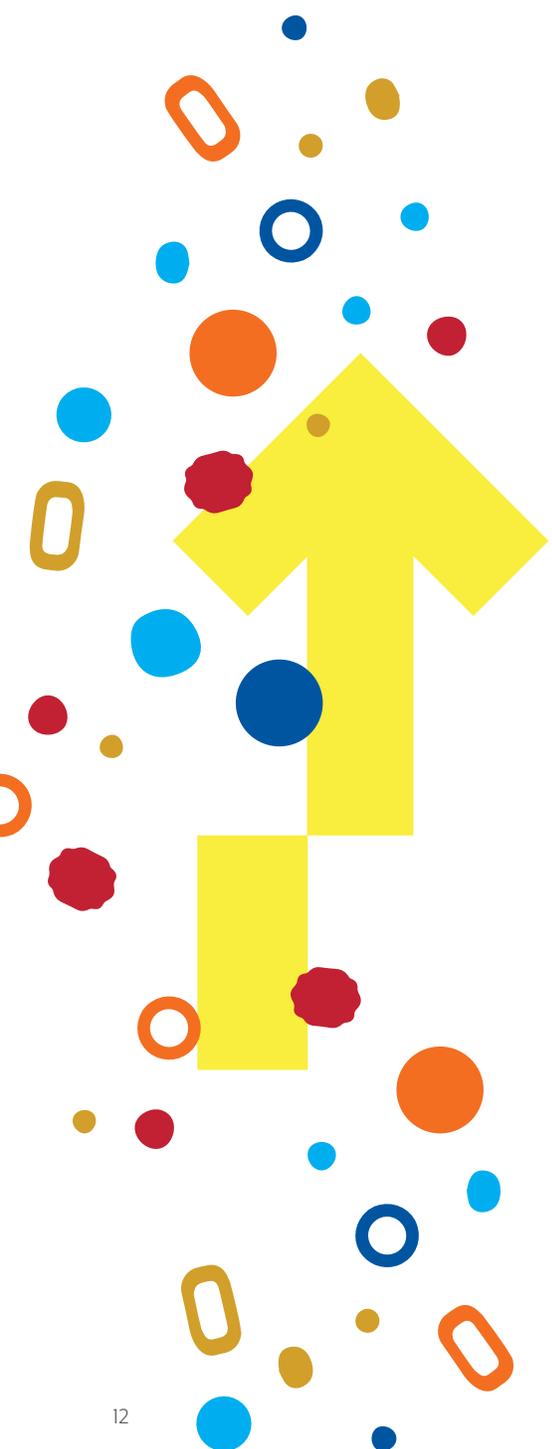
- Invest in and develop at scale skills-development programmes with proper synergies across skill sets.
- Promote social dialogue and foster the participation of youth workers' and employers' organizations in identifying gaps and opportunities for job creation, rights protection and awareness and skills development.
- Develop interventions that provide wrap-around services – job search assistance, job-matching platforms, access to finance and markets, counselling and mentoring – in conjunction with skills development.
- Strengthen the role of public employment services to secure an appropriate intermediation between labour supply and demand, including by modernizing these services and strengthening the capacity of labour counsellors.
- Improve pre-service and continuous professional development of educational and skills-development staff including access to industry-specific training.
- Create platforms for multi-stakeholder collaborations and intensifying private-sector engagement at different levels of the skills-development systems (governance, skills anticipation, financing etc.).
- Develop qualification frameworks, assessments and accreditation of learning including recognition of prior learning.

Business leaders

- Create expanded (paid) internships, traineeships and quality apprenticeship opportunities.
- Bring in market-relevant training systems by engaging in design and delivery of education and training programmes.
- Strengthen the connection and coherence between public and private employment services and agencies while creating data synergies (e.g., merging Big Data, labour force and employers' surveys) to reduce information asymmetries in the job search.
- Advocate for the voices and representation of young people in workers' and employers' organizations and support this with incentives.
- Build youth networks in chambers of commerce to expand their networks with businesses and finance.

Social Partners (employers and workers' organizations)

- Engage in collective bargaining on terms and conditions of work for interns and apprentices.
- Encourage enterprises to provide internship and apprenticeship places.
- Raise awareness about labour rights of young workers, interns and apprentices.
- Work closely with the government and young people to enhance the effectiveness of employment services, ensuring that they improve employment opportunities for young job seekers where they are being created.
- Promote the benefits of offering employment and training opportunities to disadvantaged young people.
- Explore avenues for creative and innovative opportunities to assist young people in their job search and in access to education and training opportunities.





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