



Education and **Youth Employment**



Youth around the world today are facing a future more challenging than ever before.

Education has always been critical for improving young people's chances of decent work and social mobility. Equipping youth with the skills necessary to adapt to any future transition is a critical task of formal and informal education. As the global economy continues to shift towards high-skilled industries, there is a growing mismatch between what education provides and the skills required by the workforce. Without the necessary skills and qualifications, many young people will be vulnerable to a lifetime of underemployment, lack of decent work opportunities, and major impacts on their families' health, education and life outcomes.

Key challenges



- **There are 1.3 billion young people today, the largest youth population in human history.** Yet one in five youth worldwide are currently not in employment, education, or training (NEET) (ILO, 2020).

- **Young people are more likely to be unemployed.** While youth make up one-fifth of the global population, they make up one-third of the global unemployed workforce ([ILO, 2020](#)).
- **Decent work is not available for many young people.** Even among employed youth, 30% are living in extreme to moderate poverty with an income below US\$3.20 per day, signaling the lack of decent work ([ILO, 2020](#)).
- **Informal work is on the rise.** In 2016, three in four young workers worldwide participated in informal employment, ranging from the informal agricultural economy in sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia to the gig economy in wealthier European countries ([ILO, 2020](#)).
- **Youth are particularly vulnerable to automation.** In OECD countries, the risk of job displacement is highest for youth because they are more likely to be in occupations with the highest probability of automation ([ILO, 2020](#), see [Nedelkoska & Quintini, 2018](#)).
- **Many youth are not satisfied with the education and training they are currently receiving.** In a global survey of 531 youth in 2018, 39% reported that their formal school did not prepare them with the skills they needed for the jobs they wanted ([Deloitte & GBCEd, 2018](#)).
- **The global learning crisis is a critical barrier to youth employment.** 69% of youth in low-income countries will not attain basic primary level skills by 2030 ([Deloitte & GBCEd, 2018](#)).
- **As digital skills become essential for the future of work, the gender gap persists.** In the European Union in 2016, only one in six students in information and communications technology (ICT) were female ([ILO, 2020](#)).

Make the case



- **Education must adapt to future trends and be relevant for the world of work.** Around two billion jobs, or half of jobs available in the world today, are expected to disappear by 2030 due to automation. The most vulnerable countries could lose as much as 80% of jobs ([International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity, 2016](#)).

- **Higher levels of education reduce employment vulnerability.** In 27 low- to upper-middle income countries, eight out of 10 young people with a higher education degree were in non-vulnerable employment ([Sparreboom & Staneva, 2014](#)).
- **The quality of education and learning must improve dramatically to ensure that young people are better equipped for the workforce.** More than 600 million children around the world who are in school are not on track to learn the skills they need to thrive in the future ([Education Commission, 2019](#)).
- **When businesses invest in youth education, they are investing in their skilled labour of the future.** A study has found that in India, every US\$1 invested in education and training results in a US\$53 return in value to the employer ([Winthrop et al., 2013](#)).
- **To adequately prepare youth for future employment, education needs to provide not just knowledge but also life skills.** Socio-emotional skills have been shown to be a more powerful predictor of earnings, over and above the effects of schooling and cognitive skills ([World Bank, 2018](#)).

Key infographic



One in five young people worldwide are currently not in employment, education, or training.

Key talking points



- With automation, the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the impact of Covid-19, many jobs will disappear or become obsolete, but at the same time many new jobs will be created.
- Education can provide quality, inclusive learning opportunities to develop relevant skills for the future of work.
- On current trends, more than half of all young people will not have basic skills for the workforce in 2030. In sub-Saharan Africa, fewer than one in five young people will be prepared for the future of work.
- There are more young people today than ever before.