




YOUTH ENGAGEMENT THROUGH EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP: A Global Perspective

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June 2011

1. INTRODUCTION

World Vision exists to help every child experience life in all its fullness. When childhood ends, however, the lives of many young people are severely affected by lack of employment or engagement in meaningful activities. The gap between the end of childhood and the beginning of a fruitful adulthood is a precarious time when youth can often struggle to enter into the labour market or into pre-employment activities such as further education and training. The longer a young person remains disengaged from work or study, the greater their distance from the labour market grows and the harder it becomes to eventually find employment. If youth are unable to find employment to provide them with the income and dignity to continue living life in its fullness, any gains made in their childhood may be lost.

Given the importance of youth employment, this report considers ways to increase youth employment in the developing world. To do this, we have considered policies and programs in both developed and developing contexts since youth employment is an issue faced by many countries around the world and many solutions may be applicable in multiple contexts.

This paper will highlight:

- (a) the reasons to be concerned about youth employment, especially in the context of developing countries;
- (b) the key issues that need to be addressed; and
- (c) examples of best practice that we can learn from.

2. WHY WORRY ABOUT YOUTH EMPLOYMENT?

“The high percentage of youth unemployment has been recognised as one of the most serious barriers to economic and social development in many developing and developed countries.”¹

Youth³ make up almost a fifth of the world’s population, and the youth population is surging⁴. Close to 85 percent of the 1.061 billion young men and women between the ages of 15 and 24 live in developing countries across Asia (60 per cent of the total), Africa (15 per cent), Latin America and the Caribbean (10 per cent) and other parts of the developing world (15 per cent).⁵

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) youth employment is current global priority and is likely to remain as such in coming years, particularly

Youth Unemployment in numbers... ²

| | |
|-------------|---|
| 85% | of the world’s youth live in developing countries |
| 40% | of unemployed people worldwide are youth |
| 13% | the youth unemployment rate in 2009 |
| 80.7 | million young people were unemployed in 2009 |
| 3 | the number of times a youth is more likely to be unemployed, compared to an adult |

¹ GTZ (2010) Get youth on board! Toolkit 7: Youth employment.

² Sources: ILO (2006) Youth Employment (Brochure), and ILO (2010) Global Employment Trends for Youth

³ This report adopts the definition of youth of the United Nations, which defines youth as those people between the ages of 15 and 24, regardless of cultural interpretations of the concept of youth.

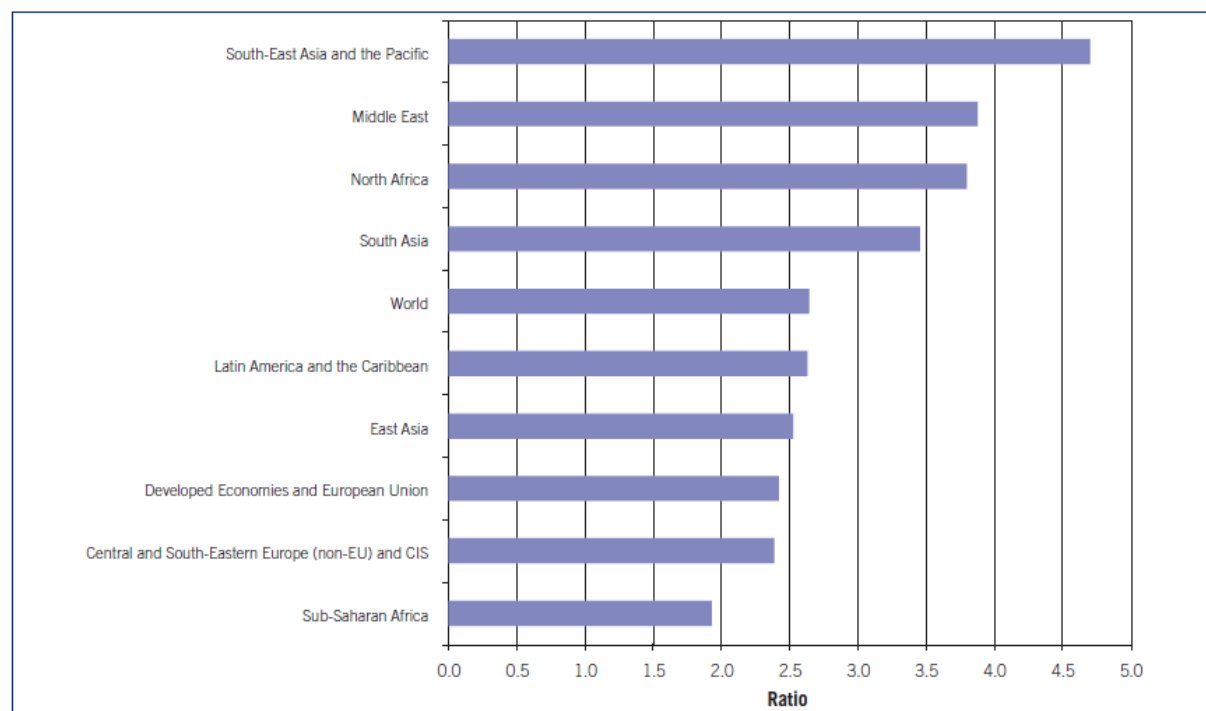
⁴ Making Cents International (2011) State of the Field in Youth Enterprise, Employment and Livelihoods Development

⁵ UN (2003) World Youth Report 2003

in light of the recent global financial crisis, which disproportionately affected youth.⁶ The number of unemployed youth is growing: 78 million young people were unemployed in 2010, well above the pre-global financial crisis level of 73.5 million in 2007.⁷

Worldwide, youth are almost three times more likely to be unemployed than adults⁸. Youth make up over 40% of unemployed people worldwide, but only 25% of the working age population. And these figures only count those youth who are actively seeking employment, ignoring those who are already too discouraged to bother looking.

Figure 18 Ratio of youth to adult unemployment rates, 2010



Note: 2010 are preliminary estimates.

Source: ILO, *Trends econometric models*, October 2010.

Source: ILO (2011) *Global Employment Trends 2011*

Unemployment is not the only problem that youth face in the labour market. Youth represent 24% of the world's working poor – those with some form of employment that live on less than USD1.25 a day – while only accounting for 18% of global employment. This is because youth are more likely to be engaged in unpaid family work, self-employed or underpaid by their employers. Furthermore, many youth (the ILO estimates 59 million 15-18 year olds) are also engaged in hazardous work.⁹

⁶ ILO. "Youth employment in crisis: Questions and answers on the situation of youth on the labour market."

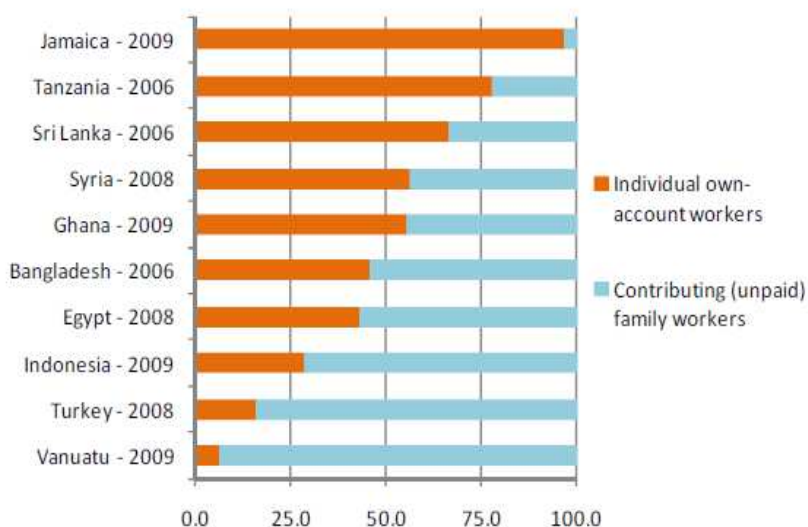
⁷ This figure is down from 80 million in 2009, which marked the height of the Global Financial Crisis. ILO (2011) *Global Employment Trends 2011*

⁸ GTZ (2010) *Get youth on board! Toolkit 7: Youth Employment*

⁹ Betcherman G, et al (2007) *A Review of Interventions to Support Young Workers*

The impacts of youth employment and underemployment are serious, and extremely difficult to correct. For the working poor, the need to engage in unskilled or indecent work at a young age can damage future employment prospects by limiting the opportunity to acquire valuable skills and knowledge or to earn a sufficient income to escape poverty. For those without work, there is a demonstrated link between unemployment and social exclusion; youth without jobs tend to see themselves as lacking value and having no choices, which can lead to problems such as mental health issues and antisocial behaviours¹⁰ substance abuse, crime, prostitution and gangsterism¹¹, all of which have both social and economic costs. Also, in economic terms, youth who don't earn an income don't save, don't spend and don't invest, which can have a significant impact on the overall economy.¹²

Figure 8: Vulnerable employment for youth, total



Note: The graph shows the latest year reported by the country.

Source: YEN (2010) Benchmarks for Youth Employment

Integration versus exclusion

| Social Integration | Social Exclusion |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Employment/sporadic unemployment | Long-term unemployment |
| High employment commitment | Low employment commitment |
| Financial security | Financial insecurity |
| Optimism | Pessimism |
| Life satisfaction | Life dissatisfaction |
| High social support | Low social support |
| Active lifestyle | Passive lifestyle |

Source: UN (2003) World Youth Report 2003

¹⁰ UN (2007) World Youth Report

¹¹ Furlong A (2003) UN World Youth Report, Chapter 2: Youth Employment.

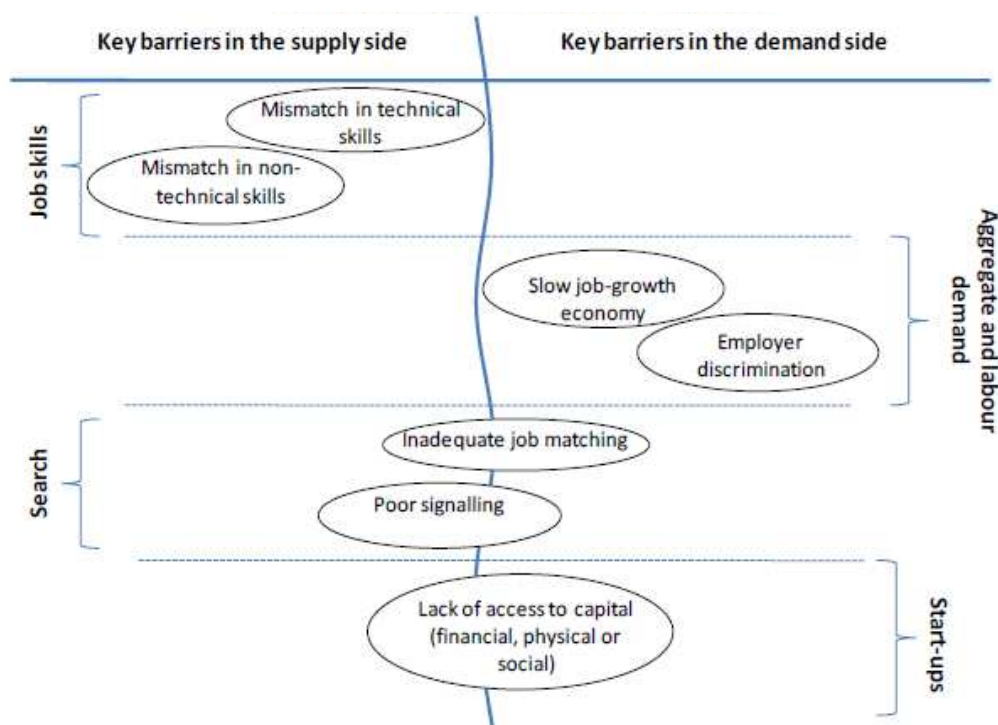
¹² ILO (2010) Global Employment Trends for Youth.

Youth unemployment in rural areas is also leading to significant rural-urban migration, as youth are more likely to relocate within their own country than any other age group.¹³ While urban centres can offer better educational and employment opportunities, overcrowding can lead to poor living conditions in slums.

It is also important to note that young women tend to be far more disadvantaged in terms of employment than young men. A review of youth unemployment in 97 countries revealed that female unemployment was higher in two-thirds of countries (as much as 20% higher in one-quarter of countries).¹⁴ There are even cases where the females experience higher levels of education attainment but lower labour participation.¹⁵ For those women who are employed, they are likely to face greater wage discrimination¹⁶ and be in vulnerable employment.¹⁷

3. WHAT AFFECTS YOUTH EMPLOYMENT?

Issues affecting youth employment can generally be categorized into issues related to demand (for young employees) and supply (of job-ready youth). Often youth employment programs focus solely on education and training, but it is not enough simply to build the capacity of young people for employment - it is necessary to ensure that they have opportunities to use their knowledge and skills productively.



Source – ILO (2010) *Global Employment Trends for Youth*

¹³ UN (2007) World Youth Report

¹⁴ UN (2003) World Youth Report 2003

¹⁵ UN (2007) World Youth Report 2007

¹⁶ ILO. Women Work More, But are Still Paid Less.

¹⁷ ILO (2008) *Global Employment Trends for Youth*

The key concern in the **supply side** of the youth employment equation in developed countries is education. In general, education often inadequately prepares youth for employment, due to outdated curricula, poor networking opportunities and lack of practical experience.¹⁸ Also, a lack of mentoring/counselling and poverty reduces the chances of youth to enter into market-driven courses/studies.¹⁹ Moreover, the rising market demand for behavioural skills such as self-confidence and leadership is largely unmet by the current education system in many countries.

An emphasis on education and training also has the effect of raising the expectations of young people who may be disappointed by their job prospects. There is a concern that having more educated young people with fewer opportunities for employment could lead to economic and social instability.²⁰

On the **demand side** of the equation, the most important factor is that there are employment opportunities available. For young people to be employed, there first need to be jobs, and jobs that are suited to the skills and experience of young people. Unfortunately, this can be a very difficult area for many actors to stimulate or influence. Jobs are usually dependent on wider economic conditions or government policies²¹ and are not easy to create through one-off interventions.

Once jobs are available, employers need to be encouraged and supported to actively seek and hire young people. There exists a labour market bias against youth, who have little experience and are consequently the last to be hired. In addition, legislation tends to protect workers with more seniority (who are therefore older) which makes young employees the easiest to let go.²²

Lastly, **between supply and demand** is the need for adequate linkages, such as job matching mechanisms, to ensure that skilled youth are aware of employment opportunities and employers know where to find qualified youth.

How do developed and developing contexts differ?

In the Australian context, a strong economy means that there are generally jobs available and employees are in demand. In some cases, youth are in high demand: for example, young people in general are a positive coefficient in Australian national employment regressions, meaning that statistically speaking it is easier for a young person to become employed. Many businesses seek out the most qualified young graduates and numerous companies and organisations have special programs to help 'rising stars' integrate into the workforces and to support their professional development.²³

For *disadvantaged* youth in developed economies like Australia, however, the story is very different and their situation often prevents them from contributing to the supply of job-ready youth. Many are unable to complete secondary education or access higher education. Others struggle with mental health issues or substance abuse. Some lack family support and even a home to go to. For these young people, the distance to the labour market is massive. They lack the education, skills, confidence, personal stability and motivation to access and retain employment. For these youth, supply-side services that address their job-readiness are vital.²⁴

¹⁸ GTZ (2010) Get youth on board! Toolkit 7: Youth employment.

¹⁹ Schoof U (2006) Stimulating Youth Entrepreneurship

²⁰ World Bank (2007) World Development Report 2007

²¹ Furlong A (2003) UN World Youth Report, Chapter 2: Youth Employment.

²² ILO (2010) Global Employment Trends for Youth.

²³ Information from interview with Sally Sinclair, CEO of National Employment Services Association (16.09.10)

²⁴ Information from interview with Sally Sinclair, CEO of National Employment Services Association (16.09.10)

The supply and demand issues in developing countries tend to be more severe than in developed economies. Poverty makes it difficult for many young people, especially young women, to become literate and numerate, let alone access higher education or skill training. Even for those with basic education, wider economic conditions in many countries mean that few jobs are available and overall unemployment is high.²⁵ Another factor that contributes to youth unemployment in developing countries is population growth and the sheer size of young cohorts entering the labour market.²⁶ In addition, there are more and more women participating in the labour market, increasing the number of youth seeking scarce jobs.²⁷ As a result, there is a stronger emphasis on the informal sector and on self employment, despite the fact that most people would prefer formal employment.²⁸

4. WHAT IS BEING DONE?

In order to better understand what is being done, this section will look at both who is involved and what they are doing.

Who is involved?

National Governments

National governments are a necessary player in addressing youth employment. This is evidenced by the strong role played by national governments in both developing and developed countries: of the interventions recorded in the Youth Employment Inventory (YEI), governments are involved in 42% of implementation (more than any other actor) and are the major source of funding for youth employment programs.²⁹ There are exceptions of course: in Sub-Saharan Africa, youth employment programs depend almost entirely on external funding.³⁰

Looking to Australia as an example for developed countries, we see that the vast majority of youth employment services are publicly funded. A strongly government-funded youth employment program supported by appropriate policies and legislation is a common approach in a number of developed countries that invest in youth employment, such as Canada and the UK.

In developing countries, governments also play an important role in youth employment promotion. In 2006, 41 countries submitted National Action Plans or progress reports on youth employment, demonstrating a genuine commitment to youth and the resolve to tackle the complex challenges that young people face.³¹

²⁵ Furlong A (2003) UN World Youth Report, Chapter 2: Youth Employment.

²⁶ Youth Employment Inventory, Background.

²⁷ Youth Employment Inventory, Background.

²⁸ Furlong A (2003) UN World Youth Report, Chapter 2: Youth Employment.

²⁹ Youth Employment Inventory; Puerto O (2007) International Experience on Youth Employment Interventions

³⁰ Puerto O (2007) International Experience on Youth Employment Interventions

³¹ United Nations (2006) Review of National Action Plans on Youth Employment

International Organizations

At a global level, there are a number of organisations working to address youth unemployment across multiple countries. These include:

International Labour Organisation³² – the ILO has long been engaged in the youth employment arena and is currently one of the leading organisations in dealing the youth unemployment issue globally and locally in partnership with the governments and local organisations. In addition to producing a large amount of research and publications on youth employment, the ILO has developed an online resource for employers called “*Youth Employment: Making it Happen*” to support employers in developing skills, creating jobs and advocating for policies that contribute to youth employment.³³

Youth Employment Network³⁴ – the UN, together with the ILO and the World Bank, established YEN following the Millennium Summit in 2000 to “develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work.”³⁵ It proposes that interventions should address four thematic priorities – employability, equal opportunities, entrepreneurship and employment creation (known as the “four Es”).³⁶ YEN currently supports a network of 19 lead (developing) countries committed to developing and executing youth employment strategies,³⁷ as well as a number of other countries currently developing national action plans. The focus of YEN is on policy initiatives rather than on-the-ground programming.³⁸

Making Cents International³⁹ – a social enterprise that is building and strengthening the field of youth enterprise and livelihoods development by providing members of all sectors with capacity building opportunities that enable them to share their lessons learned, promising practices and innovative ideas for increasing and improving economic opportunities for young people.

International Youth Foundation⁴⁰ – prepares young people to be healthy, productive, and engaged citizens by implementing programs to help youth learn, work and lead. IYF leverages the expertise and resources of businesses, governments, and civil society organizations through a global community.

Youth Entrepreneurship & Sustainability Campaign⁴¹ – the YES Campaign was launched in 2002 with the goal to Develop capacity of youth to lead in-country youth employment initiatives. Through 83 country networks, the campaign strives to build the individual capacity of youth in order to create sustainable livelihoods and to establish an entrepreneurial culture where young people move toward formal employment. Its activities include business plan competitions and support for selected youth entrepreneurs with seed funding, mentorship and other BDS.⁴²

Ashoka⁴³ – an association of social entrepreneurs, Ashoka manages a global network of young people through their **Youth Venture** program. The program invests in teams of young people to start and

³² ILO, Youth Employment

³³ Youth Employment: Making it Happen, Introduction

³⁴ See: <http://yenonline.org/>

³⁵ ILO (2003) Youth employment: Charting a “road map” for national action.

³⁶ GTZ (2010) Get youth on board! Toolkit 7: Youth employment

³⁷ Youth Employment Network (2010) Benchmarks for Youth Employment

³⁸ Youth Entrepreneurship and Sustainability, The Challenge of Youth Employment

³⁹ See: www.makingcents.com

⁴⁰ See: www.iyfn.org

⁴¹ See: www.yesweb.org

⁴² UN Habitat, Youth Employment Summit Kenya 2006, Provisional Program, Friday September 15, 2006.

⁴³ See: www.ashoka.org/youthventure

lead their own social ventures because it believes that “...one of the most effective ways to improve the lives of youth is to empower them to realize their own ability to make positive social change.”

Others – a number of other institutions including as bilateral and multilateral organisations (e.g. the InterAmerican Development Bank, the World Bank) and non-governmental organisations (e.g. International Relief Committee) are involved in addressing youth employment.

Private Sector

Overall there is a need for greater private sector involvement in youth employment. As discussed, job creation is an important part of the youth employment equation, and the participation and commitment of the private sector is key in creating jobs for young people. The Youth Employment Inventory shows that the private sector is involved in only 11% of implementation and 6% of funding of youth employment initiatives.⁴⁴

In the Australian context, the private sector has been described as unwilling to invest in the work-readiness of prospective youth employees, while companies that do participate in youth employment schemes expect to be financially rewarded by the government. When skill shortages arise, firms are reportedly more likely to request that the Government Issue skilled labour visas to immigrants than to invest in training unemployed youth⁴⁵, something the current government hopes to change.⁴⁶

In South Africa, lack of private sector support is considered a crucial issue: “Companies in South Africa have not really come to the table in terms of supporting these initiatives. Government incentives to enhance private sector involvement have largely gone untapped by the companies because of the bureaucratic nature of these incentives. In addition, incentives are more attractive for large companies and not for medium or small companies, which are seen as the growing employers of people.”⁴⁷

What are they doing?

The most comprehensive source of information on youth employment interventions is the *Youth Employment Inventory*, initiated by the World Bank, and now supported by four more partners: The German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the Youth Employment Network (YEN).⁴⁸ Currently the YEI has over 400 initiatives in its database, of which four out of five are specifically for youth.⁴⁹ Much of the information in this section has been sourced from the inventory and various analyses of the data it provides.

Overall

The Youth Employment Inventory divides interventions into nine categories (see below). In 2007, the most common intervention for youth was **skills training**, which accounts for 38% of all interventions (higher in some regions such as Latin America where it accounts for 56%; see below).⁵⁰ After skills training, **comprehensive multiple-service interventions** (those that combine different elements such as training,

⁴⁴ Youth Employment Inventory

⁴⁵ Hyam R. “Immigration needed to keep building costs down: HIA”

⁴⁶ AAP. “Youth jobs priority in population policy.”

⁴⁷ Youth Development Network (2004) South Africa Addressing Youth Unemployment

⁴⁸ Youth Employment Inventory

⁴⁹ Puerto, O (2007) International Experience on Youth Employment Interventions

⁵⁰ Betcherman G, et al (2007) A Review of Interventions to Support Young Workers

work experience, job placement services, etc) account for 33% of all interventions. Significantly less attention is given to *making labour markets work better for young people* (12%) or *improving chances for young entrepreneurs* (11%). Very few interventions focused on *making training systems work for young people* (4%) or *improving labour market regulations* (1%).

Table 1: Coverage of the Inventory by Category of Intervention and Region

| Category of intervention | Europe & Central Asia | Latin America & Caribbean | Middle East & North Africa | OECD | South & East Asia & the Pacific | Sub-Saharan Africa | Total | % |
|---|-----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|------------|-------------|
| 1. Making the labor market work better for young people | 13 | 3 | 1 | 17 | 0 | 1 | 35 | 12% |
| 1a. counseling, job search skills | 2 | 1 | | 3 | | | 6 | |
| 1b. wage subsidies | 8 | | | 9 | | | 17 | |
| 1c. public works programs | 3 | | 1 | 3 | | 1 | 8 | |
| 1d. anti-discrimination legislation | | | | | | | 0 | |
| 1e. other | | 2 | | 2 | | | 4 | |
| 2. Improving chances for young entrepreneurs | 3 | 5 | 1 | 11 | 6 | 7 | 33 | 11% |
| 3. Skills training for young people | 18 | 38 | 2 | 38 | 9 | 6 | 111 | 38% |
| 3a. vocational training including apprenticeship systems | 13 | 36 | 2 | 33 | 8 | 6 | 98 | |
| 3b. literacy & numeracy – young adult literacy programs | | | | | | | 0 | |
| 3c. 2nd chance & equivalency programs | 3 | 1 | | 3 | 1 | | 8 | |
| 3d. other | 2 | 1 | | 2 | | | 5 | |
| 4. Making training systems work better for young people | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 1 | 4 | 11 | 4% |
| 4a. information | | | | 1 | | 2 | 3 | |
| 4b. credit (to individuals or enterprises) | | | | 1 | | | 1 | |
| 4c. financial incentives (subsidies, vouchers) | | | | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 | |
| 4d. other | | | | 2 | | 1 | 3 | |
| 6. Improving labor market regulations to the benefit of young people | | | | 1 | 1 | | 2 | 1% |
| 8. Comprehensive approach | 6 | 22 | 4 | 47 | 4 | 11 | 94 | 33% |
| 9. Other (e.g. voluntary national service programs) | 1 | | | 2 | | | 3 | 1% |
| Total | 41 | 68 | 8 | 122 | 21 | 29 | 289 | 100% |

Source: World Bank Youth Employment Inventory, 2007

Source: Betchermen G, et al (2007) A Review of Interventions to Support Young Workers

While it is encouraging that so many interventions have been undertaken, this breakdown of youth employment initiatives indicates that a great emphasis is being placed on the *supply* of skilled youth, while fewer efforts have been made in the crucial area of creating *demand* for skilled youth.

Encouragingly, there a significant proportion of interventions (just over half) are targeted towards vulnerable youth from low-income families, particularly in developing countries. Gender targeting, on the other hand, is low with only 16% of interventions targeting young women.⁵¹ Another problematic trend is the lack of attention given to rural youth compared with urban youth: rural youth in developing countries are more disadvantaged in terms of poverty and employment opportunities, and yet only 10% of interventions targeted rural youth, compared with 28% of interventions targeting urban youth.⁵²

Another concern that the Youth Employment Inventory reveals, is that the largest number of interventions (42% of the total) is in the OECD region. Despite the fact youth unemployment and underemployment are much more serious in developing regions, less is being done to address unemployment. This is also a

⁵¹ Betcherman G, et al (2007) A Review of Interventions to Support Young Workers; Puerto, O (2007) International Experience on Youth Employment Interventions

⁵² Puerto, O (2007) International Experience on Youth Employment Interventions

questionable use of resources, given that the analysis of the inventory data suggests that interventions in transitional or developing economies are more effective (to be discussed below).⁵³

Another regional difference is in Latin America, where there are significantly more programs than most other regions (excluding the OECD) and a tendency towards training initiatives. This reflects an evolution of training approaches over recent decades: the seventies saw a largely supply-driven approach that depended on public training institutions; the nineties brought with it a demand-driven model encouraging private sector participation and competition among training providers; and the most recent phase has adopted the demand-driven aspects of the nineties and combined them with an emphasis on on-the-job training and job placement services.⁵⁴

National Government Approaches

The programs and policies of national governments vary widely. Looking to Australia as an example of a national government in a developed context, we see that government funding is channelled through a variety of corporate and non-profit service providers who offer a wide range of employment services across the country. The current model, called Job Services Australia⁵⁵, is seen to offer more services and resources to the disadvantaged, including youth. Job Services Australia features 35 youth specialist sites⁵⁶ out of 2000 sites managed by 136 service providers, some of whom may also offer services targeting youth⁵⁷. The privatized model of employment services creates competition and innovation among services providers, but also risks a high level of turnover given that contracts are for two years. The system is also “transactional” in that it measures and rewards transactions (e.g. referrals, job vacancy postings) as opposed to outcomes.⁵⁸

In addition to Job Services Australia, other federal government programs in Australia include:⁵⁹

- Australian Apprenticeships Access Program – offers vulnerable job seekers with nationally recognised pre-vocational training, support and assistance, through private service providers.⁶⁰
- National Green Jobs Corp – offers environmentally focused work experience and accredited training for 17–24 year olds.⁶¹
- Compact with Young Australians - has three elements to promote skills acquisition and ensure young people are “learning or earning”:⁶²
 - A requirement that all young people participate in schooling up to Year 10 and then in education, training or employment until the age of 17.
 - An entitlement to a place in an education or training program for 15-24 year olds to attain Year 12 or equivalent qualifications
 - Participation requirements (in education, training or employment) to qualify for some types of income support

Programs at the state level also exist that intend to link to or supplement the various federal programs.

⁵³ Puerto, O (2007) International Experience on Youth Employment Interventions

⁵⁴ Puerto, O (2007) Interventions to Support Young Workers in Latin America and the Caribbean

⁵⁵ See Job Services Australia website (<http://www.deewr.gov.au/Employment/JSA/Pages/default.aspx>) for more info.

⁵⁶ Mission Australia (2010) Youth Employment Strategy: Preventing a lost generation

⁵⁷ Information from interview with Sally Sinclair, CEO of National Employment Services Association (16.09.10)

⁵⁸ Information from interview with Sally Sinclair, CEO of National Employment Services Association (16.09.10)

⁵⁹ Mission Australia (2010) Youth Employment Strategy: Preventing a lost generation

⁶⁰ Access Program website.

⁶¹ National Green Jobs Corps Fact Sheet

⁶² See <http://www.deewr.gov.au/Youth/YouthAttainmentandTransitions/Pages/compact.aspx> for more info.

National Service Programs and Volunteerism

In developing countries, there are a wide variety of programs and initiatives sponsored by national governments. One approach that is found across a number of developing (as well as some developed) countries, is a national service program for youth. A report on civic engagement lists at least 29 countries worldwide – the majority in Africa – with national programs designed to engage youth in work or service that will provide them with skills and experience, as well as to ensure that youth contribute to national development.⁶³ Some examples include Ghana's National Service Scheme which engages young people in the education and health sectors, as well as a growing program with the private sector. Burkina Faso has four different levels in their National Development Service: the first 40% will be hired on as civil servants after their year of service; another 40% are volunteers who are not guaranteed employment; around 15% receive professional training; and the rest are trained and deployed as firemen.

Volunteering is another approach that can benefit both youth and organisations. Voluntary experience can equip young people with useful skills to continue along the path towards employment and entrepreneurship, as well as a sense of commitment to their community. The Ontario Association of Youth Employment Centres developed a toolkit on how youth volunteer programs can enhance youth employment services.⁶⁴ The OAYEC piloted youth volunteerism in ten youth employment centres in Ontario, Canada, as “a means of fostering caring communities, and as a means of improving school-to-work transitions through career exploration and preparation.” Based on the success of the pilot, the program was rolled out across the province.

Private Sector Initiatives

Despite the overall lack of private sector involvement, the corporate sector is increasingly investing resources in ‘corporate social responsibility’, occasionally initiating youth employment efforts. Some examples of private sector-led youth employment initiatives are:

- Citi Foundation's *Youth Employment and Livelihoods* “Increases in the number of low-income youth, ages 13-25, who demonstrate the skills needed to complete secondary school, become employed in a living wage job, start their own income-generating business or obtain postsecondary education or training.”⁶⁵
- Shell's *LiveWIRE*⁶⁶ is a global community initiative to encourage young people and their mentors to view “starting a business as a desirable and viable career option. LiveWIRE delivers practical support to young people as they develop the skills needed to plan, launch and manage new business enterprises.”⁶⁷
- Microsoft and Manpower Inc. have combined their expertise in workforce solutions and technological innovations to tackle global youth unemployment. The two international corporations will “develop a training curriculum for young entrepreneurs that include leading-edge technical, organizational, and business development skills. In addition, they will participate jointly in training, mentoring, career guidance, work-preparation, job-linkage, and entrepreneurship projects for youth, first in the region and then across the globe.”⁶⁸

⁶³ Innovations in Civic Participation (2010) Youth Civic Participation in Action

⁶⁴ OAYEC (2002) Youth Volunteerism Toolkit

⁶⁵ Citi, Foundation

⁶⁶ See: <http://www.shell-livewire.com/>

⁶⁷ Youth Employment: Making it Happen, Overview, Shell LiveWIRE

⁶⁸ Njeri M. “Manpower Inc. and Microsoft Form Alliance to Stimulate Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship in the Middle East and Africa.”

A number of organisations are working with the private sector to create demand for youth employees, including the Youth Employment Network which has a Private Sector Initiative project in West Africa.⁶⁹ The project is involved in developing knowledge on youth employment interventions, building networks of private sector and civil society organisations, and brokering partnerships for youth employment projects.⁷⁰

Youth Entrepreneurship

Given the difficulty in creating jobs, entrepreneurship (or enterprise development) is a popular approach to youth employment; however “caution should be exercised so that youth entrepreneurship is not seen as the wide-ranging solution against youth unemployment.”⁷¹ Some of the reasons for caution include:⁷²

- self-employment (especially for youth) is, by definition, risky
- in developing countries it is most often ‘necessity-driven’ and therefore lacking in strategic thinking/planning
- running a business requires particular skills (e.g. bookkeeping) and attitudes (e.g. awareness of risk) that youth may not have developed

Youth entrepreneurship and enterprise development is undoubtedly an important part of the solution to the youth employment crisis. It should be seen, however, as one component of a broader approach to youth employment, and not as the solution in itself.⁷³

5. WHAT IS WORKING?

While there are numerous examples of youth employment programs that have successfully managed to engage youth in decent work,⁷⁴ there is an insufficient evidence base on the impact of programs designed to engage youth in employment or enterprise. A number of studies on the Youth Employment Inventory have attempted to understand which types of intervention are most effective, and have been challenged by the poor availability and quality of impact evaluations on youth employment interventions (particularly in South and East Asia, the Middle East and North and Sub-Saharan Africa). Almost 40% of interventions in the inventory had no evaluation information at all on outcomes or impact.⁷⁵ Only one-quarter of interventions had impact evaluations using treatment and control groups to measure the comparative impact of activities on employability and/or earnings. Equally significant is the fact that only 10 percent of impact evaluations calculated the cost-effectiveness of their intervention.⁷⁶ Other reports confirm this view that “The development of the [youth enterprise, employment and livelihoods development] evidence base still lags behind the pace of implementation.”⁷⁷

Despite the lack of measurement, a number of conclusions were drawn from the analyses of the Youth Employment Inventory. Of the few (11) evaluated interventions that focused on making the labour market work better for young people, 64% had a positive impact. Comprehensive approaches also performed well, with 62% of the 34 evaluated programs reporting positive net impacts. One analysis suggests that a key

⁶⁹ For examples of some private sector programs, see YEN Office for West Africa (2008) Building the Case for Business Collaboration on Youth Employment.

⁷⁰ Youth Employment Network, Private Sector Initiative

⁷¹ Schoof U (2006) Stimulating Youth Entrepreneurship

⁷² Hempel K. “Don’t bank on self employment.”

⁷³ Schoof U (2006) Stimulating Youth Entrepreneurship; Hempel K. “Don’t bank on self employment.”

⁷⁴ For case studies, see Appendix 1.

⁷⁵ Betcherman G, et al (2007) A Review of Interventions to Support Young Workers

⁷⁶ Puerto, O (2007) International Experience on Youth Employment Interventions

⁷⁷ Making Cents International (2011) State of the Field in Youth Enterprise, Employment and Livelihoods Development

lesson to emerge from the evaluated programs is that “successful interventions are often associated with a multifaceted, integrated bundle of services such as skills training, promoting entrepreneurship and social elements.”⁷⁸ Entrepreneurship programs with evaluations were scarce, but did appear to be relatively successful, although with doubtful cost-effectiveness. Surprisingly, training-related programs (skills training, apprenticeships and making training systems work better), which were the most popular form of intervention, were relatively less successful. It should be pointed out, however, that a number of the negative outcomes were for interventions in developed countries, and that in developing and transition countries training programs were more successful: six out of 8 evaluated vocational training reported positive impacts on the labour market for youth and demonstrated relative cost-effectiveness.⁷⁹

In a separate analysis, the same author concluded that “program success is not determined by the type of intervention but rather by the program’s targeting strategies toward disadvantaged youth, the country level of development and the flexibility of the labour market regulations.” This analysis showed no major differences across types of interventions and emphasised that programmers must instead consider the country and employment context to determine the most appropriate intervention. It was confirmed that targeting low-income youth yields significantly higher impact than other programs. Differences across countries were again elaborated, stating that “An employment program implemented in a developing or transitional country has at least a 50 percent higher probability of yielding positive impact for youth than a developed-country program.”⁸⁰

Another interesting finding from this analysis was the fact that ongoing programs (e.g. those that have been running since the 1990s) have demonstrated better performance than shorter-term ones. This implies that there is an important learning process and that success may take time.

⁷⁸ Puerto, O (2007) International Experience on Youth Employment Interventions

⁷⁹ Puerto, O (2007) International Experience on Youth Employment Interventions

⁸⁰ Puerto O (2007) Labor Market Impact on Youth

What has been learned?

From the literature on youth employment emerge similar lessons about what makes youth employment strategies successful. The overarching recommendations on best practice that are echoed throughout the literature include:

Evaluate the context – the studies on existing youth employment strategies show that there is clearly no ‘silver bullet’ when it comes to youth employment. It is important to adequately assess the situation of the youth who are being targeted and the local context including the economy, policy environment, available services and stakeholders in order to select an appropriate approach. Also consider that efforts may need to be made to change the enabling environment to ensure program success and facilitate wider impact.

Address both supply and demand – first and foremost, it is essential that youth employment services address both demand for young employees and supply of job-ready youth. A job vacancy alone is not enough, nor is an isolated training program. Programs must address both sides of the market equation and bridge the gap between the two. The subsequent points highlight ways in which these aspects can be addressed.

| Youth employment promotion strategies | | |
|--|--|--|
| Promotion of employability (labour supply) | Promotion of linkages/matching | Promotion of employment opportunities (labour demand) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implementation of a labour-market oriented TVET system in close cooperation with the private sector• Policy advice on TVET reforms, institution and capacity building• Skills development for people in the formal and informal sector• Entrepreneurship education for young people• Promotion of social work for young people that covers life skill and health education | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establishment of a sound labour market information system• Improvement of job counselling, information and placement systems for young people, monitoring of these instruments• Policy Advice on participatory elaboration and update of National Youth Employment Policies and Action Plans• Empowerment of Youth Organizations to fight for prioritization of youth employment• Monitoring of labour standards | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promotion of young entrepreneurs (training, micro-finance and mentor schemes)• Creation of a favourable economic environment, especially for micro, small and medium-scale enterprises• Setting up incentives for employers to hire young people (youth vouchers, internship schemes)• Promotion of local Public-Private-Partnerships |

A summary of effective youth employment strategies. Source: GTZ (2010) Get on Board! Toolkit 7: Youth employment

Involve the Private Sector – one of the most important players in youth employment are the employers. Employers must be engaged and motivated to take on a key role, including:

- Work placements – providing young people and opportunity to gain work experience through short term placements
- Identification and promotion of industries where youth may excel, such as tourism and IT Permanent employment opportunities
- Identification of skills to inform the design of training programs that can meet rapidly-changing market demands and new growth sectors
- Technical advice and services
- Mentoring
- Funds/Investment

Employers should also be supported with training on the challenges that youth are likely to face, ways to communicate with youth and techniques to support youth on the job. Employers will be more likely to hire and retain youth if they are able to understand and support them. As such, youth employment programs should have a strong focus on developing strong relationships with employers and supporting them to engage and develop youth employees.

Provide comprehensive/integrated services – Youth have a wide range of needs, particularly those who are disadvantaged in terms of education (particularly literacy and numeracy), family support, substance abuse, mental illness or homelessness. Services are needed that “wrap around” each young person, including:

- Job readiness training
- Personal and professional counselling and mentoring
- Specific skill training and accreditation
- Linkages to higher education
- Work experience
- Entrepreneurial pathways (information, training, support)
- Professional networking
- Volunteer opportunities
- Basic needs (housing, food, clothing)
- Recreation
- Follow-up training and support

Ensure Government support – most successful youth employment programs benefit from some form of government support at local, regional or national levels. This support includes:

- Recognition and endorsement of programs
- (Flexible) Financial support
- Advocating the importance and potential of youth employment to the private sector
- Raising awareness of youth employment services among young people
- Encourage governments to support scaling-up successful initiatives

Develop effective partnerships and networks – the importance of relationships with private sector and government has already been highlighted, but it is worth repeating the importance of effective partnerships and networks in general. Youth employment services do not work well in isolation. Providing youth with comprehensive support and a variety of alternative pathways into employment requires:

- Leveraging the support and services of businesses, government and community initiatives
- Creating synergies between policies, programs, sectors, actors, etc.

Meet youth where they are – programs need to meet youth where they are, both physically and mentally/emotionally. Youth often struggle to access employment because they lack confidence or suffer from unique personal challenges. It is important that those working with youth understand their circumstances and that youth feel valued and are comfortable accessing the services available to them. The best way to ensure this is to:

- Tailor support to meet individual needs
- Ensure each young person feels individually supported
- Make young people feel comfortable and safe
- Ensure services are youth friendly and accessible (e.g. at youth recreation centres, avoid environments that feel institutional)
- Treat young people as equal and valuable partners in the process (as opposed to clients or beneficiaries)

Intervene early and, whenever possible, prevent unemployment – youth unemployment rises quickly and is very hard to correct. Once a young person leaves school and is unable to transition into work, the distance between them and the labour market begins to grow: they become less likely to access employment due to their lack of experience or education; they lose self esteem and develop mental health problems; and they often turn to alcohol, drugs or criminal activity to lift their spirits and pass their time. Youth employment programs should focus on:

- Identifying at-risk youth while they are still in school
- Providing incentives for youth to remain in education or transition quickly into employment
- Broadening the work-related learning pathways available in schools
- Offering employment information and services at schools
- Connecting with classrooms to ensure that students have the education they need to bridge the divide between learning and earning⁸¹

Monitor and evaluate – ensure that initiatives are properly evaluated using robust methodologies that can generate solid evidence of impact. Also take into account the cost effectiveness of each intervention.

⁸¹ Making Cents International (2011) State of the Field in Youth Enterprise, Employment and Livelihoods Development

APPENDIX 1: Case Studies of Successful Youth Employment Strategies

Companionship of Works Association (Kenya) – a Nairobi city-based job placement and entrepreneurial support service for young people who lack networks and personal support. Through creating and maintaining a special relationship with local companies, in terms of human resource development support, CoWA successfully operates two initiatives, the Job Seekers Orientation Programme; and the Young Entrepreneurs Support Programme. CoWA depends on financial support from a range of committed international sponsors and the technical contributions of over 300 local businesses.⁸²

Sunraysia Indigenous Project (Australia) – based in the city of Mildura, this project targets the integration of indigenous Australian people, especially indigenous young people, into sustainable mainstream employment opportunities. This comprehensive training and job placement initiative illustrates the power of community and business partnerships to positively overcome and help negate the consequences of endemic social and economic discrimination. The project combines pre-employment training, job skills training, mentoring, cross-cultural training and job placement. It requires project funding support from the national government and the willingness of local employers to provide employment placement opportunities for disadvantaged young Indigenous people.⁸³

Training West African youth in a growth sector: corporate social responsibility and information technology⁸⁴ – in partnership with international donors, Casio set out to provide Internet-based learning and IT skills training in half of the world's 50 least developed countries. In West Africa alone, 125 networking academies have been established in 11 countries. Currently, over 9, 200 students are enrolled throughout West Africa. More than 60% of students are between 25 and 34 years old. A survey of the LDC initiative conducted in six countries shows that two-thirds of respondents found IT jobs after completing the programme and that 10% started their own business. Currently, 31% of students graduating from the courses are women, exceeding the target of 30%. The programme is successful because it covers the demands of a growing sector. The IT industry estimates that sub-Saharan Africa will have 400 000 vacancies in this sector in a few year's time due to a lack of qualified specialists. Closing such skills gaps is probably the quickest way to combat youth unemployment. The cooperation between a private company and public donors leads to wide outreach and demand-driven training programmes.

Rapid Employment Creation (El Salvador) – In 2003, in collaboration with the Salvadorian Ministry of Education and Labour and local NGOs, as an answer to the high levels of youth unemployment GTZ devised a project for the fast and uncomplicated creation of jobs for young people. The project particularly targeted young, rural women, offering individual job coaching, application training and placements; the promotion of personal development and the transfer of soft skills; demand-oriented vocational qualifications and training; openings for work experience and internships; and opportunities for self-employment. For the employers, the project provided free pre-selection and placement of

⁸² Kenyon P (2009) Partnerships in Youth Employment

⁸³ Kenyon P (2009) Partnerships in Youth Employment

⁸⁴ YEN Office for West Africa (2008) Building the Case for Business Collaboration on Youth Employment

qualified applicants; fast, needs-oriented qualification of applicants at short notice; and the chance to employ for trial periods and offer internships without incurring further commitments. With relatively low financial costs, 153 young people were trained and 70 jobs were created⁸⁵

KOTO Restaurant and Vocation Training Program (Vietnam) – KOTO stands for “Know One, Teach One” and is an innovative program that was established in Hanoi in 1996 by Jimmy Pham, a Vietnamese Australian who had returned to visit his home country. Pham stopped to talk to a group of young people living on the street about what they wanted out of life; when they replied that they needed skills to be able to find stable jobs, Pham took it upon himself to set up a sandwich shop where they could gain skills and experience and earn an income. The sandwich shop has since become an accredited hospitality training and job placement centre with a 120-seat restaurant. The proceeds from the restaurant, as well as funding from a wide range of individual and institutional sponsors, have enable KOTO to grow. In addition to the 24-month vocational, English and life-skills training program, KOTO has begun an internship program and mentoring services, opened a new training centre and restaurant in Saigon, and become an extended campus of an Australian vocational institute. In 2009 KOTO had trained over 250 young people.⁸⁶

Vencendoras: youth employment activities for girls through sport (Brazil) – Partners of the Americas (POA) adapted an existing program that combines football-based field activities with “classroom activities, vocational training, internships with mentorships and community service, which result in the development of skills and self confidence” to meet the needs of young women.⁸⁷ The program included girl-specific curriculum, safe spaces for girls to have sensitive discussions and gender-specific monitoring and evaluation of more than 1400 young women who participated between 2008 and 2011.

⁸⁵ GTZ (2010) Get youth on board! Toolkit 7: Youth employment

⁸⁶ Kenyon P (2009) Partnerships in Youth Employment; Also see KOTO website <http://www.koto.com.au>

⁸⁷ Making Cents International (2011) State of the Field in Youth Enterprise, Employment and Livelihoods Development

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Private Sector Initiative: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/yen/whatwedo/projects/private.htm>

Youth Entrepreneurship and Sustainability: <http://www.yesweb.org>

The Challenge of Youth Employment: <http://www.yesweb.org/about/the-challenge-of-youth-employment/>

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ILO: Making it Happen – List of Useful Resources

<http://www.ilo.org/youthmakingithappen/Resources/01.html>

Making Cents International – Resource List

http://www.makingcents.com/products_services/resources.php

Resource Guide on Youth Employment

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/support/lib/resource/subject/youth.htm>

SEEP Youth & Workforce Development Learning Products

<http://seepnetwork.org/Pages/YouthandWorkforceDevelopment.aspx>

World Bank – Youth Livelihoods and Employment

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