

## ► Preface

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The youth employment challenge is constantly evolving. Each generation is not only different to the one preceding it but they face different circumstances in their lives. The current generation of youth, which the International Labour Organization now calls the “lockdown generation”, is likely to contend with tremendous challenges for the rest of their lives due to the still not completely understood social, educational and economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and the corresponding medical responses imposed.

This book was written before the pandemic emerged and brought much of the world to a screeching halt. The discussion that it comprises is on the future of work, which is still extremely valid because the pandemic accelerated much of the issues and challenges this book takes on, in the sense that there has been a substantive jump in the use of new technologies at work and new work arrangements. And they are here to stay.

There is a risk of further polarization and inequalities in the labour market in the coming generations.

Unfortunately, the rapid transformations in the world of work (before and due to the pandemic) for youth have not been matched by a similar evolution in policies.

In reflecting on these issues, this book brings together contributions from several ILO colleagues related directly or indirectly to youth employment policies. The usual question about whether youth are ready for the future places the burden of preparation on them. For that reason, this book poses the opposite question: “Is the future ready for the youth?” It specifically discusses how to transform traditional youth employment policies to help build a better future for the youth.

This project was launched by my predecessor, Azita Berar Awad, who has kindly shared her thoughts and insights with us in the foreword to the book. We hope this book promotes greater discussion at the international level and at the country level, where the ILO supports constituents to develop, implement and monitor coordinated and context-specific policies and programmes for more and better decent jobs.

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