

Youth voices from Asia and the Pacific

Messages from the youth consultations



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Foreword

Forty-five per cent of unemployed young people worldwide – more than 34 million people – are in Asia and the Pacific. Young people in this region are up to six times more likely to be unemployed than adults. They suffer more often from poor working conditions, including long hours, short-term or informal contracts, low pay, little or no social protection, minimal training and no voice at work. Young migrant workers, indigenous people and those who live with HIV/AIDS are particularly vulnerable.

As the global economic crisis persists the International Labour Organization (ILO) *World of Work Report 2012 – Better Jobs for a Better Economy* points to youth unemployment rates that have increased in about 80 per cent of advanced and two-thirds of developing economies since 2007. According to the report, “this has huge economic costs in terms of loss of skills and motivation, and could lead to human capital depreciation. There may also be accompanying social implications in terms of increased social strife, riots, illness, and so forth”.

Asia-Pacific may be leading the global economic recovery but this economic performance is not ‘job-rich’ and the region’s youth population is growing faster than jobs are being created. The increasing size of the informal sector highlights that this is also an issue of the quality of employment, not just quantity. Resolving the youth employment crisis requires giving priority to job-intensive growth, and placing women and men at the heart of coordinated policies and actions.

As the United Nations (UN) specialized agency dealing with work-related issues, the ILO has addressed this question by organizing more than 45 youth consultation events worldwide – including 13 in Asia-Pacific between December 2011 and May 2012. These events gave young people and policy makers an unprecedented opportunity to meet, discuss issues and suggest policies, in a spirit of openness and unity, cutting through different social backgrounds and generations. I hope these events will show the value of directly involving young people in policymaking and help set a precedent for the future.

This report was prepared by Ms Steffi Jochim with the guidance of Mr Matthieu Cognac, ILO Youth Employment Specialist, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, with the support of the ILO country offices and, of course, the many young women and men who shared their personal youth employment stories.

Let us make their voices resonate at the 101st International Labour Conference and beyond.

Thetis Mangahas
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Abbreviations

ACFTU	All-China Federation of Trade Unions
ACYF	All-China Youth Federation
AEC	ASEAN Economic Community
APL	Alliance of Progressive Labor (Philippines)
APYouthNet	Asia-Pacific Youth Employment Knowledge Network
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
BWSC	Bureau of Workers with Special Concerns (Philippines)
B'Yeah	Bangladesh Youth Enterprise Advice and Help Center
BYLC	Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center
CAMFEBA	Cambodian Federation of Employers and Business Associations
CO-Bangkok	ILO Country Office for Thailand, Cambodia and Lao People's Democratic Republic
DOLE	Department of Labor and Employment (Philippines)
DYD	Department of Youth Development (Bangladesh)
ECOT	Employers' Confederation of Thailand
EFC	Employers' Federation of Ceylon
EFP	Employers' Federation of Pakistan
GDP	gross domestic product
GIP	Government Internship Program
HIV/AIDS	human immunodeficiency virus and acquired immune deficiency syndrome
ICT	information and communications technology
ILC	International Labour Conference
ILO	International Labour Organization
IYE!	Indonesian Young Entrepreneurship
JCI	Junior Chamber International
JEJAKMU	Jejaring Lapangan Kerja Bagi Kaum Muda Indonesia
JSS	Jan Shikshan Sansthan
KAB	Know About Business
K.I. Asia	Kenan Institute Asia
KILM	Key Indicators of the Labour Market
LED	light emitting diodes
LFS	labour force survey
LMIC	National Centre of Labour Market Information and Forecasting (Viet Nam)
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MES	Modular Employability Skills Framework
MFI	micro finance institution
MOEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
MOL	Ministry of Labour (Thailand)
MOLISA	Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (Viet Nam)
MOLVT	Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (Cambodia)
MoRD	Ministry of Rural Development (India)
MOYA&SD	Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development (Sri Lanka)
MOYS	Ministry of Youth and Sports (Bangladesh)
NYSC	National Youth Services Council
NGO	non-governmental organization

NSO	National Statistics Office
NYC	National Youth Commission (Philippines)
NYEF	National Youth Employment Forum (Cambodia)
PacificYES	Pacific Youth Employment Strategy
PIF	Pacific Islands Forum
PISBNDN	University of Guam Pacific Island Small Business Development Centre Network
PYC	Pacific Youth Council
RO-Asia and the Pacific	ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
SDC	Skill Development Council (Pakistan)
SEI	Social Entrepreneur Incubator
SGSY	Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (India)
SME	small and medium-sized enterprise
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
SPES	Special Program for Employment of Students
TL	Timor-Leste
TLYP	Timor-Leste Youth Parliament
TVET	technical and vocational education and training
TVTC	Thondaman Vocational Training Centre (Sri Lanka)
TYPN	Thai Young Philanthropist Network
UCEP	Underprivileged Children's Education Programme (Bangladesh)
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNPFA	United Nations Population Fund
YBC	Youth Business China
YBSL	Youth Business Sri Lanka
YEN	Youth Employment Network
YEP	Youth Employment and Social Dialogue Project
YES	Youth Engagement Services
YE–YE	Youth Education–Youth Employability Project
Yi	Young Indians Programme

ILO Youth Employment Month, Global Youth Forum and Youth Employment at the 101st International Labour Conference

Youth unemployment has reached unprecedented levels and will be the main theme of the 101st International Labour Conference (ILC) in June 2012. Recognizing that the youth must be part of the solution, the ILC will hear from young people and reflect on their ideas and experience in the debate. To this end, the ILO has consulted young people from around the globe with a series of events which will culminate in the Youth Employment Forum in May 2012, to be attended by some one hundred representatives from employers', workers' and youth organizations from around the world.

As part of the Global Youth Consultations, 13 national youth employment events took place in Asia and the Pacific. The aim of these events was to discuss challenges and identify good practices for youth employment in the region.

This report summarises the key messages and youth employment practices from the events in: Indonesia and Timor-Leste (27 March); Thailand (28 March); Philippines (29 March); Viet Nam (29 March); China (7 April); Bangladesh (8 April); Pakistan (11 April); India (20 April); Sri Lanka (26 April); and the Pacific Island Countries and Territories (10–11 May). Although not officially part of the Global Youth Consultations, this report also includes messages from the Cambodia National Youth Employment Forum (NYEF) (15–16 December 2011), the Special Panel Discussion on youth employment at the ILO Office for Japan/Japan Association for Advancement of ILO Activities Symposium commemorating World Day of Social Justice (22 February 2012) and the South Asian regional event ROTASIA 2012 (26–29 January 2012).

“Normally when we need to know about something we go to the experts, but we tend to forget that when we want to know about youth and what they feel and what they want, that we should talk to them.”

Kofi Annan, Former United Nations Secretary-General

The most important message from the Asia-Pacific region as a whole is that young people want to continue to be part of the solution and that they are deeply committed to working with their governments, social partners and stakeholders from the civil society to tackle the youth jobs crisis. Young people in Asia and the Pacific want to play an active role in creating their own futures and the futures of their countries. The participants overwhelmingly agreed that there was a strong need to coordinate and synchronize policies and efforts and to build national and regional coalitions for youth employment. There was strong agreement among the more than 1,000 participants from across the region that education and skills played a key role for preparing young people for the world of work and for building competitive and sustainable economies. University students and young informal workers alike emphasized that they were willing to learn new skills and explore new training opportunities. There was broad consensus that it was critical to give youth the skills they needed to find decent and productive work through investing in education and training and making sure that the skills match the present and future demands of the labour market. Finally, the young people in this region feel very strongly about providing equal education and employment opportunities to women and men and to design policies and programmes that address the needs of the most vulnerable youth.

Youth employment in Asia and the Pacific

Asia-Pacific is an incredibly diverse region. It is home to some of the world's most advanced economies (e.g. Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand and Singapore), newly industrialized economies (e.g., China, India, Indonesia Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand) as well as some of the world's least developed countries (e.g., Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Timor-Leste, Myanmar, Nepal and many of the Pacific Island countries). The region comprises the world's most populous countries, China and India, as well as countries with very small populations such as Kiribati and the Maldives. Accordingly, the issue of youth employment looks very different across the region. For instance, Asia-Pacific faces a distinct problem of being a region in which an ageing society overlaps with an ongoing youth bulge. Furthermore, high rates of social inequality (and resulting inequality in access to education and training) in the region indicates a co-existence of structurally heterogeneous youth employment problems within countries. A commonality for most parts of the region, however, remains the issue of gender equality in the youth labour market. In all subregions, except East Asia, the unemployment rate is higher for young women than for men, and the youth labour force participation rate and employment-to-population ratio are significantly lower for young women than young men. Asia-Pacific's young women are also more likely to work in low-wage, labour-intensive and informal sectors of the economy.

Asia-Pacific is a very young region. It is home to 55 per cent of the total world population of youth (aged 15 to 24) and accounts for 45 per cent of the world's unemployed youth. In 2010, there were some 33.7 million unemployed young Asians. The youth unemployment rate was 13.6 per cent in South-East Asia and the Pacific, 8.8 per cent in East Asia and 9.9 per cent in South Asia. Youth were almost five times more likely to be unemployed than adults in South-East Asia and the Pacific, 2.7 times in East Asia and 4.5 times in South Asia.¹ However, there are great differences in youth unemployment within the subregions. In the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), for instance, the youth unemployment rates range from 2.23 per cent in Thailand to 22.2 per cent in Indonesia.² And even on the national level, the quantity and quality of youth employment varies between regions and particularly between urban and rural areas. While youth unemployment is generally higher in urban areas, more of the young workers in rural areas are facing issues of vulnerable employment and underemployment.

In order to fully understand the youth employment challenge in Asia-Pacific, one must look beyond the figures which are notorious for not reflecting the full scope of the problem.

Most young persons in the region have no or very limited access to social security or families to support them. A lack of comprehensive pension systems in many countries in the region puts the burden of supporting families on the young generation – most young people simply cannot afford the 'luxury' of being openly unemployed. The high employment-to-population ratios of youth in the poorest regions reflect the fact that the poor must go into whatever source of livelihood available. This often includes vulnerable employment with low wages, low productivity and no social protection. Consequently, in the Asian countries for which data is available, working poverty is significantly higher for young workers than for adult workers. Globally, 24 per cent of all working poor are youth.

In more advanced economies, many young people are opting out of the labour market, 'hiding out' in the education system or are too discouraged to actively search for a job. A problem faced by countries across the region is the apparent mismatch between the skills obtained in the formal education system and the skills needed in the labour market.

APYouthNet



(Asia-Pacific Youth Employment Knowledge Network)

APYouthNet is the first and only regional knowledge network on youth employment in Asia and the Pacific. Established by the ILO and its constituents from the governments, workers' and employers' organizations in 2008, the network brings together more than 800 youth employment experts, policy makers, practitioners and, of course, youth themselves. The Global Youth Consultations have demonstrated that there is a large pool of theoretical and practical knowledge on youth employment throughout the region. The aim of the APYouthNet is to systematically capture this knowledge and to leverage best practices by informing future initiatives and policy development. The network also facilitates and stimulates exchanges of ideas and experiences between regional stakeholders through e-discussions, podcasts and message boards. This allows members to access the combined work experience and expertise of its members. The APYouthNet also promotes timely and youth-friendly forms of social dialogue.

<http://ap-youthnet.ilobkk.org>

¹ ILO. 2011. Key indicators of the labour market 7th edition (Geneva).

² Sources: Thailand Labour Force Survey (2011); Indonesia Labour Force Survey (2009)

Political commitment to youth employment

At the 99th ILC in 2010, the Informal Meeting of Ministers of Labour and Social Affairs focused on the topic of youth employment in crisis. The UN declared an International Year of Youth which began in August 2010. In November 2011, leaders of the G20 committed to renew efforts to promote decent jobs for youth.

The political commitment to tackling the youth employment challenge is no less impressive in Asia and the Pacific. In 2011, the President of Indonesia called for a “Global Coalition on Youth Employment” at the 100th ILC. In September 2011, at the 42nd Pacific Islands Forum in Auckland, New Zealand, the Pacific leaders explicitly recognised the need for the development of a regional framework for youth employment and reaffirmed their strong commitment to creating decent

work opportunities for young women and men. Other regional groupings have also taken a number of initiatives to promote youth employment, for instance, the ASEAN cooperation on youth (overseen at the Ministerial level by an ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Youth). Most countries in the region have already made actions follow their political commitment and developed highly innovative and effective youth employment policies, action plans, programmes and projects. Despite the differences between approaches to tackling youth employment, there is broad agreement across the region that any successful youth employment initiative must be implemented together with the social partners and in systematic and continued consultations with young people. The events presented in this report are part of this ongoing and systematic youth consultation process.



Bangladesh National Conference on Youth Employment Dhaka, 8 April 2012

Quick facts: Bangladesh

Population: 162.2 million (2)
 Youth population: 30.17 million (3)
 Youth unemployment: 9.3% (1)
 Female youth unemployment rate: 13.6% (1)
 Male youth unemployment rate: 8% (1)
 Youth labour force participation rate: 59.2% (3)

Sources: (1) Labour Force Survey (2005); (2) UNdata (2009);
 (3) ILO estimates (2010)



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The National Conference on Youth Employment in Bangladesh was organized by the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYS) and the ILO Country Office for Bangladesh and was attended by more than one hundred participants including youth organizations and young people themselves.

Based on the official definition of youth in Bangladesh (18 to 35), about one third of the country's population are youth. Given the fact that young people are the overwhelming majority of unemployed and underemployed, creating jobs for a vast number of young people is the single largest challenge for Bangladesh.

The youth labour force has increased from 13.1 million in 2000 to 19.3 million in 2010 with an additional 1.84 million young people entering the job market every year.

There was strong agreement among the participants that the key to utilizing Bangladesh's demographic window of opportunity lies with equipping young people with the skills required by both the domestic and international markets. While most migrant workers are below the age of 35, 60 per cent of all migrant workers are low-skilled or unskilled. With a declining demand in low-skilled workers by the host countries, Bangladesh is likely to face an increase in youth unemployment unless it can cater to the increasing demand for higher skilled workers. The participants emphasized the need for greater coordination between various government agencies and international organizations which run their own skill development programmes. Youth

leaders expressed the need for greater participation of young people in the policy making and in the design, formulation and implementation of programmes for the youth.

The essential role of skill development for unlocking the entrepreneurial potential of youth was demonstrated by two graduates from the Department of Youth Development's (DYD) training programmes who shared their personal experiences of how the training programmes enabled them to become successful youth entrepreneurs. In this context, the participants strongly supported an expansion of entrepreneurship training, SME financing mechanisms, financial education opportunities, and removal of barriers and constraints that young entrepreneurs face.

Youth employment policies in Bangladesh

The Government of Bangladesh adopted the National Youth Policy in 2003 and is presently implementing its sixth five year plan (2011–15) which focuses on job creation as one of the strategies to reduce poverty. The target is to absorb about 9.2 million people over the next five years.

Youth employment Initiatives in Bangladesh

The Government carries out programmes for youth employment through the Department of Youth Development (DYD) and its network of offices at district and subdistrict levels. It operates 111 training centres throughout the country and about 227,000 youth were trained in the year 2009–10 in those centres. Thus, DYD remains the single largest actor in promoting youth employment in Bangladesh including implementation of the national youth policy.

Underprivileged Children's Education Programme (UCEP)

The UCEP (NGO which is supported by several international donors) provides a combination of education and skills training for the underprivileged youth. Because of an effective and sound training model, 95 per cent of its graduates find jobs within six months of graduation from the programme.

Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC)

BRAC is an NGO which is present in all 64 districts of Bangladesh, with over 7 million microfinance group members, 37,500 non-formal primary schools and more than 70,000 health volunteers. BRAC employs over 120,000 people, the majority of whom are women. BRAC operates programmes in many areas, including: microfinance; enterprise training; and non-formal primary education.

(www. <http://www.brac.net/>)

Bangladesh Youth Enterprise Advice & Help Center (B'Yeah)

B'Yeah is a not-for-profit organisation and part of the Youth Business International Network. It was established in 2007 with the aim of supporting young Bangladeshis who want to start their own business, and to enable young people to realise their dream of becoming successful entrepreneurs.

Youth voice from Bangladesh



© Sarah Nahar Chowdhury

**Sarah Nahar Chowdhury, 21, student
Dhaka, Bangladesh**

Just a while back, I wouldn't have bothered asking myself "What am I doing for my country?" but, lately, I realized that each one of us has got a role to play no matter where we are or who we are. Although I have managed to get into engineering to pursue my goal to be a researcher, I felt that it was high time I thought out of the box and contributed to my country's development.

After joining the Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center (BYLC), I realized that in most cases of our lives, we focus on technical solutions but sometimes change in our behavior and outlook gives more sustainable solutions – and that signifies effective leadership. After being trained on a four months long leadership training programme at BYLC, I tried to soak up the techniques and tools to exercise leadership. As a part of my programme, just with a small grant from a daily newspaper, along with five other members, we started to work on a project plan of educating the young dwellers of one of the largest slums of Bangladesh. We conducted classes on science, mathematics and showed various science experiments to make them enthusiastic about education. We also established a small library for book lovers and out-of-school youth in the slum.

I am still working to instill the concept of leadership, entrepreneurship and active citizenship among young people and to bring about a change in their mindsets which allows them to address the pressing problems with innovative rather than self-centered solutions.

I believe we are visionaries and realists who should take active participation in public affairs. But the idea of social participation should be propagated in such a way that we don't just trace out the narrow sullied lanes of the slums as donors but as change-makers of the society.

(<http://www.bylc.org/>)



Cambodia National Youth Employment Forum Phnom Penh, 15–16 December 2011

Quick facts: Cambodia

Population: 13.4 million (2)
 Youth population: 3 million (2)
 Youth unemployment rate: 3.44% (1)
 Female youth unemployment rate: 3.5% (1)
 Male youth unemployment rate: 3.3% (1)
 Youth labour force participation: 73.2% (1)

Sources: (1) Labour Force Survey (2008); (2) General Population Census (2008)



H.E. Dr Hun Manet, Cambodian Youth Ambassador

The Cambodia National Youth Employment Forum

was organized under the leadership and coordination of the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MOLVT) together with Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MOEYS), in consultation with the UN Resident Coordinator Office, and in cooperation with UN country team members including the ILO. The Forum gathered around 300 key stakeholders working around and directly with youth employment and youth enterprises in Cambodia.

Cambodia stands out as one of the most youthful countries of the Asia-Pacific region, with nearly 60 per cent of the population being younger than 24 years. This large youth population with fewer children and elderly family members to support is now entering the labour market and will remain active for the next 30 to 40 years. Whether this large young labour force will be a blessing or a burden will depend to

a great extent on their opportunities to acquire skills that will be rewarded in the labour market. Cambodia's relatively low (youth) unemployment rate reflects the need of young people to take on whatever job in the absence of effective safety nets. Actual youth unemployment mainly affects young people with higher education levels in urban areas.

Numerous national and international resource persons, including senior policy makers of the region, representatives from the private sector and successful young entrepreneurs participated in the three sessions on productive employment; effective labour market information; and entrepreneurship and skill development.

At the group work, the participants, mostly young women and men, identified key priority areas for the Action Plan on youth employment to be implemented by the Government in response to the National Policy on Cambodian Youth Development which was approved by the Government on 24 June 2011. The key priorities include: i) improvement of labour market information; ii) provision of skills training; iii) promotion of internships and volunteerism; iv) promotion of the key sectors of agriculture, tourism and information technology; v) enhancement of basic skills to primary and secondary school students; vi) providing entrepreneurship opportunities for youth; vii) provision of equal rights and access to education and skills training, including to people with disability; and viii) strengthening the capacity of youth including soft skills, languages and networks.

Cambodia is currently developing a National Employment Strategy with a strong focus on youth.

Youth employment policies in Cambodia

The Cambodia National Youth Policy signifies the commitment of the Government to address youth challenges. A Cambodian National Council for Youth Development is given the responsibility of coordinating public and private institutions and civil society and the monitoring of the youth action plan. The Government has also created a National Employment Agency which is tasked with providing effective and efficient labour market services especially for young people.

Youth employment initiatives in Cambodia

Youth Employment and Social Dialogue project (YEP)

With the financial support from the Norwegian Government, the Cambodian Federation of Employers and Business Associations (CAMFEBA) and ILO's Bureau for Employers' Activities jointly implemented the YEP under the Social Dialogue programme. To ensure that the social partners play a key role in promoting youth employment, CAMFEBA set up a tripartite Project Advisory Committee with members from the Government, employers, trade unions, NGOs, universities and donor agencies. The YEP aims to promote better dialogue between all relevant stakeholders so that they can jointly address Cambodia's youth employment challenge by promoting job opportunities for youth through matching supply and demand in skills.

Junior Chamber International (JCI) Cambodia

JCI Cambodia is a membership-based non-profit organization of young entrepreneurs aged 18 to 40, which seeks to provide development opportunities that empower young people to create positive change.

<http://www.jcicambodia.com/>

Youth voice from Cambodia



© Neang Sovathana

Neang Sovathana, 25, trainer and organizer Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Eleven years ago, I started my first work which was a volunteer translator for a group of Singaporean students. I was 14 years old at that time, studying at tenth grade in high school. I remember how scared I was to speak English with total strangers. I survived a month with them in a village spending our time repainting a primary school. A month with them has given me English language skills which would have taken me a year in my English class. That's when I started to believe in "street smart learning" and that it doesn't cost much or even nothing at all to gain experiences. A year later, I have gotten a scholarship for a youth exchange programme in Sweden. I returned from the programme after six months and continued to join social activities with a lot of NGOs in my hometown Kampong Cham. Right after my school, I applied to be an English teacher at a kindergarten where I earned US\$ 15 per month.

I'm 25 years old now, working several jobs at the same time, for instance, accountant, trainer, organizer, translator, MC, counselor, singer and dancer. How much education do I have? Well, I haven't finished a Bachelor's degree yet. I have always been a believer of education; but, my definition of education doesn't always come with a school certificate. It is about experience, confidence, vocational training, and making mistakes and learning from them. Certificates may be one of the qualifications employers look for when they recruit staff. However, certificates do not always indicate how capable a person actually is.

Cambodian young people are in need of re-thinking their definition of education and start to value informal education and vocational training. Having a clear goal of what you want to do in the future is a good idea; however, never underestimate your potential. People do have more than one skill. Like me, being 25 years old, I am earning enough to take care of my whole family. This is because I have never limited my potential. I am open to new talent discovery, give it a try, and never stop believing in myself. It is hard to find a job, but if you are good enough, jobs will find you.



China Youth Employment Consultation Beijing, 7 April 2012

Quick facts: China

Population: 1.3 billion (2)

Youth population: 225.3 million (1)

Youth labour force participation rate: 61.9% (1)

Sources: (1) ILO estimates (2010); (2) National Bureau of Statistics of China (2011)



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The China Youth Employment Consultation Event

took place at the China Agricultural University and was attended by more than 80 students, representatives from government agencies, social partners and youth organizations.

Since China's higher education system reform in 1999, the number of university students grew rapidly, from 1.17 million in 2001 to 6.6 million in 2011. However, many graduates face difficulties finding decent work after leaving university. This is partly due to the mismatch between the requirement and nature of available jobs and the education programmes of the universities. Many students raised concerns over the time conflict between school classes and employment supportive programmes, such as internships and career guidance courses. However, it was also mentioned that there is an "aspiration mismatch" in which many young people in China preferred to work in government agencies or state-owned enterprises

despite the fact that 75 per cent of all new labour entrants in urban areas are absorbed by SMEs.

The participating stakeholders recommended that university career guidance centres should be strengthened to provide students with effective employment guidance including career planning, techniques for job applications, preparation for job interviews, etc. It was also recommended that universities should provide skills training courses in line with market needs. Moreover, participants highlighted the role of social dialogue in tackling China's youth employment challenge.

In the session on self-employment, three recent graduates shared their stories about starting their own businesses. Although they had dreams of having their own business, it was not easy. It required not only financial resources but also social networks. Although some had experienced failure, they were still exploring opportunities. They mentioned that it was important to have a training base/ business incubator for potential business starters to enable them to put into practice their business ideas, guide them on fund-raising and help them get loans. In this context it was recommended that the Government and social partners should strengthen information sharing on existing micro-finance mechanisms and available assistance.

It was also suggested that the cooperation between universities and enterprises should be improved. Efforts should be undertaken to involve more enterprises to actively participate in university events and career fairs.

Youth employment policies in China

China implemented a range of policies which aim to improve employment and employability especially for young migrant workers and recent graduates. In this context, vocational skills accreditation institutions assess the skills of migrant workers after they have completed training. In addition, public employment service agencies provide free services to young migrant workers, including career counselling, job placement and labour market information. The key measures adopted by the Government to promote employment for university graduates are: i) expansion of employment areas and jobs suitable for university graduates; ii) encouraging and guiding graduates to work at the grassroots level supporting rural education, agricultural construction and rural medical services; iii) encourage graduates to work in SMEs; iv) promotion of youth entrepreneurship; and v) internship programmes that encourage in-house training within enterprises.

Youth employment initiatives in China

Youth Business China (YBC)

YBC was initiated by the All-China Youth Federation (ACYF), the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce and other agencies in 2003. YBC provides business mentoring, seed money, skills training and network support to young entrepreneurs. YBC helps young people who are unemployed, underemployed and have a viable business idea but who lack business experience and access to seed money. In 2005, YBC was accredited as the best practice programme by UN YEN Office China.

(<http://www.ybc.org.cn/>)

All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU)

The ACFTU maintains a hotline “12351” where university students can get information on available vocational training programmes and employment services. The ACFTU also offers entrepreneurship training and assistance, including small loans for business start-ups, not only to university graduates but also to other and more vulnerable groups. The ACFTU has also established a special assistance programme called “Golden Autumn Grants” which offers support to university students from both urban and rural areas whose families have financial difficulties.

(<http://www.acftu.org.cn/>)

Youth voice from China



© Wang Rui

Wang Rui, 21, undergraduate student at Chengdu Vocational and Technical College, China

I was born into a poor rural family of Mingshan County of Sichuan Province. While my mother has always been a farmer, my father used to be a migrant worker until he got injured when I was three years old.

As my father could not work on the farm any more, my family had no choice but to open a convenience store that sells daily necessities in our village. Due to financial difficulties, I also had to work part time to support myself since I was a middle school student. Working in our family shop taught me basic entrepreneurial skills. I studied applied electrics at Chengdu Vocational and Technical College and decided to start my own business after graduation. Like before, I worked part time to earn a living. At the same time, I joined a business start-up programme on light emitting diodes (LED). After receiving Green Business Opportunities training courses by the ILO, I opened my Yu Chen Electrical and Technology Studio. Six months later, I developed a cost effective, stable and low power consumption LED drive.

During a study visit to a new energy enterprise specialized in solar batteries, I found out that the enterprise should further improve its product testing procedure. I noticed that there is no local auto-testing equipment in the market. I took the opportunity and started to develop the testing equipment. Several months later, the first testing equipment for a solar battery production line was developed. The equipment trialled successfully with a company and I am now in discussion with the company about an improvement scheme of its other production lines.

From my point of view, youth entrepreneurship is one good way of solving the current youth employment crisis in China. By doing this myself, not only could I earn my own income but I could also offer job opportunities for more young women and men.

(Original translated from Chinese.)



India Youth Employment Forum
Decent Work for Youth in India
New Delhi, 20 April 2012

Quick facts: India

Population: 1.2 billion (2)
 Youth population (1)
 Youth unemployment rate: 10.5% (1)
 Female youth unemployment rate: 10.8% (1)
 Male youth unemployment rate: 10.4% (1)
 Youth labour force participation rate: 46.7% (1)
 Female youth labour force participation rate: 28.1% (1)
 Male youth labour force participation rate: 63.9% (1)

Sources: (1) Labour Force Survey (2005); (2) UNdata (2009)



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The ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team for South Asia and Country Office for India and the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE), the Government of India, hosted a National Youth Employment Forum with the aim to raise awareness on India's youth employment challenge. The event brought together over 160 stakeholders, including the Union Minister of Labour and Employment, Mr. Mallikarjun Kharge, other representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sport, Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development, workers' and employers' organizations, academia, student leaders, UN/bilateral agencies, civil society organizations and the media.

India has the largest youth population in the world with around 66 per cent of the total population under the age of 35. However, the meeting emphasized that many young people were dropping out of school without skills demanded by employers, resulting in a large pool of unskilled youth, alongside skills shortages in many sectors, especially in urban areas. Participants also stressed that young people are not an heterogeneous group; rather, specific groups face greater challenges in accessing both education/training and job opportunities, including school drop-outs, young women, youth living in rural areas, and disadvantaged castes and tribes.

As stressed by all participants, skills development is crucial for taking advantage of the demographic dividend in India. In this context, a range of participants indicated that vocational training needs to be part of formal education and that the capacity of training institutions needs to be improved. Young business leaders underscored that it is important to develop an entrepreneurial approach in order to create more jobs for youth. Young people working in the informal economy also proposed that banks should provide loans on a profit-sharing basis, which would be matched by mentoring and training. At a policy level, there needs to be coherence between macroeconomic policies, skills development, and active labour market programmes.

Youth employment initiatives in India

Modular Employable Skills, Skills Development Initiative

The Modular Employability Skills Framework (MES) is being implemented by MoLE through the Skill Development Initiative to focus on short-course skills upgrading and multi-skilling, through training that is demand-driven. In total, 1,260 MES courses have been developed and are currently being implemented by over 6,400 registered vocational training providers. Since 2007, almost 1.4 million persons have benefited from the national scheme.

Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY)

Under the umbrella of MoRD's SGSY, the Special Projects for Skill Development of Rural Youths was designed to equip unemployed rural youths from poor households with marketable skills, which would enable them to either secure placement in industry or pursue self-employment opportunities. The placement-linked skills development programme was taken up on a pilot basis through public-private partnerships. Soft skills are also imparted to beneficiaries to cope with the transition from an agrarian setting to working in industry. In view of the success of the pilot projects, which trained 600,000 beneficiaries, efforts are being made to scale up programme targeting rural youth.

Young Indians Programme (Yi)

In 2002, the Confederation of Indian Industry launched the Yi in with an objective of creating a platform for young Indians. Yi works for: promoting leadership skills of its members through a range of learning programmes; the development and engagement of students in schools and colleges through its 61 Student Net platforms which engage more than 4,000 students from various educational institutions across India; and a Farmers Net platform that has enrolled 8,500 young and progressive farmers from all across the country, providing them with real time agricultural inputs and know-how.

Prayas

Prayas was founded in 1988 in response to a large fire in New Delhi that destroyed a slum in the Jahangirpuri area. It now operates 231 centres including 11 homes for children across the country serving about 50,000 beneficiaries, marginalized children and over 11,000 youth and women addressing multiple issues, including: vocational and life skills training; empowering women through self-help groups and income-generation programmes; promotion of entrepreneurship; facilitating credit through bank linkages; and also direct microfinance operations. One scheme, Prayas' Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS) (Institute of People's Education), offers

Youth voice from India



**Poonam, 24, dress maker
New Delhi, India**

I am 24 years old and I am living in a slum cluster in the outskirts of Delhi. My father is a poor daily wage earner who struggled to support our family of six.

After I passed the tenth class, I started to support my family with any odd jobs I could find. I have then passed 12th class in self-study through an open school facility.

Two years ago, I came in contact with the Prayas organization. I have learned dress making – designing and stitching clothes – by attending a course. I would like to open my own tailoring shop once I can afford to buy a sewing machine. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to get a business start-up loan from banks. The government should encourage banks to provide loans to young entrepreneurs on a profit-sharing basis instead of collateral. I think banks should also provide loans to young entrepreneurs on a profit-sharing basis instead of collateral. Banks should also share knowledge and business skills to youth before they embark on their entrepreneurship journey. In addition, I think children should be given access to vocational training and entrepreneurship skills in schools.

(Original translated from Hindi.)

vocational training in 40 trades in course modules ranging in duration from seven days to three months. Prayas JSS also performs the role of a facilitator, securing access to traditional banking channels for their youth beneficiaries, and it provides them technical assistance and support services such as identification of livelihood opportunities and upgrading of their vocational skills. Till date, around 3,500 beneficiaries have been placed.



Indonesia and Timor-Leste Youth Employment Forum

Voices of youth – Facing the Global Challenge on Youth Employment
Jakarta, 27 March 2012

Quick facts: Indonesia & Timor-Leste

Indonesia population: 237.6 million
 Indonesia youth population: 43.1 million
 Indonesia youth unemployment rate: 22.2%
 Indonesia female youth unemployment rate: 21.6%
 Indonesia male youth unemployment rate: 23%
 Indonesia youth labour force participation: 54%
 Timor-Leste population: 1.1 million
 Timor-Leste youth population: 221,000
 Timor-Leste youth unemployment rate: 23.86%
 Timor-Leste female youth unemployment rate: 23.96%
 Timor-Leste male youth unemployment rate: 23.8%
 Timor-Leste youth labour force participation: 30.87

Sources: Indonesia Labour Force Survey (2009); Timor-Leste Population and Housing Census (2010)



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The tripartite Indonesia and Timor-Leste Youth Employment Forum was organized by the ILO Country Office for Indonesia and was attended by 90 stakeholders from both countries.

Indonesia has the fourth largest youth population in the world and records one of the highest youth unemployment rates in the Asia-Pacific region with almost one in four youth being out of work. Young Indonesians are five times more likely to be unemployed than adults. Timor-Leste, on the other hand, has a very small youth population (221,000) but is one of the region's youngest populations with 75 per cent of its population being below the age of 30. Youth unemployment is particularly high in urban areas with estimated youth unemployment rates of between 35 and 50 per cent in the

capital Dili (the definition of youth in Timor-Leste is 16 to 30 years).

Despite significant socio-economic differences between Indonesia and Timor-Leste, all participants agreed that entrepreneurship plays a central role in creating employment opportunities for youth. The stakeholders identified the following recommendations: i) include entrepreneurship training into secondary school curricula; ii) create a more favourable policy environment for start-ups; iii) provide easier access to finance for young people and expand microfinance institutions to rural areas; and iv) expand on business incubator and mentoring programmes. Moreover, the participants discussed the issues of school-to-work

transition and skills development as a main vehicle to address the youth employment crisis. There were strong calls for a closer cooperation and coordination between the education system and the world of work. Ideas which were discussed in this context included: i) aligning the content taught in schools and universities closer with the skills needed in the job market; ii) increasing the spending on education by local governments to develop skills needed in the local economies; and iii) improving and expanding on existing internship and apprenticeship programmes.

In the context of skills development, many participants noted the need for special training programmes and counselling for out-of-school youth.

Youth employment policies in Indonesia and Timor-Leste

Indonesia was one of the first lead countries of the United Nations Youth Employment Network (YEN). Indonesia's National Medium-Term Development Plan 2010–2014 includes a directive to overcome the youth employment challenge and the Office for the Acceleration of Poverty Reduction has been tasked to develop a Youth Employment Strategy. At the 101st ILC, the President of Indonesia called for a “Global Coalition for Youth Employment”.

In 2007, Timor-Leste approved its first National Youth Policy. The Policy recognises the role of young people in nation building, and outlines how ministries and civil society organizations can coordinate their work to harness young people's potential.

Youth employment initiatives in Indonesia and Timor-Leste

Timor-Leste Youth Parliament (TLYP)

The TLYP is a national institution aiming to promote youth participation in decision making at community and national level. The Parliament was inaugurated in 2010 and consists of 130 children and youth between the ages of 12 and 16.

Indonesian Young Entrepreneurship (IYE!)

The IYE! is a communication circle for all Indonesian established and aspiring young entrepreneurs. The network consists of about 5,000 members from various sectors. The IYE! was founded in 2005 as part of implementing the principles of the UN Global Compact in Indonesia, particularly for the younger generation.

Lapangan Kerja Bagi Kaum Muda Indonesia (JEJAKMU)

In February 2010, under the leadership of the National Development and Planning Agency, the Indonesia Youth Employment Knowledge Network was created under its Indonesian name JEJAKMU.
(<http://jejakmu.bappenas.go.id/>)

Youth Rights @ Work

Four Indonesian trade union confederations have jointly produced the Youth Rights @ Work: A Facilitator's Guide by and for Indonesian Trade Unions in order to reach out to youth in the formal and informal economy; increase awareness of their rights; empower youth to join a labour union; and to encourage them to take a stand for their rights.

Youth voice from Indonesia



© R. Maulana

Rendy Maulana, 24, youth entrepreneur, Bandung, Indonesia

I started my web-hosting business (PT Qwords Company International) in Bandung City when I was 18 years old. The basic idea was to provide people around me with an affordable web site to market their businesses. In the beginning, there were only a few friends who supported me and helped me marketing my web site through word of mouth. I didn't receive entrepreneurship training but I studied marketing management at university.

It was only 18 months after I started my business that I began recruiting staff. Just one year later, we expanded to eight employees, operating 24 hours with a shift system, and my web site is now within the top ten web hosting companies in Indonesia. We supported many people in having their businesses online and thus helped their businesses to grow and create jobs for others. This year, we are expanding our business to the Asia-Pacific region, currently setting up our business in Singapore.

All of this started from a small business at home. I believe our success comes from commitment, perseverance and a business with a good will - to help other people's business to grow. I did not get any help from an investor, venture capital, or even family when starting this business seven years ago. I started the business with a capital of merely 100 Dollars.

I'm hoping that I can motivate other young people to start their own business, helping to create jobs for others, and contributing to the development of our country. For this purpose I am currently mentoring in Creative Cultural Entrepreneurship as part of a Master of Business Administration programme.
(<http://www.Qwords.co.id>)

(Original translated from Indonesian.)



New Era of Social Justice in Asia

Special panel discussion:

The employment situation and challenges in Japan - Young persons' points of view

Tokyo, 22 February 2012

"Let us work together to balance the global economy and build a new social contract for the 21st century. Let us chart a development path that leads to greater social justice and the future we want."

*UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon
Message for the 2012 World Day of Social Justice*

A Symposium commemorating the World Day of Social Justice "A New Era of Social Justice in Asia" was co-hosted by the ILO Office for Japan and the Japan Association for Advancement of ILO Activities. A special panel discussion on youth employment in Japan took place as part of the Symposium. The majority of the panellists was below the age of 35 and included a representative from the All Tokyu Store Labour Union, private sector companies, an official from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare and students from the Faculty of Law, Aoyama Gakuin University. The panel was coordinated by Mr Masahiko Hayashi, Deputy Director, ILO Office for Japan.

Traditionally, young people (especially young men) in Japan used to be hired 'for life' upon graduation. However, since the 1990s recession, when companies began to reduce well-established graduate recruiting and training schemes, the number of young people who could not find permanent employment increased and many were forced to accept temporary or part-time employment. In addition, due to a shift in some of the young people's attitude to work, a number of graduates chose to defer permanent employment

Quick facts: Japan

Population: 128 million (2)
Youth population: 12.8 million (2)
Youth unemployment rate: 9.2% (1)
Adult unemployment rate: 4.7% (1)
Youth labour force participation: 43.2% (1)

Sources (1) Labour Force Survey (2010); (2) Population Census (2010)

and In terms of employment services, the panellists voiced concerns over the inefficiency of the job matching process through private web-based services for job searching of new graduates and it was noted that this may lead to young people losing motivation. It was recommended that these private employment navigation services provide applicants with background information on the companies with which they apply. In addition, it was mentioned that too much emphasis was placed on larger employers whereas more consideration should be given to SMEs as well.

Recent hiring procedures were criticised for what was perceived to be a lack of transparency. The panel also mentioned the issue of unfavourable recruitment procedures, whereby companies recruit a year ahead of students graduating, leading them to focus more on entry exams and reflecting less upon their career choices. It was recommended that employers be explicit about applicants' prospects for career development within their firms and that they communicate with their employees more effectively, including through social media. The panellists also tackled the issue of pay progression and the fact that it is either based on seniority or on performance, each presenting its own set of challenges. Finally, it was said that employers ought to design strategies to hire simultaneously graduates and mid-career professionals.

With regard to school-to-work transition processes, it was noted that the issue of high turnover rates among entry-level positions was related to a lack of exposure to the world of work at an early age. It was stressed that students needed better guidance and awareness, in the absence of which they had a tendency to become disillusioned. Meanwhile, On the Job Training mechanisms, which are well established in Japan, also presented mixed results due to the wide variety of employers involved as trainers. Nonetheless, the notions of "experimenting" work early through internships and workplace experience programmes was put forth as a decisive factor for improving Japan's youth employment situation.

Relating to precarious employment, it was noted that workplace pressure, high expectations and overwhelming levels of responsibility might explain why many young people preferred to engage in non-standard employment. The issue of work-life balance was raised in this context and said to weigh in the decision process of job applicants, more specifically for young women.

Youth employment policies and initiatives in Japan

The Japanese Government has introduced a series of reforms to address the problems of NEET and FREETERS. The reforms include setting up a residential training camp for discouraged youth, job cafes, one-stop service centre for young jobseekers, and the Job Card system which allows unemployed youth to receive practical job training from participating companies (the jobseekers are provided with a card indicating their training record and the company's evaluation of their vocational competencies).

In 2008, Japan also introduced an extensive employment subsidy scheme that hired school leavers who were cancelled a job offer or FREETERS between the ages of 25 to 34 on a full-time basis.

More recently, the Government has been preparing a new Youth Employment Strategy, expected to be launched in 2012.

Youth voice from Japan



© Wataru Kamihigashi

**Wataru Kamihigashi, 29,
legal intern with an international organization
Tokyo, Japan**

I'm working in a law firm, and also taking part in the international organization internship program. For getting my current job, I wrote a lot of applications or resumes and went through many job interviews. I was lucky because I could finally get it. Many young people in Japan are struggling to get jobs. When they want to start working after graduating from the university, they are required to submit applications or resumes to dozens of companies. In spite of all their efforts, they may not be able to get jobs. I heard that some of them even have mental disorder through their lengthy activity for getting jobs.

Most Japanese companies want to employ new graduates from university. If young people lose this only chance, they will be in difficult situations. The longer their unemployment period is, the more difficult it is for them to get jobs.

I often work till late at night, but I sometimes wonder if I am properly compensated for the long working hours. I suppose many young people are facing similar and more serious problems. If they don't have enough money and time, it ends up in limiting their opportunities and prospects for life. Recently, this problem has become more serious and has broader effects in Japan. Young people cannot get married nor have children because of their low income and being busy. I cannot help saying that they are losing their basic human rights and happiness.

I think young people should be able to enjoy not only life but also working. In order to improve our present life style, we need to continue to discuss what our society should do for the people.



Pakistan Youth Employment Forum
Contemporary Issues of
Youth Employment in Pakistan
Islamabad, 11 April 2012

Quick facts: Pakistan

Population: 180.8 million (3)
 Youth population: 37.26 million (2)
 Youth unemployment rate: 7.7% (1)
 Female youth unemployment rate: 10.5% (1)
 Male youth unemployment rate: 7% (1)
 Female youth labour force participation: 18.4% (1)
 Male youth labour force participation: 69.2% (1)

Sources: (1) Labour Force Survey (2008); (2) ILO estimates; (3) UNdata (2009)



On the policy level, the participants pointed out that policies and recommendations cannot be applied to the country as a whole but must take into account regional differences (for instance, Balochistan which is significantly poorer than Pakistan's other three provinces and needs special programmes). Similarly, the participating stakeholders identified a need to study youth employment issues and opportunities arising from the Eighteenth Amendment of the Constitution of Pakistan (April 2010) after which labour laws are no longer regulated on a federal level and became subject of provincial governments.

There was strong agreement to support job-rich economic sectors and that the private sector should be encouraged to be the main

driver of economic growth. The participants also agreed that self-employment should be promoted as a tool to create employment opportunities for youth. The stakeholders stressed the importance of entrepreneurship education before young people attempt to run their own businesses as this decreases the risk of failure.

The youth asked for their voice and visibility to be increased at every level of the policy making process as every policy affects their future. The youth participants recommended strengthening coordination mechanisms among relevant stakeholders in order to be able to participate more effectively in decision making processes.

The Forum was jointly organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the ILO Country Office for Pakistan.

Pakistan has a huge youth population; according to UNFPA projections, young people between 15 and 29 years will dominate Pakistan's population over the next 30 to 35 years. However, a large proportion (32 per cent) of youth is uneducated and has comparatively low skills levels. In 2008, secondary school enrolment rates were only 28.2 per cent for young women and 37.8 per cent for young men. In this context, the participants highlighted the importance of education and skills training for tackling Pakistan's youth employment challenge. Given the gender gap in education and employment, the participants emphasized the need to provide access to education to young girls, particularly in rural areas.

Youth employment policies in Pakistan

Pakistan's National Youth Policy (formulated in 2008) aims at creating a youth centric focus by integrating and coordinating the programmes of various ministries and institutions and providing overall guidance for youth development. The Plan of Action provides detailed measures for enabling youth employment, including promoting skills development and vocational training, entrepreneurship, micro-finance, internships, on-campus jobs and job placements and targeted action for marginalized and vulnerable youth. The UN System in Pakistan has made youth employment a priority area for the new development framework (One Programme-2).

Youth employment initiatives in Pakistan

Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Youth Development Programme

The programme offers a monthly stipend and access to training for 100,000 unemployed young persons in each province. The programme offers various skills development opportunities and job oriented certification courses to unemployed youth which they may adapt to local and international job markets. (<http://www.bbsydpindh.gov.pk/>)

Skill Development Council (SDC) Islamabad

The SDC Islamabad operates as a public-private partnership with active participation of Employers' Federation of Pakistan (EFP) and private sector businesses. The SDC Islamabad aims to identify, develop and arrange vocational, technical, professional and information and communications technology (ICT) training programmes. The training programmes are flexible, demand driven and cost effective with high participation from the EFP. The SDC Islamabad also offers tailor-made courses based on training needs assessment surveys.

(<http://www.sdc.com.pk/>)

Youth Enterprise Generator

The Youth Enterprise Generator was launched by the Youth Engagement Services (YES) Network Pakistan to find the most effective way to reach the largest number of young people with entrepreneurship education, social enterprise development services and project planning skills. It is open to all youth-serving educational and technical institutions in Pakistan.

(<http://www.yesnetworkpakistan.org>)

Youth voice from Pakistan



© Salma Butt

Salma Butt, 31, Head of Programmes, Bargad Gujranwala, Pakistan

I started working at the age of 16 years. From the very beginning, my opportunity to work in a microfinance network in rural areas led me to develop an interest in understanding income generation programmes. Soon after, I got a chance to be part of a youth led organization –Bargad – as a volunteer besides my educational pursuit. I received trainings and exposure from the organization through capacity building and eventually became a resource person for my organization. It allowed me a great deal to link my idea of income generation to employment opportunities for youth.

It further led me to be part of developing training manuals for youth on campus on soft skills gap as identified by the employers, namely workplace ethics, resumé writing and interview skills, communication skills, analytical skills, self-management, research methodology, teambuilding and confidence building. An internship program was introduced on the basis of the research to acquaint young graduates with the working environment and learn basics of office culture as well as field work.

A research based Employment Directory was developed to inform young potential employees the avenues and opportunities of employment within their area district Gujranwala.

Now I want to develop a youth employment model which combines technical skills, soft skills and active youth participation.

(<http://www.bargad.org.pk/>)



Philippines Youth Employment Forum
Any Time, Any Where Decent Work for
Filipino Youth
 Manila, 29 March 2012

Quick facts: Philippines

Population: 92 million (3)
 Youth population: 18.6 million (2)
 Youth unemployment rate: 17.6% (1)
 Female youth unemployment rate: 19.3% (1)
 Male youth unemployment rate: 16.2% (1)
 National unemployment rate: 7.4% (1)
 Youth labour force participation rate: 45.4% (1)
 Youth vulnerable employment: 33.3% (1)
 National vulnerable employment: 41.6% (1)

Sources: (1) Labour Force Survey (2011); (2) ILO estimates (2010); UNdata (2009)



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Eighty-seven highly motivated youth leaders and representatives met with Government officials, workers' and employers' organizations, academia and civil society organizations, in a Youth Employment Forum called "Any Time, Any Where: Decent Work for Young Filipinos". The Forum was organized by the ILO Country Office for the Philippines, Department of Labor and Employment's (DOLE) Bureau of Workers with Special Concerns (BWSC) and the National Youth Commission (NYC) in partnership with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Achievement Fund Joint Programme on "Alternatives to Migration: Decent Jobs for Filipino Youth" funded by the Government of Spain.

It was estimated that youth migrants aged 15 to 29 years comprised 34.6 per cent of the estimated 11.5 million overseas Filipinos living and working abroad. Due to the high number of Filipino labour migrants, the Forum put special emphasis on the link between youth employment and migration. There was broad agreement among all participating stakeholders that there are alternatives to migration and that

inclusive and job-rich growth was key to creating employment opportunities at home. However, the participants warned that one must not look at the quantity of employment only, and that the quality of jobs was a major issue for many young workers in the Philippines. In 2011, 2.27 million Filipino youth (33.3 per cent) between ages 15 to 24 were in vulnerable forms of employment defined as own account and unpaid family workers with jobs that have inadequate income, low productivity and lacked access to dialogue and social protection.

During the group work and plenary discussions, education and training were identified as playing a crucial role in preparing young women and men for employment. On the one hand, many young people were still missing out on quality education and training due to poverty and limited information on existing opportunities. Though the youth generally aspired to finishing school, insufficient financial resources have forced some of them to drop out of school and enter the workforce, exposing them to hazardous, unproductive and low-paid jobs.

On the other hand, many other young people could not find decent work despite their educational attainment because of the mismatch between the skills that they have acquired in the formal education system and those needed in the labour market. Apprenticeships and on-the-job training programs were put forward as meaningful measures to close the gap between schools and the world of work. In addition, the participants stressed the importance of access to reliable labour market information so youth can make informed education and career choices. The youth also suggested including education on labour rights in secondary school curricula to ensure that young workers are aware of their rights, thereby making them less vulnerable to exploitation.

National Action Plan (NAP) on Youth Employment and Migration

The event was also part of a series of consultations (beginning in 2010) on the NAP on Youth Employment and Migration. In order to promote policy coherence, the implementation of the NAP involved the DOLE, NYC, the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency (POEA); Technical Education Skills Development Authority (TESDA); Department of Education; and National Commission on Culture and Arts (NCCA) and required the participation of several other government agencies, social partners and youth organizations. The youth participants also signed a Manifesto of Commitment in which they reaffirmed their commitment to help in the implementation of the NAP. The NAP identifies three broad goals: i) creating employment opportunities; ii) promoting workers' rights; and iii) providing avenues for representation and intercultural dialogue. The NAP is nearing completion and will be made available on the APYouthNet after finalizing.

Youth employment initiatives in the Philippines

Government Internship Program (GIP)

The GIP is a program implemented by the National Youth Commission (NYC) for out-of school youth. The idea is to hire them as interns to give them experience in workplaces. The NYC encourages Government offices and private companies to take part in the program.

Youth Education – Youth Employability (YE-YE) Project

This project is a public-private partnership between the DOLE and private businesses. The YE-YE Project provides young people with opportunities to pursue a post-secondary school course through tuition fee advances while being offered formal workplace experiences.

Special Program for Employment of Students (SPES)

The SPES by the Bureau of Workers with Special Concerns is designed to develop the intellectual capabilities of children of poor families and harness their potential by employing them during school vacations so they can earn some money for their school expenses.

Public Employment Service Office (PESO)

The PESOs play a central role in providing up to date labour market information to Filipino youth. The PESOs can be found all over the country (1,680 in total) and are run by local government units, NGOs, community-based organizations and state universities and colleges.

Youth voice from the Philippines



© Joanna Bernice Coronacion

**Joanna Bernice “Nice” S. Coronacion, 24,
Educator/Organizer of Alliance of Progressive
Labor (APL) Quezon City, Philippines**

I was 18 years old when I had to work as a part-time employee for a food chain. It never occurred to me that I would have to work while studying until my father, a migrant worker for most of his life, lost his job abroad and was sent back home. Needless to say, it was a rude awakening for me. I thought that working part time would be easy. I was completely wrong. I had to struggle every step of the way. Completing my pre-employment requirements, like obtaining a health permit, working permit and many others was not only expensive but time consuming. By cutting back on my food and transportation expenses I was able to squeeze my meagre daily allowance as a student and pay for all the processing and documentary fees.

Then came the shock of working for very long hours with very little pay. At that time, 2006, my salary was only 47.50 pesos (US\$ 1.11) per hour. As if that was not hard enough, I also had to clean my designated place and wash at least 100 serving trays after my four-hour shift. These chores, which took up more than an hour, were no longer considered paid time. But the hardest part was when regular workers bullied us, as casual employees, every time we made mistakes. After my shift, I had to go to school. On most days, I was already too tired to focus on my studies. And that was the irony of it all. I had to work to keep up my studies, only to find that to earn enough I had to use up all my energy which, in turn, prevented me from learning in school.

When I got involved in a youth orientation conducted by the Alliance of Progressive Labor (APL), I realized that many young workers like me are not aware of their rights at work. I readily joined one of its youth organizations called Asosasyon ng Nagkakaisang Aktibong Kabataan ng Commonwealth (ANAK-Co). This turned out to be the start of my new found vocation, to educate young workers about their rights and to raise their awareness that they deserve a better deal and working conditions than what I had to endure.

(<http://www.apl.org.ph/>)



Sri Lanka Youth Employment Forum
Young Voices from Sri Lanka
Colombo, 26 April 2012

Quick facts: Sri Lanka

Population: 20.2 million (3)
 Youth population: 3.2 million (2)
 Youth unemployment: rate: 21.3 %(1)
 Female youth unemployment rate: 27.9 %(1)
 Male youth unemployment rate: 17.1 %(1)
 Adult unemployment rate: 3.3 %(1)
 Youth labour force participation rate: 36.8 %(1)
 Female youth labour force participation rate: 27.1 %(1)
 Male youth labour force participation rate: 47.6 %(1)

Sources: Labour Force Survey (2009); (2) ILO estimates (2010); (3) UNdata (2009)



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The tripartite Forum “Young Voices from Sri Lanka” was jointly organized by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development (MOYA&SD) and the ILO Country Office for Sri Lanka and the Maldives. The event was attended by more than 100 stakeholders with half of them below the age of 30.

Sri Lanka has one of the highest rates of youth unemployment in Asia. With more than 21.3 per cent of unemployed youth, Sri Lanka's youth unemployment rate is significantly higher than the South Asian average of 9.9 per cent. In addition, Sri Lankan youth are six times more likely to be unemployed than adults. This national youth employment crisis exists despite Sri Lanka's continued political commitment to tackling the youth employment challenge.

Many presentations given at the Forum emphasized that the primary cause of high youth unemployment is not a lack of available jobs but, rather, a lack of youth with employable competencies and skills. It was noted that there is too much emphasis on qualifications and too little attention is being paid to soft skills. The lack of soft skills among youth was corroborated by a survey conducted by the Employers' Federation of Ceylon (EFC) in 2010. The survey among employers found that most employers believe that the majority of youth lacked soft and life skills including competencies relating to attitude and emotional intelligence. In order to address this skills mismatch it was recommended to update the education and training system with a view to incorporating

soft and life skills alongside technical skills and knowledge. However, other participants, including representatives from the Ceylon Worker's Congress, stressed that the private sector must increase opportunities for youth to acquire skills through on the job training.

Moreover, the participants highlighted the importance of paying closer attention to regional disparities. Job opportunities for youth on Sri Lanka's estates, for instance, are worse than the national average and effective policies and programmes for disadvantaged youth must be adapted to regional and local contexts.

Youth employment policies in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka's National Development Strategy Mahinda Chinthana (Vision for the Future) (2007) has given priority to youth development. The Strategy includes specific reference introducing special programmes to reintegrate vulnerable groups of youth including facilitating pilot projects of first-time employment of disabled youth. The Strategy further aims to address discrimination based on ethnicity (rural Tamil and estate youth) and gender. In 2010, the MOYA&SD prepared a roadmap for implementing the National Plan of Action for Youth Employment with detailed proposals for action in line with the conceptual framework developed by the YEN's initiative: equal opportunity, employment creation, employability and entrepreneurship.

Youth employment initiatives in Sri Lanka

Thondaman Vocational Training Centre (TVTC)

The TVTC was upgraded in 2007 with new machineries and skilled instructors from abroad in order to train youth in accordance with international standards. More than 500 young women and men are being trained per year. (<http://stmftvvc.org/>)

Youth Business Sri Lanka (YBSL)

YBSL supports disadvantaged youth to start a business through provision of concessionary credit facilities and associating a mature and experienced individual who provides business mentor support voluntarily. The mentoring approach also includes promoting responsibility towards the programme, thereby facilitating the credit recovery. (<http://www.ybsl.lk/>)

National Youth Services Council (NYSC)

Established in 1969, The NYSC is Sri Lanka's 'pioneer' public sector organization working towards youth development. The NYSC is the only state organization which is responsible for policy making, planning and co-coordinating youth activities at national level. Its focus areas include youth policy, vocational training and youth participation. (www.srilankayouth.lk/)

Youth voice from Sri Lanka



©Timothy Kumarathunga

**Timothy Kumarathunga, 23, student
Colombo, Sri Lanka**

When I was 18 years old I received an opportunity to join with the student Christian Movement of Sri Lanka as a part-time Associate Secretary. Thereafter, I became the General Secretary of the organization in 2009–2010. During my tenure I was able to engage with local and international workshops relating to student leadership, human rights, climate justice and young leadership. Indeed, this was a great opportunity for me to gain the exposure and strengthen my soft skills such as communication and leadership skills. It was quite challenging to work in the social networking circle because you get to work with people who come from various backgrounds.

While I was pursuing my studies, I also got the opportunity to join a private company as an intern. Soon after completing my training period they employed me. It is not easy for a student in Sri Lanka to get a job with a Fortune Five Hundred company but I was successful because of my background and exposure which I received through networking.

It goes without saying that if you could apply your knowledge in a practical way, you can be innovative and creative. It will create the opportunity to grow in an area which you like to grow.



Thailand Youth Employment Forum Bangkok, 28 March 2012

Quick facts: Thailand

Population: 67 million (3)
 Youth population: 10.5 million (2)
 Youth unemployment rate: 2.23% (1)
 Female youth unemployment rate: 1.68% (1)
 Male youth unemployment rate: 2.47% (1)
 Adult unemployment: 0.63% (1)
 Youth labour force participation rate: 46.94% (1)

Sources: (1) Labour Force Survey (2011); (2) ILO estimates (2010); (3) Undata (2009)



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The tripartite Thailand Youth Employment Forum

was jointly organized by the Labour and Management Development Centre, Faculty of Economics, Chulalongkorn University and the ILO Country Office for Thailand, Cambodia and Lao People's Democratic Republic. The Forum was attended by more than 170 participants with an overwhelming majority of young people between the ages of 18 and 24.

Thailand's youth labour force has been declining for two decades to only 4.86 million in 2011. This decline reflects the sharp fall in the teenage labour force (15 to 19 years) but also the success of Thailand's extended compulsory education policy. This trend also suggests that the abundant young labour on which Thailand has relied for economic growth will be soon in shortage. To maintain its future growth and competitiveness, Thailand will need to place renewed emphasis on strengthening the capabilities of its young people and

boosting productive opportunities for them. Thailand's youth unemployment rate of 2.23 per cent (2011) is one of the lowest in Asia and the Pacific. However, high informality (over 70 per cent of Thailand's labour force work in the informal economy) and low social security coverage indicate high rates of youth underemployment and working poverty.

Many students expressed their concerns about the mismatch between the acquired skills at school and university and the skills sought after in the labour market. Adult participants shared this view and said that enrolment quotas needed to reflect labour market needs. A representative from the Thai Ministry of Labour (MOL) explained that

the Government was closely consulting with representatives from the private sector to ensure that its long-term education plan was in line with the job market and that it provided skills for Thailand's jobs of the future. Some employers stressed the importance of lifelong learning and advised students in the audience to look beyond traditional occupations and to also consider new jobs for which skilled workers were rare. During the discussions, participants mentioned the key role of reliable labour market information for matching career choices with jobs. Once young people knew which skills were sought after by employers, they would align their individual skill development plans with the labour market.

Gender inequality in the Thai labour market – despite higher female enrolment rates in schools and universities – was brought up many times in the discussions. There was broad consensus among the participants that tackling the youth employment challenge must involve closing the gender gap.



Student debate

In the student debate between the debate clubs of Thailand's Chulalongkorn University and Thammasat University, the two teams debated the proposition that the "ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) will damage Thai youth employment." The AEC which comes into effect in 2015 will allow the free flow of labour for a number of skilled professions in ASEAN and speakers highlighted both opportunities and challenges for Thailand's young workers.

Youth employment initiatives in Thailand

Building Employability through Technology and Entrepreneurship Resources (BETTER)

Microsoft Thailand, the Thai Department of Skill Development and the Kenan Institute Asia (K.I. Asia) initiated this three-year project. BETTER has equipped over 24,000 Thai workers with the necessary information and communication technology skills to cope with rapid technological changes in the 21st century, improving their employment and job advancement opportunities. BETTER has also provided entrepreneurship training for those young people who want to start their own small businesses. The project, launched in 2009, encourages businesses to focus on building skills for their workers in order to upgrade their human resources and strengthen their competitive positioning. www.thebetter-project.com

Employers' Confederation of Thailand (ECOT)

ECOT plays a very active role in running school-to-work transition programmes in Thailand. ECOT offers training courses, job placements and career counselling for Thai graduates.

Social Entrepreneur Incubator (SEI)

The SEI programme is run by the Thai Young Philanthropist Network (TYPN) together with public and private partners. The SEI aims to share knowledge, networks and expertise in business and entrepreneurship in order to develop grass-root business and social entrepreneurs. The programme includes social entrepreneur mentorship, business skills and English language for career development training.

Youth voice from Thailand



© Worrachon Dulyavitya

Worrachon Dulyavitya, 23, student Bangkok, Thailand

I am currently a senior year student at the faculty of political science (Chulalongkorn University) majoring in International Relations. Four years in the university has given me many opportunities to prepare myself for my future career. Like many other students in the field of social science, I do not have specific skills or certificates that can guarantee my future employment (unlike those engineers, architects or accountants). Therefore, it is necessary for me to develop other skills such as critical thinking, public speaking and negotiating skills which will allow me to bargain for a better job. Personally, I believe that everything I study from books is meaningless unless I actually put it into practice. Language skills are also important for students in Thailand. Since the country is filled with many foreign investors and tourists, language skill is indispensable for getting a good job both in the government and private sectors. Again, my extracurricular activities allow me to practice my English and get used to communicating with foreigners. All in all, being an active learner both inside and outside the class room is my key strategy for getting a good job.



Viet Nam Youth Employment Forum Hanoi, 29 March 2012

Quick facts: Viet Nam

Population: 88 million (2)
 Youth population: 16.5 million (1)
 Youth unemployment rate: 4.62% (1)
 Female youth unemployment rate: 4.88% (2)
 Male youth unemployment rate: 4.38% (1)
 Youth labour force participation rate: 56.14% (1)

Sources: (1) Labour Force Survey (2004); (2) UNdata (2009)



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The tripartite Viet Nam Youth Employment Forum

was jointly organized by the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) and the ILO Country Office for Viet Nam and brought together around 80 representatives from youth organizations, social partners, line ministries and international experts.

With over one million young people entering the labour market every year, creating decent work opportunities for youth is of high priority in Viet Nam.

© ILO Young people between the ages of 15 to 24 make up the largest group of the jobless, accounting for 50.4 per cent of total unemployment. Young women face more difficulties finding work than their male counterparts. In 2010, the female youth unemployment rate stood at 8.3 per cent compared to 5.9 per cent for young men. Urban youth unemployment rates tend to be two

times higher than rural unemployment while underemployment is significantly higher in rural areas. A large proportion of young people work in low-productivity, vulnerable, low-paid and informal employment.

The Forum's participants recommended that job generation for youth should be mainstreamed into the National Employment Strategy (2011–2020) and that employment policies should target disadvantaged groups in the labour market, particularly rural youth, migrant workers and ethnic minorities. Youth entrepreneurship and self-employment was also recommended as a strategy for employment creation, especially for rural youth who account for 80–85 per cent of all young workers. The participants

recommended providing better information and training opportunities on entrepreneurship as well as access to loans for youth entrepreneurs. On the supply side of the youth employment challenge, the participants emphasised the need to ease the school-to-work transition by closing the gap between education and training institutions and employers. It was suggested to expand job orientation and career support at schools and universities. There was broad agreement across the board that Viet Nam needs an all-out improvement in its vocational training system to better prepare young people for the world of work. In addition, the young people stressed the importance of having access to reliable labour market information, especially at the local level. In this context, it was recommended to develop industry specific human resource strategies at the municipal and provincial level so that training centres can adjust their plans in accordance with the needs of the local labour market.

Youth employment policies in Viet Nam

In 2003, Viet Nam adopted the Youth Development Strategy until 2010 and introduced the Law on Youth in 2005. In 2011, the Youth Development Strategy 2011–2020 was adopted which aims to develop a generation with knowledge and skills to meet the needs of Viet Nam's industrialization, modernization and integration process. The strategy's targets include generating jobs for at least 600,000 young people annually, offering job consultation for 80 per cent of young people and reducing the unemployment rate for young people in urban areas to below 7 per cent and in rural areas to below 6 per cent. By 2020, the strategy aims to provide vocational training for 70 per cent of youngsters of working age and job guidance for all students.

Youth employment initiatives in Viet Nam

Viet Youth Entrepreneurs (VYE)

VYE is the first NGO in Viet Nam which focuses solely on entrepreneurship activities among university students. The local chapters of the VYE organize regular seminars, workshops and networking events for university students. VYE's online platform promotes exchange between Vietnamese youth interested in entrepreneurship around the world. It also organized panels where potential investors convene to listen to pitches by young start-ups.

Vieclamvietnam.vn

The website vieclamvietnam.vn is managed by the National Centre of Labour Market Information and Forecasting (LMIC) of the Bureau of Employment, MOLISA. The web site is a comprehensive information portal where employers and job seekers can connect with each other and access information about vacancies, training courses, employment services, news and data and related legal documents. Young job seekers are encouraged to upload their résumés to the web site and send their queries through the portal's Q&A section. The web site plans to connect the LMIC with Employment Service Centres (ESCs) of all 63 provinces. Currently there are 22 ESCs connected through the web site.

Youth voice from Viet Nam



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**Luong Thu Ha, 22, economics student
Hanoi, Viet Nam**

I'm not sure what I want to do. I might start looking for a job later this year after I will have graduated from university. I dream of doing a marketing job that uses English but I know it's almost impossible with my degree. I also want to try a new working environment [out of Hanoi] but my home is here. My university was not my first choice for a higher education institution. I actually wanted to have a place at the National Economics University but I failed the entrance exam.

My course is too broad and also involves too much agriculture. I don't know what types of job I can get with this degree. It is apparently far from a normal economics degree. I am quite worried about my job prospects. My worries have gotten worse after witnessing all my friends struggling to find a job.

It's extremely difficult for fresh graduates to find a job because most companies require at least three years of work experience. Most employers think that they will have to provide job training before we are capable of fulfilling our roles. That's really a stereotype.

Many of my friends have had to use their families' contacts in order to find a "decent job" while others have ended up in jobs that are low-paid and have terrible working conditions.

I am willing to take unpaid internships after I finish university for more than two months as long as they help me landing a good job.

I think a good job for me means proper wages, and a decent work environment, good facilities, training opportunities and good interpersonal relations.

(Original translated from Vietnamese)



Regional Technical Meeting: Advancing the Development of a Pacific Regional Framework for Youth Employment Brisbane, 10–11 May 2012

Quick facts: Pacific Island Countries and Territories

Population: 10 million
Youth population: 2 million

Source: Secretariat of the Pacific Community (2011)

No recent data available for youth unemployment.



From left to right, back: Jessica Parapolo (Solomon Islands), Tahere Siisiialafia (Samoa), Rebecca Solomon (Vanuatu); front: Drew Havea (Tonga)

and international youth development agencies met in Brisbane to discuss the next steps for the development of such a regional youth framework.

As part of the *Pacific Declaration on Investing in Youth Employment* (developed by the Commonwealth Youth Programme Pacific (CYP), ILO and Pacific Youth Council (PYC)) which was endorsed by governments and youth representatives from 12 PICTs, the ILO has since prepared a draft *Pacific Youth Employment Strategy* (PacificYES). In order to turn the political commitment into action and to report to the PIF Leaders on the development of the regional strategy on youth employment, the ILO has organised a technical regional meeting with the support of the Pacific Leadership Programme, CYP, SPC and PYC). The meeting brought together specialists from the UN, regional and international

development agencies, representatives from the PYC and regional governments.

During the discussions, participants recognised the efforts and expertise of the ILO in developing the draft PacificYES. Further, participants welcomed and agreed in principle to concepts within the draft and will provide further revision inputs subsequent to receiving an updated draft based on meeting discussions from the ILO, including further consultations with governments and young people. It is envisaged that the framework will be developed over a period of 18 months and involve at least two regional consultations.

The key issues highlighted at the meeting were that there was need for greater coordination by governments in the implementation of the PacificYES at the national level and further that there was a need to focus on youth entrepreneurship programmes since waged employment opportunities were very limited in the PICTs.

Youth employment is one of the most significant challenges facing the Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs). According to a paper presented to the Pacific Plan Action Committee by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and Pacific Island Forum Secretariat in 2011, the youth (20 to 24) unemployment rate for the PICTs is 22.4 per cent. This high rate of unemployment and underemployment increases the risk of youth poverty and food insecurity, especially in rural areas. Recent statistics show that in most Pacific Island countries, one in four young people lives below the national poverty line.

Recent statements by political leaders and key groups have reaffirmed their political commitment to tackling the youth employment challenge in the region, such as those made at the 42nd Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) in Auckland, New Zealand, in September 2011 which explicitly recognised the need for the development of a regional framework for youth employment. In October 2011, following the PIF Leaders Meeting, regional

Youth employment policies in the Pacific

In 2007, Vanuatu launched its first National Youth Policy, of which employment was one of four priorities. This was followed in 2009 with the agreement to draft a National Action Plan on Youth Employment (NAP) and the re-establishment of the National Youth Council. Vanuatu recently became a lead country of the YEN.

The National Strategy for Young Australians was launched in 2010. A skill-first welfare policy was also introduced in 2009 requiring 15–19 year olds to engage in education as a condition for income support.

Youth employment initiatives in the Pacific

The University of Guam Pacific Island Small Business Development Centre Network (PISBNDN)

The PISBDCN supports a Small Business Development Centre network, recognized by the public, the private sector and host entities as the preeminent economic development agency in the region providing business counselling, training and information. The PISBDCN offers entrepreneurial training to at-risk youths.

Fiji National Employment Centre

The centre is based with the Ministry of Labour and has registered more than 12,000 unemployed people, the majority being youths. The centre provides employment services to support young people to gain employment in formal employment, self-employment, volunteering and overseas employment. The ILO has provided support to the centre through training on labour market information and labour statistics.

Kiribati Chamber of Commerce & Industry

The Chamber provides business training using ILO Start and Improve Your Business Programme modules to members, potential members and unemployed youths.

Tonga National Youth Congress

The Congress provides youths with agricultural and entrepreneurship skills through their Future Farmers of Tonga Programme.

Youth voice from New Zealand



© James Sleep

James Sleep, 20, Stand Up – Youth movement of the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions, Auckland, New Zealand

Labour unions are as vital in the 21st century as they were during the last century. Right across the world times are tough economically. Youth unemployment is high and young people's ability to access decent work is becoming increasingly difficult.

I became involved in trade unions after working on an hourly wage of US\$ 3.50 at the age of 15, in an after school job. I worked alongside other workers earning four times my pay for the same work. I joined a union to address an issue of inequity and to have a voice in the workplace as a vulnerable young worker

The gap between rich and poor is widening. The ability for young people to work on decent pay and conditions is enhanced by being in a union and collectively bargaining.

Collective bargaining is the most effective mechanism for lifting wages and achieving decent work. With a global trend of high unemployment, there is increasing pressure on current levels of wages and working conditions.

Unions play an integral role in achieving and upholding decent working conditions. Unions are focused on finding solutions to youth unemployment and ensuring that all young people have opportunities to up-skill and get decent and sustainable jobs.

(<http://union.org.nz/StandUp>)



Rotasia 2012

Kathmandu, 26–29 January 2012

Quick facts: Nepal*

Population: 29 million (2)
 Youth population: 4.4 million (1)
 Youth unemployment rate: 3.5% (1)
 Female youth unemployment rate: 2.9% (1)
 Male youth unemployment rate: 4.2% (1)
 Urban youth unemployment rate: 13% (1)
 Rural youth unemployment rate: 2.1% (1)
 Youth labour force participation: 75.9% (1)

Sources: Labour Force Survey (2008); (2) UNdata (2009)

*Quick facts about Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal and Sri Lanka can be found on the countries' national events' pages.



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The identified challenges and recommendations were not identical across the groups and countries. For instance, some groups (Nepal and India) were more concerned about political instability and general governance issues (corruption, nepotism, sense of impunity etc.) than others but the following key constraints for youth employment were identified: i) skills mismatch between academic skills and labour market needs; ii) limited political commitment and lack of action following verbal commitments; iii) policy and infrastructure bottlenecks; iv) social and cultural attitudes which lead to discriminatory practices based on gender, ethnicity and groups with lower social statuses.

Rotasia is an annual international conference of Rotractors and Rotaract Clubs in South Asia. The Rotasia Nepal 2012 was held in partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Sports, Nepal, the Nepal Tourism Board and the ILO. The forum was attended by more than 600 youths from Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

The thematic panel and group discussion sessions of the event were dedicated to youth employment and youth entrepreneurship and provided an opportunity for the youth participants to exchange ideas and develop recommendations. The outcomes of each group work were presented in plenary and allowed for an intra-regional identification of commonalities, good practices and opportunities for regional cooperation.

“We not only have an obligation to think of ways to tap into the resource which all these young people constitute. We will need it for the future”

Mr Robert Piper, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Nepal

The corresponding recommendations included: i) reforming the education system towards higher employability of the workforce; ii) increasing youth participation in political decision making processes; iii) improving the policy environment by creating coherent national youth employment policies; iv) raising awareness of gender and other forms of discrimination and changing public attitudes through education; and v) improving access to loans and enterprise development guidance to (potential) youth entrepreneurs.

Annex I Regional overview of participants

Youth consultations between March and May 2012

Country	Number of Participants	Male	Female	<30	>30
Bangladesh	100	74	26	—	—
China	94	46	48	82	12
India	160	—	—	—	—
Indonesia	90	48	42	36	37
Pacific	16	7	9	4	12
Pakistan	150	—	—	—	—
Philippines	87	52	35	70	8
Sri Lanka	105	60	45	54	51
Thailand	171	75	96	128	43
Viet Nam	79	41	38	28	51
Total	1052	403	339	402	214

Annex II –Photos from the youth consultations



Rotasia Nepal 2012 – 26–29 January 2012

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Indonesia – 27 March 2012

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Annex II –Photos from the youth consultations



Thailand – 28 March 2012

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Philippines – 29 March 2012 Norhashim Ulangkaya, 23, youth representative from Maguindanao presenting the Manifesto of Commitment to DJ Bagatsing, 4th District Manila's "university belt" councillor

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Annex II –Photos from the youth consultations



Vietnam – 29 March 2012

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China – 7 April 2012

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Annex II –Photos from the youth consultations



Bangladesh – 8 April 2012

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Pakistan – 11 April 2012

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Annex II –Photos from the youth consultations



India – 20 April 2012

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Sri Lanka – 26 April 2012

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Pacific – 10–11 May 2012

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Between December 2011 and May 2012, the International Labour Organization has consulted young people from around the globe to gather their input to an International Youth Forum in Geneva, ahead of the 101st International Labour Conference for which a key focus was to be youth employment. As part of this global process, 13 national youth employment consultation events took place in Asia and the Pacific. This report summarises the key messages brought by young people and policy makers.

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