

Youth Employment in Times of COVID

A global review of COVID-19 policy responses to tackle (un)employment and disadvantage among young people

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EMPLOYMENT Seminar - Youth Employment and Covid-19: Some lessons from the crisis



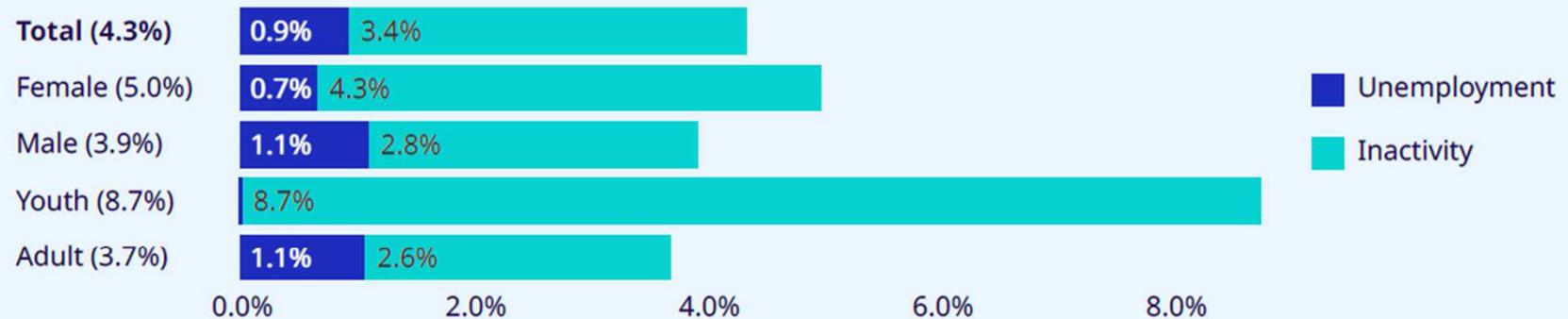
Aims

- Review COVID-19 pandemic impacts on young people.
- Outline policy responses which:
 - *stimulate the economy and employment;*
 - *support enterprises, jobs and incomes;*
 - *protect workers in the workplace;*
 - *support social dialogue.*
- Identify gaps and commonalities in responses.
- Identify future challenges.



Youth impact

Young people are disproportionately affected



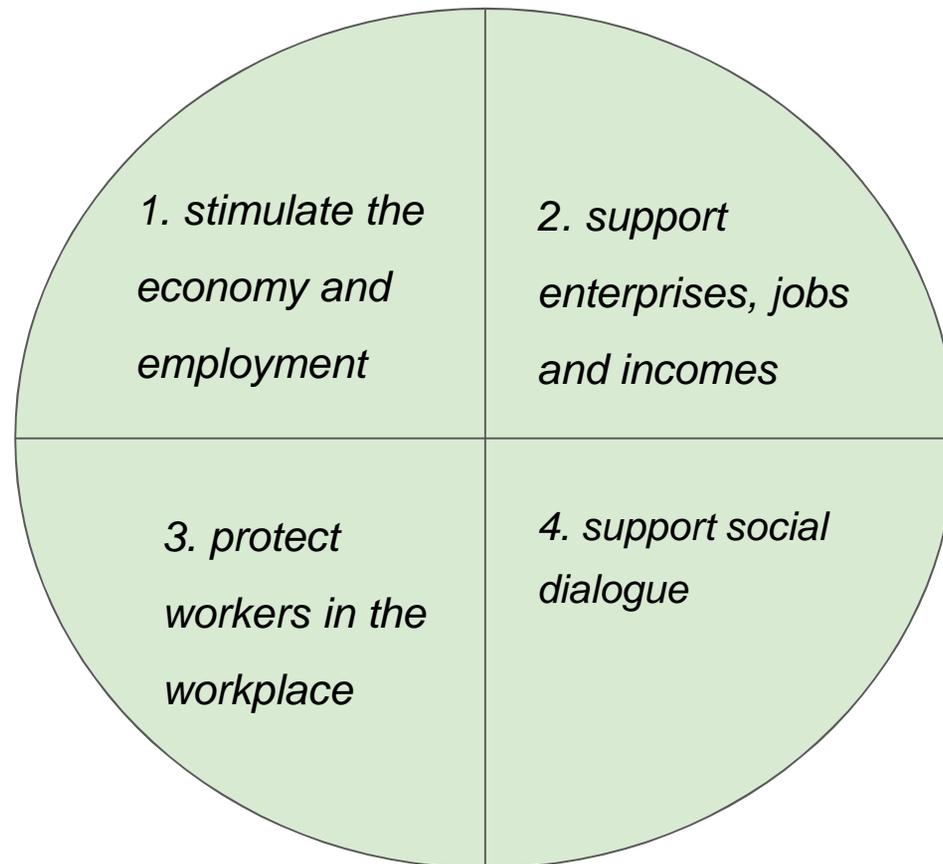
Note: The two bars in each row show the difference in, respectively, unemployment and inactivity (withdrawal from the labour force) in 2020 as a percentage of employment in the “no pandemic” scenario. The total of the bars in each case is the difference in employment compared to the “no pandemic” scenario. The percentages inside parentheses that appear after the names of the demographic groups indicate the employment loss for each particular group. Youth = aged 15–24 years; Adult = aged 25+ years.

Global percentage changes in unemployment and inactivity by sex and age (2020)

Source: ILO, [ILO Monitor, Seventh Edition](#), p. 10

Types of response

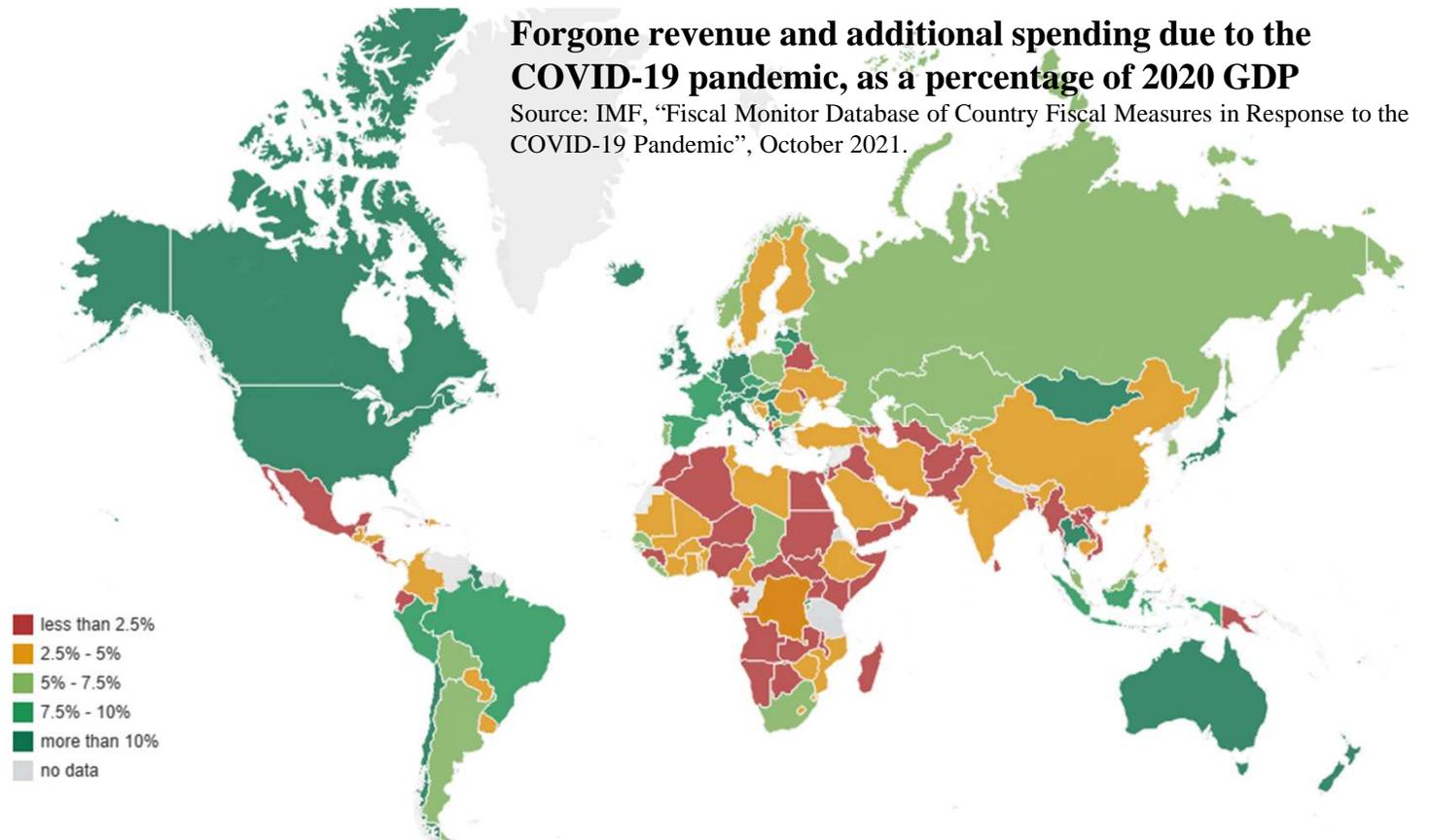
Four pillars of COVID-19 policy responses



1. Stimulate the economy and employment

Macroeconomic interventions seek to boost economies, but risk leaving certain groups behind.

E.g. the Central Bank of Nigeria adjusted interest rates, increased credit, and injected liquidity at 2.4% of GDP



2. Support enterprises, jobs and incomes

Includes:

- Employment retention and job protection schemes such as furlough
- Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs)
- Investing in employment-intensive sectors
- Using public procurement used to support SMEs and female-owned enterprises
- Putting education and training online

E.g. UK furlough and job support scheme

Furlough helped 9 million people remain in work. 80% of wages are paid by the Government and 20% by employers.

Existing ALMPs (Kickstart, Restart, and Job Entry Targeted Support) were extended.



3. *Protect workers in the workplace (and beyond)*

Includes:

- Protection from COVID-19 (PPE)
- Supporting mental health

E.g. *Kindness is Contagious* in Viet Nam

Viet Nam, the Ministry of Health and UNICEF launched the *Kindness is Contagious* campaign, to promote dialogue between policymakers and adolescents on mental health issues.

Adolescents share their stories, photos, videos, ideas and messages through social media platforms with the hashtag #long_tot_de_lay or “share kindness”.



4. *Support social dialogue*

Includes:

“negotiation, consultation and exchange of information between or among representatives of governments, workers and employers on issues of common interest in the areas of economic, labour and social policy” (ILO)



E.g. Occupied Palestinian Territories

Social dialogue played a key role early in the outbreak, the ILO supported the Ministry of Labour and social partners Emergency Response Plan, to protect the Palestinian labour market from the worst of COVID-19. The tripartite agreement reached in March 2020 agreed employers would pay at least 50% of workers' wages (with a floor of US\$305) for March-April 2020, with remaining wages paid post lockdown.

Multi-sector policies target / support young people, Mexico

Policy	Target group	Extension of pre-COVID-19 policy	New policy response to COVID-19	Details
Financial support	Small enterprises and self-employed people	X	X	New and extended forms of financial support have been made available with a particular emphasis on those impacted by COVID-19, and to small enterprises and self-employed people, including taxi drivers and domestic workers
Education and training: <i>Jóvenes construyendo el futuro</i>	Young NEETs	X		12-month internship programme for young people not in employment, education or training. Currently, the Labour Ministry is working on a strategy to support school leavers into employment or further education
Benefits, welfare and income support	Unemployed people, parents, others	X	X	Mexico City extended its unemployment benefit programme, which reached 95,000 workers; the state of Hidalgo, Yucatán created new unemployment benefit programmes
Apprenticeship schemes	Students	X		There is an existing national apprenticeship programme in Mexico, but the uptake rate is low, at around 4,000 participants; it was not extended
Employment services	Jobseekers, young people	X		Existing public employment services programmes were not reinforced. Some virtual job fairs were organized, a number of which targeted young people
Protecting workers in the workplace	General		X	<p>A health emergency was declared on 30 March 2020. The ensuing extraordinary actions to address the health emergency included the Government of Mexico establishing a <i>Jornada Nacional de Sana Distancia</i>, involving preventive measures to avoid contagion, including in the workplace. Non-essential activities were suspended. For all activities, employers were advised to authorize remote working. Labour inspections backed up these policies.</p> <p>The Ministry of Labour published a guide to occupational safety and health during the COVID-19 pandemic</p>

Policy in a pandemic

Argentina's *More and Better Jobs for Youth* programme

The scheme: Training for vulnerable young people (18-24 years)

2020:

- Training paused during lockdowns, cash transfers for participation continued
- By September 2020 some training was online, TVET is hard to virtualise
- Registration remained open, yet few new people joined during the past year

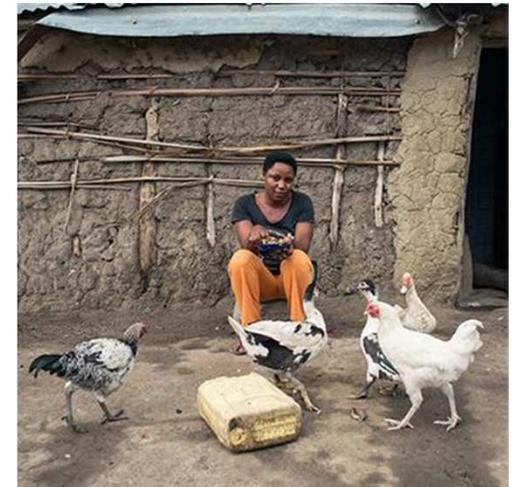
Challenges: a job is not always enough - youth job services will link transport, housing, family and health

Plans: programme to be extended to other vulnerable groups: 45s+ and women

Comparisons & gaps

Commonalities in policy responses

- All countries are affected (even with low COVID-19)
- Tendency to ‘firefight’ the emergency, with vulnerable people, young people and young women being overlooked
- Within countries, disadvantaged young people have limited internet access
 - Affects virtual job searches, education and information platforms
 - *Digital transition policies can reinforce inequalities*



Differences in policy responses

- Fiscal space varies, including within regions:
 - E.g. in MENA
 - Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar's high spending policies
 - Conflict affected states' humanitarian and labour market situation worsened.
 - Outcome: differences in recovery
 - *IMF call for global solidarity of tax and aid*
- Varying levels of cross-ministry working
 - *COVID-19 necessitated cooperation between Ministries of Health, Public Health, Labour, Treasury, Economy and Social Affairs*
 - New Zealand and Australia achieved this
- Public employment services (PES) and ALMPs mobilised quickly

BUT: Some diverted ALMPs spending to welfare (Spain and Mexico).

WHILE: Others invested in ALMPs (Hungary, Portugal and Switzerland).

Gaps in policy and evidence

Young people and the COVID-19 policy response

- Young people often covered only by **default**.
- Job retention schemes, furlough, lockdown measures such as teleworking exclude first time job seekers who tend to be young.

Evidence gaps

- Little indication of what works, why, for whom.
 - *Policy evaluations of focus on European furlough schemes*



Looking ahead

Policy recommendations

- **Strengthen** social protection and ALMPs
 - To maintain employability and protect mental health
- **Plan** for protracted crisis and lagged economic impact
 - Tapering off is preferable to a *'cliff edge scenario'*
- **Support** young refugees and IDPs
- **Report** more indicators to monitor the crisis and policies
 - mental health, informality, in-work poverty, inactivity
- **Evaluate** economic and social policy interventions
 - The pandemic allows us to test policy and learn
 - Economic *and* public health observatories

