



Inter-Agency Task Team

Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions

Thematic Working Group:

Youth

Participating Agencies:

ILO

OIM

OSGEY

UNDESA

UNICEF

WFP

Background

While young people are always heavily impacted by economic recessions, the crisis induced by the COVID-19 pandemic has brought severe and disproportionate effects. Overall, COVID-19 inflicted a triple shock on young people through (i) disruptions to education and training; (ii) increased difficulties for young jobseekers to transition to decent jobs; and (iii) job and income losses for young workers. Beyond these very visible impacts, the ILO has also documented the heavy toll on the mental well-being of youth.

Between 2019 and 2020, the global youth employment rate fell by 8.2 percentage points. This massive employment loss among young people contrasts with a fall of 3.6 percentage points in the employment rate of adults. Roughly two times as many young women lost their jobs as did young men.

Reductions in employment have translated into more young people in education or inactivity. The latter is shown by the increased number of young people not in employment, education, or training (NEET). Today, the ILO estimates that nearly 282 million youth have NEET status, a situation that affects young women more than young men. By disengaging from education or on-the-job training, young people who

are NEET are missing out on crucial early formation of human capital while reducing their chances of finding employment in the future.

For those able to stay employed or find a job after the crisis, the persistent issue is the quality of jobs. The pandemic widened inequalities and pushed young people to insecure and informal gigs, jobs that offer subsistence but may be far from providing a meaningful work-based learning experience, career prospects, and overall better employment outcomes. This situation reinforces pre-existing vulnerabilities of young workers, from vast levels of informality to working poverty. Three out of four young workers were engaged in informal employment before the pandemic, which added to the level of work insecurity and lack of access to social protection.

Unemployment, inactivity, and insecure work can have long-lasting "scarring effects" on career paths and future earnings. These effects are compounded by the severe hit on the mental well-being of young people. Unless these vulnerabilities are addressed and unless the mental well-being of young people is protected, the social risks of a "COVID-19 lockdown generation" may be felt in the long run.

Outcomes

Outcome 1: Young people are meaningfully engaged in the design and implementation of the Global Accelerator.

The youth roadmap will guide and contribute towards a meaningful engagement of young people in the implementation of the Global Accelerator. Related activities include:

- (i) Global virtual events introducing the integrated roadmap of the Global Accelerator.
- (ii) Identify a mechanism to select young experts in the co-creation of Global Accelerator activities at the global and national levels.
- (iii) Continuous consultative processes through virtual events in pathfinder countries delivered with young experts to introduce national work plans to youth networks and youth-led organizations.
- (iv) Invite youth-led organizations to regularly contribute to or co-create knowledge products of the Global Accelerator; and
- (v) Joint activities with UN entities and youth organizations, members, or contributors of the YOUTH2030 Joint Working Team and the UN Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development.

Outcome 2: The transitions of young people into productive employment and decent work are strengthened across actions of the Global Accelerator, with a focus on digital, demographic, and de-carbonization transitions.

The youth roadmap will focus on smoothing and facilitating the transition of young job seekers and young workers into decent jobs. It will:

- (vi) Assist member states in boosting pro-employment macroeconomic policies, including policy coherence and coordination.
- (vii) Issue guidance and best practice notes to support the design and implementation of interventions to enhance employability, smooth the transition of young people into employment, and incentivize the hiring of young people. Such interventions include jobs in wage and self-employment, as well as in rural and urban areas; and
- (viii) Issue guidance and best practice notes to promote the rights and voices of young workers and those aspiring to acquire a decent job.

Outcome 3: Better data on youth employment is fostered, including through the utilization by member states of the Youth Recovery Barometer.

Boosting synergies with other elements of the UN Secretary-General's "Our Common Agenda", the youth roadmap of the Global Accelerator will promote the development and implementation of the Youth Recovery Barometer, a statistical tool that traces labour market outcomes of young people based on available labour market information at country level. The implementation of the Youth Recovery Barometer integrates dialogue with young people and member states as well as their active engagement in analyzing progress and translating the global conversation into national discussions, including in the context of Sustainable Development Goal indicator 8b1 on youth employment strategies.

Furthermore, the Global Accelerator will leverage inter-agency action to advocate for more and better data to capture the realities of young people with disadvantages in the labour market, including women, young persons with disabilities, and youth from indigenous or minority groups.

Primary target group:

Actions of the Global Accelerator on youth employment will place special attention to young persons with disabilities, indigenous youth, young refugees and displaced populations, and young women.

Means of implementation:

- Leverage the national plans for pathfinder countries to identify and stimulate the active participation of young people in projects and programmes linked to the Global Accelerator.
- Leverage the technical facility of the Global Accelerator to identify entry points and co-creation opportunities with and for young people.
- Leverage existing youth networks in UN entities and partner organizations linked to the Global Accelerator.
- Capitalize on the [Decent Jobs for Youth platform](#), the [Youth Foresight Knowledge Facility](#), and the [Community Forum on What Works in Youth Employment](#).

Principles of country-level action

The work of the Global Accelerator with and for young people will leverage the Guiding Principles of the UN Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth, endorsed by the UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination in 2015 as follows:

1. **Multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral approach:** Actions of the Global Accelerator will build on a multi-dimensional approach to ensure that young women and men in different contexts and situations, including in fragile states and states in protracted crisis, as well as among displaced populations, benefit from coordinated support.
2. **Rights-based approach when working with and for young people:** The rights-based approach will promote respect for human rights and the application of international labour standards and other UN normative frameworks relevant to the promotion of decent jobs for young people.
3. **Promotion of gender equality:** The Global Accelerator will mainstream gender equality concerns throughout its implementation. The interventions supported will pay particular attention to gender issues and their underpinning socio-economic factors, as well as gender-differentiated transitions to decent jobs and, where appropriate, will target young women through positive action. Interventions will need to address female entrepreneurs' access to finance, measures that reduce and redistribute caring responsibilities and promote men's role in sharing nurturing/paternity responsibilities to ensure that young women have the opportunity to seek decent work and training.
4. **Recognition of the heterogeneity of youth and the need to promote targeted approaches:** The Global Accelerator will address the importance of adopting targeted approaches and strategies, in recognition of the heterogeneity and needs of different groups of young people, which vary according to individual characteristics (gender, age, socio-economic and family

background, educational level, national origin, refugee status, health status, disability). The Global Accelerator will also address young people that are at risk of violence and crime or that have already been exposed to illegal and/or criminal activities with the twin objectives of prevention and rehabilitation supporting their transition to a decent job.

5. **A balanced set of interventions:** The Global Accelerator will focus on support to member states to stimulate labour demand at all levels and improve education and training policies and systems so that they respond better to the current and future demands of labour markets, and to promote opportunity-driven self-employment and entrepreneurship as a career option for young people. It will promote inclusive growth and decent employment for young women and men in key economic sectors, including agriculture, manufacturing, trade, ICT, digital economy, tourism, cultural and creative industries, and the green economy.
6. **Focus on the creation of decent jobs and the improvement of the quality of work:** The Global Accelerator will support countries in the identification of sectors and areas with job creation potential and will give priority to youth employment interventions that address the twin objectives of improving the quantity and quality of jobs for youth. This includes measures to lift young people out of poverty or vulnerable employment and to support their transition from the informal to the formal economy. It will also include innovative approaches and new schemes, piloted by a range of stakeholders, which can be scaled up.
7. **Promoting the access of young people to productive assets:** Access to productive resources, including land, finance, and technology, is an enabling factor for the employment and self-employment of young people in both urban and rural areas. The Global Accelerator will promote the access of young people to assets and to environmentally sustainable economies (green economy, management of natural resources, biodiversity, and ecosystems).
8. **Expanding investments in youth for quality education and skills development:** Education and skills development enhance both the capacity to work and opportunities to progress at work. The Global Accelerator will promote increased investment in youth with a view to improving access to and the relevance of education and training and strengthening the connections between education and skills development systems and labour markets. Particular attention will be paid to lifelong learning, quality apprenticeships, and other work experience schemes that address skills mismatches. Awareness about risks, a secure path in the school-to-work transition, opportunities in the labour markets, and rights at work will be promoted including through school curricula.
9. **Promoting labour market policies, combining active labour market policies (ALMPs) and social protection measures:** The focus will be on the development of effective strategies that combine ALMPs with social protection measures, including unemployment benefits, and expanding outreach of effective labour market institutions, including employment services. Employment activation measures will be fostered, particularly for youth from disadvantaged backgrounds and young women, ensuring equal access to decent jobs.
10. **Combining immediate action with long-term policy interventions:** In recognition of the urgent need to achieve better youth employment outcomes, as well as achieving sustainable results and impact, the Global Accelerator will be implemented through a combination of time-bound actions and policy interventions addressing both cyclical and structural economic and social issues, and new emerging trends.
11. **Complementarity and coherence between public policies and private sector initiatives:** Recognizing the key role of the private sector in job creation, youth-related actions of the Global Accelerator will actively engage the private sector and promote complementarity and coherence between public policy and private investment.
12. **Involvement of organizations representing the interests of young people:** The Global Accelerator will facilitate the involvement of these organizations in relevant policy and planning discussions by pursuing active engagement with organizations that represent young people and their interests in rural and urban areas.

13. **Focus on achieving impact at the country level and pursuing regional perspectives, where appropriate:** The Global Accelerator will be practically minded and focused on the end goal of achieving impact on the ground. The mobilization of and engagement with the UN's country-based presence and coordination mechanisms is of key importance.
14. **Leveraging existing platforms and lessons learned:** The Global Accelerator will build on past and/or existing youth employment networks and platforms, including those implemented through South-South and triangular cooperation mechanisms.
15. **Expanded multi-stakeholder partnerships:** The implementation of the Global Accelerator will involve multi-stakeholder partnerships, both within and outside the UN system. Partners will bring their own expertise and added value and will engage from the initial phase of the Initiative and throughout its implementation.

Supporting documents/publications

- ILO – [Call for Action on Youth Employment \(2012\)](#)
- ILO – [Youth Employment Action Plan 2020-2030](#)
- Decent Jobs for Youth [website](#), [brochure](#) and [strategy](#)
- Decent Jobs for Youth – [Thematic Plan on Youth in Hazardous Occupations \(2022\)](#)
- Decent Jobs for Youth – [Thematic Plan on Digital Skills \(2022\)](#)
- Decent Jobs for Youth – [Thematic Plan on Green Jobs for Youth \(2017\)](#)
- Decent Jobs for Youth – [Thematic Plan on Quality Apprenticeships \(2017\)](#)
- Decent Jobs for Youth – [Thematic Plan on Decent Jobs for Youth in the Rural Economy \(2017\)](#)
- Decent Jobs for Youth – [Thematic Plan on Decent Jobs for Youth in Fragile Situations \(2017\)](#)
- Decent Jobs for Youth – [Thematic Plan on Entrepreneurship and Self-Employment \(2017\)](#)
- Decent Jobs for Youth – [Thematic Plan on Youth Transition to the Formal Economy \(2017\)](#)
- [Youth Foresight Knowledge Facility](#)
- [Rights@Work 4 Youth: Decent Work for Young People, Facilitator's Guide and Toolkit](#)