



A Youth Science-Policy Interface Publication

# THE NEXT GENERATION OF WORK

**Pathways to Sustainable  
Economies and Decent Jobs  
for All by 2030**



**UN Major Group for  
Children and Youth**  
the space for children and youth in the United Nations



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The Next Generation of Work: Pathways to Sustainable Economies and Decent Jobs for All by 2030 is a publication on youth perspectives related to the future of work, sustainable economic growth, and 21st century education and skills. This publication reflects the contribution, efforts, and support across many different organizations and individuals.

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**Disclaimer:** The views expressed in the contributions to this publication are those of the individual authors and do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the United Nations or of the organizations with which the authors are affiliated.

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# INTRODUCTION

Inclusive and sustainable economies are necessary to drive progress and propel the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at-large. Although global labor productivity has increased, the global economy is still growing at a slow rate. There must be more progress to ensure there are economic opportunities, especially for young people, that includes marginalized populations and create decent work for all. The need for sustainable, inclusive economic growth goes hand in hand with the need for quality education for all. The future of work is shaped by complex global trends related to demographic, social, environmental, and technological changes, which challenges the current understanding of work, life, and livelihoods. Understanding which skills, both for life and work, as well as modalities for attaining them (e.g. formal, informal), will be key to ensure progress towards the 2030 Agenda. This publication sets out to address the following question: *How can we shift the current paradigm to achieve pathways for economic opportunity for all by 2030, in particular decent jobs for youth?*

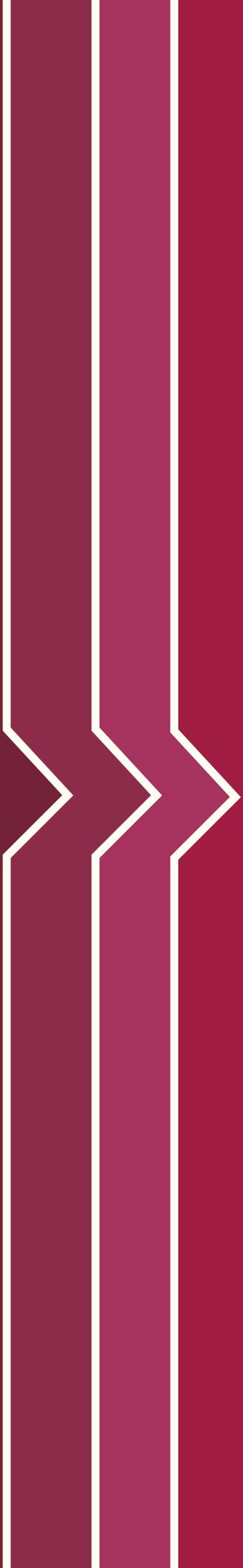
The International Labour Organization's (ILO) Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth seeks to shift the current paradigm by scaling up action and impact on youth employment under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The priorities for action are: 1) Green Jobs for Youth 2) Digital Skills for Youth 3) Quality Apprenticeships 4) Youth in Fragile Situations 5) Youth Transitioning to the Formal Economy 6) Youth in the Rural Economy 7) Youth Entrepreneurship and Self-Employment and 8) Youth Workers in Hazardous Occupations. These priorities are tackled by the initiative by building strategic alliances, scaling up action and impact, sharing and applying knowledge, and mobilizing resources. This publication aims to provide young people's insight into the initiative's priorities for action.

Although there are extensive efforts led by intergovernmental organizations to address SDGs 8 and 4, there is a gap of *youth perspectives* on these goals. Given that the next generation of work will impact youth the most, we believe it is imperative that youth voices are elevated on topics related to SDGs 8 and 4. As a result, this publication seeks to engage a diverse range of

young voices (under the age of 30), including but not limited to researchers, practitioners, civil society, and industry representatives, across geographies and issue areas. Even though there has been progress made on SDG 8 targets, globally over 70 million young people are still looking for a job and one-fifth of the world's youth are not in education, employment, or training. This is the beginning of a future open platform to field more policy recommendations and papers for other SDGs. Solving the most pressing questions related to youth employment means bringing youth voices to the table to think critically about these issues. This publication showcases fifteen different youth perspectives organized into three different sections: 1) The Future of Work, which assesses implications for changing workforce needs primarily but not limited to technological advancements 2) 21st Century Education and Skills Development, which elucidates necessary skills and areas necessary for the next generation of work and 3) Decent Work for Sustainable Livelihoods, which delves into issues to ensure that economic opportunities are possible for even the most marginalized and vulnerable populations.

Each of the fifteen papers presented in this inaugural version of the publication exhibits unique insight and offers tangible policy recommendations related to the nexus of SDGs 8 and 4. For example, Colin Coltrera and Tessa Forshaw's paper on human-centered design as it relates to workforce development presents solutions from a learning science lens as opposed to a labor skills lens that is traditionally used to create policy related to the future of work. Johan Bjurman Bergman's paper on entrepreneurial education in the MENA region highlights the ways in which reimagining education policies can lead to more effective job readiness for youth in the MENA region. Betty Barkha takes a critical look at ways in which the climate crisis can economically impact Pacific youth. Such examples are a small window into the keen insights and important youth perspectives of this publication.

This publication is a call for action to policymakers, practitioners, and researchers worldwide to take into consideration youth voices as it relates to SDGs 8 and 4. With youth unemployment at least three times higher than that of adults and youth employment investments remaining fragmented despite increased policy attention, the time is now for youth voices to be at the table to ensure that sustainable economic growth and decent work is attainable for all by 2030.



# **THE FUTURE OF WORK**



# The Human Centered Future of Work(force Development)

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## Abstract

The future of work has never been more uncertain. Forces spanning automation to climate change will impact the livelihoods of billions of people worldwide. When we only discuss this problem at the level of millions or billions, we miss the human-centered reality of what it means to be an individual worker. Looking at the issues workers face as a “learning problem” vs. a “labor problem” enables us to understand the landscape at an “n of 1” and, at this level, it is evident that traditional workforce development efforts that focus on reskilling are often ineffective, or become quickly redundant.

By shifting our perspective from a labor skills lens (i.e., reskilling through mass content delivery) to a learning science lens (i.e., enabling transformative learning experiences for individuals), we can create a new paradigm. Core learning science concepts such as exploration before explanation, moments of mastery, and situated learning support workers in developing the mindsets they need to navigate an ambiguous future. This could be the difference between marginalized and vulnerable young people becoming trapped in an endless cycle of reskilling and displacement, and becoming active agents able to navigate the future world of work.

## The Future of Work is Changing at a Rapid Pace.

Kyle,<sup>1</sup> a recent high school graduate, attended a large opportunity youth-focused job fair in Seattle to find a job. When asked why he was there, Kyle replied that he was finding it difficult to find a job because he had “no skills.” As we talked, Kyle shared how the automation of farm machinery had disrupted his last job and that he considered this previous experience irrelevant to the customer service positions on offer at the job fair. To overcome this hurdle, Kyle felt that the only

avenue open to him was to enroll in a reskilling program focused on customer service retail-specific skills.

Fast forward four years and Kyle has been employed at a nationwide retail company, one that has been making strides in automating their frontline customer service agents. This type of automation has become commonplace across the retail sector, and it has resulted in the contraction of thousands of jobs nationwide.<sup>2</sup> As this trend is only set to continue, and labor economists predict that retail is likely to be one of the hardest hit sectors, Kyle either already has or is likely to face a similar fate again: job disrupted, in desperate need of short term income and feeling as though he lacks all relevant skills.

Kyle's story is becoming an increasingly common one. The world of work is experiencing dramatic changes as it enters what the World Economic Forum has termed the Fourth Industrial Revolution.<sup>3</sup> According to the World Bank, a full two-thirds of jobs in the developing world are at risk of replacement through automation,<sup>4</sup> and in the United States estimates predict about 47 percent.<sup>5</sup> Despite the widespread impacts of this Fourth Industrial Revolution, our educational systems are reminiscent of the First Industrial Revolution. Furthermore, automation and artificial intelligence are far from the only forces reshaping the world of work in the 21st Century.

### **We Have A Learning Problem, Not A Labor Economics Problem.**

The contemporary social narrative blames Kyle's unemployment on the "skills gap" created by these changes in the world of work. That term, although very common since the 1970s, has increased in popularity recently and can be found in several cornerstone Future of Work reports, such as the reports mentioned above and those from the World Economic Forum,<sup>6</sup> McKinsey Global Research Institute<sup>7</sup>, and the OECD.<sup>8</sup> These reports (and many others) span sectors and countries, yet they all assess the future of work through a lens of labor economics. In doing so, they disconnect labor skills from the individual psychological, cognitive, and societal elements that enable learning.

A skills gap centered lens leads to the belief that reskilling is the best option for someone like Kyle to move forward. But what if it isn't? What if it isn't even a good option? We propose that we need to rethink our approach to workforce development and ground that new approach in the learning sciences, human-centered design, and the realities of the future of work. We propose that we approach the future of work as a learning problem, not just a labor problem.

If we want to prepare one billion people for the future of work, we have to be able to prepare one person.

### **The Future Of Work Has Outpaced Workforce Development.**

There are many initiatives, spanning corporations, nonprofits, and governments already tasked with reskilling disrupted and vulnerable workers, or workforce preparation in general. But current models leave much to be desired. Traditional approaches usually take the form of reskilling programs like the popular tech boot-camps, or initiatives like the one Kyle went through that are content-driven and focused on getting participants a specific type of job-based on the development of specific didactic skills. Not only can these programs be ineffective at increasing worker hireability and compensation in the short term,<sup>9</sup> but many also train workers in skills likely to be vulnerable to automation within the next five years.<sup>10</sup>

So what is the answer? We have to stop preparing workers for only their immediate next job and the latest in-demand skills. Yes, immediate economic opportunity is critical, but we also have to start preparing them to thrive in a constantly evolving future of work landscape. Navigating that landscape will require workers to be adaptable, creative, and able to navigate ambiguity. In the language of the learning sciences, workers will need self-efficacy and a growth mindset to be able to analogically reason<sup>11</sup> (or transfer<sup>12</sup>) how their existing skills apply to new and different contexts.

*Self-efficacy*, a key component of the larger concept of agency, is the difference between trying and not trying. It influences what problems people choose to take on, how much effort they put towards solving those problems, and their resilience to adversity and failure.<sup>13</sup> As Albert Bandura, who coined Self-efficacy, puts it “[i]f people believe they have no power to produce results, they will not attempt to make things happen.”<sup>14</sup> The volatile nature of the future of work means that workers must be prepared to attempt to make things happen.

A related concept, *growth mindset*, is the belief in the malleability of one’s intelligence, abilities, and personality. Its opposition is *fixed mindset*, and the difference between the two mindsets has powerful impacts on how people approach opportunities for learning and improvement. Those with a fixed mindset spend time and effort proving their intelligence and capability and avoiding situations which challenge them or threaten failure. Those with a growth mindset seek out opportunities for self-improvement.<sup>15</sup> Given the rapid shifts in the world of work, a willingness to learn and

Together these two mindsets support the development of what we see as the essential ability for the workers of the future: *analogical reasoning*. In the context of work, analogical reasoning<sup>16</sup> is the ability to see how existing skills, knowledge, and abilities transfer to new and different types of work. Having a strong ability to analogically reason reduces a learner's need to "reskill." In the case of Kyle, if he can learn analogical reasoning then he will be able to see how what he learned in his past experiences in farming and the retail sector can apply to new work.

These mindsets and cognitive abilities can be inculcated in people but are ill-served by curricula that focus on content at the cost of all else. Instead, we must approach them through a pedagogy that encourages the development of self-efficacy, growth mindset and analogical reasoning. This involves creating moments where learners can experience mastery, see accomplishment modeled by their peers, receive encouragement, and feel comfortable to challenge themselves.<sup>17</sup> A curriculum and pedagogical style designed to deliver content as quickly as possible does not afford these key transformative moments and ultimately only deliver content retention and not the development of new mindsets and cognitive abilities.

### We Need To Prioritize Pedagogy That Considers The Science Of Learning.

Decades of research in the learning sciences have given us key principles that can be built into workforce development programs. For example, in our class, Design Thinking Studio,<sup>18</sup> at the Stanford University d.school we prioritize learners exploring a space or task before explaining it to them. This lets students engage in the essential acts of sense-making constructing for themselves the physical, social, and symbolic worlds they occupy.<sup>19</sup> This pedagogical technique create the right conditions for a learner to develop a growth mindset and self-efficacy, in part because learners then understand their learning experiences as something they have ownership of and can actively influence.<sup>20</sup>

This approach is also applied by a workforce development initiative, Designing Your Success (DYS). DYS applies design thinking to life design for those at risk of job disruption.<sup>21</sup> In addition to exploration before explanation pedagogy, DYS creates learning environments that prompt analogical reasoning. For example, learners are asked to create skills profiles of themselves and to generate three possible futures that show how these skills profiles could be applied. Understanding that learning is an activity embedded in contexts, environments, and people require programs to think

not just about the surface level of content but think critically about the design of learning spaces and experiences.

## Let's Change The Current Paradigm.

The question of how to prepare the workforce for an uncertain future can seem intractable. Workers caught in the shifting tides of the modern world of work can feel robbed of their agency, and policy that protects their rights and empowers their choices is essential.<sup>22</sup> But not all essential changes happen at the policy level. Through the lens of the learning sciences, we can approach shifts in work from the perspective of individuals; from the point of view of Kyle. But to give Kyle a more inclusive future, we need to change the current paradigm: from a labor problem to a learning problem, from billions of people to one, from content to pedagogy, and from skills to mindsets and cognitive abilities.

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<sup>1</sup> For his privacy we have changed Kyle's name.

<sup>2</sup> Gretzko, M (2018) The future of work for retail?, Deloitte LaborWise, Stamford CT

<sup>3</sup> Schwab, K. (2016). *The fourth industrial revolution*, Crown Business, New York.

<sup>4</sup> Weltbankgruppe (Ed.). (2016). Digital dividends. Washington, DC: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank.

<sup>5</sup> Frey, C. B., & Osborne, M. A. (2015). Technology at work: The future of innovation and employment. Oxford and New York: University of Oxford and CitiGroup.

<sup>6</sup> World Economic Forum (2017) The future of jobs report, Geneva

<sup>7</sup> Laboissiere, M., & Mourshed, M. (2017). Closing the skills gap: Creating workforce-development programs that work for everyone.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. OECD

<sup>9</sup> Goldstein, A. (2017). *Janesville: an American story* (First Simon & Schuster hardcover edition). New York: Simon & Schuster.

<sup>10</sup> Wilson, G. (2017). Building a new mythology: The coding boot-camp phenomenon. *ACM Inroads*, 8(4), 66–71. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3132706>

<sup>11</sup> Bartha, Paul, "Analogy and Analogical Reasoning", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2019 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.)

<sup>12</sup> Pea R. D. (1987), Socializing the knowledge transfer problem, *International Journal of Educational Research*, Volume 11, Issue 6, Pages 639-663

<sup>13</sup> Bandura, A. (1997). Self-efficacy: the exercise of control. New York: W.H. Freeman.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Dweck, C. S. (2008). *Mindset: the new psychology of success* (Ballantine Books trade pbk. ed). New York: Ballantine Books.

<sup>16</sup> Bartha, Paul, "Analogy and Analogical Reasoning", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2019 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.)

<sup>17</sup> Bandura, ibid.

<sup>18</sup> See information on our class <https://dschool.stanford.edu/classes/design-thinking-studio-spring>

<sup>19</sup> Forshaw, T. (2019). Design your (educational) design work series #1: Exploration before explanation.

<sup>20</sup> Yeager, D. S., Romero, C., Paunesku, D., Hulleman, C. S., Schneider, B., Hinojosa, C., & Dweck, C. S. (2016). Using Design Thinking to Improve Psychological Interventions: The Case of the Growth Mindset during the Transition to High School. *Journal Of Educational Psychology*, 108(3), 374–391.

<sup>21</sup> New Sector Alliance (2019) Designing Your Success (DYS) Fellowship.

<sup>22</sup> Marx, Karl (1844). "Comment on James Mill," *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*

# A Cross-Boundary Team Approach to a Collaborative Future of Work

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## Abstract

Cross-boundary innovation teams, composed of internal and external team members, are collectively smarter than teams composed only of internal employees. This paper uses McGrath's Circumplex Model of Group Tasks to analyze the activities that innovation teams need to complete in order to develop new products or processes. The team's ability to complete the identified tasks is then assessed using the Entrepreneurial Muscle Memory Seven Core Competencies model. Optimizing the team's collective intelligence leads to a focus on a core competency, defined as agency. The innovation competency is demonstrated through confidence in one's ability to instigate and drive change and is critical when moving beyond idea to execution. Available data shows that agency is lacking among employees of large organizations and tends to be frequent among small business and startup team members. Eliminating organizational boundaries when building an innovation team can increase the team's capacity to carry out an innovation initiative. Such a construct can enable linkages between big and small businesses, ultimately generating profits and creating jobs for both entities. Ultimately, something as simple as linking team members across businesses of different sizes can be an important business and policy tool to distribute economic growth.

## Introduction

With 84% of executives considering innovation as the core of their company's growth, only 6% report being satisfied with the outcome of their innovation initiatives.<sup>1</sup> For large companies, infusing the corporate culture with risk-taking and entrepreneurship is now recognized as a survival need, making innovation teams ubiquitous across organizations. Most companies consider themselves in the early stages of innovation maturity,<sup>2</sup> presenting the need and opportunity for novel frameworks that can potentially increase the success of innovation endeavors.

Open innovation, enabling companies to use external input in addition to their in-house R&D and innovation resources, is a growing trend. Despite being the comparatively least utilized method, multiple studies demonstrate positive outcomes and significant future potential of open innovation initiatives.<sup>3</sup> A 2018 BCG Henderson Institute report shows that companies satisfied with their innovation performance manage to run and reinvent the business at the same time, while fostering collaboration with both internal and external partners.<sup>4</sup> Another study concludes that 74% of companies successful in developing innovative services use a mixture of internal and external innovation drivers.<sup>5</sup>

Operationalizing open innovation starts with an understanding that high-value work increasingly happens in teams.<sup>6</sup> The Fourth Industrial Revolution has decreased the value of individual cognitive abilities, while demonstrating the effect of synergistic team performance.<sup>7</sup> This paper examines open innovation on a team level, using a competency-based approach to analyze tasks teams need to complete throughout the innovation process. The core hypothesis presented is that collectively smarter innovation teams are comprised of both internal and external team members.

## Methods and Frameworks

To analyze the innovation process on a team level, we need to first understand the concept of collective intelligence. Woolley et al. empirically validated the claim that teams possess collective intelligence. The authors found evidence of collective intelligence that can be measured, comparable to the way individual intelligence is assessed. The collective intelligence of a team is not strongly correlated with the average or maximum intelligence of individuals in the group.<sup>8</sup> Pea analyzed intelligence as manifested through activity and not as a state of being. He developed the concept of distributed intelligence, arguing that activity is enabled beyond the intelligence contributed by an individual.<sup>9</sup>

Next, we demonstrate the link between tasks the innovation team needs to complete and the underlying competencies. We use McGrath's Circumplex Model of Group Tasks to analyze intelligence through different stages of group activity. In order to understand the competencies needed to successfully carry out innovation tasks, we look at the Entrepreneurial Muscle Memory (EMM) Seven Core Competencies model. Using the two frameworks provides an insight into how individual competencies enable activity and relate to the collective intelligence of an innovation team.

McGrath provides a conceptual framework for the study of groups, classifying main group tasks into four basic categories of processes: generate, choose, negotiate, and execute.<sup>10</sup> His model is shown in Figure 1 below.

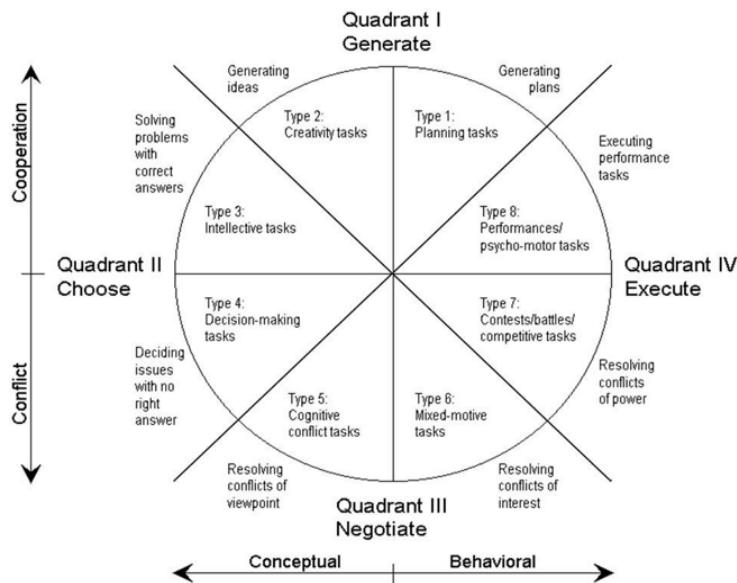


Figure 1. McGrath's Circumplex Model of Group Tasks (McGrath, 1984).

The Entrepreneurial Muscle Memory (EMM) Framework provides an understanding of critical traits that drive most successful innovations and a method to assess individuals against those traits.<sup>11</sup> The seven core EMM competencies are outlined in Table 1.

1	Awareness	Inclination to spot opportunities, with an ability to focus and eliminate the noise from the signal.
2	Agency	Tendency to take action, initiate, and execute; assume responsibility and believe in one's ability to achieve goals.
3	Communication	Attentive to appealing to both emotions and reason, while demonstrating credibility through a developed authentic communication style.
4	Problem-solving	Tendency to dig under the surface and solve novel, ill-defined problems in a complex setting.
5	Resourcefulness	Inclination to look for imaginative solutions and not be discouraged by an environment infused with constraints.
6	Networking	Disposition to focus on building and maintaining mutually enabling relationships.
7	Resilience	Prone to quickly recover from setbacks or failure, maintaining stability in light of a highly disruptive event.

Table 1. Entrepreneurial Muscle Memory: Seven Core Competencies (Entrepreneurial Muscle Lab, 2019).

Next, we look at McGrath's four categories of group tasks as they relate to innovation initiatives, examining idea generation, selection, transition, and execution.

### Idea generation: building a strategic plan and brainstorming

The first stage of the innovation process is connected to the “generate” section of McGrath’s model. Generating plans is frequently a weak point in the innovation pipeline. As it requires an innovation strategy, it goes beyond the sole notion that innovation is necessary to stay relevant. As Pisano phrases it, this stage needs a thorough “understanding and articulation of specific objectives related to helping the company achieve a sustainable competitive advantage.”<sup>12</sup> Teams at this stage need to use their awareness and problem-solving skills to identify factors related to creating, delivering, and capturing value with the end-customer in mind. The stage also requires strong agency and communication skills to build a feasible plan despite obstacles and a clear manner of communicating that plan.

Planning tends to be followed by generating ideas, a part that most innovation teams perform well on, using ideation sessions, hackathons, and workshops as methods. Generating ideas is closely linked to a strong sense of awareness, an ability to spot opportunities, and problem-solving, or tendency to dig under the surface. Generating ideas is rarely an obstacle. Employees end up frustrated afterwards, when there is no tangible outcome upon completion of the idea generation session.

### Idea selection: assessing technical and business feasibility

The second part of the innovation team process is linked to the “choosing” portion of the McGrath model. Using team members’ technical and functional expertise to solve problems with correct answers requires strong analytical and problem-solving skills. To complete this stage successfully, it is important to have the right technical and functional experts on board. Deciding issues with no right answer requires slightly more than problem-solving skills. Dealing with the type of situations when the correct answer is the preferred or agreed upon one, requires both strong problem-solving and communication skills. Corporate innovation teams, in general, tend to perform well on this category of tasks.

## Idea transition: team alignment and negotiation

Bringing individuals across disciplines, geographies, and organizations requires having people on board who can be effective at handling the next stage of the innovation team workflow: “negotiating.” Resolving conflicts of viewpoint requires excellent communication skills and the ability to put oneself in others’ shoes. Resolving conflicts of interest additionally requires strong relationship-building skills. The study by Woolley et al. found that collective intelligence of teams is “correlated with the average social sensitivity of group members, the equality in distribution of conversational turn-taking, and the proportion of females in the group.”<sup>13</sup> The finding does not come as a surprise as individuals with strong communication and networking tendencies are more likely to exhibit that type of behavior, therefore contributing to the successful completion of tasks related to team alignment and negotiation.

## Idea execution: resolving power struggles and enhancing performance

Before getting to see the light of day, new ideas and plans need to go through bureaucratic hurdles and overcome power struggles. Resolving conflicts of power can be frequent when an innovation initiative threatens to make jobs or departments obsolete. The stage requires superior communication skills (sharing benefits of the initiative), networking (getting stakeholders’ buy-in), resourcefulness (operating within multiple constraints) and ultimately resilience (not getting discouraged by rejection).

Finally, executing an idea is when most initiatives fail. This “last” stage of the model requires people with a strong sense of agency or belief in one’s ability to successfully drive change. An intriguing trend appears when analyzing data from 220 entrepreneurial competency assessment results by the Entrepreneurial Muscle Lab (EML). Less than 5% of individuals working at a large company with over 1000 employees have agency as their leading competency, while close to 40% have it as their relatively weakest one. On the other hand, 25% of individuals working at a startup or a small business (below 1000 employees) have agency as their leading competency with 9% having it as their weakest one.<sup>14</sup>

Agency appears to increase in frequency as the organizational size decreases. Further research is needed to understand whether the trend is due to self-selection or corporate bureaucracy stifling individuals’ sense of agency. As a competency that significantly influences the capacity to

generate and execute innovation plans, agency could be the missing link that unlocks the power of innovation teams.

The model is represented in an apparent chronological order for simplicity. In reality, most of these tasks may be occurring concurrently, and there can be multiple iterations of different processes.

## Discussion

Innovation teams composed of team members spanning organizational boundaries tend to have complementary competencies needed to complete different group processes. The enhanced ability to complete group tasks can be interpreted as a signal of an increased collective intelligence. Analyzing the innovation team as a separate construct allows us to assess and optimize team structures for increased performance. Previous studies have already shown that using both internal and external resources in an innovation process leads to improved innovation outcomes. The paper further confirmed the finding, focusing on the use of internal and external human capital.

Cross-boundary team structures present a unique opportunity to create synergies between big and small businesses. For large organizations, it is a chance to infuse attitudes such as agility, proactivity, risk-taking, and entrepreneurialism. For small businesses, such close collaboration provides access to platforms of scale, industry know-how, and the advantage that comes with high market power. Eliminating organizational boundaries when forming an innovation team can enhance both organizations' capability to drive change, build new products and services.

Ultimately, optimizing the distributed intelligence of individuals across organizations is a potential win-win scenario, generating profits and creating new jobs on both ends. Demonstrating the business case for investing in collaboration with smaller enterprises can incentivize large business to reimagine the concept of what constitutes a workforce. On the small business side, establishing the external team member connection can decrease the fear in working with a significantly more powerful partner. If properly utilized, cross-boundary team structures can act as an equalizer, creating individual linkages that enable big – small business collaboration.

Cross-boundary team creation still poses a number of challenges, including transparency, Intellectual Property ownership, coordination, common goals, and underlying drivers'

identification. Further research is needed to understand environmental factors that influence teams' performance. Empirically validating the correlation between competencies and tasks completion can also support the practical implementation of the proposed concept.

## Conclusion

Examining open innovation on a team level shows that cross-boundary teams have an enhanced ability to complete innovation-related group tasks. The paper aimed to demonstrate that a construct as simple as forming a team has the potential to contribute to innovation, productivity, and economic output. Further understanding the practical application of cross-boundary team formation can become a core business advantage.

Cross-boundary team structures could eliminate communication and incentive barriers between big and small businesses, enabling them to help each other grow. Combining individuals' capabilities and drive could render organizational divides obsolete. Business tools and policy instruments that foster such connections can help design a collaborative future of work. Let us start with a dialogue on how big and small players can not only co-exist but thrive together.

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<sup>1</sup> (McKinsey&Company 2018)

<sup>2</sup> (KPMG 2018)

<sup>3</sup> (Sivam, et al. 2019)

<sup>4</sup> (Reeves, Hansell and Charme di Carlo 2018)

<sup>5</sup> (Som, Jaeger and Maloca 2014)

<sup>6</sup> (Wuchty, Jones and Uzzi 2007)

<sup>7</sup> (Colvin 2016)

<sup>8</sup> (Woolley, et al. 2010)

<sup>9</sup> (Pea 1997 )

<sup>10</sup> (McGrath 1984)

<sup>11</sup> (Entrepreneurial Muscle Lab 2019)

<sup>12</sup> (Pisano 2015)

<sup>13</sup> (Woolley, et al. 2010)

<sup>14</sup> (Entrepreneurial Muscle Lab 2019). Data analyzed by Entrepreneurial Muscle Lab is aggregated, anonymized, and cannot be tracked to individual reports.

# An Intersectional Gender Lens to Labour Market Interventions in Latin America

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## Abstract

Labour market interventions are essential to shape a future of decent work and economic growth that leaves no one behind. Particularly in Latin America, a region that presents a landscape of lower productivity economic sectors and high dependence on commodities.

While striving into higher technology conversion is one of the main aims for economic growth, there are important risks of displacement and exclusion of large population sectors, especially women. The current employment segmentation in the region already presents important limitations for women, particularly the poor and indigenous, which would be accentuated if gender dimensions are not at the center of labour market interventions moving forward.

## Introduction

Regardless of the various industrialization efforts in Latin America, the region still faces a strong dependence on commodities and its main production structure is based in low value creation chains of manufacturing, agriculture and natural resource extraction.<sup>1</sup>

The later has particular effects in shaping labour markets, the access to decent jobs and creating opportunities to lift people out of poverty, particularly for women. Data shows that, from the 49% of women in Latin America that are considered part of the labour force, 21,9% are concentrated in informal commercial activities, 11,5% in manufacturing, and 27,7% in paid care and domestic work; which is related to partial employment and lower income levels.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to minimum diversification and low productivity, the fall of purchasing power and the scarcity of secure living wages in the region has increased unpaid domestic and care work as survival strategies within households. The burden of increased unpaid domestic and care work translates into structural obstacles of time use for women to enter the labour force. Recent data confirms that 43,4% of women in Latin America report family reasons as the main motive to not

actively look or engage in paid work.<sup>3</sup>

Some of these challenges can be addressed through conversion into higher technology production structures as a means for economic growth and overcoming dependency on commodities. Nonetheless, in order to engage in efficient labour market interventions that leave no one behind, the needs of women, particularly the poor, rural and indigenous, must be in the center of policy design and implementation.

## Discussion

In Latin America, the increasing participation of women in the work force is mainly caused by economic depression, stagnated growth and the fall of purchasing power, which instead of lifting them out of poverty and boosting economic autonomy, it has generated a poverty of time and a double, or even triple, workload for women in excluded population sectors.

Data from 2014 shows that Latin American women work between 60 and 90 hours a week depending on the country, combining paid and non paid work, while the range for men is between 48 to 73.5 hours.<sup>4</sup>

As the role of women has expanded into being professionals and providers of income for their families, male roles have maintained over time with men rarely engaging in unpaid care and domestic work. According to data provided by UN Women, 41% of global working hours are compromised by unpaid domestic and care work, from which, 31% is done by women and only 10% by men.<sup>5</sup>

Adding to the time constraints that this represents for women, the sexual division of labour within households has translated into employment segmentation associated with lower income and job insecurity. In Latin America 21,9% of employed women are concentrated in informal commercial activities, while 27,7% take part in paid care and domestic work services.<sup>6</sup>

Segmentation is also observed in employment productivity level, 51,8% of women in the region are employed in lower productivity sectors, and from that percentage, 82,2% of women do not have access to social security or a pension scheme for their retirement,<sup>7</sup> which highlights the degree of informality and job insecurity.

When the participation of women in the labour force responds to economic stagnation and inequalities it does not serve to enhance their lives, but rather to increase overall workload, as men,

the State and the private sector are not engaging in redistributing unpaid social reproduction work.

Evidence confirms that there is a direct relationship between domestic and care work overload with the type of jobs that women have access to. Most segmentation in employment sectors answers to the need of women to reconcile care and paid labour in flexible schedules, informality and auto-employment strategies.<sup>8</sup>

The relationship between paid and unpaid work strongly exhibits a simultaneous inclusion/exclusion of women in the labor force, while integrating them under employment insecurity schemes, they are being excluded from economic and social mobility opportunities.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, State subsidiary welfare programs and cash transfers might keep these marginalized populations under the radar, but they don't redistribute care and domestic work nor represent a path out of poverty.<sup>10</sup>

Development research has shown that cash transfers, conditional or unconditional, even if they are part of a scheme of social security networks, need to be framed in a broader structural agenda that addresses labour market mobility and social networks to achieve long term results.<sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, while addressing structural productivity levels through conversion into higher value chains of production may be enough to sustain economic growth for the developing world, it is not enough to achieve sustainable development, decent employment creation and inclusivity for all.

Specific labour market interventions from an intersectional gender perspective that takes into account income level and ethnicity are of essence to shape the future of work. Interrelations of gender discrimination, ethnicity and income vulnerability play a substantial role in creating opportunities accessible for the majority of the population.

Considering that almost a third of working women are employed in the paid care and domestic work sector, investing in universal social security networks that offer decent work will have particularly positive impacts for women. Research shows that direct investments in the care economy not only reduce and redistribute paid care work, it also has the potential of creating millions of jobs, of which 60-70% would be held by women.<sup>12</sup>

It is important to note that structural changes that aim to reduce economic inequalities from a gender perspective imply transforming the lives of all the population -women and men alike- to be able to participate with equity in all spheres of the economy, paid and unpaid.<sup>13</sup>

Hence, labour market interventions that are designed with women's needs in the center would have broader positive effects for all the population, while ignoring the gender dimensions of employment has the risk of massive displacement and exclusion. For example, studies confirm that current automation trends in lower value chains will have accentuated negative effects on women if gender informed conversion is not prioritized.<sup>14</sup>

Our challenge today is to design and implement the policy that will shape the work opportunities of future generations. If the goal is to build fair economies, decent jobs and economic growth that translates into the wellbeing of the majority and not the wealth of a minority, direct labour market interventions need to address structural inequalities. Additionally, these need to be paired with universal social security networks that ensure a basic floor of wellbeing for all and redistribute unpaid domestic and care work.

To achieve these goals a strong collaboration between governments and the private sector is needed. While interventions should be driven by States within a broader development agenda that addresses economic structural inequalities, the private sector should be kept accountable for equitable employment creation that includes marginalized populations, specially during the process of higher technology convergence in the developing world.

Some key points that outline the basics for landscaping the future of work in Latin America, from an intersectional gender lens, are as follows:

- a)** Direct investment into the care economy through universal social security networks;
- b)** labour regulations in accordance to decent work standards, particularly in paid care employment;<sup>15</sup>
- c)** revision of minimum wages and adequate earnings to meet inflation and cover the needs of the population<sup>16</sup>
- d)** gender pay gap audits and sanctions;
- e)** tax incentives to promote gender parity in the work place;
- f)** acknowledging and strategizing on reducing motherhood penalties in the workplace due to career brakes, reduced working hours and gender biased promotions.<sup>17</sup>
- g)** care services provision inside the workplace, while abiding by inclusive maternity, paternity and parental leave;<sup>18</sup>
- h)** addressing the digital innovation gender gap to avoid feminized technological displacement.

The later are examples of policy arrangements that can be tailored to specific population gaps and vulnerabilities, which paired with a broader strategy of allocated investment for employment creation under higher value chains and less dependence on natural resources, becomes a powerful combination that brings governments and corporations together in shaping a future of work where we all fit and women's needs are met.

## Conclusion

The next generation of work is not to be taken lightly. The present testifies for the consequences of our decisions in the past, hence the challenges and opportunities of today should keep us all accountable in forging an economy that has room for everyone today and tomorrow.

Addressing structural inequalities of income disparity and employment opportunities from a gender informed perspective is essential in the process of creating inclusive economies. In the context of the developing world, particularly in Latin America, we face high risks of employment displacement as automation trends and higher technology conversion are implemented.

However, at this turning point in history, the opportunity is still open to take action into the direction of inclusivity. Governments and the private sector alike, have a responsibility in turning the wheel towards equity. The stakes are high and the future of work lays in taking action today.

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<sup>17</sup> ILO. *A Quantum Leap for Gender Equality: For a Better Future of Work for All*. (ILO, Switzerland. 2019) 32–60.

<sup>18</sup> As recommended by the International Labour Organization (ILO), the future of work should have time to care, and provide care services through both the private sector and universal social security networks. Ibid, 34–41.

# **Social Entrepreneurship for the Future of Work: Co-creating a Healthier Economy & Workforce in Williamson, West Virginia**

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## **Abstract**

While workforce development initiatives are often designed from the top-down, a human-centered approach calls for decision-making authority on economic policies to be shared with the communities engaged – an approach which social entrepreneurs have been bringing to their work for decades. Echoing Green, an organization with thirty years of experience investing and support the growth of early-stage social entrepreneurs, has observed this approach succeed time-and-time again. To do this work well requires investment in community leaders deeply embedded in the constituencies they serve. Impact Experience, recipients of the 2018 Echoing Green Fellowship, have brought a human centered approach to their work with twenty communities across the United States on themes from climate resilience, community cohesion, and ecosystem building – all within a framework of building a more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable workforce and workplace. This paper highlights the progress and successes from Impact Experience's work in Williamson, West Virginia – a town working to overcome challenges stemming from the decline of the coal industry – to both show the viability of Impact Experience's local organizing model as well as illuminate the contributions social entrepreneurship can make to promote an inclusive future of work.

## Introduction

In the report “Work for a Brighter Future,” the International Labour Organization called for a human-centered agenda to ensure the future of work is designed to “drive growth, equity, and sustainability for present and future generations.”<sup>1</sup> To achieve the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth – will require a systemic coalition of effort across all sectors and industries.

Social entrepreneurship – and the leaders who represent this movement of socially conscious businesses and non-profit organizations – have been on the front lines of implementing impact-first and human-centered design work for decades. With proper investment, social entrepreneurs can build equitable and locally sustainable organizations whose primary measurement of success is their ability to transform their constituents and communities for the better. As other industries seek to bring this perspective into their work, social entrepreneurs can be an invaluable resource.

To steward the future of work, Echoing Green believes that the global community must not only strengthen people’s rights and opportunities in economies as they exist today, but also invest heavily in leaders with a vision for what the economies and societies of the future must become. Social entrepreneurs are leading the way towards a future of work that is equitable and designed to meet human needs first and foremost. These leaders already exist in communities throughout the world. With support, they are ready to build new, collaborative alternatives to address worker displacement, combat climate change, challenge the centralization of wealth and power, and empower those repressed by gender, racial, and other forms of systemic social oppression.<sup>2</sup>

Impact Experience is an example of one such organization. Impact Experience is a social impact organization focused on building bridges and deepening relationships between impact investors, philanthropists, entrepreneurs and community leaders to co-develop solutions that align with the community’s vision. Through their work in Williamson, West Virginia, they have engaged in a community-driven process to design an equitable and inclusive future for the city, already attracting more than \$8 million USD in new funding, including capital for initiatives on workforce development, healthcare and wellness, and community facilities and creating nearly 300 jobs. Their successes represent the potential of inclusive social entrepreneurship; a model we believe can make positive change if implemented across the world.

## Discussion

In Williamson, West Virginia, over 2,000 coal workers – nearly 25% of the town’s workforce – have lost their jobs since 2014. The decline of the coal industry and a lack of sustainable alternatives has left many people uncertain about their day-to-day financial stability and has contributed to a growing public health crisis in the area. Mingo County, where Williamson is located, struggles with some of the highest rates of diabetes, hypertension, and opioid abuse in the United States.

In response to these challenges, Impact Experience has brought together the Williamson community, investors, philanthropists, and innovators in a series of workshops to co-develop the future of the city in an equitable and inclusive way. By bringing together diverse stakeholders to co-create a citywide development, Impact Experience demonstrated an innovative and collaborative approach to drafting inclusive economic policy. Over the course of five years, they worked to generate trust amongst one another through a series of facilitated conversations that explored implicit bias and aligned personal and professional values – a necessary step for the Williamson community who experienced years of economic extraction and outside interests with little investment in the long-term wellbeing of their community. The trust-building phase was critical to ensure that any economic development plans would respect their community’s values as well as Appalachian culture, heritage, and history.

This trust developed into a working partnership where all participants contributed to the creation of a citywide development plan. Utilizing facilitation tools such as consensus building and design thinking, they co-identified challenges to the community as well as opportunities to address them. Beyond simply having surface-level conversations, Impact Experience emphasized the need to have deep conversations about how to build an equitable, inclusive, and sustainable workforce. Some of the key questions explored include:

- What defines quality work for your community?
- What new skills are required for a new labor force to partake in dignified work?
- How can our development plan ensure that people across race, class, and socioeconomic status are engaged, respected, and provided with opportunities?
- How does technological innovation help or disrupt an existing labor-market dynamic?

By delving into difficult topics and engaging a variety of stakeholders with established trust, the group was able to express their needs, generate insights, identify resources, and discover areas of expertise that might otherwise have gone unrealized. At the end of this collaborative design process, the community emerged with a roadmap to diversify the local economy, develop the workforce needed to implement it, and ensure that accountability and ownership was vested in local leaders so the solutions could be controlled by the community and sustained long-term. The Impact Experience model serves as a replicable solution for rolling out a multistakeholder approach to map SDG 8 targets at a local level.

Acting on the development plan, the Williamson community and external stakeholders supported the development of a Federally Qualified Healthcare Center, a health innovation hub, and a mobile farmers market – generating nearly 300 jobs for former coal workers as well as serving the health needs of over 20,000 patients who live under the poverty line. Impact Experience helped attract an additional \$8 million USD for projects ranging from workforce development in the health and solar energy industries, broadband infrastructure projects, and investment in ecotourism projects. As a result, the Williamson community has been able to achieve the following outcomes:

- **Workforce Development:** training former coal miners in the skills needed for employment in diverse sectors including agriculture, computer science, renewable energy and construction.
- **Rural Healthcare:** the development of the Williamson Health and Wellness Center, a Federally Qualified Healthcare Center that provides over 20,000 local residents across Mingo County with comprehensive healthcare and wellness programs.
- **Wellness Programs:** local healthcare leaders are building several programs including a diabetes intervention program, mobile farmers market, and a new fitness center.
- **Community Facilities:** the Williamson Health and Wellness Center purchased a new facility with meeting spaces, providing community members with the opportunity to connect with entrepreneurs who are supporting the growth of the local economy.

Williamson, West Virginia demonstrates what the future of work will look like: a broader shift away from traditional extraction economies towards new, innovative and sustainable industries. The future of work will require us to follow their lead, rethinking and redefining what it means to

work, how to build a workforce, and what comprises a dignified workplace.

## Conclusion

To truly reframe the future of work, investment must be made in leaders willing to challenge the practices of existing, exploitative industries and build the economies of the future – implemented in full, contextual understanding of how disruptions to current economic systems can have detrimental effects, particularly in oppressed communities which all too often shoulder the burden.

Impact Experience's engagement approach of generating trust among diverse stakeholders, building consensus for a collaboratively designed strategy, and ensuring local sustainability is applicable to communities across the globe. Their model and experience in doing this work is illustrative of multiple recommendations that should be adopted across the ecosystem of institutions involved in workforce development.

First, policy makers should be consistently engaging diverse stakeholders across multiple sectors to collaboratively envision the future of the community. This helps guarantee that work and workforce development is owned and shaped by community leaders with a robust network of resources – both financial and human capital – behind them. Without a strong network of support that bridges across sectors, disciplines, and geographical regions, historically marginalized communities will continue to bear the burden of structural inequalities designed to suppress the potential to obtain decent work, steady income, and a sustainable livelihood.

Second, to fulfill the ILO's vision of implementing human-centered design to improve the future of work, governments, investors, foundations and philanthropy should look to, elevate, and partner to deploy the solutions social entrepreneurs are building across the world. In particular, social entrepreneurs who display a commitment to equity, a focus on sustainability, and, perhaps most importantly, who are building organizations designed to grant power and decision-making authority to the constituents whom they represent and serve.

Third, increased investment in early-stage social enterprises led by local leaders, deeply invested in their communities' unique needs, is needed to drive change and achieve SDG 8.3. Innovation cannot be entrusted to institutions with embedded financial and social stakes in the continuation of a harmful or biased status quo. What Impact Experience, in collaboration with local partners accomplished, in Williamson, West Virginia – and what social entrepreneurs across the world strive

to accomplish every day – serves as an example and a model for an evolved future of work where businesses and organizations center equity, sustainability, and human needs at the very core of their operations. As trends in both the nonprofit and for-profit sectors point towards an increased centralization of economic power,<sup>3</sup> social entrepreneurship serves as a counterexample: vesting power and financial resources in can deliver transformational impact.

Echoing Green's research has found that social enterprises pursue funds across the spectrum of possible sources, regardless of corporate form. This underscores the importance of funders' and investors' work to design fair, inclusive processes as they determine who and what to fund,<sup>4</sup> including the creation of new models of risk assessment for investment in innovative solutions be developed. These new, innovative organizations understand that traditional risk assessment that focuses solely on economic growth is shortsighted, knowing that the social, environmental and economic challenges of today will be far costlier to address if the problems are left to grow worse. Social entrepreneurs understand that success must not be defined solely in terms of profitability or financial stability – a framework often implemented to prevent investment in areas desperately in-need of such support – but must prioritize how investments improve the lives of people.

Whether it is in West Virginia, New York City, or Nairobi, social entrepreneurs in Echoing Green's community are already calling for change when it comes to the future of work. In a round-table discussion with more than 10 NYC-based Fellows in 2017, these key issues and ideas were apparent in the conversation and a final report, "How will New York City Define the Future of Work?"<sup>5</sup> in partnership with Barclays. Putting people at the center of these workforce solutions is the key to overcoming our challenges, no matter where they live.

Social entrepreneurship has the potential to reshape the future of work and strengthen the social contract where existing economic structures have fallen short – yet it will not do so without global support and a willingness to thoughtfully transition economic power and decision-making toward community-based leadership.

The good news is that leaders willing and knowledgeable about how to do so already exist – they are willing and able to begin their work today, if given the critical support they need. In addition to financial investment and resources, we must create a community of learning and support for next generation leaders who are building and operating the businesses that are on the front lines of creating new, socially responsible businesses dedicated to racial, economic, and social justice.

This transformation will not happen overnight: it is a long-term investment in the development of leaders who, day by day, do the important work of building a new, collaborative and sustainable economy.

## Acknowledgments

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Echoing Green ([www.echoinggreen.org](http://www.echoinggreen.org))

Barclays

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# Driving Economic Growth through Policy and Technology for the Aging Population

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## Abstract

With so much attention on millennials, a spotlight should shift towards another segment that can significantly influence economic growth and impact in the Future of Work - the aging population and workforce. As life expectancy and quality of life increases, retirement age remains static, and the population of elderly grows, a silver economy is emerging of which societies are not yet prepared to access today due to policy and technology shortfalls. Simultaneously, there is a (dis)inclusion. Social isolation and loneliness epidemic among elderly that results in lost of purpose, cognitive decline, and significantly healthcare risks and burden on society. The authors survey the state of policy and technology to address these issues and conclude that more needs to be done to create successful access channels and transfer the growing population into economic benefits and reduced risks and cost to society.

## Introduction: An Aging Workforce

Bob is the most socially plugged in volunteer on the author's political campaign for Boston City Council. He communicates out via call, email, text, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. His stiff fingers make it so that he occasionally inserts a typo, but he does not let that slow him down and autocorrect technology helps. At 73 years old, Bob is one of the oldest volunteers and also one of the best. Two years ago, Bob was laid off from his job. He has tried valiantly to find another job, without any success. He has lengthy writer and editor experiences, but has had no success making it past the first interview.

As life expectancy expands in countries with developed economies,<sup>1</sup> Bob is one of many seniors facing a particular challenge: they are capable and need employment but are not finding

employers willing to hire them. According to an AARP study, 61% of respondents over the age of 45 reported experiencing age discrimination in the workplace.<sup>2</sup> Bob's involvement in the campaign provides a direct value for her team and in return imbues Bob with purpose and community, which in turn helps reduce risks of cognitive decline and increase chances of longevity. Furthermore, thanks to the advent of technologies like Google Drive and video conferencing, he can be more mobile and work remotely when needed. As his search for paid employment continues, he can continue to volunteer to keep sharp and improve his prospects. This article presents a perspective on how policy and technology can better provide opportunities for a growing aging population to ensure economic growth, continued education, inclusion and reduced healthcare cost burden on society.

## Growing Silver Economies

Today, 8.5 percent of people worldwide (617 million) are aged 65 and over. According to a new report, "An Aging World: 2015," this percentage is projected to jump to nearly 17 percent of the world's population by 2050 (1.6 billion).<sup>3</sup> We are just starting to grapple with the societal and economic impacts of this trend. How do we rethink societal norms and structures to accommodate and integrate our growing population of seniors?

We can look to Japan for one example of how to better integrate the older population. Over 25% of Japan's population is now over 65 and that number is expected to grow to 40% in the next 10 years.<sup>4</sup> One of the country's key focuses is the integration of the elderly into community via policies like Design for 100-Year Life Society, businesses rethinking to target older customers, and healthcare adopting elderly-friendly technologies.<sup>5</sup> Japan believes that all this can create a friendly environment with a strong, integrated aging community contributing to a growing economy and reduced healthcare costs.

As one of the authors, Hélène, knock doors throughout Boston, she spends much of her day with the only people who are likely to answer the door at 2pm on weekdays, the elderly. Many of them invite the author into their homes for a visit. As much as these conversations are enjoyable, there is often a painful undertone of loneliness and boredom. Boston has an exceptionally high number of educational institutions. This means that there is a lot of elderly who have much to teach as well as who yearn for mental stimulation. The author met one elderly woman recently who had

immigrated from Lebanon and got her PhD in computer technology – the first woman in her class to attain this degree. She longs for intellectual challenge and reads a novel a day, in addition to trade publications, in hopes of keeping her brain active.

Research shows that people who are socially isolated experience cognitive decline and have poorer health outcomes.<sup>6</sup> In addition, participants with a sense of purpose experience better health outcomes. “The stronger the participants felt they had a purpose in life, the lower their risk of dying. This result remained even when the scientists adjusted their calculations for factors that could affect their score, such as a participants’ sociodemographic status and their health.”<sup>7</sup> The lack of working policies, infrastructure or engagement with seniors presents a tremendous financial burden on society. From a healthcare cost standpoint, a recent report indicates that loneliness and social isolation leads to increased health risks among seniors,<sup>8</sup> which could result in a heavy care burden on society. Our community, and the population at large, would benefit tremendously from the social and reintegration of our seniors. Extrapolation of current trends to call out several critical issues: 1) Social (dis)inclusion of the aging population, 2) Number of wasted work hours and economic potential, 3) Skill/knowledge/brain drain, 4) Resultant healthcare costs from mental deterioration or loss of ability, and 5) Retirement social security burden.

Like the 73-year-old political campaign intern Bob, many of the elderly individuals the author met with have multiple communications devices, which means they could in fact tele-commute and do work remotely with some accommodations. What steps can we take to integrate our aging seniors into our communities and workforce?

### **Policy Recommendations for the Aging Population**

A sustainable solution to this problem will require a collective effort across both effective policy making and technology implementation. We need to call on policymakers to incentivize organizations to integrate our seniors. As we rethink our working hours from an outdated 1960s nine-to-five structure to a more flexible approach, we can integrate people who need part-time or remote work. The gig economy provides an additional opportunity for seniors to pick up short-term work assignments. Many large companies have diversity and inclusion programming and training. These programs can be expanded to cover age discrimination and help people recognize the value of their older colleagues, rather than just writing them off.

The US for example have outdated policies including the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) from 1967 and recent interpretations of law including 2009 Supreme Court ruling in "Gross v. FBL Financial Services, Inc." have made it more difficult to prove age discrimination as compared to race, color, religion, sex, and national origin.<sup>9</sup> New efforts by influential law makers are under way including the The Protecting Older Workers Against Discrimination Act (POWADA) but this is only scratching the surface of what needs to be done to address access and infrastructure needs of people like Bob.

There should also be broad recognition and support for organizations working to bring seniors and younger generations together. In California, a nonprofit called Bridging the Gap pairs older Chinese immigrants with high school students in a double mentorship program. The young students learn culture and language from the older folks and the seniors get help with their technology from the youth. Both groups experience feelings of inclusion and purpose. Programs in Japan and Taiwan provide established channels for seniors to volunteer their time in public infrastructure such as hospitals to stay engaged.

Technology must be the other driver that provides an accelerant for integrating seniors as part of the future of work and inclusion. It is commonplace today to meet seniors as drivers via Uber and Lyft or run errands on TaskRabbit as part of the gig economy. Airbnb's fastest growing segment are senior homeowner hosts.<sup>10</sup> However, these generalist technology platforms represent a small fraction of senior skillset and time conversion into the volunteer and work force. More technology platforms are needed to cater to senior-specific needs around access and must incentivize employers willing to take on unit contributions from this demographic. A search for senior-specific platforms in the US that can offer reliable sources of work came up with minimal solutions – an opportunity for entrepreneurs and investors.

Finally, we should invest in tech and retraining to prepare our seniors for the modern workplace. Changing the workplace environment to become more senior friendly have also had increased activity. Seniors have needs around vision impairment, other disabilities and ergonomic that should be addressed in order to better utilize the aging workforce. An article in the MIT Technology Review on the topic indicated that fundamental shift in the design of the workplace must shift as "designers don't always think about older people."<sup>11</sup> Tech companies like Google and Amazon are thinking about the older population as customers and workers; Microsoft publishes an

online “Guide for Individuals with Age-Related Impairments.”

## Conclusion

According to the WHO, by 2050, the world’s population of people over the age of 60 will double.<sup>12</sup> As life expectancy continues to increase and baby boomers move towards retirement, our aging population is a growing and critical segment and we should all be paying more attention. Reintegration of our seniors into the workplace has both societal and economic benefits. As really move the needle economically for all segments of the population, not only those aging. Despite data points of progress in both technology and policy, the authors review of the landscape concluded that there needs to be significantly more investment, policy thinking, and rapid execution in these arenas to address growing concerns around the aging workforce and senior population. Even Japan with arguably the most sophisticated in senior access policy and infrastructure is only starting to fulfill the vast potential of the silver economy.

Every day, when Bob shows up ready and eager to work, the author is remotivated to push for policies that would incentivize organizations to integrate folks like him into the workforce. How can we make sure that the areas covered in this article continue in the right direction as policymakers, investors, and entrepreneurs moving forwards?

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# **21ST CENTURY EDUCATION & SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**



# **Education to Employment Systems in the Fourth Industrial Revolution**

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## **Introduction**

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is often observed through the lens of fear and uncertainty. Recently coined by Charles Schwab of the World Economic Forum, this era is defined by the intersection of exponential technologies, rapid social transformation, and institutional shifts. When we hear about the Fourth Industrial Revolution, it is often through the megaphone of a warning. We are warned to fear the pending job losses, the economic disruption, and most of all the uncertainty of a world that is accelerating beyond our control. What if, instead, we looked at the Fourth Industrial Revolution as an opportunity for economic transformation? For the first time in history, we have the tools and systems to create an economy that works for all people. The rate of change facing public and private institutions could create the conditions for us to recalibrate our economies to work for the common good.

In many of the world's wealthiest economies, such as the U.S., the economic system is not working for most of the population. Inequality has been accepted as a condition of free market economies, and it has continued to accelerate within countries in recent decades. Naturally, this has correlated to a lack of mobility, especially for low-income youth. Increasingly, though, we have the tools and technologies to steer more equitable learning opportunities and employment outcomes. Whether we do so will determine whether we can muster the political will, the strategic systems perspective, and the policy innovation to leverage the resources at our disposal.

## **Challenges**

One of the most urgent Sustainable Development Goals set out by the United Nations was focused on improving youth transitions by 2020. Target 8.6 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set out an objective to substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment,

education or training (NEET) by 2020.<sup>1</sup> According to the World Employment and Social Outlook report issued by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2019, this target “will almost certainly be missed.” Over one-fifth of youth around the world are still disconnected from the workforce, a reality which has not been substantially improved in any of the income groups.<sup>2</sup> Given the failure in achieving demonstrable progress on creating equitable opportunities for youth, it is clear that countries need a new paradigm for developing effective education to employment systems at the national level. This paper will therefore attempt to propose a national system that is better adapted to the systemic challenges that will affect youth education and employment between now and 2030.

## Methodology

Through a comparative analysis, I have assessed the national education to employment systems of two countries that maintain among the lowest NEET rates in the world: Switzerland and Sweden. From there, I extrapolated key characteristics from those systems and cross-referenced them with existing research on policies for education to employment systems in the United States, a country that faces significant challenges in reducing NEET. Ultimately, this led to a set of recommendations for the United States to develop a national “education to employment system”. The objective of this system is to demonstrate a national strategy for implementing evidence-based recommendations vetted within the United Nations and put forward by the ILO Commission on the Future of Work. These recommendations include:

- Entry-level jobs guarantee
- Public employment system
- Universal access to lifelong learning

## Comparative Analysis

Due to the complexity of the relationship between education to employment, national governments must take a systems approach in order to sustainably and effectively address the issue. This paper compares two national systems for creating a strong transition from education to employment: Switzerland and Sweden. See Table 1 for a summary of the contemporary analysis.

- **Switzerland:** The Swiss system is characterized by its strong public-private ecosystem for transitioning youth from education into career pathways. Switzerland is often held up as the holy grail for youth employment, characterized by a strong apprenticeship system and a strong investment in innovation between the public and private sector.<sup>3</sup> The nation has consistently ranked #1 in the Youth Employment Index.<sup>4</sup>
- **Sweden:** The Swedish system is characterized by its strong social protections. The government has employed a job guarantee for youth, a public employment system to help monitor outcomes, and a proactive approach to helping youth transition into the workforce through individualized pathways (with a particular focus on measures for at-risk youth).<sup>5</sup>

Comparative Analysis of National Systems for Education to Employment Transitions		
Country	NEET (%)	Key Characteristics
Switzerland	Low (6.5%)	<p><b>Strong vocational training system, public-private investment in education and innovation. Highlights include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High rates of youth apprenticeships (over 70%)</li> <li>• Joint investment in innovation between public and private sector</li> <li>• Strong engagement of private sector in education and training</li> <li>• Market-based system for apprenticeship applications to stabilize labor supply and demand</li> <li>• Pathway mapping from education to workforce for 230 occupations</li> </ul>
Sweden	Low (6.3%)	<p><b>Strong social protections have enabled the development and demonstration of successful policies for reducing youth NEET, such as:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jobs guarantee for youth</li> <li>• Public employment system &amp; data</li> <li>• Equitable access to learning</li> <li>• Individualized pathways</li> <li>• Active measures for at-risk youth</li> </ul>

Table 1: Comparative Analysis of National Systems for Education to Employment Transitions

## System Analysis

### *Elements of an Effective National Education to Employment System*

Both countries have engineered a variety of interconnected policies and solutions to form a system that can provide an on-ramp into the economy for youth across varying regions, sectors, and socioeconomic conditions. Taking a systems approach is especially necessary when it comes to the policy challenge of reducing NEET. Navigating the transition from education to employment is more complex now than ever before.<sup>6</sup>

### **United States**

At the national level, many of the challenges facing governments are so complex that they require a “system-of-systems perspective.”<sup>7</sup> One of the primary reasons that Switzerland and Sweden have achieved strong outcomes for youth is that both countries have taken a systems approach to youth employment. This paper therefore aims to develop a framework for national-level solutions to reducing NEET, through a systems perspective. The rate of NEET in the United States is considerably higher than in Switzerland and Sweden at 13.7%, making it an ideal country for comparison. In order for the United States to leapfrog progress on NEET in time to counteract impending challenges, the country would need to consider the following questions:

1. How can we adapt the effectiveness of education to employment systems such as those in Switzerland and Sweden?
2. How can we leverage the efficiency of new technologies to deploy those solutions at scale, especially to those most at risk of being disconnected from the workforce?

A great deal of research has been carried out on how the U.S. can address specific aspects of youth employment, whether through expanding apprenticeships or developing systems to track labor market data. However, these initiatives are often recommended as standalone interventions, rather than solutions as part of a system. Below, I outline a systematic approach to achieving three outcomes in the United States. The intended outcomes are inspired from policy recommendations

outlined by the ILO Commission on the Future of Work:

- Public employment system
- Jobs guarantee for youth
- Universal access to lifelong learning

## Public Employment System

- *Exchange data between public and private sector* – Data is one of the critical pieces for employers to share current and future skills and jobs needs with government partners. (GBCE). This helps in building the appropriate pathways for economic development. Governments may need to incentive information sharing through public-private partnerships built around shared objectives on youth employment and economic growth.<sup>8</sup>
- *Streamline efforts into one common system or agency* – According to the Government Accountability Office, the U.S. spends \$18 billion across 47 different programs, scattered across different agencies often with competing priorities. Federal efforts should be coordinated into a common effort focused on creating economic pathways for those most in need.<sup>9</sup> This can either be done through the creation of a new government agency focused on transitions from education to employment or an interagency initiative focused on maximizing the benefits of shared resources.
- *Make real time jobs data publicly available* – Data is one of the most critical tools that a student needs to navigate their education in today's labor market. In order to make informed decisions, students need access to information. Today, public labor market data in the United States is often outdated and fragmented, which prevents it from being used as a compass by students.<sup>10</sup> Still, in an economy where students are expected to take an active role in adapting their learning journey to the needs of the labor market, knowledge is power. Private companies such as Burning Glass Technologies currently have data systems to predict jobs forecasts with increasing accuracy, demonstrating that it is possible to assess data that informs pathways for governments, employers, students, and educators.<sup>11</sup> However, the government must invest in developing its own public data capacity to inform decisions on education to employment pathways for all participants in the labor market.

## **Jobs Guarantee for Youth**

- *Engage in public-private partnerships to demonstrate effective pathways* – The proposal for rapid expansion of apprenticeships in the United States is sometimes criticized due to the difficulty in quality control. Apprenticeships in the U.S. were traditionally restricted to construction trades. This has presented employers with significant barriers to developing quality apprenticeships, ranging from outdated regulatory frameworks to lack of clarity around industry standards. The government should work more directly with industry coalitions of private sector leaders on joint funding and R&D to develop scalable frameworks for apprenticeships across occupations. One such coalition is the Workforce Partnerships Initiative, led by the Business Roundtable and supported by the Business and Higher Education Forum. This would address the three major barriers for U.S. employers to expand apprenticeships (startup, regulatory complexity, and lack of existing industry infrastructure) as outlined in a study carried out by the Aspen Institute Skills for America's Future initiative.<sup>12</sup>
- *Create stopgaps to poverty for youth at risk of unemployment* – For those who are most at risk of long-term unemployment, guarantee immediate training or education opportunities that can lead to work in the surrounding area. This is demonstrated by the Swedish approach of taking active measures for at-risk youth.<sup>13</sup> Another stopgap may include the Negative Income Tax (NIT) for youth under 25, which would prevent youth who are facing unemployment from facing the compounding conditions of unemployment.
- *Guarantee access to training, employment, or education for youth under 25* – This policy has achieved demonstrated success at reducing youth unemployment in the European Union, where all member states have been encouraged to commit to the “Youth Guarantee”. This program has had a transformative impact on education to employment transitions, reducing the number of youth NEET by 1.8 million across the EU.<sup>14</sup>

## **Universal Access to Lifelong Learning**

- *Expand apprenticeships and vocational training* – Apprenticeships are considered the closest thing to a guaranteed pathway for those in the working class, yet they currently account for less than 1% of American jobs. Although the federal government has invested modestly in expanded apprenticeships, investment in vocational training should expand in line with the quantifiable labor market needs for vocational training in the United States. The government should seek to chart a path towards increasing the budget for apprenticeships from \$200m to \$2b, without compromising quality standards of apprenticeships (outlined by the Pathway to Advance Youth Apprenticeships)<sup>15</sup> or siphoning funding from existing vocational programs. This apprenticeships expansion should exist as part of a larger National Learning Strategy developed through tripartite consultations in the United States.
- *Leverage data and emerging technologies to inform education decisions* – In days past, certain conditions of the labor market as a complex adaptive system made it incredibly difficult to predict and chart a path towards economic outcomes. One of those conditions was that agents in the economy (workers, employers, and governments) had very limited information for making decisions.<sup>16</sup> Today, processing information is still costly and complex, but we have far more access to data about labor markets in real time. Governments should connect the dots to leverage the power of data to allocate resources for education and training in a way that is both equitable and informed on the conditions facing sectors, geographies, and citizens in real time. The U.S. government should follow the Swedish approach to collecting data through a public employment system that benefits workers. By supporting youth in charting employment pathways and, when needed, funding training opportunities to prevent unemployment, Sweden incentivizes youth to share data and report outcomes.

- *Charting pathways from education to occupations.* One of the challenges facing higher education in the United States is that degree programs remain mostly disconnected from labor market demands. One of the key benefits of the Swiss apprenticeship system is that it has allowed the government to create sustainable systems for mapping pathways from education to employment across 230 occupations. The United States should leverage its investments in apprenticeships to develop the private partnerships and digital infrastructure necessary to map links between learning opportunities and employment outcomes. Once a robust system of data is collected, public employment platforms can deploy technologies such as artificial intelligence to predict longer-term job prospects and help individuals take control over their own learning journey from schooling to career and beyond.
- *Using data for adaptive stance to labor market conditions.* Given the exponential rate of technologies, we can also expect this data to get smarter over time. This gives us greater power to adapt to changing labor market conditions in real time. More importantly, it allows national governments to move from a “reactive” approach (often reacting to trends after it is too late through slow moving institutional processes) to a more adaptive stance (using new information and technology to adapt in real time).

## Conclusion

The U.S. could boost GDP by 2.1% from lowering NEET rates of 20-24 year olds to match Germany, adding \$405 billion to GDP.<sup>17</sup> This would require the nation to implement systems to reduce NEET among 24 year olds by 4.5 percentage points from 15.3% to 10.8%.<sup>18</sup> Contrary to popular discourse, the United States can be more like Sweden, and it can be more like Switzerland. By delivering on the recommendations on the education to employment system outlined above, the United States has an opportunity to add hundreds of billions of dollars to GDP while generating equal opportunity for all youth. Furthermore, the country can help create the framework for other nations around the world to replicate and scale equitable pathways to opportunity by 2030.

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# **Decent Work Requires Decent Innovation: Leveraging Entrepreneurial Education to Boost Innovation and Job Creation in MENA**

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## **Abstract**

In the next 30 years, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region faces an unprecedented need for decent work. These jobs should be created by increasing opportunities for private sector organizations to grow. However, despite substantial investment in education over the past decades, the region's human capital wealth as a share of total wealth remains the lowest globally. This dearth of adequately skilled individuals severely hampers the growth efforts of the private sector and causes economies to stall. This paper explores opportunities for the MENA region to find a solution to the decent jobs crisis by shifting the focus of the education system from an emphasis on rote learning to fostering competencies associated with innovation and entrepreneurship such as critical thinking, creativity, agency, and communication. The article showcases successful examples from other regions, as well as experimental approaches. It concludes by recommending a set of policy changes that can put the region on a path of peace and prosperity by creating opportunities for decent work.

## **Introduction**

According to the World Bank Group, the MENA region will need to create 300 million jobs by 2050.<sup>1</sup> This massive need for decent work is mainly due to a large youth population entering the workforce. Exacerbating the challenge is the major redeployment of human capital driven by the technological changes of the fourth industrial revolution. All countries in the region must create 10 million jobs per year starting in 2019 by opening the doors to the private sector as the main driver of the economy. Consequently, these jobs should primarily be generated through entrepreneurship, here defined as "a process by which individuals – either on their own or inside organizations – pursue opportunities without regard to resources they currently control."<sup>2</sup>

## Discussion

The situation poses a significant challenge for the MENA region, as innovation and entrepreneurial activity remains low across the lion's share of countries. In the 2018 Global Innovation Index (GII) report, the region scored 34/100, far below North America, Europe, and the Asia Pacific.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, it is imperative to note that high-income innovation hotspots such as Israel and the UAE significantly boosted the MENA regional score. Indeed, the Global Entrepreneurship Index, a composite indicator of the health of the entrepreneurship ecosystem in 137 countries, mirrors the GII's results for the region. While the entrepreneurial climate is improving across the region, only 2% of countries score above 50%.<sup>4</sup> In Europe half of the countries surveyed scored above the same threshold.

While both the GEI and GII reports discuss a multitude of levers which can be used to ameliorate the situation, both indicate that investment in the educational achievement of young people is essential to improving a country's ability to generate new knowledge and to innovate.<sup>5</sup> However, the real challenge lies in increasing the right type of educational achievement.

In an attempt at defining what type of education could boost private sector performance, the GII promotes a focus on "fostering critical thinking, creativity, and behavioral and social skills." The World Bank further echoed these recommendations in a landmark report on the state of education in MENA published in 2018.<sup>6</sup> The report notes that while substantial investment has been made in education in past decades, resulting in record-setting increases in enrollment and gender parity on almost all levels, it has failed to produce increased human capital and wealth for the region's 435 million inhabitants. In fact, the focus of the region's education system on memorization and passive learning over critical inquiry, has contributed to the region ranking at the bottom globally for human capital wealth as a share of total wealth.<sup>7</sup>

In contrast to MENA, South Korea is often celebrated as a champion of economic growth through entrepreneurship.<sup>8</sup> However, before introducing a model of entrepreneurial education modelled after those in place in Europe and the US in 2018, the country lacked a systematic approach to promoting and developing entrepreneurship. These models introduced in Korea originated in part from the OECD's recommendation in the early 2000s to introduce entrepreneurial education across all grades. Several members countries took the advice, and in its 2012 National Innovation Strategy, Denmark set out to promote innovation and entrepreneurship from primary

to tertiary level. The country did so by integrating practice-based teaching into mainstream curriculums while also supporting teachers with innovation training. These interventions, which defined entrepreneurial education as “content, methods, and activities supporting the creation of knowledge, competencies, and experiences that make it possible for students to initiate and participate in entrepreneurial value creating processes” have yielded desirable outcomes.<sup>9</sup> These results include an increase in students’ beliefs in their entrepreneurial skills, higher incomes later in life – for those who are self-employed as well as for employees and an increase in the likelihood of the individual wanting to become an entrepreneur or working on innovation projects in established companies.

In addition to Denmark, Finland, Portugal, and Sweden are other countries that have embedded entrepreneurship education into primary and secondary school curricula. Results have been promising on factors such as the propensity to start a business as well as earnings from own ventures.<sup>10</sup> In the Finnish example, entrepreneurship was introduced as one of seven cross-curricular themes in primary education and one of the six themes in upper secondary schools. This approach allows entrepreneurial thought to permeate all school subjects. It has been suggested that this “teaching through entrepreneurship” approach can, in addition to developing necessary innovation skills, also increase the perceived relevance of subjects taught, increase motivation and school engagement while alleviating issues of boredom.<sup>11</sup> Studies on entrepreneurship education in the wider MENA suggest that this approach of integrating the development of entrepreneurial competencies across subjects such as mathematics, sciences, and social sciences could be viable in the regional context as well.<sup>12</sup>

In the past decade, many novel approaches to achieving this integrated entrepreneurial competency training have appeared. One of them is the Entrepreneurial Muscle Memory (EMM) framework. Developed by Bozhanka Vitanova and her colleagues, is it based on an interview study of 31 pioneering U.S. social entrepreneurs identified through Ashoka, the World Economic Forum Young Global Leaders, and Forbes 30 under 30. By leveraging recurring themes from the interviews relating to entrepreneurial success, the framework proposes seven core entrepreneurial competencies. These include awareness, agency, networking, problem-solving, resourcefulness, communication, and resilience.

The theory suggests that an individual’s first entrepreneurial memories can be traced back

to formative experiences which took place between the ages of 10 and 16. It is further proposed that by applying motor learning concepts, individuals can develop these competencies through repetition of movement, much like the way in which athletes develop mastery. The EMM approach has been pilot-tested both in secondary schools in the U.K. as well as in tertiary institutions in the U.S. Participating students reported increased entrepreneurial self-awareness in addition to an increased understanding of the value of entrepreneurial competencies. While experimental theories such as the Entrepreneurial Muscle Memory provide exciting new perspectives on entrepreneurial training, more work is needed to develop such nascent concepts into fully fledged models.

More broadly, researchers have attempted to conceptualize a learning framework for education that develops entrepreneurial competencies.<sup>13</sup> There is agreement that in order to be useful, entrepreneurship education must be tailored to account for differences in culture, context, and circumstances.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, many also concede that programs should be personalized to the individual learner. Consolidating insights from a multitude of studies, the below five elements of entrepreneurial education could prove a helpful guide in creating entrepreneurship education models for the MENA region.

In line with Thrane et al., the framework starts with an individual self-awareness element where learners discover their competencies, preferences, motivations, means, and network which helps them gain a deeper understanding of their self-efficacy in the entrepreneurial process.<sup>15</sup> A focus on individual competencies also serves to personalize the learning experience for the individual.

Next, a social group element allows students to compare entrepreneurial experiences and learn from each other. Here the students can be turned into teachers, sharing experiences with their peers. Such oral articulation of actions taken and the resulting insights can facilitate the deep learning process significantly according to Russian psychologist Galperin.<sup>16</sup> Subsequently, these individual and group insights are applied across academic subjects to achieve an element of everyday practice, which can establish core entrepreneurial competencies, help transform behavior and create memories of increasing success in relation entrepreneurial undertakings.

Furthermore, an aspect of value creation can be introduced. Here, learners are initially primed to identify problems in their surroundings and taught to generalize these in order to as-

sess if an opportunity to create value for a broader public is present. If an opportunity is identified, learners are asked to create innovative solutions, prototype, and devise a business model around it. Finally, as it relates to the assessment of entrepreneurial competencies the focus should be on assessment for learning, and not of learning.<sup>17</sup> This implies that the assessment should inherently promote learning, emphasizing the process rather than testing the outcomes.

A plethora of insights regarding best practices makes devising a well-rounded and effective model for teaching entrepreneurial competencies difficult. Countries must select and adapt those that can work in the local context. In this process, it is imperative that countries in the West support growth markets with both financial and human resources.

## Conclusion

Governments in the MENA region have a formidable challenge ahead--creating decent work for 300 million people in the next 30 years. To this end, countries must improve the opportunity for the private sector to be the leading job creator. In order to heed the call from policymakers, the private sector will require skilled human capital that possess the competencies required for innovation. For years, the region has made significant investments in education without achieving the desired outcomes. It is time to shift the paradigm for education in the region to produce human capital that can drive societies forward. Without this fundamental change, where critical inquiry takes precedence over memorization, no model for entrepreneurship or innovation education can be effective. Therefore, the following recommendations should be considered:

- Shift the models of education from rote memorization which fosters surface learning to an approach based on inquiry that allows for deep learning and unlocks the potential of the region's youth
- Introduce entrepreneurship education as a cross-curricular theme across all levels of education, allowing innovation competencies to permeate all subjects
- Include innovation and entrepreneurship education for youth in National Innovation Strategies to demonstrate the paramount importance of an early start and continuous building of relevant competencies
- Move away from the assessment of learning, which incentivizes "teaching for tests" to assess-

ment of learning, which incentivizes “teaching for tests” to assessment for learning, which incentivizes “teaching for life”

- Provide all stakeholders, including educators, administrators and parents with the requisite training to create a network of student supporters and buy-in throughout the community

Governments in the region need to act fast to implement policies that redirect the region’s excellent investment in education towards financing locally adapted models with a proven track record of delivering the type of talent that the private sector needs to thrive. Without the appropriate changes, the region will face further political instability with potentially far-reaching consequences on a global level. However, if the region succeeds in creating the 300 million jobs it needs, it will emerge as a global powerhouse of economic prosperity and peace. It will only get there by pushing the doors to the private sector wide open, relinquishing a degree of societal control. For the sake of the region’s youth, leaders must urgently muster the courage to do so.

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# Lifelong Learning: Ensuring the Youth of Today Prosper through Labour Market Reforms

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## Abstract

The future of work and labour market reforms are confronting workers with increased insecurity, isolation and uncertainty. This poses challenges to the youth of today,<sup>1</sup> who were educated under an archaic labour-market paradigm of ‘education-job training-work-retirement’. This policy brief proposes reforms and a new vision of lifelong learning through Lifelong Individual Training Accounts (LITAs), where labour market flexibility is promoted and workers have the opportunity to prosper. After describing LITAs and highlighting the successes of similar initiatives, this policy brief issues a call to action for reforms that assist young people and workers whilst supporting the 2030 Agenda.

## Introduction

The future of work is evolving, with changes in the global economy fundamentally transforming working life. Whilst workers in the developed world in the latter half of the 20th Century could expect long-term job security, making a living in a fixed location, for a company that invested in employee training: the 21st Century worker confronts a different environment.

This emerging environment is one of job insecurity, isolation and uncertainty. Work is becoming increasingly uncertain, with a more dynamically efficient economy creating short-term and task-based employment, resulting in forecasts estimating workers will change jobs over nine times during their careers<sup>2</sup> and that one-in-nine employees within OECD countries are on temporary contracts.<sup>3</sup> Work is also becoming increasingly isolated – in OECD countries, one-in-seven workers are now self-employed<sup>4</sup> with a continuing trend for modern workers to reside in dispersed locations rather than central office hubs. In addition, work is becoming increasingly insecure due to the erosion of collective bargaining rights and fall in trade union membership. For example, trade union membership in Germany has fallen from 35% in 1985 to 17% in 2016, and despite some trade union

membership increases in select developing countries, this has not been universal.<sup>5</sup>

## The Challenges Facing the Youth of Today

As a result, the youth of today can expect to encounter different labour market challenges than those faced by previous generations.

The youth of today will experience increased competition for fewer jobs. This comes from ageing populations participating in the labour market for longer as seen in Western Europe and Japan, or from fellow young people due to demographic bulges (e.g. Africa<sup>6</sup>). Automation will also increase competition, with up to two thirds of developing world jobs being susceptible to replacement<sup>7</sup> and over 50% of leading companies expecting that automation will lead to a reduction in their workforce by 2022.<sup>8</sup> Job competition is already high for young people due to youth unemployment residing comparatively high at 13% meaning, "...nearly 67 million young people...are actively searching for work but are unable to find a job".<sup>9</sup>

The youth of today will also experience reduced employer investment in training, with recent figures showing the percentage of workers receiving employer-sponsored training falling by 42% and those receiving on the job training falling by 36%, in comparison to previous decades.<sup>10</sup> A recent survey of 1,200 CEO's also shows that whilst 74% planned to use artificial intelligence in the future – only 3% planned to increase investment in employee training.<sup>11</sup>

The youth of today will also have to adapt to the accelerating pace of change. Previously, those with a higher level of education could expect a wage premium, yet "by 2020 the knowledge college students acquire will have an expected shelf life of less than five years".<sup>12</sup> This trend will cause underemployment – where college graduates take jobs that do not require a degree. The increased speed of change, and shorter time of skill relevance in the labour market, also produces a greater threat to those who are not in employment, education or training (NEET).

Therefore, the education and skills one obtains when they are young can no longer last entire careers. The youth of today, will need to update their existing skills and acquire new ones constantly throughout their career, making the current 'education-job training-work-retirement' model obsolete.

If nothing changes, the consequences could be disastrous – with the effects of higher youth unemployment, low-quality work or automation displacement leading to individual despair, an

economic slowdown and social unrest.

Instead, in order to thrive in the future, new policies and new models are necessary to provide young people with the opportunities for continual upskilling, retraining and education. By doing so, states can accelerate towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – specifically SDGs 4.3, 4.4 and SDGs 8.3, 8.5 and 8.6.<sup>13</sup>

## Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Individual Training Accounts

Increased promotion of lifelong learning, and the creation of Lifelong Individual Training Accounts (LITA's) for every citizen, including young people entering the labour market, can provide the correct labour-market model to ensure future prosperity.

Lifelong learning encompasses formal and informal learning from early childhood to adulthood and it provides a pathway to inclusion in labour markets.<sup>14</sup> The paradigm also has transformative potential due to it promoting continual improvement, making it the correct skill formation paradigm for the modern economy. Yet current lifelong learning programmes have limited participation, those who need it the most do not participate, and they "...[are] not always perceived as being useful".<sup>15</sup>

However, greater spending on labour market programmes and the implementation of LITA's can help. LITA's would be individual accounts that are available to all workers who are eligible to participate in the labour force, who could use them at any time to pursue further educational and skills development. They would belong solely to the workers (meaning they are transferable across employment positions) and the enrolment course of choice would be at the discretion of the worker – within a pedagogy defined by both national and local labour market needs and government quality assurance mechanisms – to improve employment outcomes and reduce the misappropriation of funds.

Digital technologies can help broaden participation in training due to online platforms reducing barriers to participation such as cost, time and resource constraints. Personal development pathways and digital interfaces can be designed to have individual personalisation, helping LITAs provide workers with a view of the positive consequences of their efforts. This can be especially beneficial if accompanied by skill recognition frameworks, created by the government and the private sector, that provide targeted support for vulnerable groups. Accompanying these accounts,

changes in social protection to allow for an entitled number of hours of training for every employee would be enshrined as a legal right, to help workers take time to invest in their future.<sup>16</sup>

LITAs can be financed by higher public spending on labour market programmes, alongside businesses providing employee-training schemes and subsequently benefiting from training levies and tax incentives. The guaranteed monetary amount a worker receives in their account, which is reviewed on an annual basis, would be based upon a regressive relationship on current and past earnings, alongside their social circumstances and regional location.

## A Call to Action

The benefits of creating LITA's include substantially improving flexibility within the labour market. This flexibility allows workers to transition quicker to different job opportunities and to pursue a variety of career interests. These accounts also help to improve the educational level of the workforce through the creation of strong incentives and improved opportunities – which generates a high rate of return for the worker, the private sector and the economy. Finally, through being more flexible and more educated, workers are more likely to see an increase in wages and adapt to changing market conditions, reducing the likelihood of an increased burden on the welfare system.<sup>17</sup>

When implementing LITA's one can draw on the lessons learned from other countries that have implemented lifelong learning initiatives. Singapore benefited from having a defined list of training providers and providing direct subsidies to individuals, which helped over 285,000 Singaporeans receive training.<sup>18</sup> The success of France's le compte personnel de formation resulted in over 500,000 hours of training being accrued in 2016 with over 65% of those hours completed by job seekers – its key target audience.<sup>19</sup>

Yet the global leader in promoting lifelong learning is Denmark. By heavily investing in a highly qualified and flexible workforce Denmark has prospered in the knowledge economy. It provides the highest percentage of GDP to labour market programmes with 3.2% – Germany and the USA devote only 1.4% and 0.2% respectively. Heavily influenced by the inauguration of højskoler (people's high schools) and the pioneering work of Niels Grundtvig (1783–1872) in the 19th Century, Denmark has created a labour market where people can learn and develop the skills they need to thrive.

The result has been transformational. Between 1995 and 2008 Denmark had an average unemployment rate of 4.9%, compared with 8.5% in the rest of the EU15 and a dramatic fall in its long term unemployed – whilst providing “income security for workers and economic freedom for employers”.<sup>20</sup> This shows what successfully funded lifelong learning programmes can achieve, and whilst the Danish model cannot be replicated easily, it should act as a call to action to other states.

## Conclusion

Therefore, future economic and social success relies upon labour market programmes preparing the youth of today to be agile, able to overcome increased labour competition and the rise of automation, resilient to an increased pace of change, whilst possessing the self-motivation and discipline for continuing education and job training.

The youth of today can do this through the support of the state, via the adoption of the principle of lifelong learning and labour market programmes such as LITAs. Alongside working with the private sector, and their own efforts, this change can help young people thrive in new jobs aligned to the 2030 Agenda due to increased skill development opportunities promoting greater flexibility.

As *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman states, for workers to achieve prosperity in the future, “you will have to be a lifelong learner”.<sup>21</sup> It is imperative that the future role of public policy, through labour market programmes, is to work with all stakeholders to ensure that such opportunities exist. The creation of Lifelong Individual Training Accounts is a good place to start.

## Acknowledgements

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# The "Unwritten Rules" of the Workplace: What Can (and should) be Written Down and Taught by Schools and Employers

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## Abstract

This paper argues that education-to-employment transition efforts are insufficient without a lesson on the “unwritten rules” of the workplace—and that the need for such a lesson is becoming ever more urgent as automation compels humans to focus on what only humans can do: communicate, collaborate, and problem solve. This paper also includes a brief discussion of the most salient “unwritten rules” that ought to be prioritized in classrooms.

## Introduction

The “21st century skills” of professionalism, communication, problem solving, and teamwork are the four most essential “career readiness” competencies for new college graduates to have when entering the workforce, according to the National Association of Colleges and Employers’ 2018 survey of 201 employers.<sup>1</sup> Despite ~98% of employers declaring the competencies as “essential,” however, only ~54% of employers consider new graduates to be “proficient” in these competencies. The ramifications of this alarming gap between expectations and reality should worry educators, students, and business leaders alike. According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Center for Education and Workforce, “Businesses large and small constantly tell us how hard it is to find qualified workers who can not only do the job, but who can also show up to work on time, dress appropriately, and work well with a team. With almost 6 million unfilled jobs in America, this lack of soft skills hurts workers, businesses, and the economy.”<sup>2</sup> Moreover, as more repetitive, predictable tasks become automated in our increasingly knowledge-based economy,<sup>3</sup> the need for a workforce that is well-equipped in uniquely human skills will become ever more urgent.

Despite the general consensus on the importance of soft skills, employers and schools still lack a common language with which to define these soft skills.<sup>4,5</sup> What does professionalism look

like and sound like? What does it mean to be a problem solver? What are the ingredients of effective communication? Telling new workers to “show attention to detail,” “take ownership,” and “manage up” is no different from telling a first-time cook nothing but “pick good ingredients” and “watch the time.” Abstractions only make sense for those who have had the lived experience. For those who have not had the experience, abstractions can be frustrating, if not outright demoralizing. Students need prescriptive guidance—and prescriptive guidance require a common and precise language between employers, schools, and students. Without properly translating for students what employers expect them to know and practice day-to-day at work, schools and employers will continue lacking an ability to upskill workers in an efficient, effective, and scalable manner, supervisors will continue lamenting over the deficiencies of new graduates, and new graduates will continue scratching their heads about what they might be missing.

## Defining a Hard-to-Define Concept

In response to the widespread and urgent call for a career-ready workforce, I interviewed 468 supervisors, interns, recent graduates, and human resources professionals across a range of industries, functions, and geographies to understand the precise mindsets and tactics separating the most successful workers from the mediocre ones. For supervisors and human resource professionals, I asked two principal questions: (1) “What are the most common mistakes new graduates and interns make in their first jobs?” and (2) “What separates the outstanding workers from the mediocre ones?” For interns and recent graduates, I asked, “Which specific workplace situations did you have to navigate through trial and error that you wish you could have been explicitly taught in school?”

The reflections from supervisors and subordinates alike pointed to a clear and consistent pattern: the most successful workers are not those who confine themselves to the written rules of the workplace; they are, instead, the ones who identify and adapt to the *unwritten rules*.

It is unwritten, for example, that promotions are not solely based on hard work. They are also based on one’s ability to fit in, manage expectations, and build relationships. The *written rule* is that no question at work is a “stupid question.” The unwritten rule is that workers are expected to give their supervisors solutions and not simply problems. Mediocre workers, for example, will often throw their hands up at the first sign of an obstacle and ask for help. Stellar workers, on the other

hand, will (a) do their homework and then show their homework and (b) ask for feedback, rather than an answer: first, they attempt to solve a given problem on their own and document the struggles the encounter; next, they bundle multiple questions together and wait for the least disruptive time to consult a coworker; finally, they describe what they attempted on their own and then ask for others' feedback. Though seemingly subtle, the difference between saying, "How do I do this?" and "I am trying to accomplish X; I attempted A and B, but am struggling with C; can you offer me feedback on what I am doing wrong?" is the difference between looking lazy or incompetent and convincing others that one has resourcefully exhausted all options before seeking assistance. With respect to communication, note the difference between saying, "I will be out of the office tomorrow" (or not offering advance notice at all) and saying, "I am trying to schedule a check-up with my doctor in the coming weeks; I understand we have a major deadline this week, so I am looking at next Wednesday; I do not see anything on the team calendar then; would it be okay if I took Wednesday off, or would you suggest a different time?" The former approach can come across as selfish, uncompromising, and uncaring. The latter approach, on the other hand, is likely to come across as more proactive, organized, and considerate. With respect to professionalism, the difference between a worker who shows up to meetings with a notebook and pen in hand and a worker who shows up empty-handed (or, worse, with their lunch) is the difference between a worker who looks dedicated and responsible and a worker who looks disorganized and disengaged.

Of the 20 workplace situations I identified in my research where the *unwritten rules* ought to be taught more explicitly—and where training is likely to result in material operational efficiency gains—the most salient are the scenarios of (1) navigating one's first day, (2) receiving directions, and (3) delivering bad news. My research suggests that a worker who fails to make a positive first impression by failing to show up on time, dress in appropriate attire, and ask the right questions is a worker who must work doubly hard to re-establish their reputation. Similarly, a worker who fails to ask the questions of (1) "What do I need to do?" (2) "By when do I need to do it?" and (3) "How should I do it?" when delegated a task is a worker who will inevitably misinterpret a supervisor's needs and waste valuable time doing the wrong work. Lastly, a worker who fails to give deliver bad news early and deliver a plan for how they will solve the problem at hand and prevent similar problems from happening in the future is a worker who is unlikely to be trusted with important tasks again. Though perhaps obvious in retrospect, these *unwritten rules* are currently only taught

through painful trial and error that puts both workers' careers and firms' bottom lines at risk.

### Navigational Smarts over Book Smarts

The principal finding of my research is that the difference between outstanding workers and mediocre ones is not *book smarts*, but rather *navigational smarts*. Whereas book smarts are a function of one's academic aptitude and training, *navigational smarts* are a function of one's ability to navigate the unwritten expectations of work and social situations—and to remain above those unwritten expectations. In the case of asking for help, the expectation is that workers will save their supervisors time and stress—and not simply toss problems back to their supervisors to solve. In the case of taking time off, the expectation in a team environment is that individuals will act predictably and consider how one's actions or inaction will adversely impact other team members. Any action or inaction that surprises others adversely can be seen as inconsiderate. In the case of attending meetings, the expectation is that all attendees will be engaged. As such, actions such as pulling out one's phone, looking flustered when asked a question, and/or showing up empty-handed risk being interpreted as disengagement or, worse, incompetence.

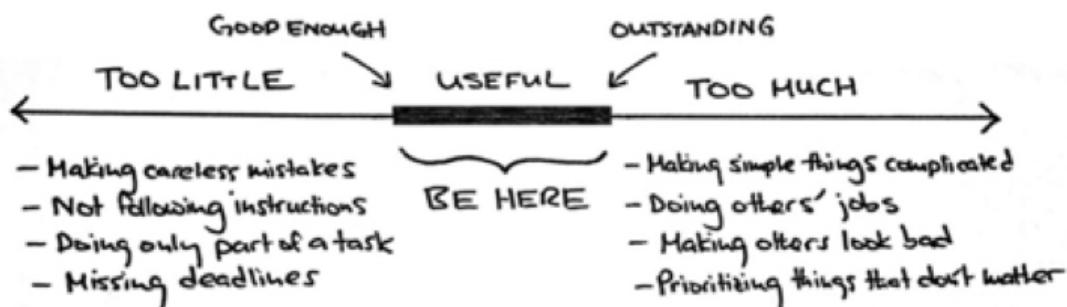


Figure 1. The "Range of Usefulness," a framework uncovered through my research that encapsulates many of the unwritten rules of the workplace.

Remaining above expectations is only half the battle, however. Not overshooting expectations—and, as a result, coming across as trying too hard—can be equally important. In other words, succeeding in the workplace comes down to remaining within a certain "Range of Usefulness"

(Figure 1), a figurative region between *good enough* and *outstanding*. To fall below *good enough* (to the *too little zone*) is to make careless mistakes, not follow instructions, complete only part of a task, and/or miss deadlines. To overshoot *outstanding* (to the *too much zone*) is to make simple tasks complicated, do others' jobs, make others look bad, and/or prioritize tasks that do not matter. Immediately asking for help without first making an independent attempt is to do *too little*. Putting one's head down and making unilateral decisions on matters where others expect to be consulted is to do *too much*. Failing to alert others of one's absence is to do *too little*. Constantly pushing back on tasks because of one's upcoming vacation is to do *too much*. Showing up late, empty handed, and/or without having read the meeting agenda is to do *too little*. Interrupting others and/or correcting others in front of stakeholders others seek to impress is to do *too much*.

Beyond being unfamiliar to new graduates, the *unwritten rules* of the workplace also contradict many of the habits that students develop in school. In school, the instructions are clear, the rubric is objective, and the quality of one's work is the only relevant input for the purposes of grading. As a result, whereas in school a student who starts and finishes a major project the night before a deadline may still earn an "A," at work that same student may be fired for failing to adequately manage stakeholders and expectations. Without explicitly teaching the *unwritten rules* of the workplace, either as a capstone experience in college or as part of new hire training at work, students risk importing the same *book smart* habits from school and neglecting the *navigational smarts* that separate outstanding workers from the mediocre ones.

Writing down and explicitly teaching the *unwritten rules* is neither about fueling a culture of conformity, nor is it about endorsing existing power structures of the working world, as inequitable as they may be. A curriculum on the *unwritten rules* is about navigating the world of work that *exists*. It is in no way meant to discredit or supplant efforts to design the more tolerant, inclusive, and forgiving world of work that *ought to exist*.

The benefits of teaching the *unwritten rules* accrue to more than simply workers. Schools also have an opportunity to brand themselves as cultivating more "career-ready" graduates, while employers have an opportunity to build teams that can reach full productivity more quickly.

## Conclusion

The results of my qualitative research challenge the belief that “employability is an extremely complex, and somewhat vague, concept that is both difficult to articulate and define.”<sup>6</sup> Employability is only vague if we settle for the broad notions of “professionalism,” “communication,” “problem solving,” and “teamwork.” It is not vague if we insist on a more granular definition in the form of specific situation-specific behaviors. A mere twenty categories meaningfully captures the majority of common workplace situations—all of which can, in fact, be taught. A common language exists. A future where new graduates enter the workforce ready to hit the ground running—and where humans are equipped with the 21st century skills to succeed in the future of work—is within reach. Schools and employers merely need to invest in training.

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# Realizing the 21st Century Skill of Global Competence in Higher Education: A Case Study of South Korean Internationalizing Universities

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## Abstract

Universities across the world have increasingly pursued internationalization efforts. Accordingly, in South Korea, universities have invested billions of dollars in internationalization efforts, such as attracting foreign students and faculty, increasing English-medium instruction courses, and teaching curriculum related to global competence. This paper argues that there are structural barriers to the full realization of global competence in South Korean internationalizing universities.

## Introduction

Higher education (HE) has changed to where universities are increasingly impacted by globalization, including increased technological connections, peoples, and economic trade across borders. Consequently, universities around the world have implemented internationalization efforts. These include initiatives to increase student mobility, accelerate cross-border academic activity, and adapt policies to agendas set by international organisations, including a growing call from international and national policymakers for universities to foster global competence. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which added a section measuring global competence in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests in 2018, defined global competence as:

The capacity to examine local, global and intercultural issues, to understand and appreciate the perspectives and the world views of others, to engage in open, appropriate and effective interactions with others from different cultures, and to act for collective well-being and sustainable development.<sup>1</sup>

The emphasis placed on global competence by international organisations like the OECD and the United Nations (UN) reflects a prioritization of global competence, which is often seen as necessary for the 21st century workforce. For example, the OECD states that jobs in an increasingly interconnected world necessitates future workers to “be open to people from different cultural backgrounds” and to “build trust in diverse teams and demonstrate respect for others.”<sup>2</sup> Given the increasing emphasis of global competence in HE<sup>3</sup> to what extent is fostering global competence in university students realized? I study this question in the South Korean context, in which I argue that efforts to foster global competence do not fulfill their potential because of Korea’s deep-rooted value of ethnocentric nationalism impedes more recent efforts of fostering spaces of global competence, particularly in universities.

## **Global Competence in Korean Higher Education**

South Korea<sup>4</sup> presents a rich context for studying global competence because of its ambitious HE internationalisation efforts. The Korean government has invested billions of dollars in HE internationalisation as a part of a larger strategy to become economically competitive in the global market.<sup>5</sup> Specific areas that Korean universities have focused on include increasing the number of foreign faculty and students, emphasizing global rankings, proliferating international research collaborations, and bolstering English-medium instruction.<sup>6</sup> In total, Korea invests 2.6% of the nation’s GDP into the HE system, which is the second highest rate in the world.<sup>7</sup> Korea also has one of the highest rates of participation in HE in the world, with the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Institute of Statistics placing the 2015 gross enrollment ratio for tertiary education at 93%.<sup>8</sup>

Elements of the OECD’s definition of global competency are echoed within Korea’s education policy. For example, in the policy “Korean Education that Harmonizes the World”, there is an emphasis on “Global Citizenship Education” that ‘aims to help individuals understand and practice universal values of mankind such as world peace, human rights, [and] cultural diversity.’<sup>9</sup> Korea is also committed to the “exchange of globally competent persons” through “customized curricula for foreign students” to “improve the study-abroad environment” and to “enhance the settlement environment for foreigners.”<sup>10</sup> Universities have also emulated Korean national policies, which intend to foster global competence within its students.<sup>11</sup> Yet, current scholarship on South Korean HE centers

on the level of the abstract, obscuring how these processes play out for HE's direct beneficiaries—the students—as well as what this means for developing future theory, policy, and practice. Despite extensive literature written on Korean HE government policies, there is a relative dearth of research on “what in fact is happening inside Korean universities”.<sup>12</sup>

## Methods

A key aim of this research was to understand if the potential for global competence was fulfilled for students attending internationalizing Korean universities. To approach this research, I employed a comparative case study approach<sup>13</sup> across three different South Korean universities with robust internationalization efforts, including increasing the number of foreign faculty and students, emphasizing global rankings, and bolstering English medium instruction.<sup>14</sup> These three different universities (named by pseudonyms for ethical reasons) were Korean International College (KIC), American Branch University (ABU), and Daehan University (DU). The research methods I specifically undertook in this study included 1) Semi-structured interviews of 34 students 2) Critical discourse analysis of 23 university-affiliated documents and 3) Archival research of 2 national curriculum documents. The data collection for this research occurred in Spring 2018.

## Findings and Discussion

In my research, I found that although there were instances where elements of global competence manifested in students, the potential for global competence was not completely realized because of the entrenched value of ethnic nationalism within the sites I studied.

Existing literature has shown that a deep-rooted sense of nationalism in Korea contributes to division and even discrimination of international students that occur within sites of HE. Although Korean universities actively recruit foreign students, ethnic nationalism manifests in everyday interactions between domestic and foreign students.<sup>15</sup> As a result, foreign students often experience ‘cultural chauvinism’ and ethnocentric behaviours from Korean faculty and peers on a daily basis.<sup>16</sup> Such observations align with scholarship that traces a lasting legacy of Korean ethnic nationalism coming from a belief in a shared ancestry and bloodline.<sup>17</sup> An example of this cultural chauvinism was found when I asked students what they thought about international students. When I asked Sonya, a Korean diaspora student, about her thoughts on how DMU views international students, she said,

"Professors complain about international students, because of the quality of the students, especially Chinese students, like they just accept them...like they do pay more tuition but they're like, I don't know, it's a huge money maker." I found Sonya's comment that specifically pointed out the Chinese student community to be one of several such comments across the three sites. These comments align with Lee, Jon, and Byun's study<sup>18</sup> that found prevalent instances of neo-racism of Korean domestic students towards Chinese international students. According to the UNESCO Institute of Statistics, Chinese students make up over 50% of the total international student population in Korea.

An unintended structural barrier was the differing academic start dates at these universities. For example, the different start dates at these universities seemed to contribute to institutionalized divisions between foreign and domestic students. Within the promotional documents of the three universities, there are "spring" and "fall" start dates to accommodate for differing academic terms for students from different country contexts. The Korean academic year begins in March and then ends in February. In contrast, many other academic years, such as that of the U.S., begin in the fall and end in the summer. Although the policy of the two start dates appear to be in place to attract and accommodate foreign students, this policy seems to have an unexpected outcome of reinforcing divisions between foreign and domestic student populations. For example, Jill, a non-Korean student from the U.S. said: "So most Korean schools start in the spring, right? But most international students at KIC start in the fall because that's how the U.S. system, like a lot of other systems work. So, the KIC students who start in the fall end up becoming pretty isolated from the Korean students." Thus, the differing semester systems appear to contribute to divisions between foreign and domestic student populations.

## Conclusion

The promotional brochure for KIC reads, "students will share a passion for encountering and understanding other cultures and nurturing the cosmopolitan values needed to become responsible global citizens." This statement aligns with the growing call for universities to foster global competence. Yet, my research shows that although South Korean universities have heavily invested in internationalization efforts, the potential for global competence that are externalities of these efforts can go unrealized. Given that global competence is an important component for the future

of work, particularly in developing capacities to collaborate with those from other cultural backgrounds, it is imperative that universities can realize efforts to nurture global competence within its students. Thus, in the Korean context, a re-examination of structural barriers, such as ethnocentric nationalism and programmatic elements, like differing academic calendars, would be worth pursuing.

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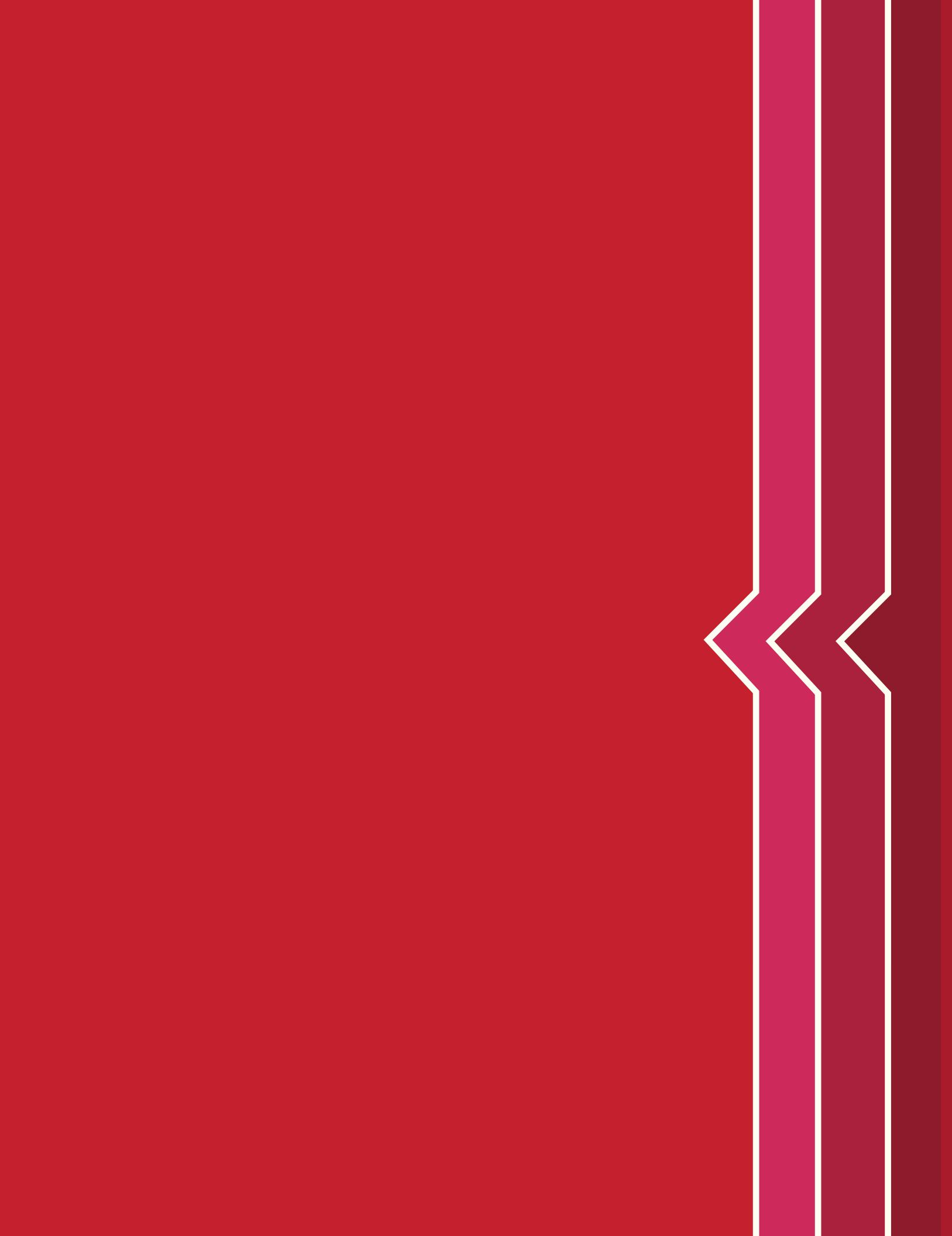
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# **DECENT WORK FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS**



# **Pathways for Pacific Youth in the Face of the Climate Crisis**

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## **Abstract**

The future of work has transformed greatly over the last decade; however, in hand with rapid technological advancement and globalisation comes the climate crisis, which is holding many back. The Pacific small island states are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, natural disasters and environmental degradation. The increased frequency and intensity of natural disasters, rising sea levels, food insecurity, multiple health risks and possibility of displacement pose existential threats to those living in small island Pacific states. This paper provides brief insights on the impacts of climate change and natural disasters in the context of the future of work, lack of disaggregated data, gender gap, and current opportunities available that can be strengthened going forward by specifically honing in on challenges faced in small island Pacific states. Meaningful engagement and long-term investment in youth are essential to building a resilient, sustainable and inclusive economy that promotes well-being and growth. We must work holistically to understand trends of employment and promote skill-building and decent work opportunities that will shape the future of work for Pacific youth in the next decade.

## **Introduction**

Climate change is controversial. Some deny it as a true phenomenon, but many communities feel the tangible effects of climate change. For the small island Pacific states, it is an everyday battle to survive in the face of the climate crisis. The Pacific region has a youth population of over 50 percent and over the years, it has made strategic priorities linked to address issues affecting youth development, including Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) commitments and the Pacific Youth Development Framework (PYDF) 2014 – 2023.<sup>1</sup> The labour force participation rate of youth in the region is at an average of approximately 44%<sup>2</sup> while unemployment rates are around 14%, which is large considering the population size of most nations in the region. Providing employment

in small, dispersed and isolated economies with high population growth and rapid urbanisation is causing understandable concerns for many Pacific island countries. Implementation efforts have continuously been hindered for various reasons, a major factor being the increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters and environmental degradation in the region. Around the world, jobs that are prevalent today will suffer under the weight of climate change. Small island developing states (SIDS) are especially vulnerable due to their low capacity to adapt.<sup>3</sup> However, commitment to progress, the implementation of SDGs, and the youth development framework through a multi-sectoral and intersectional lens remains a priority for the Pacific region.

The world of work has changed tremendously in the new millennium in parallel with changes to the environment, technology, global migration and growing inequalities.<sup>4</sup> Pacific island countries are amongst the most exposed countries in the world to natural disasters and impacts of climate change. being small and geographically isolated only further exacerbates impacts. To put the extent of the damage into perspective, Cyclone Winston in 2016 damaged 495 schools, 88 health facilities, disrupted access to basic services for weeks and cost the Fijian government FJD \$2.85 billion<sup>5</sup> (USD \$1.3 billion), approximately 20% of the annual GDP; similarly, Cyclone Pam in 2015 cost the Government of Vanuatu USD \$449.4 million,<sup>6</sup> approximately 64% of the GDP of Vanuatu.

Frequent natural disasters and deteriorating environmental conditions exacerbate economic and development challenges and pressure economic growth, which often leads to debts. To recover from the loss and damages of such natural disasters, small island countries are left with no option but to take up loans to support the rebuilding process, pushing small island developing nations in the region further into debt. Reconstruction and recovery efforts add to public debt. for example, in Vanuatu, the stock of public debt to GDP increased from 48.8% in 2016 to 53.9% in 2019,<sup>7</sup> mainly due to disbursements for infrastructure and reconstruction activities after Cyclone Pam.

In addition to the immediate impacts of natural disasters, the slow-onset impacts of climate change are expected to affect:

1. Employment rates, especially for those in agriculture, tourism and fisheries.
2. Tourism revenue, which is also a large contributor to national GDPs
3. Migration trends, for example Pacific labour mobility schemes
4. Displacement, either temporary or permanent as impacts intensify

5. Security concerns, the displacement of communities has shown a rise in tensions, conflict and violence against women especially when host communities are struggling to make ends meet.<sup>8</sup>

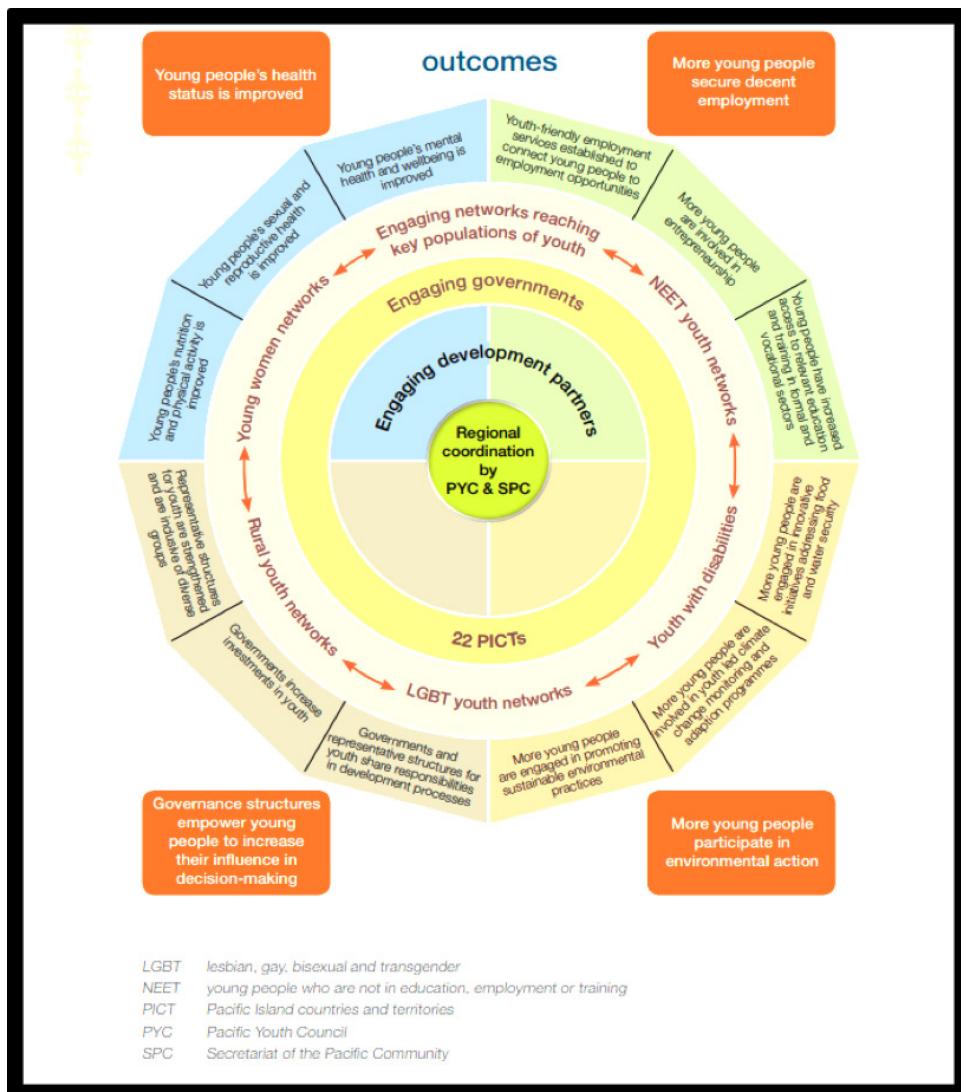
The climate crisis requires immediate action and just and equitable transitions as we pave the way forward. The ILO guidelines for a just transition<sup>9</sup> are instrumental in providing practical policy recommendations that can be adopted by nations as part of their adaptation strategies. The document proposes "*A just transition for all towards an environmentally sustainable economy, needs to be well managed and contribute to the goals of decent work for all, social inclusion and the eradication of poverty*"(p.4). A transition that incorporates justice for workers and those affected by climate might be our only way forward.

## Pacific Youth

Youth stakeholders recognise that a change to the way the region addresses youth is urgently required. The urgency of action was brought to attention through the *State of the Pacific Youth 2011: Opportunities and Obstacles*<sup>10</sup> report. The 2011 report highlighted underlying issues of poverty, rapid population growth, stagnating or underperforming economies, unemployment, political volatility, education systems and rising inequalities as causes of problems for youth. The evidence from that report pointed towards majorly investing in the (i) governance of youth initiatives, (ii) data collection and analysis, and (iii) mobilising resources for youth. The findings helped shape the Pacific Youth Development Framework, which brought together a coordinated approach to guide Pacific governments in ensuring transformative change for youth. The framework was created to support countries in developing their own youth policies and addressing national implementation priorities.

The PYDF highlights outcomes and focus areas that can be viewed in Figure 1 below:

**Figure 1: Development Outcomes for Youth.<sup>11</sup>**



As in most places of the world, not all young people from the Pacific are the same. situations differ on the basis of geographical location, gender, sexual orientation, access to education, health care, social welfare and socio-economic backgrounds. This by no means implies that no progress has been made. In Fiji, for example, the opportunities available for an 18 year-old in Suva will not be the same as those available to an 18 year-old from the outer islands. However, the government has changed policies to push for nationwide change by making education free for all students until high school and providing bus fares and textbooks, as well as offering various mechanisms to support tertiary, vocational and trade studies upon completion of high school. Strategic, targeted and youth-centered approaches are necessary for widespread change.

Currently, there are major gaps in the availability of disaggregated data on young people in the Pacific. Improved statistical data and analysis on youth is critical to identify gaps and provide evidence to guide investments. Many Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) do not measure youth unemployment with international standards. Thus, there is a need to think about sustainable solutions that incentivise youth populations and takes into account their skill levels.

## Pacific Labour Mobility

With the introduction of seasonal worker schemes in Australia and New Zealand, the Pacific islands have benefitted through increased incomes, asset growth, improved standards of living, and educational support of family members, as well as overall economic benefits to the individual, family and community.<sup>12</sup> New Zealand established the Recognised Seasonal Employer Scheme (RSE) in 2007 with the twofold objective of addressing labour shortages in the horticulture and viticulture sectors in New Zealand and supporting the economic development of Pacific islands via remittances sent home.<sup>13</sup>

Similarly, Australia's seasonal worker program brings workers, who are tied to an employer or labour-hire company, from nine Pacific countries to work in the horticulture industry. Traditionally, the horticulture industry relied on backpackers to fill the labour gap. However, Pacific islanders have been identified to stay up to six times longer and are on average 20 percent more productive on farms.<sup>14</sup> The scheme has seen seasonal workers use the money earned in Australia to support the development of their families back home; for example, using money earned to support childrens' education, build houses, or start businesses. Post Cyclone Pam, there was an increase in applications from Vanuatu to enter Australia and New Zealand under seasonal worker schemes. The New Zealand government responded by making concessions for existing workers and waiving the visa fees for RSE workers.<sup>15</sup> The vast majority of ni-Vanuatu workers decided to stay after the cyclone, as it was clear that ongoing remittances were critical not only in the short-term but also as part of a longer term strategy to rebuild, respond and recover from natural disasters.<sup>16</sup>

In 2018 alone, New Zealand supported 12,850<sup>17</sup> RSE workers. Similarly, since its establishment in 2012, Seasonal Worker Programme (SWP) has supported over 33,000<sup>18</sup> seasonal jobs for workers from the Pacific and Timor-Leste. The success of the SWP in contributing to the economic development of Pacific island countries while addressing labor shortages in Australia paved way

for the Pacific Labour Scheme which commenced in July 2018 and enables citizens from Pacific countries to take up opportunities in Australia for up to three years.<sup>19</sup> Although considered a success in many aspects for Pacific island workers, the scheme is not a perfect one and there are still some very important issues that need to be addressed. For instance, exploitation,<sup>20</sup> hazardous working conditions, restrictions on joining unions,<sup>21</sup> poor living conditions,<sup>22</sup> death while on the scheme, underpaid staff, low numbers of women and understanding the social and cultural implications of moving away from home and communities are all areas where concerns need improvement. Active efforts are being made to figure out the best way for Pacific workers and Australia's and New Zealand's governments to continue strengthening their partnerships and providing options for labour mobility. Overall, there is consensus that the positives outweigh the negatives in the labour mobility schemes and challenges can be addressed through existing mechanisms.

## Gender Dimensions

In unfortunate accordance with global trends, Pacific gender norms are no different. the gender gap manifests itself in not just pay but also in rates of unemployment. The ILO has noted that women and young people in agriculture and tourism are more likely to be drastically affected by climate change than men – women tend to be poorer and disproportionately represented in both sectors. Women are also more likely to be victims of sexual and gender based violence after disasters strike with limited access to health and support services.<sup>23</sup>

Additionally, while both women and young people are heavily employed in the informal economy and more likely to undertake precarious work.<sup>24</sup> Young women particularly face high levels of unemployment and are burdened with sexual and gender-based violence and discrimination.<sup>25</sup> Even in the case of the SWP, female workers in Australia with a higher mean level of education were earning slightly less than the men, but were remitting more.<sup>26</sup> However, steady progress has been noted in this regard the Pacific islands governments have committed to a Gender Equality Declaration.<sup>27</sup> to prioritise equal and meaningful representation of women in decision-making as well as launched the Pacific Partnership to End Violence against Women and Girls in the region. These agreements, which are similar to the PYDF, are meant to guide and complement existing efforts of national governments.

## Conclusion

As we continue to envision the future of work, we have to be realistic in envisioning what this means regionally and nationally. It is no longer just a youth issue, a climate change issue, or a decent work issue, it is all of that and so much more. The need to address these challenges simultaneously and respectfully is crucial for all; however, the urgency is higher for some regions than others. Pacific youth are no different but very different at the same time, it is our diversity that strengthens us and keeps us resilient. A just and equitable transition that take into account injustices and incorporates learnings from the labour and climate movements is imperative going forward meaningfully.

Investment is needed to sustain agriculture, tourism, and fishery sectors with infrastructure development and knowledge building efforts. Efforts must be made to promote gender equity and formal employment opportunities for youth. Research with longer timeframes are needed to fully comprehend the transformative and negative impacts on Pacific youth in relation to the “future of work” initiatives. Periodic mapping, baseline and disaggregated data is crucial in identifying gaps, tracking progress and making relevant change where needed. An evidence-based approach must be employed with clear support mechanisms nationally and efforts to seek academic and economic opportunities abroad must be planned for. In order for us to create enabling environments for young people to grow sustainably and stay connected digitally, an intersectional, multi-sectoral approach is critical. We can no longer work in silos. We need a human-rights focused, youth-centred agenda for the future of work that does not leave anyone behind.

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# The Economic Case for Contraceptives: Their Role in Promoting Growth and Availability of Decent Jobs for Youth in Sub-Saharan Africa

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## Abstract

This paper examines reasoning for the promotion of family planning methods in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). It makes the economic argument that higher contraceptive usage rates are strongly correlated with the presence of decent jobs in countries, using economic growth, unemployment rate, and wage rate as indicators. The article examines two distinct sets of rationale for higher contraceptive usage – first, the argument that lower fertility should be promoted to capitalize on unique current demographic trends in SSA, and second, the argument that lower fertility enhances female workforce participation. The paper concludes with brief recommendations on future action to reduce unaffordability and stigma surrounding family planning in SSA.

## Introduction

Current economic conditions in sub-Saharan Africa present both a large challenge and opportunity for improvement in promoting decent employment for youth in alignment with Sustainable Development Goal 8. As defined by the United Nations Economic and Social Council in General Comment 18, decent work is “work that respects the fundamental rights of the human person... provides an income allowing workers to support themselves and their families...[and] include[s] respect for the physical and mental integrity of the worker”.<sup>1</sup>

Despite economic expansion of about 5 percent annually in Africa, the primary driver being the extractive industry has meant that growth has been neither sustainable nor conducive to creating more decent jobs.<sup>2</sup> The International Labour Organization estimates that in 2018, 67.8 percent of SSA’s workforce was “vulnerable”, defined as being an own-account or contributing family worker. Both own-account and contributing family workers were isolated because of high levels of

precarity – specifically, less access to social protection schemes.<sup>3</sup> Within sub-Saharan Africa, women are severely overrepresented in vulnerable employment. ILO data found that about 80 percent of women in SSA's workforce are either own-account or contributing family workers, placing them in precarious situations.<sup>4</sup>

Increased contraceptives use can massively benefit sub-Saharan Africa. Even minor improvements in contraceptive availability and stigmatization can aid growth and improve the abilities of women to access decent, non-vulnerable employment.

## **Demography, Economic Growth, & Decent Work**

To promote available decent work, economic growth must be prioritized. Abundant evidence points to a strong complementary correlation between economic development and the availability of decent jobs. Fields' analysis of a series of East Asian countries with the highest growth rates found that within 30 years, real earnings were four times greater in Hong Kong, six times greater in the Republic of Korea, and eight times greater in Taiwan. In each case, unemployment rates were extremely low, between 2 to 4 percent. Correlatively, his analysis of six Latin American countries found that their weak growth rates manifested themselves in shockingly high unemployment rates (14 percent in Chile and 13 percent in Venezuela) or declines in real earnings (20 percent in Mexico, 47 percent in Venezuela, and 58 percent in Bolivia<sup>5</sup>). Both high real wages and low unemployment indicate a higher likelihood decent work will be available.

Sub-Saharan Africa's "youth bulge", the demographic distribution structure where a decreasing proportion of people are members of older age groups, represents a unique opportunity for capitalization. About half of SSA's population is under 18 years of age.<sup>6</sup> More notably, in SSA, there are more individuals in the 0-4 category than the 10-14 category, more individuals in the 10-14 category than the 20-24 category, and so on.<sup>7</sup> The youth bulge of SSA's population suggests that the working-age population will continue to grow in the future, as the large populations of children and adolescents ages into young adults. The rapid expansion of SSA's potential workforce is notable because the large proportion of youth mirrors the conditions that allowed for East Asia's economic revitalization in the second half of the 20th century. Between 1965 and 1990, the working-age population of the broader East Asia and Pacific region doubled from 541 million to 1.039 billion. Perhaps more critically, since the number of dependents, the population aged 0-14 and 65+,

increased by only 143 million, providing a ratio of almost two working-age adults to each dependent.<sup>8</sup> Analysis by Bloom and Williamson attributed as much as one-third to one-half of East Asia's economic miracle to favorable demographics.<sup>9</sup> Causally, the World Bank hypothesizes that two specific factors allowed East Asia to transform its demography into economic dividends. First, faster growth of the youth population created a large pool of workers. Second, a higher ratio of working-age adults to dependents reduced the burden of dependents and thus promoted the growth of per-capita income.<sup>10</sup>

In the case of sub-Saharan Africa, capitalizing upon a large proportion of youth and working-age adults is not possible at the population structure's current rate of change. For per-capita income to exhibit an increasing trend like in East Asia, the ratio of dependents to the working-age population must fall. In other words, the current youth bulge trend of the highest percent of the population being members of the 0-14 age group cannot continue for SSA to experience an economic revitalization similar to East Asia's. Therefore, fertility rates must fall.

### **Contraceptives and Women's Agency**

The benefits of reducing fertility rates extends beyond favorable demographic development. Especially for young women, reducing the rate of unwanted and/or accidental pregnancies has been found to have strong effects on the ability to sustain oneself economically and the ability to obtain a decent job. Beyond the dependency ratio, the high rate of adolescent parenthood in SSA has further economic and social consequences in serving as a barrier for adolescent women to obtain formal employment, especially in jobs that may be considered decent.

Women who become pregnant at a younger age are less likely to complete their education and have less economic agency than those who have children at an older age. Researchers from the Population and Poverty Research Network found that in metropolitan Cape Town, South Africa, having a child before the age of 17 equated to receiving 1.26 fewer years of schooling.<sup>11</sup> Another study conducted in Madagascar which controlled for both nonrandom selection and the cyclical nature of high rates of fertility and low rates of education found that adolescent mothers were 42 percent more likely to drop out of school.<sup>12</sup> A lower level of schooling may prevent women who are or were young mothers from gaining a decent job with a higher wage rate or restricts them to employment in the informal sector or in care work.

In the context of economic growth, an analysis by Bloom, Canning, Fink, and Finlay across multiple countries found a strong association between higher fertility rates and lower female workforce participation. The results implied that within the 20-39 age group, for each additional child borne, female workforce participation decreased by 10-15 percent, with a reduction of about four years of paid work for each child.<sup>13</sup> Not only do high fertility rates prevent women from obtaining the level of education that may assure them a decent job, but sometimes denies them opportunities to participate in the labor force altogether.

Along with the unfavorable ratios of dependents to working-age adults discussed previously, the low rates of workforce participation for women caused by high fertility represents massive lost productivity for sub-Saharan countries. Unplanned and/or unwanted pregnancies not only impact the size of a country's potential labor force, but they also reduce opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurship by preventing women from receiving the education needed to develop new ideas that may create economic growth in the future.

## **Efficacy & Implementation**

Both conclusions about sub-Saharan Africa's current demography and the potential of an increased rate of female workforce participation find that lower fertility rates are markedly economically beneficial for both economic growth and the availability of decent employment.

Empirical data suggests that contraceptives can be effective toward reducing fertility rates. In Thailand, an increase from 14 percent in 1970 to 50 percent in 1979 occurred in the contraceptive usage rate, largely due to increased awareness and accessibility. Knodel, Debaivalya, and Kamuansilpa concluded that the drastic increase in contraceptive use had surely contributed to a sharp decline of almost 40 percent of Thailand's fertility rate between 1969 and 1979.<sup>14</sup>

Specifically in the context of present-day sub-Saharan Africa, the potential economic impact of policies that promote contraceptive usage seems to be extremely great. Currently in SSA, the number of births per 1,000 women aged 15-19 is 109. The figure is stark in comparison to both the statistic in high-income countries, which is 22 and the world statistic, which is 46.<sup>15,16</sup> Further, the Guttmacher Institute estimates that around half (49 percent) of pregnancies of adolescents aged 15-19 are unintended, proving the potential of a large positive impact given more access to widespread contraception.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, there is a high unmet demand for contraceptives. United

Nations data places the unmet need for contraceptives in SSA as 24 percent, twice the 2015 world average.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, Hubacher, Mavranezouli, and McGinn found over 90 percent of youth in SSA had knowledge of some form of birth control, but only one-third had ever utilized contraceptives.<sup>19</sup>

Many potential barriers could explain the vast unbridged gap between demand and actual access. In sub-Saharan Africa specifically, there are often high costs associated with obtaining reliable, modern contraceptives. Apart from financial costs, such as the costs of transportation, missed time at work, etc.,<sup>20</sup> costs can be broadly defined to include social costs, which are a significant factor in SSA. Though difficult to quantify, social unacceptability, ambivalence, and insufficient or incorrect knowledge play large roles in the low rates of contraception usage in many SSA countries, even in situations where government subsidies and/or assistance from non-governmental organizations exist. Erroneous beliefs in side effects or an unwillingness to admit ignorance are prevalent especially in developing countries such as SSA, where many family planning programs are in their early stages.<sup>21</sup>

To alleviate both financial and social concerns, investments must be made towards continuing to promote the safety, success, and affordability of contraceptives. Not only do policies and assistance measures need to be formulated so they specifically serve adolescents, a uniquely vulnerable population that benefits the most from access to birth control, but investment in preventive sex education must be made. Evidence-based sex education, whether offered through traditional schooling formats, individual interventions by trained workers, or another method, may go a long way towards eradicating the stigma that has greatly affected the efficacy of current interventions in sub-Saharan Africa.

## Conclusion

The economic rationale for action from both governmental bodies and aid organizations on increasing contraceptive usage rates is clear. First, sub-Saharan Africa's current demography represents a powerful opportunity for the region to initiate a similar economic miracle to East Asia's in the latter half of the 20th century. However, in order for trends of economic growth, which is strongly related to the availability of decent work, to emerge, fertility rates must decrease. Second, for women in SSA, unplanned pregnancy in adolescence significantly reduces chances of obtaining a decent job. Not only does it reduce ability to participate in the workforce, but it also impedes

access to education, the likelihood they will obtain higher-paid work in the future and participation in innovation.

Even marginal increases in levels of contraceptive usage would have a significant impact on fertility rates. Given that almost half of births occurring among women between ages 15–24 are unintentional, Hubacher, Mavranzeouli, and McGinn concluded if just 1 percent of women not currently using a form of contraceptive adopted a highly effective method similar to an implant, the number of prevented unintended pregnancies could surpass 2 million.<sup>22</sup>

Governments and non-governmental organizations must take strong action now to create awareness regarding the benefits of family planning and reduce the gap between the youth in sub-Saharan African seeking access to family planning services and those who are able to obtain it. Organizations working towards economic improvement and the availability of decent jobs must prioritize addressing both fiscal and social costs associated with obtaining contraceptives through a variety of financial and educational methods.

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# **Securing Decent Jobs for Marginalized Youth: A Case Study of Bangladesh**

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## **Abstract**

Young people in Bangladesh face a precarious future, despite living in one of the world's fastest growing economies. According to the UN report, Bangladesh will be the third fastest growing economy in the world, achieving a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 7.4% in 2019. The future of work presents countless opportunities to reverse long-term decent work deficits, but it also presents serious challenges that could increase inequalities and joblessness if not well managed. With more than 64 million unemployed youth worldwide and 145 million young workers living in poverty, youth employment remains a global challenge. How well countries adapt to such changes will be a major determinant in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Southeast Asia is booming with young populations but one in five workers of Asia are working above ten hours a day but living below the poverty line. Technology is starting to take a heavy toll on the youth employment due to the Fourth Industrial Revolution. In this critical situation, marginalized youth are the most vulnerable as most of them have poor access to skills development opportunities. This article focuses on understanding the transactions of digitalization as it relates to the perspective of marginalized youth. By analyzing the context of Bangladesh, this article explores obstacles of achieving SDG goals by 2030 and analyzes the prospects for the marginalized youth community in the future global job market.

## **Introduction**

For marginalized youth living in Asia, data shows that, young people ages 15–24 who make up 22% of the world's adult population often face great challenges in finding employment.<sup>1</sup> In the case of marginalized youth even if they secure work most of the time the work is in jobs that are physically demanding and pay less than livable wage. Moreover, it is not just about creating employment but generating decent work for all, in accordance with the UN Sustainable Development Goal

8. For example, in many developing Asian countries like Bangladesh, workers are working in the labor-intensive sectors to find the opportunity to earn some income in the digital gig economy, such as being an Uber driver. Such labour platforms offer opportunities to earn money, but at what cost? Potential fallbacks include long working hours, low wages, low job security, increasing competition for low-skill jobs. Bangladesh, similar to many developing nations of Southeast Asia, is still struggling to incorporate the informal labor sector within the provisions of national labor law.<sup>2</sup>

Bangladesh has sustained strong economic growth in the last decade and has gone through massive technological, social and infrastructural transformation. At this point of time it is undeniable that the future of work is technology-based, which will allow many skilled people to have decent job. At the same time this technological dependency will also cause unemployment or joblessness, particularly for the most vulnerable populations. If not managed properly this may cause serious consequences for marginalized youth communities and for the overall economic development of Bangladesh. How countries deal with youth unemployment is linked to determining their future of work along with their progress in achieving SDG 8. This article will cover issues concerning the future of work from the perspective of marginalized youth living in Bangladesh.

## The Economic Context of Bangladesh

Data from the World Bank shows that young people in low-income countries are more likely to have some kind of job compared to young people in middle- and high-income countries.<sup>3</sup> Young people in Bangladesh, especially marginalized youth, are compelled to help support their families to the extent that many drop out of school prematurely and end up in precarious and low productivity employment with few opportunities for advancement. They are often engaged in agricultural activities or in jobs in the informal sector, which tend to have lower labor productivity. Young women are much more likely than men to fall into this group, leading to a persistence in the gender gap. Thus, the low employment rate of young women of Bangladesh is the result of several factors, including their roles as primary caregivers in households as well as societal norms that limit their participation in working life.<sup>4</sup> Bangladesh is also experiencing additional challenges with high levels of informality and the need to transition these workers to formal employment which can help increase protection as well as enhance revenue for governments to expand the provision of social

protection measures and make investments in education and infrastructure.<sup>5</sup> However, Bangladesh also faces the temptation to keep lower labour standards to remain competitive in a world economy that is propagating low wages and difficult working conditions.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the marginalized youth community could not break through the cycle of poverty and remains beyond the reach of government initiatives of skill development or labour standard assurance mechanisms. As a result, SDG 8 which specifically calls for the “full productive economic opportunities for young men and women” is challenging to implement in Bangladesh.

### **Understanding Possibilities for Economic Transformation**

To fulfil the SDG 8 goal of full employment and decent work for all by 2030, how can developing countries and those furthest behind harness new technologies and opportunities to move people into more productive, better paid, and sustainable jobs?<sup>7</sup> These was a major question raised at 73rd UN General Assembly.<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, the world’s youth population is growing sharply in regions with high poverty.<sup>9</sup> According to the latest data of the International Labour Organization (ILO), in 2018, still nearly one in two workers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region was in vulnerable employment. Today, two out of three workers in this region are in informal employment. It is easy to understand the frustrations of young people in Bangladesh, because their country is going through a paradigm shift resulting from technology. As a result, their jobs are radically shifting. In many Asian middle-income countries like India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri-lanka, Nepal, Myanmar, a high proportion of young people are not in employment, education, or training. Neither working nor developing their productive skills for the future, this group represents a lost opportunity.<sup>10</sup> Artificial intelligence, automation and outsourcing of digital work have created a lot of decent jobs already but there are a large number of people who will not be able to adapt to this new market and are bound to lose their jobs.

Now the question regarding the future of work brings in more despair than hope for many young people because there remains the fundamental question of whether governments of Asia are prepared for changes brought on by the Fourth Industrial Revolution. It is heartening to know that Bangladesh is the first Asia-Pacific country to commit to the International Labour Organization’s (ILO) Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youths. Bangladesh pledged to train 250,000 youth on digital skills and deliver 340,200 apprenticeships by 2023 through a2i project of Bangladesh

government.<sup>11</sup> The commitment by a2i is a good first step towards creating digital jobs for youth. Yet it is unlikely that digital skills alone will take care of the unemployment problem. Although digital skills increase employability, these skills need to be reinforced with the knowledge in an individual's specific career area.

The government of Bangladesh has started to invest in lifelong learning mechanisms in digital skills, entrepreneurship, strong apprenticeship programs, widespread technical and vocational education and Training (TVET). Bangladesh's national SDG progress tracker and sectoral strategies that expand decent jobs and addresses the vulnerabilities of the most disadvantaged people of the country are all steps in the right direction. The government has also established Technical Training Institutes in most districts. This are some examples of the kinds of initiatives necessary to develop the employability of marginalized communities living in the interior parts of the country.

The Bangladeshi government has made remarkable investments to increase employability of young people throughout the country and has provided opportunities for young people to transform themselves into human resources. Yet, many employers do not seem to value skills acquired in existing TVET programs. Furthermore, the general basic education system that Bangladesh inherited from the British colonial period do not offer these skills effectively.<sup>12</sup>

## **The Way Forward**

Bangladesh has implemented a wide range of initiatives but focusing only on skills training will not be effective. The Bangladeshi government must align skills development with aims of the country's educational institutions. Otherwise, the program may not be more than a band-aid solution that does not end up benefiting marginalized youth. Equally important is the need for opportunities in the job market for applying these knowledge-based skills. This means there must be adjustments made between job demand and job supply.<sup>13</sup>

One important recommendation is the need for social dialogue to develop effective policy responses that can help shape the future of work to achieve the best possible outcomes.<sup>14</sup> Skills development, social protection, social dialogue, equal opportunity, occupational safety and health and adequate labour market regulations are essential components of the policy response to shape a future of work with sustainable economic growth and decent work for all.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, decent

work for marginalized communities requires national and international actors to commit to the objective of creating quality jobs globally and to pursue cooperative solutions to this challenge. This includes increased efforts to ensure the full and equal participation of women in the labour market.

## Conclusion

The latest labor force survey conducted in 2017 from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics shows that the number of employable people has increased at a higher rate than the number of jobs. Thus, more people are unemployed, including Bangladesh's most marginalized youth. Yet, training or apprenticeship opportunities alone cannot solve the unemployment problem. Skills development is only a part of the whole solution toward decent employment. Faced with the challenges including an aging population, globalization, and digitalization, it is about time that countries all around the globe, including Bangladesh, put in place the mechanisms that will help workers to re-skill and find work and help employers to create sustainable and decent jobs. Although there is much work to be done, Bangladesh is a frontrunner in achieving SDG goals. With proper planning and resource mobilization, Bangladesh has a good chance of achieving SDG Goal 8 by 2030 and enable marginalized youth to have a decent work opportunities.

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# **Incubators as Potential Tools for Employment Creation: Policy Implications for Sub-Saharan Africa**

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## **Abstract**

Sub-Saharan Africa is confronted by a demographic structure that will see a large part of the population reach working age over the next few years. Providing decent work, especially to the youth, will be a challenge and governments are searching for solutions to tackle this problem. There is increasing evidence that start-up incubators boost employment creation. While the early stage incubation programs appear to be effective, there is still a gap when it comes to scaling and deal flow. This paper argues incubators are a potential tool for job creation but more importantly they also empower participants to take charge of their professional future. For countries with a high youth unemployment rate, providing a positive outlook on the future can be seen as a core argument in favour of incubators.

## **Introduction**

Developing countries in general, and those on the African continent in particular, are faced with a demographic structure where large numbers of the population will be of working age in

the coming years<sup>1,2</sup> and where there are few employment opportunities for younger generations entering the workforce.<sup>3</sup> According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), most of the Sub-Saharan African region is at risk, with more than 1 million individuals becoming unemployed in 2017; 72% of whom are working in vulnerable conditions.<sup>4</sup>

The lack of employment generally has the potential to cause social discontent, while the quality of existing jobs is a contributing factor to social discontent as work is an important trademark of human identity in today's world.<sup>5,6</sup> The population structure, however, can also provide for a significant demographic dividend.<sup>7</sup> The term demographic dividend signifies a reduction of the youth dependency ratio in this context and results in positive effects in terms of "labour supply, savings and human capital".<sup>8</sup>

The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 aims to promote "sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all".<sup>9</sup> As incubators are one potential pathway for job creation, the focus of this paper is the topic of "Youth Entrepreneurship & Self-Employment" as provided in the publication concept note.<sup>10,11,12</sup>

## Methods

This paper is based on a literature review and linked to a report produced for the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)<sup>13</sup> during a Master's class entitled "Practical Project in Development Cooperation" at the University of St. Gallen. The class required students consultations for the SDC and granted access to experts from the field to have an in-depth discussion about the topic of this paper.<sup>14</sup>

## Discussion

In the last ten years, the topic of entrepreneurship has attracted attention worldwide. Multinational Enterprises (MNEs) and investors are now complementing more traditional actors in the field of development. Simultaneously there has been a surge of incubator creation.<sup>15</sup> No matter the environment, a large majority of start-up companies ('start-ups') do not survive longer than two to three years.<sup>16</sup> Incubators are designed to support the start-ups in the early stage of their lifecycle and can leverage the Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) sector for economic growth.<sup>17</sup> Incubators on the African continent have been established only in recent years as a tool

to enable enterprise creation and eventually reap the benefits in terms of job creation and salary disbursement.<sup>18</sup> The time delay between investment into these incubators and emergence of the first tangible results can be significant. This leads to the first recommendation, R1: Increase the time horizon for policies supporting incubators. Some of the key metrics for the success of an incubator include whether the companies that complete the incubation program have more employees, better yield, and more sales.<sup>19</sup> In academic literature there are varying definitions of what constitutes an incubator. The definition adopted for this paper is that of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), which describes an incubator as a “systematic way to support the establishment and growth of a new company... that provides physical space and a number of services to start-ups, helping them through the earlier stages of their development”.<sup>20</sup> This definition was chosen because it is simultaneously inclusive while identifying the main characteristics of an incubator.

The Global Accelerator Learning Initiative (GALI) regularly publishes its latest findings on the effectiveness of incubators and has specific publications tailored for emerging markets.<sup>21</sup> GALI shows that incubators in emerging countries produce increased revenue, create more jobs, and attract higher equity investments and higher rates of access to debt for start-ups.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, there is some evidence that suggests that incubators are useful tools for job creation.

For the region of Sub-Saharan Africa, the benefits of an incubator program match those of the emerging market’s sample.<sup>23</sup> The key contribution according to the start-ups themselves is access to direct funding, network and skill building.<sup>24</sup> These crucial contributions are segments of a whole ecosystem that needs to work together to enable start-up success. This leads to the second recommendation R2: The whole ecosystem needs to be supported to make start-up success possible. One key issue for the sector is growth acceleration after the initial incubation phase. While incubators are a useful tool for the first phase of creating a company, there is a gap between the initial push and reaching the stage where impact investors can confidently invest their money.<sup>25</sup>

Existing literature for the start-up segment has plenty of advice on how to deal with the challenge of scaling a nascent business.<sup>26</sup> Unfortunately, literature is lacking when it comes to scaling start-ups in developing countries.<sup>27</sup> This leads to the third recommendation, R3: Focus on incentives and instruments to de-risk investments into start-ups. In their previous research, the authors have found that the effects of an incubator program go beyond the standard key performance indicators. Notably, the main benefits reported by experts in the field and former incubator partici-

participants was the empowerment of the applicants to take charge of their professional future.

Learning how to think like an entrepreneur can be a powerful instrument to counteract youth unemployment and a negative outlook on the future.<sup>28</sup> This leads to the fourth recommendation R4: Design education programs to teach the entrepreneurial mindset. Innovative ideas can change whole sectors. Mpesa, a mobile phone-based money transfer and financing company, is one example of a disruptive business idea that has transformed the financial landscape of Kenya. Through such enterprises, the concept of mobile money has seen rapid scaling in Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>29</sup> This example shows the high amount of leverage that can come from a single start-up. Mpesa not only enables money transfer but it created a new way of doing business for many people and opened up new sources of income for them.

Incubator programs offer prospective entrepreneurs the opportunity to learn how to deal with local market environments and regulatory processes, as well as how the informal business networks are structured. To enable this, it is crucial to have local talent with the required experience to impart this knowledge to the founders. Incubators have the potential to generate substantial effects because the solutions are locally tailored.<sup>30</sup>

## Conclusion

Incubators can be a possible solution in the toolkit to counteract youth unemployment. GALI presents promising data from emerging economies and Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>31</sup> While the early stage incubation programs appear to be effective, there is still a gap when it comes to the next stage of scaling and deal flow.<sup>32</sup> The potential of incubators goes far beyond the standard key performance indicators such as job creation or equity investment. Rather, the most significant benefit is the empowerment of participants to take charge of their professional future.

To recap the four recommendations from this paper:

R1: Increase the time horizon for policies supporting incubators

R2: The whole ecosystem needs to be supported to make start-up success possible

R3: Focus on incentives and instruments to de-risk investments into start-ups

R4: Design education programs to teach the entrepreneurial mindset

The final recommendation that draws from all four recommendations is that various stakeholders should focus on the strength of their organization and support incubator initiatives in that area. No

matter your background there is a part for you to play in the start-up ecosystem.

## Acknowledgements

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- <sup>31</sup> GALI (Same as 20 & 21)
- <sup>32</sup> Koh Harvey & Meier Simon (Same as 23)

# The Nexus of Decent Work and Emigration Trends in Nigeria

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## Abstract

Migration is a phenomenon which significantly influences economic and social development. A consistent negative migration rate for over two decades in Nigeria reveals the high number of people exiting the country in search for “greener pastures”. Existing literature on migration trends has revealed poor economic conditions as one of the major motivations for emigration. Using descriptive statistics and literature review, this study critically examines international emigration trends and its nexus with decent work environments and economic growth in Nigeria. In conclusion, the paper recommends some practical solutions in order to promote labor market reforms in Nigeria thereby propelling a sustained economic development.

## Introduction

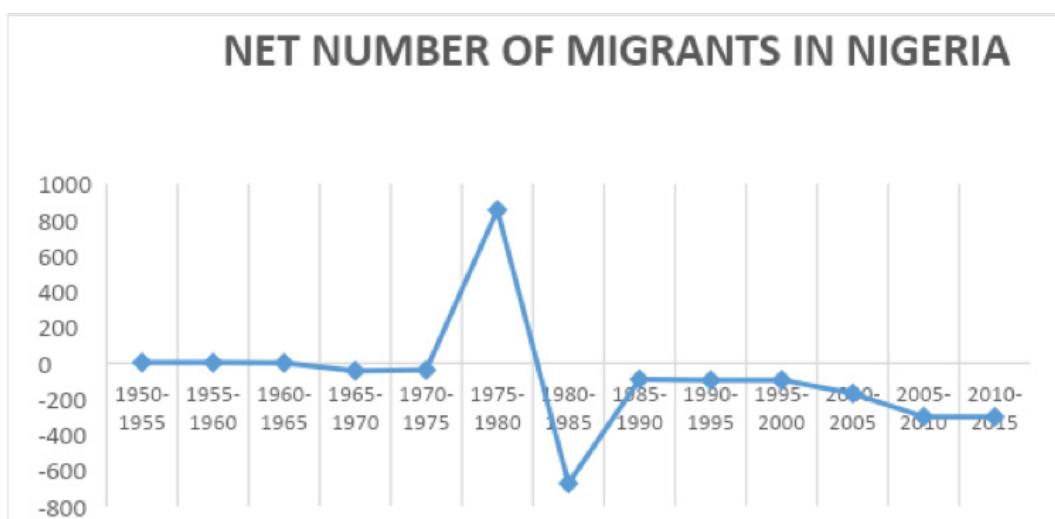
Migration can be defined as the movement of people from their usual place of residence to another area at a particular period of time. According to the United Nations, an international migrant is someone who changes his or her usual country of residence. In 2017, the globe witnessed an international migration stock of 258 million which represents 3.5% of the world's population.<sup>1</sup> The share of international migration in the world's total population makes the concept a very significant one for discourse. There are two major types of migration based on geography. They include internal migration (which includes the movement of people within the same country) and international migration (which involves the movement of people from one country to another). The scope of this study will be international emigration trends in Nigeria and its effects on decent work conditions and sustained economic growth in Nigeria.

With a young growing population of over 190 million, Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa. According to the United Nations' World Population Prospects in 2017, Nigeria is the world's

seventh largest country. Annual population growth rate in Nigeria remains steady at over 2%. This is an interesting case study to examine when it comes to mobility of people leaving the country as the net migration rate is -0.2 migrants per 1000 people.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, more people leave Nigeria than migrate into the country.

### Discussion: Emigration Trends in Nigeria

Regarding data on emigration flows in Nigeria, information is recorded in the arrivals and departures records in the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS). However, this source coupled with other sources like the National Population Commission (nPop) and other governmental agencies do not give a rich and accurate description of emigration patterns in Nigeria. This is due to undocumented emigration activities which happen frequently in Nigeria, especially within the coastal regions. A visual representation created by the author from the UN World Population Prospects is shown in Figure 1 below.



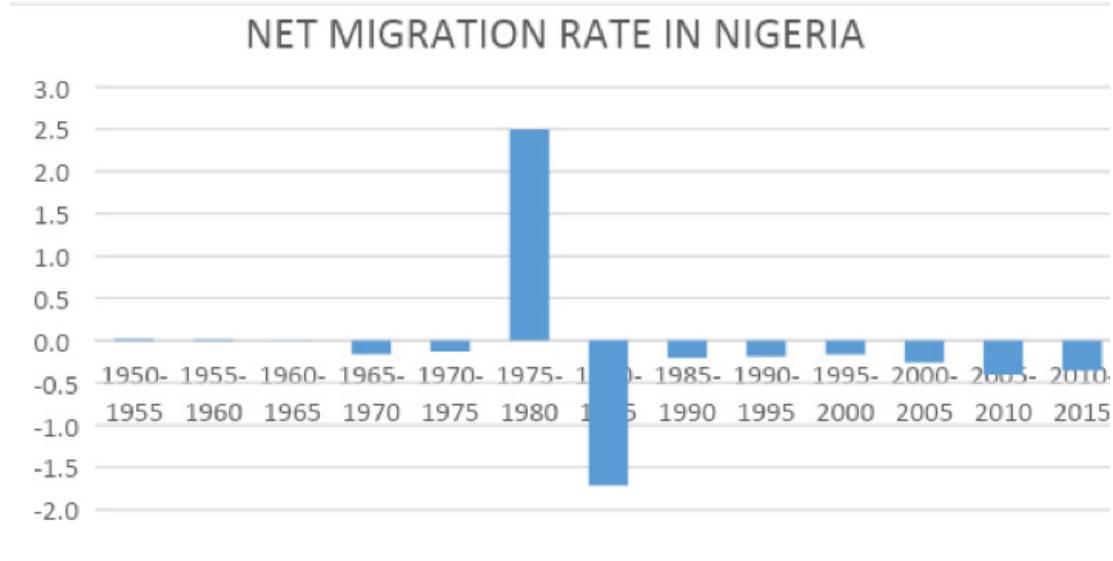
*Figure 1: Graph of 2017 United Nations World Population Prospects*

However, we can still deduce trends in emigration of people from Nigeria to other countries. Using the data from the World Population Prospects 2017, it can be observed from the graph that the net number of migrants has witnessed a negative growth. Between 1970-1975, the number of emigrants in Nigeria was 38,000 more than the number of immigrants. However, a sharp increase in the number of immigrants was witnessed in 1975-1980. This is due to the crude oil boom which allowed many foreign expatriates to come and capitalize on the natural resource. The demand for

labor witnessed during this period also encouraged people from neighboring countries especially within West Africa (e.g. Ghana) to migrate into Nigeria.

The trend of an increase of immigrants in the late 1970s was reversed in the early 1980s. The number of migrants leaving the country was 671,000 more than the number of immigrants entering the country. The economy entered a state of recession, food scarcity and debt. This was due to the over reliance on the oil sector, which caused neglect of agricultural production. In addition, the implementation of the structural adjustment policy (SAP) and the “Ghana must go” revolution implemented by the government in power executed as at that time encouraged immigrants to leave. Ever since then, due to economic, educational, and security reasons, the number of emigrants have been more than immigrants in Nigeria, leaving the current net migration rate at -0.2 per 1000 people.

In two decades, the number of Nigerians residing outside the country almost doubled from 0.4% of the Nigerian population (465, 932) in the year 1990 to 0.7% (1,030,322) in 2013.<sup>3</sup> A visual representation created by the author from the UN World Population Prospects is shown in Figure 2 below.



*Figure 2: Graph of 2017 United Nations World Population Prospects*

28.1 million Africans emigrated from the region in 2010. Nigeria ranks 6th out of the top 10 countries responsible for this emigration flow.<sup>4</sup> The Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty produced a report in 2007 that the Nigerian immigrants' most preferred destination countries are Sudan (24% of Nigerian emigrants are found here), United States (14%) and United Kingdom (9%). This shows that the Nigerian immigrants are majorly found within the African

region.<sup>5</sup>

Recently, this emigration pattern is changing as two thirds of Nigerian emigrants are now found in developed regions. The 2013 migration profile prepared by UNICEF revealed that the top countries of destination include USA, UK, Cameroon, Italy, and Cote d'Ivoire in that order. The recent trend of emigration to more developed regions signifies that more skilled professionals are leaving the country. The IOM 2014 report states the absence of economic opportunities and decent work conditions in less developed countries as the major reasons why the skilled Nigerians are migrating to developed regions. Looking at involuntary emigration, the number of asylum seekers has increased over time. The number increased from 8,294 in 2006 to 10,148 in 2007 and further to 15,022 in 2008. The European countries remain the major recipients for asylum seekers from Nigeria. These countries include Italy, Canada, Ireland, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Spain, etc.<sup>6</sup>

### **Effects of Emigration on Decent Work Conditions in Nigeria**

Decent work is a multidimensional concept that consists of job opportunities that are of good quality, provides reasonable income and respects the fundamental human rights of employees in both economic and social spheres. Decent work promotes equality, fairness, and occupational safety. This helps to propel inclusive and sustainable development in society as the ILO reiterates that countries who enforce good practices in decent work developed faster compared to those who do not.<sup>7</sup> The emigration trends of Nigeria which focus mainly on labor migration explains the fact that decent work conditions are lacking in Nigeria.

The Decent Work Country Programme II (2015–2018) explains that there are several deficits in decent work conditions in Nigeria.<sup>8</sup> These include limited employability of the workforce due to lack of skills required, obsolete technical and vocational training which do not keep up with modern technological trends, and the slow rate of job creation and growing workforce which increases unemployment rate. This stimulates emigration which in turn has impact on decent work in Nigeria.

As was noted earlier, the number of those emigrating from Nigeria in recent times to developed regions are highly skilled workers. This leads to further worsening of decent work conditions in Nigeria as the human capital left is not sufficient to propel innovation in job creation. The low quality of education in Nigeria limits the employability of graduates. This encourages students to receive education in developed countries.

The number of Nigerian students studying abroad as a percentage of the total tertiary enrollment in the country, has increased over time, from 14.5% in 2003 to 20.7% in 2006.<sup>9</sup> According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics Database, the number of Nigerian student migrants (35,131 students) in 2006 almost tripled by the end of 2016(95,731). This increase in the number of student migrants leads to huge brain drain not just in the present, but for future generations. This is because very few immigrants come back to the country of origin to contribute to innovation. Promotion of quality education through the provision of world-class tertiary institutions in Nigeria is required so as to reduce the rate of students going abroad for studies.

Furthermore, the conditions and reforms of the labor market can influence one's decision to emigrate. For example, Clemens and Petterson estimated that 12,579 nurses trained in Nigeria left the country as of the year 2000. This accounts for 12% of the total number of trained nurses in Nigeria.<sup>10</sup> In 2009–2012, 2,701 trained Nigerian doctors left to work in other countries.<sup>11</sup> (IOM 2014). The working conditions of the health sector characterized by low and irregular pay, high work hours with no incentives has encouraged many medical professionals to immigrate. The emigration of skilled medical experts contributes further to the unavailability of decent work as there is reduced access to health services which threatens the social protection of citizens. Therefore, the Nigerian government should discourage emigration by improving the labor market conditions. This can be done through the increase of minimum wages, job creation, and other labor market incentives. Improving decent work conditions helps to retain the technical know-how needed to stimulate innovation and promote human rights.

A positive effect of emigration on decent work and economic growth is the concept of remittances. Remittances instigate more integrated processes of economic change. Nigeria is one of the top remittance receiving countries over the years. From the World Bank Migration and Remittances Factbook, Nigeria received \$25.1 billion dollars as remittances from her emigrants who are abroad in the year 2018.<sup>12</sup> This money is used to cater to the needs of families, access educational, medical and other social services, facilitate investment and create business opportunities. Improved social welfare access and the formation of human capital are vital preconditions to attain decent work and economic growth. The use of remittances to fund education improves human capital which is an important factor for improved labor market outcomes. Recent analysis by Mallet has revealed that remittances are a shock absorber instrument to ensure continued financing of education and

skill acquisition even in the face of economic crisis.<sup>13</sup>

However, remittances are spent basically on urgent and short term needs and not on entrepreneurship or job creation thereby discouraging decent work in Nigeria. From the analysis above, it can be inferred that despite interventions to stimulate job creation in Nigeria, the overall effect of the emigration pattern have adversely impacted decent work environment.

## Conclusion

Contrary to popular belief, the working conditions of the labor market in the country of origin can influence emigration trends, not just the unemployment rate. These emigration trends further worsen the decent work conditions explaining the vicious cycle (nexus) linking both concepts. The negative effects of emigration trends are further reinforced by low level of return migration due to the scarcity of decent jobs. The adverse effects of a poor decent work climate cannot be over-emphasized as it gives rise to social and economic forms of inequality, which breed poverty in the society. To combat this, policy reforms geared towards employment creation, improving labor market conditions, promotion of gender equality, and building the capacity of the labor force are necessary in order to achieve equitable, inclusive and sustainable development in Nigeria. The implementation of these reforms will promote the involvement of foreign companies and Nigerians in diaspora in business and investment environment of the country to provide new opportunities for the teeming populace.

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# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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For more information about these issues see the following resources:

The Next Generation of Work: Pathways to Sustainable Economic Growth and Decent Work for All by 2030:  
[www.pathways2030.org](http://www.pathways2030.org)

ILO Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth:  
<https://www.decentjobsforyouth.org/>

UN Major Group on Children and Youth:  
<https://www.unmgcy.org/>

UN SDG 8:  
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg8>

UN SDG 4:  
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg4>

