

FAST FACTS

United Nations
Development Programme



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

Economic empowerment of youth

Youth unemployment, underemployment and wages that are below the poverty line (\$1.25 per day) diminish human and social capital and are associated with poorer health and educational outcomes. This contributes to long-term, intergenerational poverty and inequality leading to weaker resistance to shocks, and weaker social cohesion.

In its development policy and practice concerning youth, UNDP sees decent work and livelihood creation as chief determinants of socio-economic empowerment of youth and a contributor to the achievement of sustainable human development.



UNDP's approach

To improve the outlook for youth employment in developing countries, UNDP focuses on factors affecting labour demand and supply as well as on policies conducive to job creation for young persons and improvements in the general quality of employment.

Labour demand

UNDP focuses on factors affecting demand for labour by:

- Supporting youth entrepreneurship and enterprise development, including young persons' access to finance, markets, and other resources that increase their productive capacities and competitiveness.
- Supporting social enterprises, by building capacities of youth to help communities, solve social problems, increase employment for youth, reduce poverty, and give back dividends to the community.
- Working with the private and public sectors to encourage internship and apprenticeship schemes and incentives for private and public employers to hire young people or contract their services.
- Working with governments in crisis and post-crisis contexts to design, implement, and monitor public employment schemes targeted at youth as a way to secure livelihoods and reintegration.

MATTERS OF FACT*

- **Two-thirds of youth in developing economies are without work, not studying, or engaged in irregular, informal employment.**
- **Within the next decade, the world population is projected to increase by over 400 million, posing additional pressures on the labour markets in developing countries, where about 85 percent of youth live.**
- **High youth unemployment rates are reported in the Middle East (28.3 percent) and North Africa (23.7 percent).**
- **In other regions, low unemployment rates mask poverty wages (below \$1.25 per day). 152 million young workers, representing 24 percent of all workers, live in households below the poverty line (US\$1.25/day).**
- **Young women have significantly lower labour force participation rates. 13.2 percent of young women in the Middle East are active participants in the labour market, compared to 46.5 percent of young men. The gender gap is a global trend reflecting traditional gender roles, but also systemic issues, such as the difficulty in combining work and family responsibilities or the fact that women often receive lower wages than men for the same work.**

*Source of data: ILO

Labour supply

To enhance labour supply affecting youth, UNDP:

- Works toward increasing employability of young persons through the development of skills, capacities, and knowledge.
- Promotes internships, apprenticeships, and volunteering schemes in support of young persons' transition from school to work or their reintegration into the labour market.
- Addresses skills mismatch a) through support for job centres and job market information systems; and b) by advocating for greater coordination among businesses, policy makers, and education and vocational training bodies in designing curricula based on labour market assessments and forecasts.
- In its efforts directed at youth economic empowerment, UNDP collaborates with UN agencies, including the ILO and other partners.

Policy development

In order to create an environment conducive to job creation for young persons and improvements in the general quality of employment UNDP:

- Supports the development and implementation of institutional and policy frameworks and works toward removal of structural barriers that young women and other disadvantaged youth groups face in the labour market.
- Provides policy support for the development of national strategies to prioritize the generation of youth employment, particularly for women and disadvantaged groups.
- Promotes investment in sectors with the potential for growth in youth employment, such as the service sector.
- Promotes measures to support the development of regional and local economic development that incorporate youth-specific initiatives.

UNDP in action

UNDP has been providing assistance to a number of governments in the development of National Youth Policies including **Jordan, Saudi Arabia** or **Kosovo**. In Jordan, UNDP supported the development of a national youth strategy that focused on strengthening 120 youth training centres across the country that prepare youth for employment. In Saudi Arabia, UNDP is providing assistance to the Ministry of Economy and Planning in the preparation of a national youth strategy. In Kosovo, UNDP supports the country's long-term strategy to promote decent and productive work for the youth with education, enterprise development and labour market policy as the three strategic areas to be pursued in the short to medium term.

In **Georgia**, UNDP has been instrumental in overhauling the out-of-date vocational and educational training system (VET) curricula across the country with an objective to provide participants with skills that respond to the needs of the labour market. By making the courses available to people of all ages (the youngest participant was 17, the oldest 78), this project promoted the philosophy of lifelong learning.

In **Serbia**, UNDP helped to establish the Youth Employment Fund, which included the provision of child care grants and mobility grants. The Fund was designed with the aim of achieving equal distribution of female and male beneficiaries - 47% of beneficiaries were female. The Fund enabled the participation of single parents (most of them mothers) and beneficiaries from rural areas who had to travel to the city for employment and training.

In **Albania**, UNDP partnered with the private sector to employ the most marginalized youth (i.e., young people without parental care, those living with disability, ethnic minorities, survivors of trafficking and domestic violence, and youth living in extreme poverty).

In **Rwanda**, the youth employment initiative *YouthConnekt* uses Google hangout technology in combination with other social media channels and SMS to connect young people to role models, resources, skills, entrepreneurship, and employment and internship opportunities. The platform has a practical, results-oriented format, including interactive, multi-stakeholder panel discussions, partnership announcements, as well as opportunities for participants to showcase their innovative ideas and projects to potential partners.

Confronted with social exclusion and security challenges present in several countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (**El Salvador, Belize, Colombia**) and in post-conflict settings (**Somalia, Sudan, Nepal**), young persons at risk of criminal behavior are supported in (re-)integrating into society through enhanced livelihood, employment, and educational and vocational training opportunities supported by UNDP.

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#UNDP4YOUTH



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