



FACT SHEET

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT: YOUTH PERSPECTIVES ON THE PURSUIT OF DECENT WORK IN CHANGING TIMES

Key facts and selected quotes from worldwide youth contributors to the Report

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT: RATES & CONSEQUENCES

- The global youth unemployment rate, which has long exceeded that of other age groups, saw its largest annual increase on record in 2009; at its peak, **75.8 million young people were unemployed**.
- In 2010, the global youth unemployment rate was 12.6 per cent, **dramatically overshadowing the global adult unemployment** rate of 4.8 per cent.
- Today about **152 million young workers** live in households that are **below the poverty line** (US\$1.25 per day) comprising 24 per cent of the total working poor.

Young people who are able to find a job must accept “an extremely low salary. Some employers are using this as an opportunity to exploit youth.” PARTH, 24 YEARS OLD, INDIA

“The revolution in Egypt, that is led by frustrated but hopeful youth, is stimulated by a long history of failure to solve the unemployment problem, corruption and human rights violations. We revolt with a hope that once we have a good governance system, Egypt will attract more investments and jobs...There is a strong connection between security and economic and social empowerment, with a young generation understanding that close relationship and fighting for securing both.” EMAD, 28 YEARS OLD, EGYPT

- In response to their employment situation, there is some evidence that young people are **delaying marriage and pregnancy**, adjusting family size and assuming increased caregiving responsibilities. Many young people are also **moving back home** with family or sharing homes to cut expenses.

High rates of unemployment “discourage people from getting married because they won’t have enough means to build a family.” LOUBNA, 23 YEARS OLD, MOROCCO

GENDER DIFFERENCES

- In 2010, the total youth unemployment rate was 25.5 per cent in the Middle East and 23.8 per cent in North Africa. **Female youth unemployment** in these regions was particularly striking, at 39.4 per cent in the Middle East and 34.1 per cent in North Africa.

“Young women are doubly affected as they face not only lack of opportunities, but poor quality of work, especially in the informal segments – characterized by low wages, less secure employment, and no voice representation.” LODY, 25 YEARS OLD, CAMBODIA

- Globally, in 2010, 56.3 per cent of young males participated in the labour force, against 40.8 per cent of young females. The **global unemployment rate for young females was 12.9 per cent**, compared with 12.5

per cent for young males. In the developed economies, in the **European Union and in East Asia**, young men have experienced slightly higher unemployment rates than young women.

“In the past, girls were also excluded from some jobs. But in recent years, they have been more and more favoured. So in some jobs proposals we often see ‘female candidates are encouraged to apply.’” YOUSSEUPHA, 23 YEARS OLD, SENEGAL

REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

- Developing countries are home to 87 per cent of the world’s youth, who are often **underemployed** and working in the **informal economy** under poor conditions. Youth living in poverty cannot afford to be unemployed.

“Governments don’t do a lot to implement ideas... It’s like they are not interested in making the situation better.” SANDRA, SLOVENIA

- In developing countries, unemployment tends to be high among more educated youth, leading to the **problem of educated unemployment**.

There is an “excessive obsession for qualifications and certifications”, and “jobs tend to be restricted within informal social networks (familial and friendship ties).” AYSHAH, 26 YEARS OLD, KENYA

“Many young people, particularly the poorest, are starting work too early without the basic skills that could make them marketable. Students are completing secondary schools without having the skills that allow them to adapt to changes in the labour market.” ROGER, GHANA

“What is the use of education if we are not given a chance to put our knowledge and skills into work?” MRIDULA, 16 YEARS OLD, INDIA

LABOUR MIGRATION

- Increasingly, young people are **moving to cities or migrating to countries** with greater job opportunities, separating from their families and social support networks.

“We, the youth, we are losing hope. We try to blame others expecting that one day everything will be fine, that one day someone will knock on our door offering us the job of our dreams...but why do we have to wait? We need to innovate, to risk, to create, to search...why not in another country, for example?” LEO, 28 YEARS OLD, SPAIN

LOOKING AHEAD

“Young people are, in general, more conscious of global issues like climate change and social equity. I think that promotion of green economies among youth is a winning solution.”

MICHAEL, 23 YEARS OLD, ITALY, WORLD ESPERANTO YOUTH ORGANIZATION

“Instead of training young people to seek jobs, they should train students to create jobs.”

BWENJE, UGANDA

“The most important thing is to not give up and learn new things every day.”

YANIRA, 29 YEARS OLD, MEXICO

“We want to make a difference. We want a chance to work. We want to prove ourselves.”

NAVJOT K.

The World Youth Report is available at **UNWorldYouthReport.org**

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