

**Youth Employment Network (YEN) Papers**

**Youth employment promotion:  
A review of ILO work  
and the lessons learned**

David H. Freedman

Employment Strategy Department

2005/1

---

---

---

## Preface

The Youth Employment Network (YEN) was created within the framework of the Millennium Summit, the largest meeting of Heads of State and Government in history, held at the United Nations in September 2000. It was here that world leaders resolved to “develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work.” The Secretary-General invited the ILO and the World Bank to join with the United Nations in an inter-agency partnership aimed at addressing the global challenge of youth employment.

The YEN seeks to share best practice on youth employment between countries and to link political commitments to technical results. Countries, with the support of the partner institutions and other specialized agencies are encouraged to take stock of past national policies, prepare National Action Plans (NAPs) on youth employment and compare progress with that of their peers.

For the partner institutions, this process likewise offers an opportunity to look back and assess their own progress in contributing to global efforts to achieve higher levels of employment and an improved quality of life for young people. All three organizations have a long history of activity in this field. The ILO’s own involvement dates from its inception in 1919.

This paper, by Dr. David H. Freedman, is the first in a Youth Employment Network (YEN) Working Paper series. The paper takes stock of the ILO’s long history of work on youth employment, presents the principal messages derived, provides the author’s views on areas where further work might be warranted, and suggests how the ILO could better disseminate its work and messages on youth employment.

The study finds that the ILO has a rich history of work on youth employment and training policy, reflected in an impressive array of publications. While one observes ebbs and flows in concrete manifestations of the ILO’s commitment to youth employment, policy findings and recommendations generally have remained consistent over the years. They highlight the need for a comprehensive and integrated approach; strategies to promote youth employment must combine policies aimed at both the demand and supply sides of the economy. The ILO repeatedly has observed the importance of a healthy macroeconomic climate, stressing that special measures for young people and macroeconomic interventions should be mutually reinforcing. Still, any assessment of more general measures should include their potential for helping young people to obtain jobs.

While the ILO has long recognized the importance of involving workers’ and employers’ organizations in the design and implementation of youth employment programmes, one finds in past ILO literature few strong messages concerning the involvement of young people other than as the intended beneficiaries. Thus, it is encouraging to see that, now through the YEN, the ILO strongly advocates giving young people a true voice in the fight against youth unemployment. In moving forward, the ILO certainly can list among its strengths, its social partners and the

---

---

recently established Youth Consultative Group (YCG). All have an important role to play at the country level, including in the tracking of policy recommendations.

The YEN is launching this new Working Paper series following the 93<sup>rd</sup> Session, June 2005, of the International Labour Conference (ILC), which held a general discussion on the basis of a report entitled *Youth: Pathways to decent work*.

The Conclusions of this discussion on promoting pathways to decent work for youth adopted by the ILC are appended to this paper. These Conclusions include an ILO plan of action based on three pillars: building knowledge, advocacy and technical assistance. With regard to building knowledge, the main aim is to assist countries in developing their policies and programmes to address the youth employment challenge. Dr. Freedman shows that the ILO already has built a considerable knowledge base, while suggesting that there is much more useful research to be carried out. His paper, the first in this new working paper series, is intended to provide an additional building block to this ongoing process.

José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs  
Executive Director  
Employment Sector

---

---

## **Acknowledgments**

The author is grateful to Steven Miller for inspiring this working paper and offering helpful suggestions along the way. Among the serving officials who provided important information about ILO youth employment programmes covering recent biennia, the author wishes to acknowledge, in particular, Gyorgy Sziracski for the valuable information and insights that he shared. Mariangels Fortuny offered useful comments on an early draft, and Mark Levin and Laura Brewer on the final draft. I am particularly grateful to May Ballerio for her technical inputs on dissemination and for helping the author keep abreast of this ever-changing field. Jane Stewart's positive feedback on the paper was a source of considerable encouragement. Special thanks are reserved for Regina Monticone who read the paper in its entirety more than once and offered very useful detailed comments of both a substantive and editorial nature. Finally, thanks are due to Rowena Ferranco for her helpful and kind secretarial support.

---



---

## Contents

Preface.....	
Acknowledgments.....	
Executive summary of ILO messages on youth employment .....	4
I. Examination of the ILO's work on youth employment, 1919 to 2004 .....	6
The ILO and youth, pre-1970 .....	6
The ILO and youth employment in the 1970s: The start of a broader approach .....	8
The ILO and youth employment in the 1980s: An active biennium .....	12
The ILO and youth employment in the 1990s: A period of reduced emphasis.....	19
The ILO and youth employment from 2000 onwards: The Youth Employment Network.....	24
II. Closer examination of the evolution of ILO messages on youth employment.....	31
1. A life cycle approach.....	33
2. Social, political and security implications of youth unemployment.....	34
3. Decent work.....	36
4. Employability .....	37
5. Equal opportunities .....	41
6. Active labour market policies .....	42
7. Employment creation.....	44
8. Entrepreneurship .....	46
9. Targeting, monitoring and evaluation .....	48
10. Role of the social partners .....	50
11. Participation of young people .....	52
III. Dissemination of the ILO's work and messages on youth employment .....	55
Appendix: Resolution concerning youth employment .....	60

---

---

---



---

## Youth employment promotion:

### A review of ILO work and the lessons learned

Within the framework of the Millennium Declaration (September 2000), the United Nations Secretary-General convened, together with the heads of the International Labour Organization and the World Bank, a high-level policy network on youth employment. A High-level Panel of the Youth Employment Network (YEN) was established in early 2001 and its 12 members held their first meeting in July 2001 at ILO Headquarters. On that occasion the Secretary-General requested the ILO to take the lead in organizing the future work of the YEN and to assume the responsibility for hosting a permanent Secretariat.

Member States were encouraged to draw up National Action Plans on youth employment as a matter of priority, and the Secretary-General invited the ILO to take the lead in supporting the implementation of these recommendations. Four top priorities were identified for all National Action Plans regardless of a country's economic or social development: (1) employability; (2) equal opportunities for young men and young women; (3) entrepreneurship; and (4) employment creation.

The international community clearly has handed the ILO a high-level inter-agency responsibility and a major technical challenge, involving not only the Office but also member States and social partners. Yet the ILO does not start from scratch. From the 1960s onwards, some degree of youth employment-related work activity has featured in almost every ILO Programme and Budget.<sup>1</sup> At times this has been confined to isolated activities in the Employment or Training Major Programmes. On other occasions youth employment has been presented as an inter-departmental or global theme aimed at achieving synergy or greater coherence, or as a more in-depth action programme.<sup>2</sup>

In view of the critical importance of the initiative that the ILO has been called upon to lead, the large body of past ILO work in the field of youth unemployment is both relevant and useful. In returning time and again to what may be seen as a continuing, perhaps even intractable problem, the Office and its constituents have deemed it serious enough to devote substantial Regular Budget resources over the years. The purpose of this study is threefold: (1) to take stock, over time, of ILO research,

<sup>1</sup> Since 1970-71, the Programme and Budget has been produced every two years and presented to the ILO's Governing Body for adoption.

<sup>2</sup> Interdepartmental or global themes grouped together for programme presentation purposes proposed work on topics of concern to several technical departments. Major Programmes corresponded to the overall work programmes of technical departments such as Employment and Development, Training, Social Security, etc. The actual work on interdepartmental or global themes was carried out in the respective technical departments. Action programmes were defined in the Programme and Budget for 1996-97 as special projects on subjects of topical importance designed to achieve specific objectives and to produce useful outputs within a given time-frame. Overall responsibility was assigned to a particular technical department, although contributions could be drawn from elsewhere at headquarters or in the field.

---

publications, meetings, instruments and select operational activity in the field of youth unemployment and youth employment policy; (2) to present the principal messages derived from this work and to identify areas where further work might be warranted; and (3) to suggest how the ILO might better disseminate its work and messages on youth employment with a view both to enhancing its operational activity and influencing decision makers.

The paper begins by providing a composite of the main ILO messages in the form of an Executive Summary. The ensuing sections offer a review of the ILO's work on youth employment over the years. Although the review starts with the Organization's inception in 1919 and continues up to the beginning of 2005, the principal content is derived from 1970 onwards.<sup>3</sup> At that point, youth employment and training began to figure more prominently in the ILO's research and operational activity. Thus, the study will cover in detail roughly 35 years of Office activity. It will assign special attention to those biennia where "youth" figured among the Office's global themes or action programmes.

Throughout this period, the ILO's field structure has figured prominently in the Office's work on youth employment. The regional employment teams<sup>4</sup> played an important role, particularly during the 1980s, while CINTERFOR<sup>5</sup> to this day continues to address the link between vocational training and youth employment. Thus, work in the field will form an important part of the study.

As the Office's work programme reflects the wishes of its constituents, the fact that the problem of youth employment has always been a part of the ILO's research agenda suggests an inherent interest or concern on the part of the Governments, Employers and Workers who make up the Governing Body and attend the ILC. Therefore, in conjunction with a review of the work of the Office, the study will examine the extent to which youth employment has been the subject of Conference reports, discussions, instruments (including resolutions) and other constituent meetings, and the more important interactions and causal relationships involving the Organization's three principal organs: the Conference, the Governing Body and the Secretariat.

Following the stocktaking of items completed and outputs delivered, a significant sample of this work will be chosen for content analysis under 11 subject headings covering both substantive issues and processes relevant to youth employment

<sup>3</sup> The starting point for the review will be successive Programmes and Budget, dating from the late 1950s when the Office added narrative text to its budget document. With the introduction of programme implementation reports in 1969, it became easier to measure the effect given to budget proposals.

<sup>4</sup> Jobs and Skills Programme for Africa (JASPA) had the widest range of activity in this area, but the three other employment teams – Regional Employment Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean (PREALC), Asian Regional Team for Employment Promotion (ARTEP) and Southern African Team for Employment Promotion (SATEP) – also made important contributions until they all were replaced in the early 1990s by a different form of field structure at the technical level.

<sup>5</sup> CINTERFOR is the ILO's Inter-American Research and Documentation Centre on Vocational Training, based in Montevideo.

---

promotion. The aim is to ascertain and then compare the ILO's messages on youth employment over time. The study will pay particular attention to the messages contained in major books, reports and Conference documents, including resolutions. The analysis will take note of whether the Youth Employment Network's political message, summarized in the four principles of employability, equal opportunity, entrepreneurship and employment creation, reflects new thinking or is found in earlier Office undertakings. Messages regarding other recurring macro and micro issues will be examined as well. Following the examination of messages under each of the 11 subject headings, the paper will identify research gaps and offer suggestions for further work.

The study's principal aim is to review ILO work activity and messages on youth unemployment and youth employment policy. Yet if the goal is to inform debate and influence policy, it is pertinent to ask whether the ILO has effectively disseminated its findings. While this represents a major undertaking in its own right, and one not necessarily limited to the present subject matter, there will be an initial attempt to shed some light on this question.

---

## **Executive summary of ILO messages on youth employment**

There is a strong basis for the ILO's focus over the years on youth unemployment. First, unemployment impedes young people in their passage from adolescence to adulthood, which often involves setting up a household and forming a family. Early workplace skill development is crucial to future earnings growth, while prolonged unemployment early in working life increases the probability of future joblessness and lower future wages. Second, young people without a stake in the system are more likely to become alienated and to engage in anti-social behaviour, including alcohol and drug abuse, juvenile delinquency and other forms of social unrest. High levels of youth unemployment may lead to alienation not only from society, but also from democratic political processes. Consistent with the concept of decent work, the goal is not just the creation of jobs for young people but also the creation of quality jobs. It is necessary to look at the nature and characteristics of jobs, considering the skills and interests of young workers.

All countries should review, rethink and reorient their education, vocational training and labour market policies to facilitate the transition to work and to give young people a head start in working life. There is a need to review education and training programmes and, as necessary, bring them into greater conformity with the world of work. The aim is to ensure that young people upon leaving school possess a general education and a balanced range of qualifications and skills. Investment in primary schooling is the most cost effective form of educational investment that a developing country can make. Skill training also needs to be broad, flexible and responsive to changing market conditions. As regards apprenticeship training, this implies ensuring that apprenticeship curricula are modern and up-to-date and that they provide individuals with appropriate skills and capacity for ongoing learning and productivity improvement. There is a further need to establish closer links between formal and non-formal education as well as between classroom instruction and on-the-job training. Work experience combined with training seems to be the most effective policy. Programmes that comprise both off-the-job training and work placements within enterprises are generally more effective than programmes that contain only one of these elements, e.g. programmes based solely on work placements or classroom training.

Within education and training systems, equality of access should be strongly encouraged. Training policies should aim at widening women's access to training and retraining in all sectors and occupations and at all levels of skill and responsibility. Vocational guidance programmes need to pay special attention to girls and young women, helping them to make non-traditional career choices. As part of compulsory education, all young women should have access to the same career information, school subjects and eventual qualifications as young men as well as subsequent opportunities to pursue further training.

Active labour market policies (ALMPs) are a complement to formal education and training systems. Unemployed young workers benefit most from initiatives that offer a broad range of mutually supporting programmes. These can include educational support, training, subsidized work, job search assistance, career advice, as well as counseling to deal with drug, alcohol and family problems. Still, experience has

---

shown ALMPS have a limited impact, while expansionary macroeconomic policies clearly have a positive effect on employment.

Both the quantity and quality of employment opportunities for young people are closely associated with the functioning of the economy as a whole. Meeting the employment aspirations of young people is dependent on higher and sustained rates of global economic growth to achieve a significant expansion in overall labour demand. Youth unemployment is primarily a reflection of a country's poor macroeconomic performance. Stable macroeconomic institutions, policies and goals are among the fundamentals of a sound, employment-creating economy. Special measures for young people and macroeconomic interventions should be mutually reinforcing. Within a larger economic and social policy framework, it is necessary to view in their totality and more fully integrate education, training, counseling, labour market interventions as well as overall employment policy. Moreover, while policy makers cannot conduct the battle against youth unemployment separately from efforts to reduce overall unemployment, they should assess general measures partly in terms of their potential for helping young people to obtain jobs. Job creation for young people, then, must form part of a total approach to employment and can best take place in a healthy, dynamic and growing economy with financially sound enterprises.

Enterprise development by and for young people represents an essential source of employment creation for this age group. Yet, while self-employment and small business creation are an important means for young persons to obtain gainful employment, they play a lesser role than wage employment in overall employment growth. Encouragement of youth entrepreneurship as part of a youth employment strategy calls for start-up capital, financial, marketing and management assistance, training, provision of free or low-cost premises and workshops, and mentor support together with other supportive interventions that established enterprises and employers could take to help young entrepreneurs to gain access to capital.

Enterprise development programmes and active labour market policies, as other measures aimed at youth, share the need for targeting the most disadvantaged young people. Close targeting enhances programme effectiveness. Continuous monitoring of results and evaluation of impact are extremely important, permitting selection of the more successful youth initiatives for replication elsewhere.

The involvement of workers' and employers' organizations in the design and implementation of youth employment programmes, including active labour market policies, is an important factor in determining their success. Such involvement engages worker and employer commitment to schemes and tends to enhance the relevance of programme content and the quality of training. At the same time, young people should be more involved in helping to set priorities and in the selection, design and implementation of youth employment schemes.

---

## I. Examination of the ILO's work on youth employment, 1919 to 2004

### The ILO and youth, pre-1970

From its very inception in 1919, the ILO has sought to regulate or improve the employment and working conditions of young people. The Minimum Age (Industry) Convention, 1919 (No. 5) was the first in a series of ILO Conventions aimed at the abolition of child labour and establishing or raising the minimum age for admission to employment in various sectors or types of economic activity.<sup>6</sup> Also in its inaugural year, the ILO adopted the Night Work of Young Persons (industry) Convention, 1919 (No. 6).<sup>7</sup> Three Conventions, two adopted in 1946 and the third in 1965, aim to ensure that young people are fit for employment, by calling for compulsory thorough medical examination before their admission.

A good number of resolutions adopted by the ILC from 1953 onwards provide further evidence of the importance that the Organization attached to youth employment.<sup>8</sup> The *Resolution concerning Protection of the Employment and Living Conditions of Young Persons*, adopted in June 1953 at the Thirty-sixth Session of the Conference, invited the Governing Body to focus on the further action required by the Organization to provide young workers with adequately-remunerated employment opportunities, and to develop facilities for their vocational guidance and training.<sup>9</sup>

Then, at its Forty-third Session in 1959, the ILC adopted the *Resolution concerning the Problems of Young Workers*, which was much more far-reaching in scope. The Resolution invited the Governing Body to consider, *inter alia*: (1) using the ILO's technical assistance activities to help launch and implement programmes for the welfare of young workers; (2) convening meetings of consultants selected from a newly-created Panel of Consultants on young workers' problems in order to systematically study problems affecting young workers; (3) placing such problems on the agenda of the various organs of the ILO, such as the ILC, regional conferences

<sup>6</sup> The earlier minimum age Conventions were largely superseded by the Minimum Age Convention (No. 138) and Recommendation (No. 146), 1973.

<sup>7</sup> The Night Work of Young Persons (industry) (Revised) Convention, 1948 (No. 90) increased the period of prohibition from 11 to 12 consecutive hours, while otherwise allowing for greater flexibility. Two years earlier, the ILO had adopted the Night Work of Young Persons (Non-Industrial Occupations), 1946 (No. 79), applying to all occupations other than those recognized as industrial, agricultural or maritime. See ILO: *Summaries of international labour standards*, Second edition (Geneva, 1991), pp. 101-02.

<sup>8</sup> As early as 1945, the Twenty-seventh Session of the ILC, held in Paris, had adopted the *Resolution concerning the protection of children and young workers*, which focussed on social and health protection rather than employment per se.

<sup>9</sup> The Resolution also requested the Governing Body to consider the possibility of initiating a study as a guide to future action on the measures which might be required to ensure the best possible conditions of employment and progress for young people. See ILO: *Record of Proceedings*, ILC, 36<sup>th</sup> Session, 1953 (Geneva, 1954), p. 438.

---

and Industrial Committees; and (4) expanding, if necessary, the Office's facilities for dealing adequately with the various problems affecting young workers.<sup>10</sup>

It remained for the ILO to focus sharply on youth unemployment and employment promotion in later resolutions. Nevertheless, the Preamble noted that large numbers of young workers were unemployed, while the operational paragraph addressed to member States urged them "to develop well-rounded and adequate youth policies and programmes which will enable them to apply progressively I.L.O. standards relating to the employment, training and conditions of work of young workers, if they have not already done so".<sup>11</sup>

One year later, the ILC returned to the protection of young workers when "youth and work" was chosen as the theme of the Report of the Director-General. The report spent only a single page on youth unemployment per se. However, it devoted one chapter to occupational opportunity and choice and another to education, training and vocational preparation for work.<sup>12</sup> The Forty-fourth Session also adopted the *Resolution concerning Measures to Protect the Living and Working Conditions of Young Workers*, which reinforced the messages contained in the preceding resolution. In addition, the Governing Body was asked to examine placing on an upcoming Conference agenda the question of revising existing instruments and/or adopting one or more new "instruments dealing with the living and working conditions of young workers, including those in rural areas".<sup>13</sup>

In fact, although in the ensuing years, the ILC adopted the Medical Examination of Young Persons (Underground Work) Convention, 1965 (No. 124), a decade would pass before the ILO adopted, in 1970, an instrument specific to young people that encompassed youth employment and training, and there too from a very particular vantage point.

Before turning the page to the 1970s, it can be observed that up to this point most of the ILO's youth-related activity took place within the framework of the ILC, i.e. standard setting, adoption of Conference resolutions, and presentation of a Director-General's report. The days of extensive research would follow, but even in the 1960s, there was some research on youth, with the *International Labour Review* serving as the vehicle for its presentation. A Meeting of Consultants on the Problems of Young Workers, held in Geneva from 30 October to 4 November 1961, gave rise to an article on "Youth Employment and Vocational Training Schemes in the Developing

<sup>10</sup> Starting with the 1959 Programme and Budget, meetings were signalled, but often postponed. This was true, for instance, of the *Meeting of Experts on Juvenile Employment* (1959 P&B), and the *Meeting of Experts on Employment and Unemployment among Those with a Secondary or Higher Education (Educated Unemployment)* (1962 P&B). It has not been possible to document whether a *Meeting of Consultants on Young Workers' Problems* (1965) and a *Meeting of Experts on Youth Services* (1968) took place.

<sup>11</sup> ILO: *Record of Proceedings*, ILC, 43rd Session, 1959 (Geneva, 1960), pp.778-79.

<sup>12</sup> ILO: *Report of the Director-General, Part I: Youth and Work*, ILC, 44<sup>th</sup> Session, Geneva, 1960.

<sup>13</sup> ILO: *Record of Proceedings*, ILC, 44th Session, 1960 (Geneva, 1961), p. 734.

---

Countries”.<sup>14</sup> In 1963, two articles appeared in separate issues on the “Employment Prospects of Children and Young People in the Near and Middle East” followed by “Employment Prospects of Children and Young People in Asia”.<sup>15</sup> Then in 1966, the ILO published a special issue on “Special manpower mobilization schemes and youth programmes for development purposes”<sup>16</sup>, based on a number of case studies carried out by the Office during 1964 and 1965.

### **The ILO and youth employment in the 1970s: The start of a broader approach**

The Special Youth Schemes for Development Recommendation, 1970 (No. 136) sought to establish principles and guidelines aimed at meeting youth employment and training needs. These included the voluntary nature of such schemes as well as their integration with human resources plans and programmes directed towards achieving full and productive employment.<sup>17</sup>

By then, of course, the ILO had launched its World Employment Programme, a new employment-oriented approach to poverty alleviation and development, which favoured a continuing interaction between research focussed on policy analysis and operational activities. From the 1970s onwards, this would have implications for the ILO’s approach to young workers among other target groups and problem areas, calling for enhanced analysis and policy intervention.

The *Programme and Budget for the Biennium 1970-71* announced that problems of youth would be a major focus of the World Employment Programme (WEP). Proceeding from the framework provided by the aforementioned Recommendation No. 136, the ILO carried out four studies on youth employment and training schemes in Malawi, Malaysia, Mali and Sri Lanka. Subsequently, preparatory missions to several countries drew up detailed requests for UNDP-financed technical assistance projects designed to strengthen and expand national youth service programmes. Studies on the management needs of youth employment programmes, youth and rural development, and the special problems of youth and cooperatives also figured in the 1970-71 biennial programme.

The *Programme and Budget for the Biennium 1972-73* retained the accent on youth employment and training schemes and led to a publication on their cost-benefit

<sup>14</sup> See *International Labour Review*, Vol. LXXXVI (September 1962), No. 3, pp. 209-234.

<sup>15</sup> See *International Labour Review*, Vol. LXXXVII (January 1963), No. 1, pp. 51-66 and Vol. LXXXVIII (December 1963) No. 6, pp. 564-95.

<sup>16</sup> *International Labour Review*, Vol. 93 (January 1966), No. 1.

<sup>17</sup> By then, the ILO had adopted the much broader Employment Policy Convention and Recommendation, 1964 (No. 122). The Convention established full, productive and freely chosen employment as a cornerstone of future employment policy, while the Recommendation, under the section on “Selective Measures” called for assignment of special priority to measures designed to remedy the serious problem of youth unemployment.



---

analysis.<sup>18</sup> The biennium also began to show results from a work programme on “Education and employment in developing countries”. Results included publication of a monograph, a paper, two articles published in the *International Labour Review* and a book by Mark Blaug entitled *Education and the employment problem in developing countries*.<sup>19</sup> This latter volume assessed the responsibility of educational authorities for the employment problem of developing countries and addressed the question of how education systems could be reformed to maximize the rate of growth of income-earning opportunities. Professor Blaug argued that the tendency of educational systems to grow more quickly at the top rather than at the bottom of the education ladder must be reversed, and that this could only be achieved by a restructured pattern of educational finance combined with direct intervention in labour markets.<sup>20</sup> In the field of vocational training, the Office collaborated with UNICEF in preparing case studies and guidelines on pre-vocational training and vocational training schemes for urban and rural youth in developing countries. Elsewhere, the Office completed a study on the role of social institutions in the promotion of youth participation.

In the next biennium, content specific to young people and the world of work was rather limited. The *Programme and Budget for the Biennium 1974-75* provided for an examination of the implications of the “educational explosion” on the employment situation in industrialized countries. Thus began a pattern that has continued to this day. One or two budget documents featuring a concentration of work on youth employment problems was followed by one or more biennial programmes where work on youth unemployment appeared to be considerably downgraded in importance, without being terminated altogether. Then, in a subsequent biennium, one observed a heavy re-emergence of youth employment activity, followed one to three biennia later once again by a lack of emphasis. While never totally disappearing from the ILO’s work programme, the priority assigned to youth unemployment has varied greatly over the years.

The ILC, at its Sixtieth Session in 1975, adopted the Human Resources Development Convention and Recommendation (No. 142 and No. 150) whose heavy emphasis on vocational guidance and vocational training was particularly relevant to the young.<sup>21</sup> A good number of the provisions of the Recommendation addressed children and young people in particular. It requested Members to extend the scope of their vocational guidance systems to helping children and young people at school gain an

<sup>18</sup> ILO: *Youth training and employment schemes in developing countries. A suggested cost-benefit analysis*, (Geneva, 1972). Mr. Emile Costa, a member of the ILO’s Economic Branch, developed and applied a methodology to Kenya and Sri Lanka (at that time Ceylon) aimed at estimating the real costs and benefits of youth services for the national economy.

<sup>19</sup> Mark Blaug: *Education and the employment problem in developing countries* (Geneva, ILO, 1973; fourth impression, 1981).

<sup>20</sup> The author went on to observe that to reverse these trends meant that the cure to educated unemployment would create or aggravate the “school leaver problem”, for which the remedy, at least in the short run, was to provide out-of-school education. See *ibid*, p. 89.

<sup>21</sup> In fact, the long title of the instruments is Convention (Recommendation) concerning Vocational Guidance and Vocational Training in the Development of Human Resources.

---

understanding of the world of work and the employment and career opportunities that might be open to them as well as the associated requirements. Children and young people who had never been to school or who left early should be given information on a broad range of occupations and employment opportunities in these occupations, as well as guidance on how they might gain access to them. The Recommendation also stressed the need to inform young people of the importance of general and vocational education in relation to existing employment prospects and economic and social development trends.

The *Programme and Budget for the Biennium 1976-77* retained its accent on education and employment. The Office carried out surveys and published several working papers on education and labour market expectations of school leavers, as well as completing for commercial publication two manuscripts on educational reform and employment. It also carried out a comparative analysis of higher education and the labour market based on seven country case studies in Eastern and Western Europe.<sup>22</sup> An article in the *International Labour Review* dealt with some of the difficulties which school-leavers and young workers encountered in their search for a job or a training place and then reviewed the measures taken or envisaged in a number of countries to alleviate the problem.<sup>23</sup> Elsewhere in the programme, the ILO collaborated with UNICEF in technical cooperation activities designed for the vocational preparation of young people in rural and urban areas.

At the level of the Conference, the biennium's major undertaking was the World Employment Conference (WEC) held from 4 to 17 June 1976. The WEC adopted a Declaration of Principles and a Programme of Action, which reaffirmed the need to meet the challenge of creating sufficient jobs in developing countries to achieve full employment. It also recognized the satisfaction of the basic needs of all people as one of the primary objectives of national development efforts and international economic relations. The Programme of Action urged the provision of "productive employment, equal opportunity and equal pay for work of equal value, vocational training and working conditions suited to their age" for young people.<sup>24</sup>

The *Programme and Budget for the Biennium 1978-79* may not have been the first and certainly was not the last in which the Office promised more work on youth employment and training than it was able to deliver. For instance, the P and B announced further work on the employment problems of youth. The intention was to evaluate a variety of approaches aiming to bridge the gap between school and working life and to reduce unemployment through intervention in the labour market. This was

<sup>22</sup> The overall programme, which started in the early 1970s, and benefited from considerable DANIDA support, formally ended in April 1978.

<sup>23</sup> P. Melvyn: "Youth unemployment in industrialized market economy countries," *International Labour Review*, Vol. 116, No. 1, July-August 1977, pp. 23-38. A consolidated and updated version of this article and a paper by D. H. Freedman, entitled "The idle threat: unemployed youth", subsequently were published by the two authors as "Youth unemployment: a worsening situation," in D. H. Freedman (ed.), *Employment outlook and insights* (Geneva, ILO, 1979), pp. 81-92.

<sup>24</sup> ILO: *Declaration of Principles and Programme of Action Adopted by the Tripartite World Conference on Employment, Income Distribution and Social Progress and International Division of Labour*, Geneva, 4-17 June 1976, p. 6.

---

to result in a publication containing guidelines and policy conclusions for use by manpower planners, educators and labour market authorities. The subsequent listing of outputs consisted of one working paper and four lectures. A work item on the training needs of youth in developing countries comprised three parts: (1) studying the possibilities for extending part-time technical instruction to young people receiving mostly on-the-job training; (2) finding out how the work of non-governmental voluntary organizations that were actively involved in educating and training youth, especially underprivileged youth, could be better coordinated with national training systems; and (3) assessing the experience gained in running special youth training schemes. The results of the first part were to be used in technical cooperation, while the second and third components were intended to lead to the development of appropriate guidelines. In the end, the overall study was reduced in scope, resulting in a desk study on new project design, and a single set of guidelines for the field on providing direct stimulus to national action in favour of urban and rural youth. A separate piece of work focussing on providing technical advisory services concerning (1) training programmes suited to girls and women in rural areas and (2) programmes for school drop-outs was eventually subsumed under the above-mentioned work item.

On the constituent front, the 1978-79 biennium resulted in two resolutions on youth employment and a third that contained an important operative paragraph pertaining to young people. The ILC adopted at its Sixty-fourth Session in 1978 the *Resolution concerning Youth Employment*. Unlike the earlier resolutions adopted by the ILC, the new resolution reflected the intensifying focus on the problem of youth unemployment per se. It stressed that the problem of youth unemployment should be dealt with in the context of an overall and well balanced strategy for full employment. The resolution recognized that short-term economic measures alone could not solve the problem of youth unemployment, no more than the general problem of unemployment; rather such measures should form part of comprehensive policies aimed at economic development and growth, which could make for the attainment of social priorities. It then called upon member States to devote priority attention to the elaboration of specific and effective measures against youth unemployment for implementation in the framework of overall full employment plans or policies. These should include appropriate agricultural policies, credit facilities, training, extensive literacy programmes, expanded and, if necessary, reorganized, vocational guidance and placement services, and respect for the principle of equal pay for equal work (also in the case of young workers). One specific operative paragraph called for methods of education and training which combined practical work with theoretical studies, integrating vocational training into employment promotion measures and promoted the skills, abilities and opportunities of individuals in employment, regardless of sex. As will be seen later, these messages were consistent with work emanating from the Office. The resolution also called upon the Office to encourage and assist governments through technical cooperation and to work out effective measures against youth unemployment in cooperation with employers' and workers' organizations. It further requested the Office to promote the implementation of existing standards related to young workers.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> See ILO: *Record of Proceedings*, ILC, 64<sup>th</sup> Session, 1978 (Geneva, 1979), pp. 31/20-21.

---

The next year, the ILC met to renew its endorsement of the World Employment Conference Declaration of Principles and Programme of Action. It adopted a *Resolution concerning Follow-up to the World Employment Conference*. The wide-ranging set of recommendations addressed to member States included a call “to study, evaluate and disseminate information on special programmes and measures adopted with a view to furthering the absorption of young people in productive employment, including innovative training designed to facilitate the orientation of young people towards employment and self-employment.”<sup>26</sup>

The growing importance that the constituents attached to youth employment problems also manifested itself at a regional level. The ILO presented to the Third European Regional Conference, held in Geneva in October 1979, a report entitled *Young people and work*.<sup>27</sup> The report focussed on job prospects, preparation for work through schools and vocational training, and policy coordination for young people and work. Following committee discussion of this technical item, the Regional Conference adopted a *Resolution concerning young people and work*. The resolution contained separate sections on general education, vocational guidance and vocational training, each of which included detailed recommendations on preparing young people for entry into working life. Overcoming gender-based discrimination and addressing the needs of physically, mentally and socially disadvantaged young persons were all addressed. Governments, with employers’ and workers’ organizations, were encouraged to pursue active and integrated employment policies aimed to help young people find adequate remunerative employment, as far as possible, in their occupations of choice. The resolution recommended that the Director-General place increased emphasis on the preparation of young persons for entry into employment.<sup>28</sup> In its efforts to address the problems of youth unemployment, the decade of the 1980s was about to emerge, both for the Office and the larger Organization, as the fullest in ILO history up to that point in time.

### **The ILO and youth employment in the 1980s: An active biennium**

The Director-General announced in the *Programme and Budget for the Biennium 1980-81* an increased accent on youth. While that particular biennium’s programme featured considerable work, the Office appears to have promised more than it was able to deliver on schedule. Under a new sub-programme on “Employment problems and policies in industrialized countries”, a study on the functioning of local labour markets with regard to youth employment in several European countries was completed, while a piece of work that sought solutions to youth unemployment through alternative patterns of work and life never got off the ground. In the Management development programme, a project on effective approaches to

<sup>26</sup> ILO: *Record of Proceedings*, ILC, 65th Session, 1979 (Geneva, 1980), p. 42/21.

<sup>27</sup> ILO: *Young people and work*. Report II, Third European Regional Conference, Geneva, 1979.

<sup>28</sup> In more specific terms, the Office was invited to review existing international standards, organize technical meetings, seminars or symposia, and increase its research, all relating to vocational guidance, vocational training, conditions of work and employment of young persons.

---

entrepreneurial development for youth resulted in a trainers' guide on *Self-employment as a career*. In the Training policies programme, an examination of alternative methods for the delivery of training to disadvantaged youth advanced, in the course of the biennium, as far as the data completion stage. This was a contribution to a joint project on the insertion of youth into working life organized in conjunction with several other programmes. In addition to the aforementioned employment and training components, the Labour law and labour relations programme undertook to examine the contribution that different systems of remuneration could make to the insertion of young people into working life. During the biennium, work advanced as far as a review of the existing literature. The Conditions of work and life programme prepared six national monographs on the influence of their conditions of work and attitudes to work on young people's insertion into working life. Finally, the biennium saw the introduction of a post for the coordination of activities concerning young workers and older workers.<sup>29</sup>

By 1981, the Jobs and Skills Programme for Africa (JASPA), with headquarters at that point in Addis Ababa, was well into a multi-country study on the paper qualification syndrome (PQS) and the unemployment of school leavers. As there had been insufficient economic growth in most African countries, particularly in the modern urban sector, employers, in order to absorb all educated persons, generally tended to escalate the educational requirements of jobs. This phenomenon caused the education system to place undue emphasis on language and mathematics and on paper and pencil tests, rather than on developing problem-solving skills. It also pushed governments to give more emphasis and resources to secondary and tertiary rather than to primary education. Above all, the PQS contributed to unemployment because higher education qualifications produced greater aspirations, frustration and unemployment since educated persons were not prepared to accept lower-level jobs. In July 1981, JASPA organized a sub-regional seminar in Nairobi to discuss a two-volume study of the PQS in eight English-speaking countries of East and West Africa. The aim was to discuss the findings of the country studies, stimulate a debate on education and selection for modern sector employment in Africa, and begin to identify solutions to the problem.<sup>30</sup>

The *Programme and Budget for the Biennium 1982-83* reverted to less emphasis on youth unemployment. This partly reflected a decision to place less weight on employment problems in industrialized countries.<sup>31</sup> Proceeding from the previous

<sup>29</sup> The Office retained this function for two more biennia. As regards the young workers' component, it never served as a model for facilitating the performance of effective inter-departmental activity.

<sup>30</sup> See ILO: *The Paper Qualification Syndrome and the Unemployment of School-leavers* (Addis Ababa, ILO, October 1981). Following the seminar, JASPA published a synthesis of the eight country studies in an analytical manner that turned the issues into basic themes and used the country studies as sources of information and findings. See ILO: *Paper Qualification Syndrome (PQS) and Unemployment of School Leavers* (Addis Ababa, ILO, 1982). JASPA went on to conduct similar studies of the PQS in eight French-speaking countries. JASPA published these results in two further synthesis studies in 1982 and 1985.

<sup>31</sup> A large proportion of the work proposed under the technical major programmes, as well as the regional major programmes, was concentrated on six global themes: rural development, technology, energy, the urban informal sector and international migration.

---

biennium's work on training for self-employment, the Office developed training programmes and guidelines for nine-month courses for young people. These comprised an integrated package of training in vocational and managerial skills and entrepreneurship development. In addition, under the Training for special groups sub-programme, a study was prepared on the integration of youth training schemes into national training systems.

At its 34<sup>th</sup> Session in 1979, the United Nations General Assembly decided to organize an International Youth Year in 1985. Then, in 1981, Resolution 36/28 invited the organizations of the United Nations system to contribute to the preparation and celebration of the Year and to plan a specific programme of activities, in the light of their own experience and priorities. This prompted the ILO to take a fresh look at its activities and responsibilities as regards youth and labour and to set out the broad lines of its intended policy for the next few years in the Report of the Director-General to the ILC at its Sixty-eighth Session in 1982.<sup>32</sup>

The ILC, at its Sixty-ninth Session in 1983 adopted the *Resolution concerning young people and the ILO's contribution to International Youth Year*. Member States were called upon to take immediate coordinated action to combat youth unemployment, in the framework of a full employment policy. Effective action should occur in the legislative, economic and social fields. It should include specific measures aimed at improving job opportunities and the quality of work for young people in rural areas as well as full application to young people of the principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value. The Office, in turn, should reflect in its activities and implement before and during the International Youth Year (IYY) specific measures for the employment and training of young people for work and for life. The Office also should prepare reports on the ILO's contribution to the IYY for submission to the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).<sup>33</sup> In 1983, the ILO actively participated in five regional meetings organized by the United Nations to prepare regional programmes of action for young people.

The *Programme and Budget for the Biennium 1984-85* introduced "Youth" as a global theme for programming purposes, observing that a sustained attempt had been made by several major programmes in the technical sector to ensure that their proposals reflected the need to resolve the problems of the young workers. Within the Employment and Development Department, a sub-programme on the special problems of youth undertook a cross-country analysis of the impact of policy instruments designed to improve youth access to first employment. A working paper was completed on the "Work Experience Programme" in Ireland, the first in a series of working papers that eventually included studies on youth schemes in France (1987), Australia (1988), and the United States (1988). However, a proposed survey

<sup>32</sup> ILO: *Report of the Director-General, Part I, What jobs for youth?*, ILC, 68th Session, Geneva, 1982. The present study will highlight key messages from the Report in a subsequent section.

<sup>33</sup> The Office also was called upon, *inter alia*, to undertake by 1985 a general survey of the needs and problems of young people in the field of work and of measures undertaken by member States to resolve these problems, and to include on the agenda of the 71st Session of the ILC in 1985 a further discussion on the problems of youth, including the elimination of child labour and preparation of young people for the world of work. See ILO: *Record of Proceedings*, ILC, 69<sup>th</sup> Session, 1983 (Geneva, 1984), pp. 35/23-25.

---

of what certain key groups, such as youth organizations, perceived to be the principal constraints to greater youth access to first employment was dropped in order to provide resources for preparation of reports on youth for the 1986 ILC as well as for other meetings associated with International Youth Year.

Within the Training Department, the Small enterprise development sub-programme completed guidelines (based on nine projects in developing countries) and materials on entrepreneurial development intended to respond particularly to the needs of young people. Elsewhere in the Training Department, two other pieces of work were cancelled.<sup>34</sup>

The Social security major programme published an international comparative survey on social security provisions for the protection of young people.<sup>35</sup> The Workers' education programme undertook to produce a guide to programmes and services which were or could be made available to young workers by trade unions.

The 1984-85 Programme and Budget also provided resources for another meeting on youth: the Tripartite Advisory Meeting on the Integration of Youth into Working Life in Industrialized Countries, held in Geneva in September to October 1985. The report prepared for the meeting focussed particular attention on education, training and labour market policies for young people, and the outlook for skills and training as a result of new technologies.<sup>36</sup> The meeting adopted a set of conclusions that called upon the Office to: carry out comparative studies evaluating vocational guidance and counselling systems, leading to guidelines for the design of such systems; collect and disseminate information on training, employment and labour market measures for young people; and undertake evaluation studies on the effectiveness of measures aimed at integrating youth into working life. There also was a request for an objective study on whether the costs and regulations associated with the hiring of youth had an impact on their employment and on decisions by employers in this area.<sup>37</sup>

In reviewing the 1984-85 biennium, with its heavy emphasis on youth employment promotion, it is also important to note the Employment Policy (Supplementary

<sup>34</sup> One called for the preparation of a technical manual and the provision of advisory services to help member States to develop vocational guidance services for youth; the other, on skill requirements of rural self-employment, was cancelled in favour of increasing service and support of technical cooperation. Similarly, the Labour law and labour relations programme was unable to complete a study of the effect on young workers of rules and procedures applicable to workforce reductions. That was due to staffing problems.

<sup>35</sup> Paul Fisher: *Social Security Protection of Youth* (Geneva, ILO, 1986). Although the 1985 implementation report referred to a large-scale international survey that would be published in 1986 as a comprehensive manuscript, the eventual output took more the form of a working paper (called an internal report) prepared by a consultant. Nevertheless, it appears to have been a solid study and a useful contribution to the youth unemployment literature.

<sup>36</sup> See ILO: *Integration of Youth into Working Life*, Tripartite Advisory Meeting on the Integration of Youth into Working Life in Industrialized Countries, September-October 1985.

<sup>37</sup> Most of the conclusions were substantive in nature and, therefore, will figure in the later discussion of ILO messages. It should be noted here, however, that the meeting expressed the wish that its conclusions be utilized in the preparatory work for the 1986 ILC.

---

Provisions) Recommendation, 1984 (No. 169). Employment Policy Convention and Recommendation, 1964 (No. 122) remained the foundation stone of employment promotion but this new employment policy instrument placed the earlier standards in the wider framework of the landmark 1976 Declaration of Principles and Programme of Action. It also focussed greater attention on problems and issues that had emerged or become more acute since the adoption of the employment policy instruments two decades earlier. With respect to the “employment of youth and disadvantaged groups and persons”, Recommendation No. 169 called for special measures on behalf of young people, such as programmes alternating training and work, the adaptation of training opportunities to technical and economic development, measures to ease the transition from school to work, and promotion of research on employment prospects as a basis for a rational vocational training policy. There also was a call for careful monitoring to ensure that these special measures resulted in beneficial effects on young people’s employment.

The Office retained young workers as a global theme in the *Programme and Budget for the Biennium 1986-87*, while the 1986 ILC focussed on the welfare of young workers and tackling the problems of unemployed youth.<sup>38</sup> The report entitled *Youth* prepared for a general discussion to recognize the contents of the ILO’s 1982 International Youth Year resolution. It also aimed to preserve issues directly related to youth in other earlier ILC discussions.<sup>39</sup> Following a global perspective on the problems and issues confronting young people, the report went on to cover extensively the ILO’s own activities intended to benefit youth. The ensuing chapters focussed on youth employment and training in developing countries, youth employment in industrialized countries, and, in conclusion, required national action followed by ILO action. Following a long, and sometimes difficult, discussion, the Conference adopted a brief *Resolution concerning young people*, with a detailed attached set of Conclusions.<sup>40</sup>

The Office, in its Regular Budget activity, continued to focus on improving the access of young people to first employment. Thus, within its Labour market analysis programme, the Employment and Development Department broadened the initial examination of the effect of specific policy measures to include the impact of various institutional factors that often reduced the possibilities for young people to find jobs.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>38</sup> The 1983 Conference resolution on young people and the ILO’s contribution to International Youth Year had invited the Governing Body to place on the agenda of the 1985 Conference a general discussion item on the problems of youth. As the Governing Body already had given its preliminary consideration to proposals for new items for the 1985 agenda, the Governing Body ultimately accepted the Director-General’s reasoning that the subject could be discussed more appropriately at the 1986 Conference. See ILO: *Youth*, Report V, ILC, 72nd Session, Geneva, 1986.

<sup>39</sup> The report refers to a string of instruments, resolutions and action programmes all of which have been discussed earlier in this paper.

<sup>40</sup> The report and the Conclusions adopted by the Conference obviously will figure prominently in the examination of ILO messages.

<sup>41</sup> The original Programme and Budget proposal cited as examples of institutional factors, wage structures, public sector hiring policies, legislation concerning security of employment, collective bargaining agreements, education and training systems, and patterns of job search and placement. Staff deployment at the time limited the possibilities for realizing the full potential of this work item.



---

The scope of another work item on job creation efforts and special employment programmes was broader than young people who, nevertheless, were among the target groups for such interventions. It resulted in several working papers, *ILR* articles and papers prepared for presentation at regional meetings. The examination of problems of programme design, implementation and evaluation enhanced the relevance of this work.<sup>42</sup> Meanwhile, within the Training Department, a sub-programme on Small enterprise development within the Management development programme focussed on the entrepreneurial training of young people. It prepared a discussion paper on experience with entrepreneurship development in schools, and organized a technical meeting on entrepreneurship and self-employment training, together with the Asian Development Bank.

In the field, JASPA continued its own intense programme of work on youth employment well into the mid-1980s. Already by 1985, it had completed a set of six country studies on the youth employment problem and programmes in six Francophone African countries and a synthesis report.<sup>43</sup> A year later, in 1986, JASPA, published a second synthesis report based on case studies in eight Anglophone African countries.<sup>44</sup> Also in 1986 (November), JASPA organized a Regional Workshop on Youth Employment Promotion in African Countries, in Buea, Cameroon.<sup>45</sup> In addition to covering earlier work on youth employment programmes in Francophone and Anglophone Africa, the workshop included sessions on youth employment in both urban and rural areas as well as outside Africa. Finally, in 1986 to mark the tenth anniversary of JASPA a book of essays was published in honour of its Director, Shyam B. L. Nigam, upon his retirement. One of the chapters provided a broad overview of the youth employment problem in Africa.<sup>46</sup>

Among the regional employment teams, JASPA was not alone in carrying out work on youth employment. The Regional Employment Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean (PREALC) brought out a study in 1987 that integrated earlier work done during International Youth Year.<sup>47</sup> The study examined the impact on young people of various structural changes, e.g. population, production and education,

<sup>42</sup> ARTEP and PREALC were involved in the Office's work on special employment schemes or programmes, with both organizing workshops or seminars on the subject in the mid- to late-1980s.

<sup>43</sup> The six countries were Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Mauritania and Senegal. For the synthesis, see BIT: *Les programmes spéciaux d'emploi et de Formation de la jeunesse. Rapport de synthèse*, Une étude comparative du PECTA (Addis Ababa, 1985).

<sup>44</sup> The eight countries were Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Nigeria, Somalia and Zambia. For the synthesis, see ILO/JASPA: *Youth employment and youth employment programmes in Anglophone African countries. A comparative sub-regional study. Synthesis report* (Addis Ababa, 1986). The major conclusions derived from this second set of studies will figure in the ensuing content analysis.

<sup>45</sup> Seven Anglophone and six Francophone African countries were represented by one delegate each, while the Workers' and Employers' organizations were represented by two delegates each.

<sup>46</sup> See D. H. Freedman: "Youth Employment Problems and Programmes in Africa," in *The Challenge of Employment and Basic Needs in Africa* (Nairobi, Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 81-94.

<sup>47</sup> OIT: *Situación y perspectivas del empleo juvenil en América Latina, 1950-1980* (Santiago, 1987).

---

occurring in the Latin American region from 1950 to 1980, followed by an analysis of youth employment in the same period. Asian Regional Team for Employment Promotion (ARTEP) brought out a working paper that surveyed the nature and dimensions of youth employment in a large number of Asian countries and offered an analysis and strategy recommendations.<sup>48</sup>

In ending this biennium, attention is drawn to a highly relevant Report of a Commonwealth Expert Group, three of whose ten members were or had been ILO directors at headquarters or in the field. As this publication, issued by the Commonwealth Secretariat, incorporated many messages on youth employment consistent with what the ILO was saying elsewhere, it merits mention in this report.<sup>49</sup>

The *Programme and Budget for the Biennium 1988-89* closed out a youth-employment intensive decade by featuring Youth as one of nine interdepartmental themes selected for programming purposes. The Labour markets and employment planning programme, in cooperation with the ILO's regional employment teams, retained its focus on how best to design youth employment programmes and measures. This included some advisory service activity, mainly by the employment teams, on the formulation of strategies and policy packages that addressed youth employment problems in an integrated manner. The Office carried out country case studies on the design of youth employment programmes in Cyprus, India, Jamaica, Kenya, the Republic of Korea and Mauritius.<sup>50</sup>

Within the Training policies programme, several papers were completed on the transition from school to training. Among these were a conceptual paper on the usual forms of technical and vocational education and training, and their links to the regular education system, and one on training-cum-production as a strategy to improve links between schools, training and enterprises. The Programme and Budget also referred to the use of extra-budgetary resources to finance programmes addressing the training needs of the most disadvantaged rural population groups, including young people.

In the early 1990s, the Labour administration programme began a fairly detailed examination of the catalytic role of employment services in the implementation of youth schemes, with attention to the diversity of methods and techniques applied.<sup>51</sup> Due to budgetary cutbacks in November 1988, the Social Security Department discontinued its planned contribution to the Youth interdepartmental theme.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>48</sup> R. Thamarajakshi: *Youth employment in Asian countries* (New Delhi, ILO/ARTEP, March 1987).

<sup>49</sup> Commonwealth Secretariat: *Jobs for Young People: A Way to a Better Future* (London, Commonwealth Secretariat Publications, 1987).

<sup>50</sup> Some of the studies were not completed and published until later biennia. In addition, two articles examining youth employment programmes in the African region and Sweden respectively were published in the *ILR* during the 1988-89 biennium.

<sup>51</sup> See BIT : *Les services de l'emploi et les actions en faveur des jeunes*, Document no. 16 (Genève, 1992) and ILO: *Employment services and youth schemes introduction*, Document No. 16 (Geneva, 1994). The lead author was Mr. François Ducloux.

<sup>52</sup> It had planned to examine the effectiveness of measures taken within the framework of social security systems to ensure the employment of more young people.

---

In the 1988-89 biennium, youth employment and the problems facing young workers were addressed within the context of an industrial activities meeting. The 12<sup>th</sup> Session of the Metal Trades Committee, convened in Geneva, in December 1988, included as an agenda item Young workers in the metal trades. The report itself covered employment trends and prospects for young workers in the metal trades, training for employment, as well as conditions of employment of young workers in the metal trades.<sup>53</sup> Following discussion of the report, the Metal Trades Committee adopted a set of conclusions (examined in the following section).

### **The ILO and youth employment in the 1990s: A period of reduced emphasis**

The Director-General announced in the *Programme and Budget for the Biennium 1990-91* four priority themes. Youth employment was not among them. The Employment planning and labour market analysis programme included a work item on employment policies for target groups. While the budget text mentioned unemployed youth as a target group, the ensuing implementation report only referred to studies on women and elderly workers.

Within the Training Department, under the Management development programme, a work item on entrepreneurship development in formal training and education systems appears to have been limited to the documentation and analysis of experiences in technical cooperation projects introducing entrepreneurship training in technical institutes and universities. Unlike the budget text, the implementation report contained no explicit reference to youth. The same was true of a work item in the Vocational training programme on rural women's vocational training, which initially had talked about reaching girls and women. At the same time, two new work items relevant to youth were added to the Training policies programme in the course of the biennium. Under the first item, a paper was prepared that reviewed the contractual and statutory relationship between employers and young persons in apprenticeship programmes in several developed and developing countries. Under the second, a paper and a bibliography were completed on the subject of combining training with productive activities as part of a strategy to improve links between schools, training and enterprises.

In the *Programme and Budget for the Biennium 1992-93*, the Office launched a new major programme comprising three interdepartmental projects (Employment promotion and structural adjustment, Equality for women in employment, and the Elimination of child labour). At a time when renewed emphasis was being placed on women's issues and child labour was coming completely to the fore, youth and youth employment issues appear to have fallen off the Office's radar screen.<sup>54</sup> This was

<sup>53</sup> See ILO: *Young workers in the metal trades*, Report III, Metal Trades Committee, Twelfth Session, Geneva, 1988.

<sup>54</sup> Then again, perhaps youth employment never fell completely off the radar screen, because if one dug deep enough relevant publications always could be found. Thus, in 1992, there appeared Philippe Egger: *Travaux publics et employ pour les jeunes travailleurs dans une économie sous ajustement : L'expérience de l'AGETIP au Sénégal*, Occasional Paper 2, Interdepartmental Project on Structural

---

even more evident in the 1994-95 biennium when the Programme and Budget stated in the Introduction that the third priority objective around which proposals were centred concerned “the protection of working people, including vulnerable groups such as women, children and migrant workers...”

Over the years, there have been target groups and problem areas which, once introduced, have never been absent from the ILO’s Programme and Budget. Women, migrant workers and, more recently, child labour all would appear to fall in that category. Still other areas of research and action have figured prominently as ILO programmes for one or two decades before being shut down in their entirety. Appropriate technology and income distribution are examples that readily come to mind. The Office’s work on youth has occupied, over the years, an intermediate position. Each time that youth employment has been presented as a priority area, sometimes over successive biennia, there has ensued a period of de-emphasis if not disappearance. Yet it never has disappeared completely for each new wave of concern over youth unemployment has ensured its subsequent return to the Programme and Budget.

This was the case in the 1996-97 biennium. The era of multiple work items involving several departments had ended at the start of the 1990s, but the *Programme and Budget for the Biennium 1996-97* introduced an Action Programme on Youth Unemployment, shown under the Labour market policies programme. The Programme and Budget referred to two major outputs: the first, a detailed comparative synthesis report presented to an interregional symposium in 1999, will be discussed below; the second, a policy manual, which was to outline the advantages and disadvantages of the various policies and schemes, was not produced. Nonetheless, the Action Programme,<sup>55</sup> which was intended to produce country case studies from all over the world as well as policy reviews concentrating on specific aspects of the youth unemployment problem, resulted in the publication of nine studies in the Employment and Training Papers series between 1997 and 1999 together with a subsequent major book by Niall O’Higgins (to be discussed later). Although most of the country studies were based on Western European experience, one paper focussed on youth unemployment in Hungary and Poland, another included Canada in its examination of youth unemployment and youth labour market policies, while a third examined youth unemployment and its policy implications in India. The policy reviews included: a study of employment and training policies in relation to youth entry into the labour market; education, employment and training policies and programmes for youth with

Adjustment (Geneva, 1992); and G. K. Ikiara, M. Yambo, and G. Merckx : *Integrated Policy Approach to Youth Employment in Kenya*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Biennial Meeting of African Employment Planners, Arusha (Tanzania) 30 Nov. – 4 Dec. 1992, Jobs and Skills Programme for Africa (Addis Ababa, ILO/JASPA, 1992). In the following biennium, there appeared R. Lindenthal: *Cooperatives and employment in developing countries* (Geneva, ILO, 1994), a Cooperative Development working paper that contained six pages on involving young people in cooperatives with a view to influencing their employment situation.

<sup>55</sup> The objective of the action programme was to: (1) raise awareness among constituents of the problems associated with the labour market entry of young people; (2) to improve their understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of the principal policy and programme options; and (3) to enhance the capacity of member States to design and implement policies and programmes for promoting youth employment.

---

disabilities; and minimum wages and youth unemployment. In addition, the Labour Administration Branch contributed working papers to the overall Action Programme, offering case studies of France and the United Kingdom. Both studies were published in 1998. At the same time, another action programme, the Action Programme on Skills and Entrepreneurship Training for Countries Emerging from Armed Conflict, published in its series a study on youth.<sup>56</sup>

No review of ILO activity in the field of youth employment would be complete without some reference to the extensive work carried out over the years by CINTERFOR (Inter-American Research and Documentation Centre on Vocational Training).<sup>57</sup> Already in the late 1980s and early 1990s, one saw evidence of CINTERFOR research, design and testing of training methodologies for disadvantaged youth, and the organization of workshops and meetings on youth training and employment issues.<sup>58</sup> However, the period 1997 to 1998 stands out as being particularly rich in CINTERFOR contributions to the ILO literature on youth employment and training. The CINTERFOR journal, *Boletín Técnico Interamericano de Formación Profesional* devoted a special issue to youth, training and employability.<sup>59</sup> Targeted youth training programmes, such as CHILE JOVEN, Proyecto Joven in Argentina and PROJoven in Peru, figured prominently in this issue. Another 1997 publication tried to draw lessons for Latin America from European experience.<sup>60</sup> Two major publications followed in 1998: *Por una segunda oportunidad: La formación para el trabajo de jóvenes vulnerables* and *Juventud, educación y empleo*.<sup>61</sup> The first, through its overview chapters and country case studies, provided a “state of the art” understanding of the training of young people coming from impoverished backgrounds. The second, offered a collection of papers invoking the public policy challenges of training unemployed youth.

<sup>56</sup> S. Maslen : *The reintegration of war-affected youth : The experience of Mozambique* (Geneva, ILO, 1997).

<sup>57</sup> CINTERFOR is a technical unit of the International Labour Organization, with headquarters in Montevideo. Created in 1963, it provides for the exchange of experiences, based on research, documentation and dissemination of vocational training activities, particularly among Member States from the Americas and Spain.

<sup>58</sup> See, for instance, CINTERFOR/OIT y Departamento de Trabajo de los EE.UU.: *Proyecto de investigación y desarrollo: Aplicación de tecnologías innovadoras en la formación de jóvenes en situación de desventaja, Informe Final*, Marzo de 1991.

<sup>59</sup> See Cinterfor/OIT: *Entrega Especial: Jóvenes, Formación y Empleabilidad, Boletín Técnico Interamericano de Formación Profesional*, Número 139-140, Abril-setiembre 1997.

<sup>60</sup> See L. Cachón Rodríguez: *Políticas de inserción de los jóvenes en los mercados de trabajo en la Unión Europea* (Montevideo, Cinterfor, 1997).

<sup>61</sup> See C. Jacinto y M. A. Gallart (Coordinadoras): *Por una segunda oportunidad: La formación para el trabajo de jóvenes vulnerables* (Montevideo, Cinterfor, 1998); and CINTERFOR: *Juventud, educación y empleo* (Montevideo, 1998).

---

Once again, in the *Programme and Budget for the Biennium 1998-99*, there was an action programme focussing on the youth unemployment problem.<sup>62</sup> This time it was entitled “Strategies to combat youth marginalization and unemployment”. In a sense, this second action programme provided for the completion and consolidation of the work begun in the preceding biennium. While the absence of an implementation report for the 1998-99 biennium makes it difficult to provide a complete accounting of the work delivered, three major outputs or outcomes ensured a positive ending to the decade of the 1990s in the sphere of youth employment promotion.

At its 86<sup>th</sup> Session in 1998, the ILC adopted a *Resolution concerning youth employment*. The operative paragraphs addressed to “member States and, where appropriate, employers, workers and their respective organizations” were detailed and precise.<sup>63</sup> The operative paragraphs addressed to the Governing Body were equally far reaching. They called upon the Governing Body to accord high priority to youth employment when considering the Programme and Budget for 2000-01 and subsequent biennia, to consider including, as soon as possible, an agenda item on youth employment for general discussion at the ILC, to ensure that the issue of youth employment be included in regional or sub-regional level meetings, and to ensure that ILO regional structures and multidisciplinary teams assist governments and the social partners to implement ILO policy on youth employment. The resolution requested the Governing Body to instruct the Director-General to make follow-up programme and budget proposals on strategies to combat youth marginalization and unemployment. This was with a view to: drawing up an international youth employment strategy; creating a database on youth employment; and disseminating best practice information and research on youth employment initiatives. The resolution also instructed the Director-General to cooperate with other international bodies to promote international action on youth employment.<sup>64</sup>

The second output was the aforementioned synthesis report. Entitled *Employing Youth: Promoting employment-intensive growth*,<sup>65</sup> the Office presented this report to the Interregional Symposium on Strategies to Combat Youth Unemployment and Marginalization, held in Geneva from 13 to 14 December 1999. The symposium and the report highlighting the main issues raised at that meeting represent the third major output referred to above.<sup>66</sup> Discussions in the symposium focussed on three sets of issues: (i) factors responsible for high youth unemployment, and policies and strategies adopted to combat the problem; (ii) lessons learned from such policies and

<sup>62</sup> The objective this time around was presented as “the development of a coherent and systematic method of intervention that can be adapted to national situations and integrated into employment policies with a view to combating youth unemployment and exclusion”.

<sup>63</sup> Here again, many of these will figure in the examination of ILO messages.

<sup>64</sup> This last provision was to assume particular importance in the light of the future creation of the Youth Employment Network involving the ILO, the United Nations and the World Bank.

<sup>65</sup> ILO: *Employing Youth : Promoting employment-intensive growth*, Report for the Interregional Symposium on Strategies to Combat Youth Unemployment and Marginalization (Geneva, 2000).

<sup>66</sup> See ILO: *International Symposium on Strategies to Combat Youth Unemployment and Marginalization*, Geneva, 13-14 December 1999 (Geneva, 2000)

---

strategies; and (iii) possible future orientation of strategies. The participants suggested five areas for future action: (1) improvement in the data and analytical base on youth unemployment in developing countries; (2) taking a fresh look at active labour market policies and programmes to identify the more positive and innovative experiences and their transferability; (3) identification of reforms needed in the education and training systems with a view to bridging the gap between the worlds of learning and work; (4) identification of specific difficulties faced by young people in setting up micro-enterprises and how they could be overcome; and (5) adoption of longer-term strategies as opposed to short-term palliatives for combating youth unemployment.<sup>67</sup>

Finally, at least three other outputs published during or just after the 1998-99 biennium are well worth mentioning. The first, a working paper issued in the field in 2000, was seen as a contribution to the above-mentioned Action Programme. The Southern Africa Multidisciplinary Advisory Team (SAMAT) published in its Discussion Paper series a study intended to contribute to the development of coherent and systematic methods of intervention to combat youth unemployment and exclusion that could be adapted to specific national situations and integrated into employment policies.<sup>68</sup> The second was a section on young workers that formed part of *World Employment Report 1998-99*.<sup>69</sup> The third was a KILM indicator on youth unemployment contained in *Key Indicators of the Labour Market 1999*. The youth unemployment indicator also figured prominently in the two ensuing editions of *KILM* published in 2002 and 2003.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Once again, these two reports will form part of the content analysis to follow.

<sup>68</sup> See G. Kanyenze, G. C. Z. Mhone, and T. Sparreboom: *Strategies to Combat Youth Unemployment and Marginalization in Anglophone Africa*, Discussion Paper No. 14 (Harare, ILO/SAMAT, 2000). The paper covers Egypt, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

<sup>69</sup> See ILO: *Employability in the global economy: How training matters*, *World Employment Report 1998-99* (Geneva, 1998), pp. 178-183. Although a small part of a much larger report on the role of training and efforts to improve training systems in a period of depressed employment and rapid globalization, it is replete with messages and, thus, will be included in the content analysis to follow.

<sup>70</sup> ILO: *Key Indicators of the Labour Market 1999* (Geneva, 1999), pp. 231-252. The indicator consists of four distinct measurements: (1) youth unemployment rate (youth unemployment as a percentage of the youth labour force); (2) ratio of the youth unemployment rate to the adult unemployment rate; (3) youth unemployment as a proportion of total unemployment; and (4) youth unemployment as a proportion of the youth population.

---

## The ILO and youth employment from 2000 onwards: The Youth Employment Network

The *Programme and Budget Proposals for 2000-01* introduced a new form of programming at the ILO<sup>71</sup> and an Office restructuring that had implications for the location of work on youth employment. Moreover, the first biennium of the new millennium featured the establishment of the Youth Employment Network (YEN).

In the 2000-01 biennium the new InFocus Programme on Skills, Knowledge and Employability (IFP/SKILLS) became the central point within the ILO for work on the youth-aged target group. Announced major outputs included: (1) a training package for education institutions and employment services on how to prepare school-leavers for entry into the labour market; (2) research on successful monitoring and evaluation techniques for youth employment policies and programmes, leading to a manual in the 2002-03 biennium; (3) policy manuals for employers and trade unions on promoting decent employment for young women and men; and (4) a major tripartite conference on youth employment, planned for the 2002-03 biennium. Of the four outputs, only the third was delivered in the form outlined above, but with an important caveat to follow as regards the fourth.<sup>72</sup>

The third output, *Meeting the youth employment challenge: A guide for employers*, was designed to help employers and their organizations to initiate and expand action to promote youth employment.<sup>73</sup> On the workers' side, the Office published *Juventud y empleo: Guía sindical*, a training guide, comprising six modules, intended for use by workers' organizations as a tool for disseminating concepts and notions about youth employment.<sup>74</sup> As regards the fourth of the proposed major outputs, it appears that the resources and staff time allocated to it were used instead to prepare the 1<sup>st</sup> High-Level Panel Meeting of the YEN that was held in Geneva from 16 to 17 July 2001.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>71</sup> In fact, from 2000 onwards, it becomes slightly more difficult to match with precision, work proposed and work delivered on youth employment.

<sup>72</sup> As regards the first proposed output, a working draft was completed in March 2002, but never published. It was entitled "Helping Youth Build Better Futures: A Career Development Manual for Staff Working with Youth in Developing and Transitioning Countries".

<sup>73</sup> See ILO: *Meeting the youth employment challenge: A guide for employers (Geneva, 2001)*. The publication involved the collaboration of a newly-established InFocus Programme on Skills, Knowledge and Employability and the Bureau for Employers' Activities. The guide was tested in Bangalore on employers from South Asia.

<sup>74</sup> See OIT: *Juventud y empleo. Guía sindical (Montevideo, 2001)*. The publication was a joint effort involving CINTERFOR, IFP/SKILLS and the Bureau for Workers' Activities. The modules were tested on trade unionists from the five countries of Mercosur and Chile. (The publication is out of print but a copy was temporarily located for the purpose of this study).

<sup>75</sup> As already mentioned in the first paragraph of this report, 12 eminent persons comprising the High-level Panel, met at the invitation of Mr. Annan, Mr. Somavia and Mr. Wolfensohn. The members of the Panel were Saifuddin Abdullah, César Alierta, Ruth C. L. Cardoso, Hernando de Soto, Geeta Rao Gupta, Bill Jordan, Allan Larson, Rick Little, Maria Livanos Cattai, Magatte Wade, Ralph Willis and Rosanna Wong. Working with the three agency heads and members of the Joint Secretariat, the High-level Panel prepared, discussed and elaborated a background issues paper and a set of policy proposals to promote decent work opportunities for young people. The draft document, in turn, was presented to the World Youth Forum, held in Dakar, Senegal in August 2001 and, subsequently, the



---

In fact, capitalizing, in part, on work that had begun at an earlier stage, IFP/SKILLS brought out a series of three working papers in 2001-02 that touched on various facets of youth employment promotion. The first examined policies and programmes aimed at assisting young people in generating self-employment opportunities. The second, issued in conjunction with the North African Multidisciplinary Advisory Team (NAMAT), offered a case study of Egypt. The third looked at the ways that Youth Business International (YBI), a technical member of the Youth Employment Network, had helped young people into self-employment. The three working papers were among the first work of the ILO explicitly linked to the Youth Employment Network.<sup>76</sup>

Also around this time, a fair amount of work on youth unemployment was taking place in Latin America. In 2001, the Multidisciplinary Team for the Southern Cone of Latin America published a working paper on youth employment for presentation at the “Simposio Subregional sobre Desempleo Juvenil y los Sindicatos, organized by IFP /SKILLS and the Bureau of Workers’ Activities in Montevideo, in March 2001.<sup>77</sup> CINTERFOR continued to make important contributions to the overall ILO literature on youth employment and training. For example, the *Boletín Técnico Interamericano de Formación Profesional* devoted another special issue to the theme of job training and employment of young people in Latin America and the Caribbean.<sup>78</sup> In another publication, a frequent CINTERFOR contributor provided a comparative analysis of the situation of the young people of the region in the 1990s, focussing particular attention on their heterogeneity and economic uncertainty.<sup>79</sup>

Nevertheless, the major research output on youth employment policy in the 2000-01 biennium was a publication that had been in preparation for many years. *Youth unemployment and employment policy: A global perspective* was a long book which, after presenting the characteristics, causes and consequences of youth unemployment,

recommendations of the YEN and its High-level Panel were transmitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on 28 September 2001 (A/56/422). A second meeting of the High-level Panel was held from 30 June-1 July 2003, also at ILO headquarters.

<sup>76</sup>The Forewords to these working papers stated the objectives of the high-level policy network on youth employment as: (1) to formulate a set of recommendations on youth employment which the Secretary-General would propose to world leaders for action; (2) to disseminate information on good practices and lessons learned from specific past or ongoing youth employment policies and programmes; and (3) to undertake a series of youth employment initiatives.

<sup>77</sup> See R Diez de Medina: *El Trabajo de los Jóvenes en los Países del Mercosur y Chile en el Fin de Siglo* (Santiago, OIT, 2001)

<sup>78</sup> Cinterfor/OIT: *Capacitación Laboral de Jóvenes, Boletín Técnico Interamericano de Formación Profesional, Número 150, setiembre-diciembre 2000*. The part of the Cinterfor web site devoted to “Youth, training and employment” not only provides information on relevant Cinterfor publications and documents but also serves as a source for other publications on these subjects, largely within the Latin American context.

<sup>79</sup> R. Diez de Medina: *Jóvenes y empleo en los noventa* (Montevideo, Cinterfor, 2001).

---

went on to examine in considerable detail the policy responses, followed by conclusions and recommendations.<sup>80</sup>

Finally, training for employment figured on the agenda of the ILC at its Eighty-eighth Session in 2000. The Governing Body had decided at its March 1998 session that human resources development and training should be the subject of a general discussion at the 2000 Conference. Then, at its March 1999 session, the Governing Body decided that the specific issue of youth employment and training should be part of the discussion.<sup>81</sup> The Conclusions of the discussion included a proposal that the ILO revise the Human Resources Development Recommendation, 1975 (No. 150).

The *Programme and Budget for the Biennium 2002-03* formally introduced the ILO's partnership with the United Nations, the World Bank, business, trade unions and other civil society organizations in the "High Level Policy Network on Youth Employment" (YEN). Under the operational objective of "Knowledge, skills and employability", in place of Regular Budget work items, there was reference to additional extra-budgetary funding of \$6 million. The aim was to make it possible to develop innovative training programmes targeting young men and women, including those with disabilities, in their transition from school to work. The intention was to integrate these programmes into national initiatives to tackle youth unemployment.

As for the YEN, its mandate was strengthened by UN General Assembly Resolution 57/165, "Promoting youth employment", which encouraged Member States to prepare national reviews and action plans on youth employment and to involve youth organizations and young people in this process.<sup>82</sup> To date (February 2005), over 30 countries have joined this process, including 11 "lead countries" who have committed themselves to take the lead in developing their National Action Plans and sharing their successes and failures both internally and with neighbouring countries. In Indonesia, the first lead country for the YEN, work began in 2003 on the drafting of a National Youth Employment Action Plan. Feeding directly into the drafting process were the findings of two ILO-led activities carried out in 2003: a series of "youth for youth" consultations; and a number of school-to-work transition surveys.

In Central Asia, the *Know About Business* (KAB) programme was launched in Kazakhstan in 2001 and extended to Kyrgyzstan in 2002. KAB is primarily designed to give young people aged 15 to 17 an awareness of the opportunities, challenges, procedures, characteristics, attitudes and skills needed for self-employment. Trainers, following guides and modules comprising 120 hours of curriculum, are able to

<sup>80</sup> N. O'Higgins: *Youth unemployment and employment policy: A global perspective* (Geneva, ILO, 2001). Part II of the book on policy comprises chapters on general issues, labour market information, monitoring and evaluation, the minimum wage and youth employment, education and training systems, active labour market policy, and the role of employers' and workers' organizations. This book obviously will figure prominently in the consideration of messages on youth unemployment and employment promotion.

<sup>81</sup> See ILO: *Training for employment: Social inclusion, productivity and youth employment*, Report V, ILC, 88<sup>th</sup> Session, Geneva, 2000

<sup>82</sup> See A/RES/57/165.

---

provide instruction in entrepreneurship and small business management to vocational and technical education students.<sup>83</sup>

Elsewhere in the field, the ILO/Japan Tripartite Regional Meeting on Youth Employment in Asia and the Pacific was held in Bangkok from 27 February–1 March 2002. The meeting, which was part of a wider project that included preparatory research and country workshops, paved the way for pilot country projects, regional cooperation and further publications activity, including an action manual.<sup>84</sup> Moreover, from 28 October to 12 November 2002, CINTERFOR conducted an online seminar on the subject of youth and training for employability: development of key employment skills.

In reviewing the work of the 2000-01 and 2002-03 biennia, it is important to take note of the increased emphasis placed on: (1) developing practical tools; (2) raising awareness; and (3) building partnerships. The aforementioned guides for employers and workers certainly fall in the first category. Development of school-to-work transition surveys represents another example. The Survey consists of a generic questionnaire for target populations of young men and women.<sup>85</sup> Surveys have been implemented or are in the process of being carried out in Azerbaijan, China, Egypt, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, the Syrian Arab Republic and Vietnam.

Among the awareness-raising or promotional materials, four brochures or fact sheets may be cited: *Generating opportunities for young people: The ILO's decent work agenda*; *Decent Work: A Common Goal of Youth and Trade Unions*; *Meeting the Youth Employment Challenge: A guide for Employers*; and *Youth and Work: Global Trends*. Awareness also is at the heart of the first in a Working Paper series on “Youth and Entrepreneurship” launched by the ILO's InFocus Programme on Boosting Employment through Small Enterprise Development. Part I of this paper analyses awareness and promotion programme in formal and non-formal education from around the world.<sup>86</sup> Part II contains an extensive directory with short descriptions of more than 100 current and recently completed programmes for entrepreneurship education.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>83</sup> In 2003, the Ministry of Education of Kazakhstan officially adopted the KAB programme as a recommended curriculum for the secondary education and vocational training systems. Plans are underway to expand the network of KAB trainers in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, as well as to extend the programme in 2004 to Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. It is under pilot testing in more than 20 countries in Central Asia, Africa and Latin America.

<sup>84</sup> See ILO: ILO/Japan Tripartite Regional Meeting on Youth Employment in Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok, ILO, 2002).

<sup>85</sup> The generic questionnaire targets: (1) in school youth; (2) job seekers; (3) young employees; (4) self-employed and own-account workers; and (5) employers and managers of young people.

<sup>86</sup> K. Haftendorn and C. Salzano: *Facilitating Youth Entrepreneurship, Part I: An analysis of awareness and promotion programmes in formal and non-formal education*, SEED Working Paper No. 59 (Geneva, ILO, 2003).

<sup>87</sup> K. Haftendorn and C. Salzano: *Facilitating Youth Entrepreneurship, Part II: A directory of awareness and promotion programmes in formal and non-formal education*, SEED Working Paper No. 59 (Geneva, ILO, 2004).

---

Regarding partnerships, the coordinating role that the ILO, United Nations and World Bank perform together for the high-level policy network on youth employment is particularly notable. Of course, this represented the establishment of closer ties with existing partners. In addition, the ILO established partnerships that are more recent with Rotary International, Youth Business International and the Prince of Wales International Business Leaders Forum. Further partnerships were established through the YEN with the Draeger Foundation, the Youth Employment Summit in addition to a range of youth organizations including the World Organization of the Scout Movement, and the Youth Women's Christian Association. In addition, in 2003, the ILO collaborated with the International Development Research Center (IDRC) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) to produce a second publication in the Livelihoods Pathways series, which focusses on issues facing young people and on support strategies to promote decent, viable and sustainable livelihoods.<sup>88</sup>

Following the Conference discussion on human resources development and training in 2000, the Governing Body at its 280<sup>th</sup> Session, in March 2001, decided to include that topic as an agenda item of the 91<sup>st</sup> Session (2003) of the ILC. The aim was to pave the way for a revised recommendation on human resources development that would reflect the "new approach to training". The Office prepared a report,<sup>89</sup> intended to serve as the basis for a first discussion. That report contained a chapter on "education, initial training and skills for employability and work", which included a look at the training situation of young people.

The *Programme and Budget for the Biennium 2004-05* announced that the Office would address youth employment policies through its participation in the Youth Employment Network. This time part of the proposed work figures under the operational objective of "Employment policy support". It aims through ILO technical assistance to provide support for drafting National Action Plans for Youth Employment in the lead countries under the Youth Employment Network. The other part remains under "Knowledge, skills and employability", emphasizing innovative skills development programmes for disadvantaged young people, especially in the transition from school to work, and for young people with disabilities. In this regard, IFP/SKILLS produced an extensive analysis of training policies and programmes for disadvantaged youth, which includes approximately 50 good practices.<sup>90</sup>

At present, there are 17 lead countries of the YEN that are championing the preparation of National Action Plans on youth employment. They are Azerbaijan, Brazil, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ecuador, Egypt, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jamaica, Mali, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sri Lanka, the Syrian

<sup>88</sup> J. Grierson and J. Schnurr (ed.): *Pathways to Livelihoods and Decent Work: Strategies and Tools for Investing in Young People* (Ottawa, The Canadian Youth Foundation on behalf of the ILO, IDRC and CIDA, 2003).

<sup>89</sup> ILO: *Learning and training for work in the knowledge society*, ILC, 91<sup>st</sup> Session, 2003 (Geneva, 2002).

<sup>90</sup> L. Brewer: *Youth at risk: The role of skills development in facilitating the transition to work*, InFocus Programme on Skills, Knowledge and Employability, Working Paper No. 19 (Geneva, ILO, 2004). Also available in French and Spanish.

---

Arab Republic, Uganda and the United Kingdom. Thus, more and more of ILO's work on youth employment is taking place within the framework of the YEN, its network of partners and, in particular, youth organizations, with whom there is now more substantive involvement than in the past. The ILO has provided specific technical support to countries such as Azerbaijan, Brazil, Indonesia, Namibia and Sri Lanka. For instance, in both Azerbaijan and Sri Lanka, the ILO prepared background reports as inputs into the preparation of national action plans for youth employment.<sup>91</sup>

In the first year (2004) of the current biennium, the ILO added to its collection of work on youth employment with three further publications, one of which paved the way for an important meeting. The ILO prepared the first of these, *Improving prospects for young women and men in the world of work*,<sup>92</sup> within the framework of the YEN. Produced as a Guide to Youth Employment, the book reviews the basic considerations, trade-offs and experiences that can be used to design and implement policies and National Action Plans on youth employment. It also examines how various actors, and in particular young people, can play a role in seeking integrated and coordinated solutions.

The second publication, *Global employment trends for youth*,<sup>93</sup> examines trends in the youth labour force, youth employment, youth unemployment, discrimination within the unemployed youth population and a broad range of other youth labour market indicators. The aim is to shed light on the possible factors contributing to the increasing difficulties young people face today when trying to enter the *labour* force.

The third report was prepared as a background paper for an ILO Tripartite Meeting on Youth Employment held in Geneva in October 2004.<sup>94</sup> The Meeting adopted a set of Conclusions that underscored major factors comprising the youth employment challenge, outlined key elements of an approach to promote decent work for young people at the national level (including an integrated pro-employment and pro-youth growth approach), and pointed to enhanced ILO action to achieve increases in decent work for young people. The latter included calls for strengthened cooperation with multilateral institutions and other international organizations, improved coordination within the ILO's advisory services and technical cooperation activities to ensure policy coherence, development of a set of tools that could be used flexibly and

<sup>91</sup> M. Godfrey: "Towards a National Action Plan for Youth Employment in the Azerbaijan Republic" and "The National Employment Policy and Young People: The Youth Employment Challenge in Sri Lanka".

<sup>92</sup> See ILO: *Improving prospects for young women and men in the world of work. A Guide of Youth Employment* (Geneva, 2004). This Guide was prepared by Maarten Keune of the European University Institute in Florence, Italy and edited by Regina Monticone, a Senior YEN Specialist.

<sup>93</sup> ILO: *Global employment trends for youth* (Geneva, 2004). The report, written by Sara Elder and Dorothea Schmidt, was prepared for International Youth Day, 12 August 2004.

<sup>94</sup> See ILO: *Starting right: Decent work for young people. Background paper, Tripartite Meeting on Youth Employment: The Way Forward* (Geneva, 13-15 October 2004). The Meeting was attended by 93 participants, among whom were 22 delegates and advisors from 15 governments, 14 employers' representatives and 14 workers' representatives. The document and the conclusions of the Meeting contributed to the report prepared for the general discussion on youth employment that took place at the 93<sup>rd</sup> Session (2005) of the ILC.

---

adapted by member States in the formulation of youth employment policies and programmes to bring young people into productive and decent employment, and the promotion of tripartite forums for the exchange of national experiences on youth employment.<sup>95</sup>

By way of summary, the first part of this study has shown that the ILO has a rich history of work on youth unemployment and youth employment and training policy. The ILO sometimes has promised more than it could deliver, and one observes the ebbs and flows in the ILO's commitment to youth employment promotion. Nevertheless, no fewer than six times in the past 20 some years, the ILO has developed a major programme initiative around youth employment. Moreover, the sheer quantity of ILO publications on youth employment and training is impressive, as is the number of occasions on which the ILO's constituents have given formal expression to their own views.

In the process of presenting this historical review, the first part of the study has given an initial indication of some of the ILO's thinking about how to solve the youth employment problem. For if the ILO has made a contribution in this field, it can best be judged on the correctness of its ideas and the value of its advice. From the vast literature already cited, the second part of the study selects sixteen of the most comprehensive or important publications and documents for a much more detailed examination of the ILO's key messages and how they have changed or been reinforced over the years.

<sup>95</sup> ILO: "Conclusions of the Tripartite Meeting on Youth Employment: The Way Forward," Geneva, 13-15 October 2004

---

## II. Closer examination of the evolution of ILO messages on youth employment

The first part of this study has drawn attention to a vast ILO literature on youth employment, broadly defined to incorporate work not only on training but also on other ILO fields that have an impact on the youth employment situation. Much of this work has been specific in character, therefore containing messages that are limited in nature. At the same time, there have been a certain number of ILO publications, including reports prepared for the ILC and other major meetings, as well as conclusions adopted by those meetings, which approached youth unemployment and employment promotion from a wider perspective. As a result, these publications have lent themselves to the presentation of a broader range of ILO messages.<sup>96</sup> Sixteen such publications have been chosen for further examination of their key messages.<sup>97</sup>

The 16 publications are listed below in chronological order and assigned a number for referencing purposes:

(1) P. Melvyn and D. H. Freedman: “Youth unemployment: a worsening situation,” in D. H. Freedman (ed.), *Employment outlook and insights* (Geneva, ILO, 1979), pp. 81-92.

(2) ILO: *Report of the Director-General, Part I, What jobs for youth?*, ILC, 68<sup>th</sup> Session, Geneva, 1982.

(3) ILO: *Integration of Youth into Working Life*, Tripartite Advisory Meeting on the Integration of Youth into Working Life in Industrialized Countries, September to October 1985; and (3a) GB.231/7/8, *Report of the Tripartite Advisory Meeting on the Integration of Youth into Working Life in Industrialised Countries* Geneva, 30 September to 4 October 1985).

(4) ILO/JASPA: *Youth employment and youth employment programmes in Anglophone African countries. A comparative sub-regional study, synthesis report* (Addis Ababa, 1986); and (4a) D.H Freedman: “Youth Employment Problems and Programmes in Africa,” in *The Challenge of Employment and Basic needs in Africa: Essays in honour of Shyam B. L. Nigam and to mark the tenth anniversary of JASPA* (Nairobi, Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 81-94.

<sup>96</sup> Not surprisingly, messages emanating from earlier-cited publications with a narrower focus often also are reflected in the publications treating a wider range of issues. Thus, for instance, while the publications by Mark Blaug or JASPA’s work on the paper qualification syndrome do not figure specifically in the examination to follow, some of their key messages will, nevertheless, be recognized in the ensuing part of the paper.

<sup>97</sup> A draft of this paper, including the content analysis to follow, was completed in June 2004. The historical review of the ILO’s work subsequently was updated to December 2004. This accounts for the reference to *Starting right: Decent work for young people* and *Improving prospects for young women and men in the world of work* in the preceding examination and its absence in the ensuing analysis of key messages.

---

(5) ILO: *Youth*, Report V, ILC, 72<sup>nd</sup> Session, Geneva, 1986; (5a) ILO: *Record of Proceedings*, “Report of the Committee on Youth,” 37, ILC, 72<sup>nd</sup> Session, 1986 (Geneva, 1987).

(6) R. Thamarajakshi: *Youth employment in Asian countries* (New Delhi, ILO/ARTEP, March 1987).

(7) ILO: “Conclusions concerning Young Workers in the Metal Trades, Note on the proceedings,” Metal Trades Committee, Twelfth Session, Geneva, December 1988.

(8) ILO: *Employability in the global economy: How training matters*, *World Employment Report 1998-99* (Geneva, 1998).

(9) ILO: “Resolution concerning youth employment,” *Record of Proceedings*, Vol. II, ILC, 86<sup>th</sup> Session, 1998 (Geneva, 1998).

(10) ILO: *Employing Youth: Promoting employment-intensive growth*, Report for the Interregional Symposium on Strategies to Combat Youth Unemployment and Marginalization (Geneva, 2000); and (10a) ILO: *International Symposium on Strategies to Combat Youth Unemployment and Marginalization*, Geneva, 13 to 14 December 1999, (Geneva, 2000).

(11) ILO: *Meeting the youth employment challenge: A guide for employers* (Geneva, 2001).

(12) N. O’Higgins: *Youth unemployment and employment policy: A global perspective* (Geneva, ILO, 2001).

Turning now to ILO messages, the first observation is that most studies on youth employment begin by discussing the size, nature, causes and consequence of youth unemployment. This provides a foundation for the consideration of policy options that normally follows. In selecting subject headings for an examination of messages, the principal, although not exclusive, focus of this study is on policy, i.e. what the ILO has recommended. Sometimes the policy focus is on substantive areas, such as education and training, entrepreneurship, and active labour market policies. Other times, the focus is on process or cross-cutting issues, such as targeting, and involving young people and the social partners in programme design and implementation. The subject headings and the material contained under each have been ordered in a way that allows the ILO messages to be presented in a coherent manner, i.e. telling the story of youth unemployment and youth employment policy as seen through the eyes of the ILO.

At the same time if a review of ILO activity and messages on youth employment is to be more relevant for future work in this field, it seems worthwhile to adopt, for some of the subject headings, terminology that is in current usage. This includes not only the 4 E’s of the YEN (Employability, Equal opportunities, Employment creation and Entrepreneurship), but also decent work and the life cycle approach. The aim is not to find historical references to the two latter terms, but to find messages that cover



---

similar or related ground, some of which may be more descriptive or analytical rather than prescriptive.

The six elements mentioned above form part of 11 comprising the building blocks of the framework for the content analysis to follow. The elements are presented and examined in sequence as follows:

1. A life cycle approach
2. Social, political and security implications of youth unemployment
3. Decent work
4. Employability
5. Equal opportunities
6. Active labour market policies
7. Employment creation
8. Entrepreneurship
9. Targeting, monitoring and evaluation
10. Role of the social partners
11. Participation of young people

## **1. A life cycle approach**

The decision to start this examination of ILO messages with the life cycle approach of the ILO's Gender Promotion Programme reflects two facts about the youth-aged population that may usefully be stated at the outset: (1) although 15 to 24 is the most generally recognized age definition of youth,<sup>98</sup> it is not universally accepted, and the transition from childhood to youth and then from youth to adulthood can vary by culture; and (2) the opportunities and risks, advantages and disadvantages faced at one stage of life frequently influence the transition to the next. When this involves poverty, discrimination or inequality, the risks and disadvantages all too often are perpetuated at the next stage.

Turning then to the past literature, we find that while the concept introduces a new approach by the ILO and certainly the associated methodology is new, many of the underlying notions can be detected earlier on. For instance, a 1986 piece pointed to the limitations of establishing fixed age limits for young people of 15 to 24, since in Africa, children often were called upon to help out with family work in the field or the marketplace well in advance of their fifteenth birthday. It was observed that the transitions from childhood to youth and from youth to adulthood were not well defined. (4a, 82). Four years earlier, the ILO already had observed that some people were virtually deprived of their youth – the normal time of training and transition between childhood and adulthood – since they had to start working as adults as soon as they emerged from childhood. (2,12). A later report presented youth as a biological group that lasted a few years; the problems of youth, therefore, were the problems of society (10a, 24).

<sup>98</sup> This definition is used by the United Nations.

---

As early as 1979, it was stated that young people who suffered long periods of unemployment were deprived of the opportunity to acquire work experience and to establish an employment record, which in turn influenced future earnings and career possibilities. The study went on to observe that as suitable jobs became available in the future, it was important that “today’s young people” – the adults of tomorrow – be prepared to fill them. What was to be feared was a ‘lost generation’ without skills, productive work experience or the will to work. That would seriously interrupt the process of renewal of the labour force, and future economic growth would suffer. There also would be the grave threat of transmission of negative attitudes towards work to a successive generation of children who, in turn, might approach future employment situations with still less preparation and an even greater sense of hopelessness (1, 83). For the increasing numbers of young people who faced a prolonged transition into the labour market, “today’s youth unemployment problem could readily be transformed into tomorrow’s adult unemployment problem (5,125). Nearly 20 years later, the ILO delivered a similar message, in observing that early workplace skill development was crucial to future earnings growth, while unemployment early in working life had been shown to increase the probability of future joblessness and to lower future wages significantly. Moreover, unemployment obstructed the movement of young people from adolescence to adulthood, which often involved setting up a household and forming a family (8, 179). The ILO returned to the impact of youth unemployment on subsequent stages of life when it signalled that early unemployment in a person’s career could permanently impair the individual’s future productive capacity. Once again, the ILO observed that barriers to employment could block young people in the passage from adolescence to adulthood, involving setting up a household and forming a family (10, 10).

Situating youth and their long-term chances of staying in productive employment within the framework of a life cycle model offers a useful descriptive and analytical tool that merits further work by the ILO. Some work is under way on the linkages between child labour and youth employment and more could be envisaged. At the other end of the spectrum, the impact of youth (un)employment on issues affecting older workers, such as pensions and social security, retirement age, and reductions in working time, calls for further research by the ILO and its partner institutions. In addition, it will be interesting to see whether and, if so, how the life cycle approach might be used as a prescriptive tool for gauging how risks and disadvantages at an early stage of life influence outcomes at subsequent stages.

## **2. Social, political and security implications of youth unemployment**

A question that could arise from the historical review of the ILO’s work on youth employment is why the interest in this subject wanes and flows but never completely disappears. Part of the explanation surely lies in the fact that periodically high levels of youth unemployment come to be viewed as a threat to the very fabric of society. The various facets of this heightened concern have been reflected in some of the ILO’s own literature on youth employment.

The earliest ILO publication cited in this content analysis referred to the risks of youth unemployment to society as well as to the individual. It observed that young people

---

without a stake in the system were more likely to become alienated and to engage in anti-social behaviour. Unemployed youth had figured prominently in large-scale incidents of violence in a number of cities, while crime was increasingly prevalent among youth and much more wanton in character (1, 83). The 1986 ILC report noted that too many young people had been left at the margin of society. It then went on to link marginalization with such social problems as alcohol and drug abuse, as well as juvenile delinquency (5, 6). More than a decade later a similar refrain was sounded when reference was made to the connection between youth joblessness and crime, drug abuse and vandalism. High levels of youth unemployment also were seen as leading to alienation, social unrest and conflict (8, 179). Elsewhere it was observed that the number of young American men committing crime in the 1980s and 1990s was large enough to make 'prisoner' just about the fastest growing occupation among young people (10, 19). The same report also pointed out that increasing numbers of young people were committing suicide (10, 20). This was especially true of young men aged 15 to 19, particularly in English-speaking countries. From 1970 to 1992, the rate more than doubled in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the USA, while in Ireland it went up more than 20 fold (10a, 3-4).

The preceding sub-section already has referred to how long periods of unemployment deprive young people of the opportunity to obtain work experience and establish an employment record. A related concern is the possibility that periods of unemployment early in a person's working life could permanently impair that young individual's productive potential and, therefore, his or her long-term employment prospects (12, 52). Yet it also has been pointed out that this absence of productive opportunities has implications that go beyond the individual to the maintenance of societal values and institutions. For instance, recent mass protests against global capitalism, which were overwhelmingly organized by people aged 15 to 24, highlight the growing appeal of alternative value systems, however inchoate they may be. A generation of young people without productive and decent jobs will inevitably be more receptive to the message that big business is not interested in them. It is further argued that if the unemployment of young people continues or grows worse: society loses out on its investment in their education and training; lower income translates into reduced aggregate demand and consumer spending; personal savings and the pool of capital available to business are similarly reduced; and a reduced tax base and higher welfare costs lower the amount of money available for further investment and the scope for tax cuts (11, 6). Finally, high levels of youth unemployment may lead to alienation not only from society, but also from democratic political processes, which again may give rise to social unrest (10, 10).

The most recent area of concern, which has not been covered in the ILO literature, is the threat to societies and the world as a whole posed by terrorism. *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman has written of the hopelessness and despair that drives many young people into socially and personally destructive behaviour and contrasted this with the hopefulness of the employed young people who staff call centres in places like Bangalore, India. As with the various social problems discussed above, there is a need for more empirical evidence linking youth unemployment on the one hand, and quality employment on the other with forms of behaviour that society deems as desirable or undesirable. Even more fundamentally, there is a need to reconcile the perception that youth pose a problem to society (and therefore something must be done) with a fuller understanding of youth viewed as an asset to

---

society. These are areas where the ILO could make a useful contribution and is beginning to do so through the YEN, one of whose core messages proclaims “youth as an asset”.

### **3. Decent work**

The Director-General’s report to the ILC in 1999 launched the concept of decent work, emphasizing that the goal was not just creation of employment but the creation of quality jobs. It went on to observe that the quality of employment could mean many different things: it could relate to different forms of work, different conditions of work, as well as to feelings of value and satisfaction.<sup>99</sup> Since then, the ILO has gone further in exploring the meaning of the decent work concept and in developing indicators to measure decent work<sup>100</sup>

Turning then to youth, as the preceding historical examination has shown, the ILO’s early work focussed much more on qualitative than quantitative aspects. This was true of the Conventions that dealt with minimum age, night work and fitness for employment and Conference resolutions that addressed such matters as the working conditions, welfare and adequate remuneration of young workers. Yet, the 16 publications and documents being examined in this part of the study provide relatively little coverage of the qualitative aspects of the jobs that young people fill. This is particularly surprising in that it is these qualitative aspects that quite often are linked to youth expectations and job satisfaction.

The exceptions are found in the 1982 and 1986 ILC reports, with the 1986 report perhaps offering a few clues as to the dearth of coverage by the ILO. It observed that in developing countries relatively little was known about the working conditions of young people outside of the modern sector and also noted that in the field of occupational safety and health, with the exception of studies on child labour, ILO activities had not been aimed at specific age groups<sup>101</sup> (5, 43). Nevertheless, the 1982 report observed that many young workers were employed in an environment and in conditions that were a genuine hazard to their life, health and normal growth (2, 29). It went on to conclude that we must take a look at the nature and characteristics of jobs so as to improve the quality of employment and make greater allowance for the skills and interests of the young workers (2, 41). The Conclusions adopted by the 1986 Conference complemented this message. After observing that working conditions should not discriminate between various categories of workers, the ILO’s constituents stated that young people in their formative years required clearly determined and defined hours and conditions, taking into account the need to limit

<sup>99</sup> ILO : *Report of the Director-General, Decent Work*, ILC, 87<sup>th</sup> Session, Geneva, 1999, p.4

<sup>100</sup> See *International Labour Review, Special issue: Measuring decent work*, Vol. 142, No. 2, 2003/2.

<sup>101</sup> It would be useful to check whether this has changed in the ensuing years.

---

working time in order to allow for sufficient time for education, rest and leisure activities<sup>102</sup> (5a, 27).

Later ILO studies focussed almost entirely on the quantitative dimensions. Perhaps this can be explained by the sheer magnitude of youth unemployment. Yet, in view of the poor quality of many jobs available to young people, particularly first jobs, it would be a mistake to ignore their quality and would be inconsistent with the Decent Work Agenda. As the concept of decent work is central to current ILO activity, it would be useful for the Office to examine possible trade-offs between quantitative and qualitative aspects and how these can be kept to a minimum.

#### 4. Employability

The YEN Roadmap for Employability skills reiterated that employability is a key outcome of education and training of high quality, as well as a range of other policies. It encompasses the knowledge, skills and competencies that enhance a worker's ability to secure and retain a job, progress at work, cope with change and secure another job when desired or necessary.<sup>103</sup> Moreover, the Second Meeting of the YEN High-Level Panel proclaimed that all countries need to review, rethink and reorient their education, vocational training and labour market policies to facilitate the school-to-work transition and to give young people – particularly those who are disadvantaged because of disabilities or discrimination – a head start in working life. Of all the subject matter covered by this content analysis comprising the second part of the study, this perhaps is the area that is most replete with ILO messages. Although there is considerable overlap in the literature in the treatment of education, training and the school-to-work transition, to the extent possible the present study will build the presentation in this section around these three broad headings. The overriding theme, however, is preparation for the world of work.

*Education* – One might begin with a general set of observations about the importance of education. The education system has a critical role in preparing young people for life and work. It is responsible for preparing young men and women with a base of intellectual development, knowledge and skills that will enhance their personal ability as well as their potential for employment, and assist them in coping with changes at the workplace brought about by technology and other factors (5a, 24). Two of the studies, some 16 years apart, (3, 25-26; 11, 18) list what the former calls basic requirements for working life and the latter, essential competencies. They both identify literacy and numeracy, language skills, manual (vocational) skills, and personal and interpersonal skills. The former study also lists information about working life, such as an elementary knowledge of the economy, employment and the roles of institutions as well as how to apply for a job, while the latter includes abilities to solve problems and think creatively, along with computer and keyboard skills.

<sup>102</sup> The text also urged the ratification and implementation of the Minimum Age Convention and Recommendation, 1973 as well as the relevant standards pertaining to night work and the medical examination of children and young people.

<sup>103</sup> The original source of this definition is the *Resolution concerning human resources training and development* adopted by the ILC (Geneva, 2000).

---

It would seem that the place to begin is with universal primary education, which introduces a major element of equity, while raising individual productivity. Investment in primary schooling is the most cost-effective form of educational investment that a developing country can make (4a, 92). Such thinking is reflected in the 1998 youth employment resolution, which urged increased investment in basic education targeted at improving the quality of education and access to further and higher education for disadvantaged categories of young people. This should be accompanied by measures that aim to ensure that young people upon leaving school possess a general education and a balanced range of qualifications and skills (9, 32).

Yet, as already shown in the first part of this study, too often the educational system, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, has encouraged students to gear their efforts to passing examinations and collecting certificates, diplomas and degrees. With respect to Asia, it has been argued that a major explanation of youth unemployment is the irrelevance of education and training systems to labour demand and the lack of adaptation of the formal school system to the world of work. An integrated approach to education and training is needed, one that lays emphasis on basic education and foundation courses in theoretical subjects supplemented with first class work experience and skill development (6, 45 and 49). More generally speaking, education and training programmes should be reviewed and, as necessary, brought into greater conformity with the world of work. There is need to examine the relative effectiveness of general education and vocational education in preparing young people for jobs and careers and in making them sufficiently flexible to adapt to weak labour market conditions (1, 91). Therefore, it is necessary to adapt not only the educational system but also the training system to the needs of urban and rural labour markets (4, vi).

*Training* – It is not surprising then that much of the literature focusses on the role of training, or some mix of education and training, in preparing young people for the world of work. As poor skill levels are only one of a number of factors leading to youth unemployment, labour market policies for young workers need to include training as part of an integrated and targeted package (8, 180). It has been observed that preparation for manual skills and introduction to the world of work are, with some exceptions, largely delegated to the vocational education or training system (3, 26). Yet skill training also needs to be carefully geared to the existence of market opportunities. In many developing countries, there are still areas of activity to be exploited in the farm and non-farm sectors of rural areas, in the development of physical infrastructure through public works, as well as through self-employment in the informal sector (12, 163-64). Vocational training for employment in the agricultural sector should be given adequate importance as a means for non-urban youth to acquire qualifications and obtain jobs in their own regions (3a, 27). Another set of suggestions for Africa has focussed on developing practical-oriented syllabuses in agriculture for primary schools. These could be taught alongside other subjects or in isolation, either in school or through a continuing education programme; they also could be tied in with short specialist courses for young people at Farmer Training Centres to count as credits towards the full course (4, 47).

Additionally in developing countries, the importance of training in basic skills and informal sector apprenticeships, especially in crafts and repair services, has been

---

stressed (6, 47). It has been argued that there is little evidence that job training schemes work, especially in difficult times, partly because they are biased towards preparation for formal sector jobs that do not exist in adequate numbers (10, 34). Thus, greater efforts should be directed towards enhancing the on-the-job training capacity of the informal sector, which provides a low-cost form of training (5, 61). For most informal sector activities, secondary school education is not regarded as a substitute for apprenticeship training. At the same time, training institutes could play a greater role in preparing youth entrants to the informal sector by gearing more technical content to the training requirements of the informal sector and by offering complementary skills of a rudimentary nature in areas such as bookkeeping (4a, 90-91).

More generally, the literature points to the need for training to be broad, flexible and responsive to changing conditions. Training programmes that are broad-based and meet the growing demand for skilled workers, possessing cognitive and diagnostic skills in addition to manual skills, are to be encouraged (7, 76). Training systems of all types need to react quickly and flexibly. As regards apprenticeship training, this implies ensuring that apprenticeship curricula are modern and up-to-date and that they provide individuals with appropriate skills and capacity for ongoing learning and increased productivity (11, 24-25). Moreover, training of young people should not be restricted to initial training for work; it should be continuous and involve retraining to equip young workers and enterprises to cope with technological and occupational change. In order to avoid a mismatch between skills training and availability of jobs, education and training policies should take into account not only changing economic and technological conditions, but also changes in qualifications, functions and work organization in enterprises (5a, 24-25). In a related vein, given that in the average life cycle, job change is now expected to occur several times, the development of portable skills and competencies is essential. In addition, for education and training to meet market demands, it is necessary to develop the work force in tune with the new skills and competencies required by increasing globalization (10a, 24). At the same time, one finds cautionary notes in the ILO literature. It has been observed that private sector training typically excludes low-skilled persons due to the lack of interest on behalf of private firms in training disadvantaged workers. In general, training programmes for disadvantaged young people do not appear to raise their wages or employment prospects (10, 50).

*School-to-work transition* – A recurring theme in the literature is the need to establish closer links between formal and non-formal education as well as between classroom instruction and on-the-job training (4a, 92). School curricula should reflect the requirements of entering the labour market. Closer links need to be fostered between the worlds of education and work, with educational curricula, at least to some extent, taking into account the vocational needs of young people (12, 166). This same study states that it is now generally recognized that a combination of subsidized work experience and vocational training works best. Work experience combined with training seems to be the most effective form of policy. Moreover, the most successful programmes are those that place trainees with private-sector employers rather than those offering temporary placements in public-sector job creation projects. Even more specifically, programmes that comprise both off-the-job training and work placements within enterprises are generally more effective than programmes that contain only one of these elements, such as programmes based solely on work

---

placements or classroom training (12,110,112 and163). Elsewhere it is observed that programmes must include both training and practical apprenticeships in the private sector, with the aim of ensuring that the training and experience acquired correspond to market needs (10, 28). It also has been argued on behalf of programmes which provide some form of in-firm work experience, that, in addition to providing essential on-the-job training opportunities, they can help to overcome employer attitudes towards young inexperienced workers (8, 180).

Combining work with well organized, implemented and monitored training schemes represents a positive step towards the integration of training and work experience, but problems arise when training content is not adapted to the new skill requirements of the labour market or when alternation between training and work remains uncoordinated (5, 109). As the training provided by enterprises often constitutes an important link between the educational system and the labour market, it is necessary to find solutions to financial, administrative, legal and material constraints that impede the performance of this role (3a, 27).

In view, then, of the importance attached to the links between education and training systems on the one hand, and work experience and the role of private enterprise in the overall process, on the other, one looks to the literature for helpful recommendations to improve the school-to-work relationship. There are some, but they do not go nearly far enough. Thus, one reads of the need to incorporate different forms of linked work and vocational training into a comprehensive approach that allows for continuing training, a return to the formal education system and/or steady advance to stable, worthwhile jobs (5, 109). It is recommended that flexible working arrangements be promoted so that young people can avail themselves of on-and-off-the-job education and training opportunities in the context of agreed workplace arrangements (9, 32). With a view to providing more information to schools concerning employment opportunities, other recommendations encourage student and teacher visits to workplaces, company visits to schools, videotapes for schools and other materials that describe career options, and adopted school programmes. In addition, it is urged that education and training give attention to the personal and social skills that help young people to more fully integrate and participate in their working environment (7, 75-76).

This appears to be another area where the ILO has a continuing contribution to make. Training and skill development are a mainstay of the Office's overall work programme. As the historical review in Part 1 has shown, for more than 30 years the training needs of young people frequently have figured in this major area of ILO activity. Many lessons have been learned and featured above. If a gap has been identified, where more work is called for, it is the whole question of how to improve the school-to-work transition. This involves facilitating closer links between classroom instruction and other forms of training, and initiatives offering work experience, starting with those in the private sector. With a view to developing a much more solid collection of case material, the ILO may wish to see how much of this information can be obtained through secondary research and then determine whether it might be useful to supplement that which is available with its own primary research, perhaps carried out with partner institutions. It also may be worth exploring whether high youth unemployment in developing countries tends to be positively correlated with levels of education because educated young people are relatively advantaged and can better afford the waiting time associated with unemployment.



---

## 5. Equal opportunities

The mandate of the Equal Opportunity working group of the YEN is to develop recommendations to eliminate gender-based inequality in access to and treatment in education, training and employment.<sup>104</sup> In view of the amount of work that the ILO has done in recent years on gender promotion and gender equality, with particular attention to gender mainstreaming across technical programmes, it would not have been unreasonable to expect the content analysis to turn up an abundance of references to equal opportunity between young men and young women in the ILO literature on youth employment, particularly in the more recent contributions. The results, however, are not as numerous and wide-ranging, nor the recommendations always as detailed as might have been anticipated. What follows is the best material culled from ILO literature on youth employment.

The 1986 Conference reports placed the accent on equal access to training, pointing to the need for special policies in order to enable young women to participate with young men in education and vocational training. Training policies, therefore, should aim at widening women's access to training and retraining in all sectors and occupations and at all levels of skill and responsibility. They should seek to provide better and broader training so as to give young women a stronger skill base, make them more productive in their work and better prepared to deal with market and technological changes, and equip them to assume higher levels of technical and managerial responsibility (5, 98). Although more generally stated, these thoughts were echoed by the ILO's constituents, who urged that equality of access to education and training be strongly encouraged. This would enable girls and young women to enter streams leading to a broader occupational choice and provide them with skills that responded to labour market needs and a wider range of employment opportunities. In this regard, there was a need for vocational guidance programmes to pay special attention to girls and young women in order to broaden their traditionally-restricted training and labour market possibilities. Moreover, acceptance of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value should be promoted (Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100) (5a, 25 and 26). Along similar lines, an earlier set of conclusions had urged that measures be taken to help girls and young women to make non-traditional career choices and to have equal access and opportunities to education, training and occupations in accordance with international labour standards (3a, 27).

Several reports referred to the need to deal with the problems of image and stereotyping. It was argued that sex stereotyping began at birth, particularly in the non-formal sectors of developing countries, and conditioned the access of girls and young women to education, training and employment. In view of the many traditional cultural obstacles to women's equality with men, information campaigns and other practical measures to promote equality should be undertaken, utilizing all appropriate

<sup>104</sup> "Roadmap for equal opportunity in education, training, and employment", p.1. In line with the Roadmap, the focus here is on gender-based inequality. It is recognized, however, that, consistent with the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (No. 111), 1958, equality of opportunity can be impaired by exclusion or preference on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin. In the ILO's work on youth unemployment, the focus has been largely on gender equality.

---

means, e.g. school curricula, radio, films (5, 148) and (5a, 26). This was reiterated by the exhortation to tackle the image problem which reflected, in part, stereotyped attitudes towards certain occupations as male jobs. This called for special efforts to ensure that as part of compulsory education all young women had access to the same career information, school subjects and eventual qualifications as young men as well as subsequent opportunities to pursue further training. Recruitment efforts on behalf of young women must be stepped up and, where they were under-represented, they might be given special consideration when applications were selected for particular jobs or apprenticeships. Wage discrimination, where it existed, should be eliminated (7, 75-76).

More recently it has been observed that the fundamental requirement for equality at work is the protection and prevention of direct and indirect discrimination. Employers can contribute to gender equality in the workplace by implementing an equal-opportunity policy which, *inter alia*, could include the following: (a) policies and programmes, including leadership and skills training, designed to avert gender-based job segregation and to increase the opportunities for women to move into skilled and non-traditional jobs and managerial positions; (b) placement, guidance and counselling services that have sufficient skilled personnel familiar with the special problems of young women; (c) encouragement for employers to recruit and promote young women in sectors, occupations and trades where they are under-represented; (d) enforcement of strict policies to eliminate sexual harassment and discrimination; (e) support for family-friendly policies that encourage and support equal family responsibility and benefits for both parents and for single and dual-job parents; and (f) information campaigns to declare and publicize the policy (11, 47, 50 and 53).

This last contribution goes the furthest in pointing to where the ILO's continuing work on gender promotion could be harnessed to reinforce the ILO's work on youth employment in one critical area, i.e. equality at the workplace. Earlier ILO work focussed more on the role of education, training and guidance counselling in overcoming obstacles to equality. Much less work seems to have been done by the ILO on policies to promote equal opportunity for young men and women at the workplace. Here, the ILO could look more closely at policy measures that have worked and at the associated legislative, institutional and, perhaps even, cultural factors that condition the success of such measures.

## **6. Active labour market policies**

Many of the aforementioned school-to-work transition initiatives form part of what generally are called active labour market policies (ALMPs). Such policies are assigned a separate section in this paper because they tend to be broader in content and, in addition, occupy a prominent place in the literature. ALMPs generally comprise: (1) labour market training; (2) job creation, often in the form of subsidized employment; and (3) improving the match between job seekers and job vacancies. An ILO publication defines ALMPs as a complement to formal education and training systems, which are generally remedial in nature and attempt to correct the failure of education and training systems to integrate young people into employment (12, 4).

---

The ILO literature tends to divide into those pieces that suggest what should comprise a package of ALMPs and those that tend to view such policies with a critical eye. Regarding the former, in order to strengthen or adapt the demand for labour and facilitate the matching of labour supply and demand, measures should be taken to enhance skill formation, improve labour force mobility, and improve machinery for job search and recruitment (5a, 23). Another ILO reference adds the element of targeting when it states that for young people from poor or ethnic minority communities, ALMPs need to combine training for vocational skills with extensive job counselling, remedial education and other support to facilitate movement into employment (8, 182).

The ILO publications that take a more critical view of ALMPs are among the most recent. The first of these offers a more nuanced perspective, which is not inconsistent with the previous reference. Claiming that ALMPs have had varying degrees of success in alleviating youth unemployment and promoting employment (12, 4), O'Higgins states that unemployed young workers benefit most from initiatives that offer a broad range of mutually supporting programmes. These can include educational support, training, subsidized work, job search assistance, career advice, and counselling to deal with drug, alcohol and family problems. Job search assistance can improve the matching of job applicants in times of economic growth and also can be a useful complement to training and work experience programmes. In addition, programmes that include training and experience in regular workplaces are effective in providing young people with a foothold in the labour market as well as in overcoming employers' negative attitudes towards young people with no work history (12, 143 and 163).

Much more critical were the two publications associated with the 1999 International Symposium on Strategies to Combat Youth Unemployment and Marginalization. Most categorical was the statement that experience had shown ALMPs to have a limited impact at best, while expansionary macroeconomic policies had had a clearly positive effect on employment (10a, 29). The other report observed that Sweden's much heralded ALMPs did not seem to have been overly effective. There was also considerable evidence that large-scale programmes designed to move young people from unemployment to work, such as the Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP) and the Youth Training Scheme (YTS), which operated in the United Kingdom in the 1990s, were ineffectual. In the United States, it was found that the Job Training Programmes, funded by the Department of Labour, had no impact at all, while more narrowly focussed, smaller but much more expensive schemes such as the Job Corps had generated significant positive returns. In Europe, there seemed to be little evidence that ALMPs had had a positive impact on participants' wages, but there was stronger evidence that they had had positive employment effects, although there was no consensus on this question (10, 14 and 47-48).

All of this points to a question on which further research is required. Although the ILO no longer has a programme at the branch level on labour markets, the importance that the Organization still attaches to active labour market policies was reflected in the Governing Body's decision to request a paper on the subject for the November 2003

---

session of its Committee on Employment and Social Policy.<sup>105</sup> The paper pointed to a number of fruitful areas for further research, including the links between ALMPs and macroeconomic policy, trade-offs and complementarities between labour market regulation and ALMPs, the possibilities ALMPs offer in helping to formalize the informal sector and making it more productive, and concrete ALMPs for different target groups, especially youth and older workers. This suggests that the ILO, perhaps together with other YEN agencies, has a key role to play in work leading to the efficient delivery of ALMPs to young people and the achievement of more consistent positive outcomes.

## **7. Employment creation**

At the second meeting of the High-Level Panel of the YEN, the Panel pointed out that the other 3 E's (employability, equal opportunity and entrepreneurship), to be most effective, require an enabling environment where employment creation is placed at the centre of macroeconomic and other public policies. This is a central fact of policy analysis, which the ILO has observed repeatedly over the years, both generally and with specific reference to youth employment promotion.

From the earliest ILO studies cited here to the most recent, there are references to the crux of the problem. A diagnosis for developing countries, pieced together from the 1986 Youth report, might read as follows: The youth employment situation is a function of overall economic and social development. The unemployment and massive underemployment could be attributed in large part to the pattern and composition of output. While it is not youth alone who are victims of both the depressed state of their national economies and the insufficient aggregate demand for labour, the incidence of unemployment, underemployment and inadequate incomes falls disproportionately upon them (5, 47-48). Moreover, whether one is speaking about developing or industrialized countries, the solutions to youth unemployment are inextricably linked to the difficulties they face in reducing overall unemployment (10, 39). Efforts to improve the youth employment situation both quantitatively and qualitatively must form part of larger national employment efforts (5, 111).

Proceeding from this brief analysis, prescriptive elements then follow: The strategy for youth employment promotion has to feature a high rate of economic growth (6, 46). The first step must be to revive the economy and stimulate investment, which is a precondition for creating employment for everyone (2, 40). More specifically and drawing on the experience in sub-Saharan Africa, the long-term solution to the youth employment problem requires renewed economic growth, including a fundamental re-orientation of the development pattern to one that is more employment-oriented. (4, v). In a similar vein, the ILO's constituents observed: Meeting the employment aspirations of young people is dependent on higher and sustained rates of global economic growth so as to achieve a significant expansion in overall labour demand,

---

<sup>105</sup> At its March 2003 session, the Governing Body endorsed the Global Employment Agenda (GEA) as the employment arm of the decent work programme and requested the Office to select from among the ten core elements of the GEA one item for detailed discussion at its next session. The item selected was the ALMPs core element. See GB.288/ESP/2, p.1.

---

since both the quantity and quality of employment opportunities for young people are closely associated with the functioning of the economy as a whole (5a, 22).

At the heart of reviving economies, renewing economic growth, stimulating investment, expanding labour demand, generating employment and thereby creating jobs for young people is, in the words of one ILO constituent report, “a healthy macroeconomic climate conducive to growth and employment” (7, 75). Perhaps even more emphatically stated, youth unemployment, first and foremost, is a reflection of a country’s poor macroeconomic performance (12, 2). Turned around, stable macroeconomic institutions, policies and goals are among the fundamentals of a sound, employment-creating economy (11, 9). It has been further argued that while experience has shown active labour market policies to have had a limited impact at best on employment creation, expansionary macroeconomic policies clearly have had a positive effect (10a, 29). For Africa, it has been observed that macroeconomic policies which stimulate demand for national products, together with the reorientation of industry towards more labour-intensive patterns of production sustained by backward and forward linkages could contribute to an increase in formal sector employment (4a, 89).

More generally, it has been declared that the first and most fundamental lesson is that youth and adult unemployment are connected and both driven by what happens to overall employment (10, 53). While a special focus on young people needs to be maintained, the fight against youth unemployment cannot be dissociated from the fight against unemployment as a whole (4, v). Yet while the struggle against youth unemployment cannot be treated separately from efforts to reduce overall unemployment, general measures should be assessed partly in terms of their potential for helping young people to obtain jobs (1, 91).

Job creation for young people, then, must form part of a total approach to employment and can best take place in a healthy, dynamic and growing economy with financially sound enterprises (7, 74). Viewed in similar terms, the creation of adequate youth employment opportunities has to be seen in the context of employment creation programmes for all workers. Thus, it is closely tied to dynamic economic policies aimed at furthering economic growth and achieving full employment (3a, 26). Referring to OECD countries, one basic pattern in the worsened job market of young workers is the disproportionately large response of youth employment or unemployment to changes in overall unemployment (10, 18). Rising levels of aggregate demand will reduce both adult and youth unemployment but will have twice as high an impact on young people as on older age groups (10, 53).

What then does the ILO say about the mix of macroeconomic policy and special measures on behalf of young people? Here one finds a fairly high degree of consensus and consistency over the years. As early as 1986, the ILO was indicating that while temporary work experience and training schemes for young people had a role to play, they were not a substitute for sound macroeconomic policy (5, 112). That year’s Conference report went on to reinforce the message by adding that youth policy should not be viewed as a set of measures to compensate for the failure of macroeconomic policy (5a, 132). Special measures for young people and macroeconomic interventions should be mutually reinforcing. Within a larger economic and social policy framework, education, training, counselling, labour

---

market interventions as well as overall employment policy needed to be viewed in their totality and more fully integrated (5, 112 and 132). That message was consistent with several transmitted by the report delivered to the ILC four years earlier. On that occasion, efforts by governments to establish a better link between the educational system and the employment market were acknowledged; however, there still was need for a comprehensive and coherent medium-term programme that met the many different requirements of young jobseekers, especially the most disadvantaged. Such a programme, in turn, must be fully integrated in a global employment strategy (2, 40-41).

Twelve years later, the message was more nuanced. The ILO professed that targeted programmes, combining work experience with classroom training and job-search and career counselling, could serve many young people, but their effectiveness depended very much on the state of the economy; during periods of recession or slow growth such programmes were likely to function mainly as a means of maintaining young people's attachment to the labour force, while showing little effectiveness in increasing the probability of employment or income gains in the short-term (8, 180). The messages communicated the following year were closer in content to the earlier messages, placing more emphasis on the various measures for tackling youth unemployment and the merits of having an overall youth policy, with a set of coherent policy objectives (12, 57-58). Policy recommendations included closely linking youth employment policy with educational policy within the framework of an overall youth policy, and developing youth employment programmes in the context of an overall strategy for youth employment promotion (12, 166-67).

In conclusion, it has been affirmed that a strategy to combat youth unemployment must combine policies aimed at both the demand and supply sides of the economy, with better results usually achieved in an overall growth-promoting environment. A combination of complementary macroeconomic, income and labour market policies is needed to move towards higher employment levels and better-quality jobs for young people (12, 162).

Turning then to the ILO role in macroeconomic analysis with respect to employment and the labour market, it could be argued that while the ILO has done some good work in this field, it could be doing more. This is particularly true in view of the need for the ILO to further strengthen the macroeconomic foundation for its continuing dialogue with the Bretton Woods institutions on employment and the other social dimensions of structural adjustment and globalization. It is more difficult, however, to make a case for macroeconomic policy being the principal focus of the ILO's work on youth employment. Nevertheless, given the interconnection demonstrated in this section between youth unemployment and overall unemployment, should the ILO decide to deepen its work on the macro side, it should aim to further the Office's understanding of the interplay between macro and micro policy in encouraging the growth of decent work for young people.

## **8. Entrepreneurship**

As with the other 3 E's, there is nothing about entrepreneurship that is unique to young people. However, by establishing the Youth Entrepreneurship group as one of

---

four working groups of the YEN, the aim is to focus on those aspects of policy that specifically help young people to find decent and productive work through entrepreneurship, including social entrepreneurship. In fact, a look at the ILO's work over the years shows a long recognition of the fact that enterprise development by and for young people represents an essential source of employment creation for this age group.

At the heart of the ILO's messages on youth entrepreneurship is an acknowledgement of its important role as part of any larger youth employment strategy. Thus, with respect to young people, one reads: self-employment and micro-enterprise development have potential in many countries (**10a**, 23); the enhancement of self-employment and small enterprise in the formal sector is a promising strategy (**10**, 54); and, as a part of overall employment policy, self-employment and small business creation should be encouraged within the framework of promoting priority sectors of the economy (**5a**, 24). Moreover, there is the exhortation to promote small- and medium-sized enterprise, entrepreneurship and self-employment among young people as one of the major sources of employment opportunities for them (**9**, 33). Yet, the ILO also has pointed out that in countries at all levels of development, while self-employment and small business creation are an important means for young persons to obtain gainful employment, they play a lesser role than wage employment in raising overall employment (**5**, 143). This message is carried a step further by the emphatic statement that self-employment programmes should not be the only, and perhaps not even the main, response to youth unemployment. Many young people are not suited to becoming entrepreneurs, and prevailing economic conditions will limit the scope for the creation of new enterprises. That same study acknowledges that self-employment programmes could contribute to the integration of young people into jobs, but only as part of a broader strategy and package of measures (**12**, 125).

One of the more recent studies points out that people in self-employment find it intrinsically attractive and tend to enjoy greater well-being and satisfaction than equivalent employees, but that potential entrepreneurs are held back by lack of capital (**10**, 46). Elaborating on this point, it has been noted that a shortage of capital can kill off many good business ideas even before they begin, or that the financial backing provided to young entrepreneurs often is not enough, thereby leading to an under-capitalization that threatens business viability (**11**, 37). With similar emphasis, it has been maintained that of central importance in self-employment initiatives is access to finance, the lack of which is a major impediment to young people setting up in business on their own (**12**, 164).

It is not surprising then that recommendations to encourage youth entrepreneurship as part of an overall youth employment strategy are supported in the ILO literature by calls for start-up capital. Other forms of recommended support include financial, marketing and management assistance, training, and the provision of free or low-cost premises and workshops (**5**, 143) and (**5a**, 24). Fourteen years later most of these elements were reiterated and several new ones were added. These include mentor support, i.e. informal advice and guidance from a person with sound business experience, and perhaps networks, which might help a young beginner, as well as business-expansion support (**12**, 125). To these elements the literature added enterprise education through the school curriculum and doing business with young entrepreneurs (**11**, 33). Going further, that same publication outlined ways in which

---

employers could help young entrepreneurs to gain access to capital. These include: opening a dialogue with banks and financial institutions to encourage lending to young entrepreneurs; helping young people prepare their proposals to lending institutions through advice on documentation and business planning; providing or brokering small start-up grants or larger amounts to provide greater support for very sound business proposals; guaranteeing loans to young people as an incentive for finance institutions to lend money to suitable young entrepreneurs who lack sufficient personal collateral; and lobbying government for appropriate and targeted funding for young entrepreneurs in order for support to go to the most viable new enterprises (11, 37-38).

The last publication cited goes the furthest in pointing to possible future ILO research under this subject heading. There is no longer a question that the promotion and support of youth entrepreneurship has a role to play but it must form part of a much larger package of youth employment measures. What needs to be documented are the forms of support that are most essential and make the greatest difference in encouraging and sustaining youth entrepreneurship. Such an examination should be disaggregated according to level of education and training and the relative economic and social disadvantage of the young people involved. Moreover, such work needs to distinguish between the respective roles of formal and non-formal education and training for entrepreneurship, together with how each can be strengthened.

## **9. Targeting, monitoring and evaluation**

The preceding review of ILO literature on active labour market policies and entrepreneurship already alerts us to the importance of targeting. As regards entrepreneurship, it has been maintained that it is necessary to establish which groups should be targeted. In many countries, particularly those in the developing world, a case can be made for operating self-employment programmes for educated young people, who are likely to have fewer difficulties with the basics of running a business. The rather meagre evaluation results suggest that programmes targeting the better educated are much more effective (12, 131 and 143).

The case for targeting is forcefully set out with the observation that there is little evidence anywhere in the world that large untargeted youth employment or training programmes improve either the employment prospects or earnings for young people, especially for disadvantaged youth. Narrowly targeted programmes, however, can ease the plight of selected youth categories (10, 54). Closely targeted programmes are more effective than non-targeted ones because they are better tailored to meet the needs and abilities of specific groups and, therefore, likely to be more successful (12, 113).

Notwithstanding the earlier suggestion to target educated young people for self-employment programmes, the ILO, generally has argued in favour of selecting disadvantaged youth as the intended beneficiaries of special programmes designed for this age group. The 1986 Youth report asserts that if it is a major goal of special youth measures to rectify inequality of access to training, work experience and employment, then such schemes must be clearly targeted on the most disadvantaged young people (5, 130). Schemes introduced to provide young school-leavers with training,



---

education and/or work experience and lead to productive and freely chosen employment should pay particular attention to the most disadvantaged young people, such as the long-term unemployed (5a, 26). A further recommendation that policies promoting youth employment should be targeted towards disadvantaged young people is reinforced by the general finding that targeting and programme effectiveness are closely linked. That study goes on to add that although findings on programmes aimed at disadvantaged young people are often discouraging, there are indications that the fault lies, at least partially, with programme design and implementation, rather than with the fact that they are aimed at disadvantaged youth per se (12, 165-66).

Referring to Africa, the most successful special youth employment schemes seemed to be the ones that concentrated on people without formal education or with only low levels, thereby avoiding “featherbedding” (4, vi). Consistent with this statement was the observation that, while there might not be complete agreement on the value of government subsidies offered to employers to hire young people, when used they should be for the purpose of achieving a net addition to the number of jobs created and/or the provision of quality training. (7,75). However, as further pointed out, the use of certain simplistic measures of success, such as post-programme placement rates had led many administrators to favour those young people already in a position to help themselves. Broad-based programmes that tended to aid those who already were relatively well-equipped for the labour market ended up increasing levels of inequality between different groups of young people (12, 142).

The measurement of programme effectiveness or success establishes the links between targeting, monitoring and evaluation. This is an area that figures prominently in several of the more recent ILO publications, although one also finds earlier reference to the importance of monitoring and evaluation. Continuous monitoring of results and evaluation of impact, especially on the target group, are extremely important, permitting selection of the more successful youth initiatives for replication elsewhere (4a, 88).

O’Higgins goes the furthest in clearly and concisely explaining the respective roles of monitoring and evaluation. Monitoring ensures that programmes are implemented the way they were intended. It helps to provide quick feedback on any implementation problems and, thus, allows corrective measures to be taken if specific targets or goals are not being met (12, 68 77 and 143). Evaluation helps to identify the design features that increase a programme’s effectiveness. It suggests ways in which programmes can be improved, by identifying which types are more successful and why<sup>106</sup> (12, 59 and 143). As monitoring and evaluation are fundamental requirements for the effective implementation of policies and programmes aimed at promoting youth employment, programmes need to incorporate both functions at the design stage (12, 168).

Another of the more recent publications reinforces these findings and messages and elaborates the associated methodological considerations. It urges that detailed and careful evaluations be conducted for any job-creating strategy for young people. Such

<sup>106</sup> The book argues that all too often programmes are not subject to adequate evaluation. Their success or failure is judged by their gross outcomes rather than a comparison of programme results with some estimate of the situation had the programme not taken place.

---

assessments must be carried out over the long term and they require sophisticated evaluation methods with control groups (10, 54). Considerable care needs to be taken both in choosing a control group to overcome the selection-bias problem and in ensuring that comparable data are available on both control and treatment group (10, 48 and 50).

The importance of monitoring and evaluation also is endorsed in the employers' guide, which asserts that the only way to properly determine whether government and employer efforts are working as intended is to build regular monitoring and evaluation into all policies and initiatives. Employers have a role in ensuring that all youth employment initiatives (including all facets of education and training) are subjected to a rigorous ongoing, reassessment of effectiveness and efficiency. Monitoring and evaluation can be built into employers' policies and strategies to ensure that they are operating efficiently and providing maximum benefit to members and to unemployed youth. Monitoring and evaluation should feed back into employer programmes so as to improve their effectiveness (11, 29 and 60).

As can be seen, a fair amount of work has been done on targeting, monitoring and evaluation, including some of the more specific working papers and articles identified in the first part of this study. Yet the need remains to deepen understanding of the design and delivery of programmes aimed at improving the employment chances of the most disadvantaged groups of young people. If resource constraints limit the ILO's capacity to conduct primary research in this area, the Office still should make a more concerted effort to keep abreast of relevant research carried out by other international organizations, universities and research institutes and take account of these findings when shaping its own research agenda.

## **10. Role of the social partners**

In view of the ILO's tripartite structure, it would be surprising if the social partners did not figure prominently in the ILO's literature on youth employment. This is especially true in view of the centrality of enterprises in any successful employment creation strategy and the trade union role in protecting workers' rights and interests. In fact, even a cursory look at the literature turns up a good number of broad-based statements of principle concerning tripartism, sometimes wider forms of societal participation or, more particularly, the role of the social partners. Thus, one reads: well organized cooperation among the government, employers, workers and other major interests is vital to reaching understandings and establishing coherent arrangements for combating the youth unemployment problem (1,92); the involvement of workers' and employers' organizations in the design and implementation of programmes, including active labour market policy, is an important factor in determining their success; such involvement engages their commitment to schemes and tends to enhance the relevance of programme content and the quality of training (12, 115 and 143); trade unions and employers' organizations have a crucial role to play at all levels where policy is made or action taken to create employment for young people or to facilitate the transition from school through training to employment; workers' and employers' organizations contribute with their experience and take part in the creation of policies in whose implementation those they represent have a major role to play (5, 137); the full involvement of the social partners in

---

determining appropriate working conditions and remuneration levels for young people is imperative (5a, 23); or, only slightly more specifically, since the integration of education, training and employment is indispensable to the integration of young people into working life, it is essential that governments, employers and workers should assume fully their responsibilities in these three areas (3a, 26).

Going a step further, it would be desirable to find innovative procedures and measures to effectively associate teachers' organizations, labour market authorities, trade unions, employers' organizations and enterprises in the elaboration of school programmes that take into account contemporary realities and serve as a preparation for active life (3a, 27); or, there is a need for systems involving the social partners in developing, monitoring and evaluating training policies to ensure their continued effectiveness and relevance to the needs of young people and the labour market (5a, 25). Finally, member States are called upon to encourage greater participation by employers, workers and their respective organizations in: (i) determining the programme and content of education and vocational training; (ii) implementing such programmes; (iii) designing, monitoring and assessing systems to recognize qualification and skills; and (iv) fostering closer cooperation with education providers (9, 32).

While the aforementioned material serves to remind the reader of the tripartite foundation on which the ILO stands, and the essential role of the social partners in effecting change, it does not go far enough in spelling out in concrete terms the role of the social partners, singularly and collectively, in promoting and supporting the achievement of higher levels of quality employment for young people.

The Metal Trades Committee declared that young people have the right for their interests be protected by law and/or collective agreement. Governments must create the legal conditions and employers and trade unions the collective agreements necessary for promoting and safeguarding those interests. In addition, after acknowledging the important role that vocational guidance counsellors have to play in facilitating young people's transition from school to work, the report observes that this task can be made much easier if employers and trade union representatives actively participate through their direct contacts with schools and the provision of current information on metal trade industries (7, 76).

O'Higgins offers a general policy recommendation – workers' and employers' organizations should be involved in both the design and implementation of youth employment policy – but then goes on to provide supporting detail. Both can help to identify the most appropriate forms of training and employment programmes for available job opportunities and can help to foster formal and informal school/industry linkages (12, 168-69). Moreover, they can take part in determining course curricula under the dual apprenticeship system and become involved in sponsorship and placement, as well as in promotion and information activities within schools. The further involvement of workers' and employers' organizations in the formulation and implementation of active labour market policies is likely to improve their effectiveness. The sharing of knowledge and requirements will tend to increase the relevance of the policies adopted and increase the commitment of employers' and workers' organizations to their success (12, 156).

---

Clearly the publication that goes the furthest in spelling out a role in concrete terms is the guide for employers. The current study presents under the most relevant subject headings many of the ideas and recommendations aimed at assisting employers to promote youth employment. Still, there remain other messages that are worth citing. On partnerships with workers' organizations, the publication states that youth employment lends itself ideally to social dialogue. Consultative and policy committees can offer a sound basis for partnerships between employers' and workers' organizations to support greater youth employment. There may also be scope for employers and trade unions to reach broad framework agreements on mutual efforts to encourage youth employment (11, 64). Elsewhere the guide sets down various roles that employers and their organizations can play where government programmes are in place or under consideration. The first step is to establish a dialogue with the government and other stakeholders on programmes to create more jobs for young people. Other steps are: developing employer expertise and learning the lessons of other countries; contributing to the design of effective programmes; promoting government programmes to employers through the publications, internet sites and other information channels of employers' organizations; and providing feedback to government and other stakeholders about how programmes are working in practice (11, 12-14). Finally, it is worth noting the message on getting the most out of labour relations. Pointing to the impact of labour and employment regulations – including collective bargaining agreements and arbitrated labour relations settlements – on the capacity of employers to create jobs for young people, it is suggested that opening a dialogue on these issues with government and other social partners is an important first step. In this regard, the employers submit that there is often a considerable reserve of good will and a willingness to put traditional divisions to one side in the interest of young people (11, 11).

The guide for employers brings to mind a work item contained in the 1984-85 Programme and Budget, but subsequently dropped. The original idea was to conduct country surveys aimed at showing what key stakeholders perceived as the principal constraints to greater access to first employment and how their perceptions influenced subsequent decisions and actions. The intention was to focus initially on youth organizations but then go on to survey employers' organizations and trade unions, among others. In hindsight, the approach was too narrow and 17 years later the employers provided a much more useful model. While an understanding of constraints and what to avoid is useful, a survey of what works and associated blueprints of action for the key actors, both individually and collectively, offers greater potential. This, then, is an area where the ILO today could make an even more important contribution for the benefit of employers and workers alike, as well as young people seeking employment.

## **11. Participation of young people**

In view of the fact that the study originally planned for the 1984-85 biennium had intended to begin the examination with the perceptions of young people themselves, i.e. youth organizations, it is worth asking how strong a message the ILO has delivered over the years with regard to the participation of the intended beneficiaries of the initiatives discussed in this paper. One study clearly and concisely sets out the case for wider participation by young people, noting that it is only fair for young

---

people to have a say in affairs that affect them; it also acknowledges that young people may have a greater sense of whether particular programmes will work for their peers (11, 64).

In fact, the references to this subject are limited in number and not particularly far reaching. Thus, one reads that youth can participate as agents of change in national development (4, 48). Wherever possible, young people should be more involved in helping to set priorities and in the selection, design, and implementation of youth employment schemes (5a, 22). There is an urgent need to incorporate young people into the formulation of youth policies and programmes so as to incorporate their aspirations; and institutions need to empower the young so that they too have a voice (10a, 23-24). Employers may wish to consult with youth organizations or encourage them to put forward a representative group to consult with employers, governments and other interest groups on issues affecting youth employment. More specifically, consideration might be given to providing young people with a voice in the determination of curricula and competencies to be taught in apprenticeships through participation in school committees (11, 25 and 64). To cite another example, working hours, work organization and earnings are all areas in which young workers would like to have some say. Yet this requires that the industrial relations machinery allows them to be involved in one way or another in the decision-making process, at least at their place of work (2, 31). Finally, the message that probably goes the furthest in pointing the way to further ILO work on giving young people a voice comes from another one of the early reports. Policy and programme design should be based on a pertinent diagnosis of the youth employment situation and on lessons from past experience, particularly as regards the participation of young people in their formulation and implementation (3a, 26).

Clearly then, there is a gap in this area, most certainly in the ILO's own work. Much more needs to be known about the barriers to the fuller participation of young people in the selection, design, implementation and evaluation of the policies and programmes that are supposed to be on their behalf and, perhaps even more importantly, how to overcome these barriers. There is an associated need to document and widely disseminate lessons of experience on what works and why. For the ILO with its core value of social dialogue and its extensive work over the years on various forms of participation, this would appear to be a natural area for applying its expertise. Going beyond the required research it, therefore, is encouraging to see that the ILO is becoming much more of an advocate of giving young people a true voice in the fight against youth unemployment. For example, the YEN's structure contains a standing Youth Consultative Group. Within the international community, the ILO must lead the way in this area.

By way of summary, then, the ILO has developed and refined, over time, a useful knowledge base and a set of messages on youth unemployment and youth employment policy that it still can draw upon today. Sometimes, over the past 25 years, there appears to have been a lack of awareness of earlier ILO research, findings and conclusions. Fortunately, however, this seldom resulted in important contradictions. ILO messages have been consistent and reinforced over time by repetition. In addition, it can be argued, that in recent years earlier work has been deepened. While acknowledging the high quality of some of the previous work done by the Office, including two very good Conference reports, perhaps the three best ILO

---

publications on youth employment are the most recent, i.e. *Employing Youth: Promoting employment-intensive growth*; *Meeting the youth employment challenge: A guide for employers*; and *Youth unemployment and employment policy: A global perspective*.

The last of these three publications, which took so many years to complete, was, in the end, well worth waiting for. What use was made of the results and how well its messages have been disseminated is a question to be addressed in the final part of this study. The present section has tried to identify some of the research gaps and point to areas where the ILO retains a comparative advantage. This, more than any other part of the paper, could be the subject of a useful in-house discussion in anticipation of the next programme and budget cycle. Such a discussion also could help the ILO in establishing its place and comparative advantage vis-à-vis its YEN partners. Subsequent discussion with these partners could lead to proposals or firm up suggestions for work to be carried out jointly.

---

### III. Dissemination of the ILO's work and messages on youth employment

The first part of this study has shown that the ILO has a long history of work on youth unemployment and youth employment policy, while the second part has shown that the outcome has been a fairly consistent set of messages. Yet there remains the question of how well known is the ILO's work in this field. To address this matter, one has to take at least a cursory look at how ILO research materials are disseminated, in what numbers, and who receives them (which may not imply necessarily that they always are being read).

These are not academic questions if one turns back to the Programmes and Budget used as source material for the first part of the study and examines the statements of objective that were part and parcel of those documents for some 20 years from the late 1970s onwards. While such statements were formulated at the major programme, programme and sub-programme levels, it was the latter that were closest to the constituents or target groups to whom the work items comprising particular sub-programmes were addressed. The following typify the nature and scope of objective statements: (1) the purpose is to promote better understanding among government officials, workers, employers and educators of the principal constraints to youth employment and of the relative effectiveness of measures and schemes aimed at facilitating access of young people to meaningful and productive employment; (2) the objective is to reduce high unemployment and meet the needs of vulnerable groups, particularly of young workers and women, in industrialized market economies; and (3) the aim is to improve national capacity to formulate plans, policies and programmes to increase employment creation, especially at times of economic crisis; this will be achieved by improving both planning techniques and the information base for the design of employment creation programmes.

Thus, it is in relation to promoting better understanding among the ILO's constituents and other groups, improving member State capacities to plan and implement and, even reducing high unemployment that one has to measure ILO impact through the dissemination of its research findings, main messages and policy advice. It would not be unreasonable to assume that the attainment of such lofty objectives could only be accomplished through distribution of large numbers of copies of the relevant publications, along with delivery and information systems capable of reaching wide audiences in both developed and developing countries. Going further, wider dissemination of policy advice would need to be followed up with operational activities to bring the key actors together to achieve the desired outcomes.

While it is not possible to obtain distribution and sales figures for the older publications cited in this study and unpriced publications are more difficult to track than priced publications, there is sufficient information available to construct at least a partial picture of the extent of ILO outreach through its publications. One might begin with working paper series. As the number of books and monographs has decreased over the past decade, this has become an increasingly popular way of publishing research results. To cite one previously-mentioned example, the Employment and Training Papers series ran from 1997 to 1999 and comprised 56 working papers. Nine of these, including the first paper in the series, were on youth unemployment. Back in the 1970s and 1980s, World Employment Programme

---

Research Working Papers were clearly identified as preliminary documents circulated to stimulate discussion and critical comment. A typical print run was 200 copies. The working papers of today no longer carry this designation and, in fact, are much more polished in appearance. Much of the work might not even be classified as preliminary in nature. However, the typical print run remains unchanged at 200 copies, with some papers going as high as 300 copies. This is fairly limited, when viewed in relation to ambitions such as those established by the aforementioned objective statements. However, it has to be quickly acknowledged that these nine working papers, along with most others, are now available on the Internet. The ILO's use of this form of dissemination will be assessed shortly.

Books, as expected, are printed in larger numbers and thus it will be useful to examine, first, one of the most recent examples of a priced publication among the youth unemployment literature, i.e. the book by O'Higgins, *Youth unemployment and employment policy: A global perspective*. The original print run of 3,000 copies was typical for this type of book when it was published. Of this stock, 1,700 were reserved for sale by the ILO's Bureau of Publications, while the remainder were used to cover the free distribution requirements.<sup>107</sup> A good-selling book of this nature is one in which, within the first two to three years following publication, the sales stock is running low and an instruction has to be given for a second printing. Any authored publication that exceeds 1,500 copies sold is considered to have done very well by ILO standards.<sup>108</sup> In its initial years following publication, the O'Higgins book sold over two thirds of that number. For a topical book of this quality, such results certainly could be considered satisfactory, although less than outstanding. On the positive side, the drop-off in sales from year one to year four was not large and the book continues to sell. Adding together, copies sold and copies given, one finds that over 2,500 copies of this book were distributed. Clearly this is not a total that could be expected to have a major impact on the way the world views and responds to high levels of youth unemployment and this, of course, is without knowing how many of those copies found their way into the hands of policy makers or others in a position to make a difference.

Two other recent book-length publications commented upon favourably in this report were *Employing Youth: Promoting employment-intensive growth* and *Meeting the youth employment challenge: A guide for employers*. The latter had a print run of 2,000 copies. The print run of the former was more limited: 500 copies in English; and 200 each in French and Spanish. Both were unpriced and therefore did not

<sup>107</sup> The major categories of free distribution are as follows : (1) official (ILO constituents) ; (2) depository libraries designated by national governments ; (3) exchange agreements between the ILO library and other libraries worldwide; (4) anyone else for whom it had been agreed at some time that they should receive ILO publications free of charge, including academic or specialized libraries not covered by the earlier categories; and (5) ILO Headquarters units, the author unit, external offices and sometimes donors.

<sup>108</sup> Here the ILO is no different from academic and small- to medium-sized publishing houses that typically would be aiming to sell 500 to 1,000 copies of ILO-type publications. Examples of ILO books that have exceeded 2,000 copies sold and been reprinted are *The sex sector*, *Negotiating flexibility*, *The Asian financial crisis*, *HIV/AIDS and employment*, and *Gender and jobs*. Books pertaining to the maritime sector, management consulting and occupational safety and health often sell well in excess of these numbers.



---

benefit from the free distribution and marketing machinery that the ILO has in place for priced publications. Distribution plans would have been drawn up directly by the responsible technical units. There are two arguments for pricing that were forfeited in both cases. The first is that products given away free of charge are often perceived as being of lesser value than those which are sold.<sup>109</sup> The second is that pricing allows access to the general book trade and thus to civil society through bookshops, distributors and sales agents. Each of the two books was produced with a particular purpose or audience in mind. Nevertheless, given their fine quality, it would seem unfortunate to so limit their wider distribution and risk that all too quickly, they will be forgotten.

Flagship publications, such as the *World Employment Report*, offer greater opportunity for carrying ILO messages to a larger audience. The 1998-99 edition discussed in this report serves to illustrate. The print runs were 6,000 copies in English and 2,500 copies each in French and Spanish. The free distribution numbers were larger than for an ordinary ILO book but 3,000 copies in English, 1,600 in Spanish, and 1,500 in French were reserved for sale. In addition to the prescribed free distribution at the outset, normally for a flagship publication there is more subsequent free distribution than for a standard publication. All told, then, approximately 7,000 copies have been sold or given since the initial free distribution. While these are excellent distribution numbers, it has to be remembered that the material on young workers comprised only 4 ½ pages buried in a much larger report. Thus, this is not likely to be the first place that readers would look for ILO information and analysis on youth employment policy.

Another type of publication that lends itself to much larger distribution is a Conference report. As regards substantive matters, this can take the form of a theme report of the Director-General or a technical report prepared for a general or first discussion at the June Conference. The earlier content analysis featured the 1982 Report of the Director-General and the 1986 report prepared for the general discussion on Youth. While print and distribution numbers are not available for either of these reports in view of their age, a more recent report cited in the historical review can serve as a proxy indicator, since there has been very little variation in the print runs for Conference reports over the years. Thus, an examination of the print runs for *Training for employment: Social inclusion, productivity and youth employment*, prepared for the 2000 Conference, shows that to print runs of 3,300 copies in English, 1,900 in French and 1,100 in Spanish, there is a need to add 500 copies in Arabic, 400 in German, 400 in Russian and 300 in Chinese. Given their nature, although priced, most copies of Conference reports are given away, with one important caveat: they also form part of subscription packages, which raise revenue, while contributing to a wider institutional dissemination of certain key ILO publications.

In the not too distant past, ILO dissemination would have been built largely around print copies. Today, the Internet and electronic publishing have created much wider opportunities for the delivery of ILO messages. In July 2001, the ILO's Publications Advisory Committee (PAC) discussed a paper on electronic publishing and took a

<sup>109</sup> A JIU Report on United Nations System Revenue-producing activities cited UN General Assembly approval of the principle that publications which "are sold rather than freely distributed usually command greater respect and are more likely to be read and hence have a greater impact".

---

number of key publishing policy decisions that elevated the role of electronic publishing within the ILO to a new level. Most notably, the PAC decided that, henceforth, all ILO materials should be prepared in an appropriate digital format for electronic transmission in some form. While electronic publishing was not a substitute for conventional types of printed publications, the complementarity of the various modes of publication available should be accepted as central to all publishing decision making. Thus, ILO publications, of whatever type, should always be viewable online through the ILO website, with the possibility of downloading from screen to print as appropriate. With respect specifically to publications on youth employment, it is possible now through hyperlinks to connect with a broad range of relevant ILO material and, going further, with youth employment publications of other YEN partners. This is worth pursuing.

An examination of the website of the Employment Strategy Department (EMP/STRAT) shows that the ILO has gone far in making its publications available over the Internet. As already mentioned the nine working papers on youth employment in the Employment and Training Papers series are online in full text, as is *A guide for employers*. This certainly broadens the potential readership for ILO publications well beyond the limited numbers who receive print copies. However, until such time as computers with high-speed connectivity become more widely available throughout the developing world, there are limits to the extent of dissemination via the Internet.

A further issue pertains to ease of access to all ILO materials on youth employment, priced and unpriced, in print and online format, and cutting across technical departments. This was a problem area where the PAC in its July 2001 meeting was most emphatic. The decision taken read as follows: "...the ILO website should be developed to provide a single access point on information about the availability of the full range of ILO publications, whether priced or unpriced, through a group of searchable databases in one site. For unpriced publications, hyperlinks could provide connections to the relevant technical units and field offices, with a link back to the main site". More than four years after the adoption of this decision, work to implement it is now in progress and more urgent than ever. In addition to facilitating much easier online access through one point of contact to a fuller range of ILO publications on youth unemployment (or any other subject), the introduction of a central access point for all ILO publications would lend itself to the efficient management of inventory of ILO publications and documents.

In recent years, the ILO has undertaken a number of additional initiatives aimed at extending further Internet access to its publications. It has established contracts with a number of electronic content providers who offer online subscriptions to individuals or institutions (MyiLibrary, Ingenta, EBSCO, MIMAS, Proquest and HeinOnline). While particularly useful in parts of the world that have widespread Internet access, where connectivity is more limited these undertakings come up against the same constraint discussed above. This is why still another initiative, the ILO Digital Collection 2003, is so appealing.

The Collection consists of over 650 selected ILO titles that have been put together on one CD-ROM by the Human Info NGO. These publications, which span 25 years, are fully searchable. Searches can be conducted by subject heading, title, organization,

---

topic or particular words. This CD-ROM Collection lends itself to free distribution and, therefore, wider access in developing countries to ILO analysis, policy advice and practical information. The concept and the associated technology lend themselves to the preparation of customized CDs. Thus, for instance, the ILO's material on youth employment could be combined with that of the World Bank and the United Nations, as well as other international organizations, and placed on one single CD-ROM.<sup>110</sup> Alternatively, the ILO might combine on a CD its publications on youth along with those it has produced on women, migrants, the elderly and disabled persons among other target groups. Such CDs even could feature summaries of ILO messages on the promotion of youth employment together with the actual published material. In a similar vein the ILO could consider the preparation of shorter, popularized print versions of some text, key messages and policy recommendations contained in one or more of the recent ILO publications on youth employment.

Whatever the format, the idea is to make the material more widely available and this thinking could be applied to other major ILO fields as well. The overriding aim should be to ensure fuller integration of the production of ILO outputs, most notably research and policy analysis, and their widest possible delivery to target audiences and intended beneficiaries. This ultimate goal concerns the Office as a whole.

<sup>110</sup> In fact, the ILO took a big step in this direction with the publication in the first half of 2005 of a CD-ROM on *Youth employment: A pocket guide to recent ILO publications*. This CD-ROM allows easy access to the full contents of most of the more recent unpriced publications on youth employment, such as reports and working papers, and adds information on the YEN, including references to Network activities and research.

---

## **Appendix: Resolution concerning youth employment**

The General Conference of the International Labour Organization, meeting in its 93rd Session, 2005,

Having undertaken a general discussion on the basis of Report VI, *Youth: Pathways to decent work*,

1. Adopts the following conclusions;
2. Invites the Governing Body to give due consideration to them in planning future action on youth employment and to request the Director-General to take them into account both when implementing the Programme and Budget for the 2006-07 biennium and allocating such other resources as may be available during the 2006-07 biennium.

### **Conclusions on promoting pathways to decent work for youth**

1. In addressing the employment challenges faced by young women and men, it is important to recall the ILO Decent Work Agenda, the ILO Global Employment Agenda, the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the ILO Declaration of Philadelphia, the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up, the body of international labour standards relevant to work and young persons (see appendix), the conclusions of the Tripartite Meeting on Youth Employment: The Way Forward (Geneva, 13-15 October 2004), the World Commission report on the Social Dimension of Globalization and the ILO's participation in the inter-agency Youth Employment Network.

### **Issues and challenges**

2. In all regions and countries, young women and men set out in life with dreams, hopes and aspirations. Yet everywhere young women and men face challenges in the labour market. If young people are to be given opportunities, then multiple pathways to decent employment are needed. Achieving decent work for young people is a critical element in poverty eradication and sustainable development, growth and welfare for all.

3. Young women and men bring numerous assets to the labour market: relevant and recent education and training; enthusiasm, hope and new ideas; willingness to learn and be taught; openness to new skills and technology; realistic expectations on entry to the labour market; mobility and adaptability; and represent a new generation to meet the challenge in countries with an ageing workforce. The challenge is to bring young people into employment without displacing other workers. Policy-makers have to consider intergenerational issues and recognize, in this context, a life-cycle approach.

---

**4.** Young people are employed and seek employment in diverse local, national, regional and international circumstances. This includes diversity between developing and developed economies, and within these economies. Governments, employers and young workers are not homogeneous groups; they have different needs, capacities and expectations. The ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up is universal and applies to all workers, regardless of national circumstances and levels of development.

**5.** Many young people are in education or employed in decent jobs. In many countries, young people are able to make successful transitions from education to the world of work. In some countries, the ageing workforce also presents growing opportunities for young people. There are diverse forms of work in which young people can engage, with vastly different employment conditions, including permanent full-time or part-time work, as well as casual, temporary or seasonal work. These forms of employment may provide entry points for young workers to the labour market and enhance their long-term employment prospects. Unfortunately, there are also too many young workers who do not have access to decent work. A significant number of youth are underemployed, unemployed, seeking employment or between jobs, or working unacceptably long hours under informal, intermittent and insecure work arrangements, without the possibility of personal and professional development; working below their potential in low-paid, low-skilled jobs without prospects for career advancement; trapped in involuntary part-time, temporary, casual or seasonal employment; and frequently under poor and precarious conditions in the informal economy, both in rural and urban areas. Other young workers lack adequate incomes, access to education, training and lifelong learning, social protection, safe workplaces, security, representation and rights protected under international labour standards, including freedom of association, collective bargaining and protection from harassment and discrimination.

**6.** Of the world's over 1 billion young people, 85 per cent live in developing countries with a high incidence of poverty and inadequate employment opportunities. There is significant regional variation in youth employment, with some countries facing greater challenges than others due in part to the uneven impacts of globalization and the asymmetries in current global economic activity. The scourge of HIV/AIDS, the weight of external debt, armed conflict, poor governance, unstable institutions and gender inequality compound weak economic growth and deter the public and private investment necessary to create jobs. Rapid population growth is expected to significantly increase the number of youth searching for decent work opportunities in most developing countries.

**7.** In developed economies, the challenge may be linked to slow economic and employment growth, the transition into employment, discrimination, social disadvantages, cyclical trends, and a number of structural factors. Variation in the youth employment challenge requires specific responses.

**8.** In too many instances, the labour market prospects for young people vary according to gender, age, ethnicity, education level, family background, health status and disability. Some groups are therefore more vulnerable and face particular disadvantage to securing and retaining decent work.

---

**9.** The regulatory environment for investment and enterprises and labour law should create an investment climate that fosters economic growth and decent employment of young persons. Whilst employment cannot be directly created but only encouraged by legislation or regulation, it is recognized that labour legislation and regulation based on international labour standards can provide employment protection and underwrite increased productivity, which are basic conditions in order to create decent work, particularly for young people. Labour laws and, where they exist, collective agreements, should apply to all young workers, including those currently lacking protection because of disguised employment relationships.<sup>111</sup> Efforts should be made to move those in the informal economy into the formal economy. The creation of an enabling environment, the pursuit of good governance and the sustainable existence of both physical and social infrastructure are necessary for the competitiveness of existing businesses and the start-up of new enterprises.

**10.** Investment in youth reaps benefits for individuals, communities and societies. Decent work for young people unleashes multiplier effects throughout the economy and society, boosting investment and consumer demand and ensuring more stable and cohesive social ties across generations, including sharing institutional workplace knowledge. It shifts young people from social dependence to self-sufficiency, helps them escape poverty and enables them to actively contribute to society.

**11.** Youth unemployment and underemployment impose heavy social and economic costs, resulting in the loss of opportunities for economic growth, erosion of the tax base which undermines investment in infrastructure and public services, increased welfare costs, and unutilized investment in education and training, and may also be associated with social instability and conflict, increased levels of poverty, crime and substance abuse.

**12.** The youth employment challenge is bound to the general employment situation and, while it has its own dimensions, it is influenced by a number of general factors which may have positive or negative consequences, including:

- the impact of globalization;
- the impact of structural reforms in developing countries;
- the level of, and fluctuation in, aggregate demand;
- demographic trends;
- the level of economic activity, public and private investment and sustainable growth;
- the employment intensity of growth in developing countries;
- an enabling regulatory environment for both enterprises and the protection of workers' rights;

<sup>111</sup> As referenced in the conclusions of the ILC's general discussion on the employment relationship (2003).

- 
- entrepreneurship and enterprise creation options, including through cooperatives;
  - education and training outcomes;
  - the relationship between education and labour market needs; and
  - work experience and labour market services.

**13.** As new entrants to the labour market, some young workers lack the specific training or seniority that may buffer older workers from swings in market conditions; their employment is highly dependent on the state of the economy. During economic downturns, the practice of “last hired, first fired” and the lack of vacancies take a toll on young workers when they are less equipped to find new employment.

**14.** Whilst some young people transition effectively from education to work, the transition is problematic for too many others. One concern is when young persons do not possess basic literacy and numeracy skills that are necessary to access vocational training and transition from a state of unemployability to employability. Another concern is when, for protracted periods, young people are not in employment, education or training. In other instances, some young people do not complete schooling and/or have insufficient skills to gain secure and sustainable employment opportunities.

**15.** Failure to find a job may be linked to lack of relevant skills and training opportunities, to low demand for the skills in which young persons have trained, or to changing demand in the labour market. The mismatch that arises can lead to long periods of jobseeking, higher unemployment and sustained periods of lower skilled and precarious work. Lack of opportunities for work experience and entrepreneurial development, combined with the absence of adequate labour market information, vocational guidance and counselling, and poor job placement mechanisms, exacerbate the problem of getting a decent job.

**16.** Particular groups of young people face specific hardships due to discrimination and social exclusion, including those with disabilities, those affected by HIV/AIDS, indigenous youth, those involved in hazardous work, demobilized soldiers, ethnic minorities, migrants and other socially disadvantaged youth. In general, young women, in particular young women with children, are more prone to unemployment, discrimination, sexual harassment, underemployment and poor working conditions. In some cases, young persons are denied access to employment opportunities for which they are fully qualified and competent solely on the basis of their age.

**17.** Governments and social partners are committed to addressing the youth employment challenge with the involvement of young women and men. Urgent action is required to enhance the involvement of young workers, workers’ organizations and employers of young workers and their organizations in development, implementation and monitoring of youth labour market policies and programmes.

---

## **Policies and programmes for decent work for young people**

**18.** The principles of the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122), whereby “each Member shall declare and pursue, as a major goal, an active policy designed to promote full, productive and freely chosen employment”, are fundamental to any employment policy directed at young people.

**19.** Although one size does not fit all, meeting the youth employment challenge calls for an integrated and coherent approach that combines macro- and microeconomic interventions and addresses both labour demand and supply and the quantity and quality of employment. Youth employment should be considered in all relevant social, employment and economic policies through a well-balanced policy mix. Supportive national trade, industry, training and wage policies, with appropriate involvement of the social partners, are also required to meet the youth employment challenge. The employment prospects of young people are inextricably linked to the general employment situation and can be especially vulnerable to fluctuations in economic conditions. Consequently, targeted interventions aimed at overcoming disadvantages, while promoting equality, social inclusion and an equitable society, are required. Policies and programmes that aim to prevent cycles of disadvantage from being repeated across generations are critical in achieving social inclusion and decent work for youth.

**20.** High and sustained economic growth is a necessary condition for the generation of employment, including quality employment for young people. This requires macroeconomic policy supportive of increased and sustainable employment growth through expanded investment, productive capacity and aggregate demand in conditions of economic and political stability. Governments should have policy space to ensure ownership of their macroeconomic and industrial policies enabling them to expand their economies including the manufacturing and services sectors. Social progress and economic growth should go hand in hand. Policies relating to globalization, including trade and foreign direct investment, should, wherever necessary, be reformed to create decent jobs for young people. Monetary, fiscal, trade and social security policies should be coherent with the overall objective of increased and sustainable economic growth, employment generation and social protection. Assessment of the likely employment implications of macroeconomic policy choices can better inform an adequate policy mix.

**21.** Placing economic growth and employment generation at the centre of national policy objectives calls for supportive and coherent national, regional and international policy frameworks. Reforms are required at the national and international levels to ensure developing countries have access to additional financial resources to promote economic development and decent work. International debt relief, including debt cancellation, and increased official development assistance (ODA) are important components of such reforms. In addition, some of the recommendations of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization are particularly relevant in this regard. National and international strategies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) should combine economic growth, poverty eradication and social and employment objectives, including youth employment. The forthcoming review of the MDGs in September 2005 provides an excellent opportunity to assess the extent to



---

which national, regional and international policies and strategies address the promotion of decent work for all with a focus on young people.

**22.** Increased and sustainable economic growth, while necessary, is not a sufficient condition for sustainable employment generation, particularly for young people. A range of complementary policies are needed to enhance the employment content of growth while also increasing productivity and ensuring adequate social protection. Policies should seek to strengthen enterprises and enhance labour demand as well as the quality of the labour supply. Governments should review all policies to ensure they do not discriminate against the hiring of youth.

**23.** In developing countries the employment intensity of growth must be increased. For example, employment-intensive investment in infrastructure has been shown to be an effective means to enhance sustainable decent work among low-income and low-skilled workers, as well as to create assets that enhance productivity and output. Such investment is a proven means to eradicate poverty, particularly when it is combined with training.

**24.** The development of entrepreneurship among young people is an important component of employment policies. Some young people have the potential to become entrepreneurs and create or join an enterprise. Some young people also have the potential to establish or join cooperatives. This potential should be actively nurtured through an enabling environment combining information on opportunities and risks faced by entrepreneurs and those involved in cooperatives, business development services directed particularly at young people, mentoring and financial services (including access to credit and venture capital) and simplifying registration (including business entry) procedures. Employers' organizations, together with governments, have an active role to play. The development of entrepreneurship and cooperatives should respect international labour standards. National legislation and policies concerning cooperatives should be in accordance with the Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation, 2002 (No. 193).

**25.** As stated in the 2004 UNDP report *Unleashing entrepreneurship: Making business work for the poor*, developed country governments should:

foster a conducive international macroeconomic and policy environment to unleash the full potential of entrepreneurs in developing countries. A robust international economy provides markets for goods from developing country companies. In addition, increasing the flow of development aid and reforming the global trading system to provide fair economic opportunities to producers from developing countries are essential for promoting rapid growth in domestic private investment.

**26.** Policies for small enterprises, including entrepreneurship and cooperatives, should be reviewed for their relevance to young persons in different country circumstances. Policies to promote employment should also be reviewed to attract, inform and assist young persons in establishing or joining small enterprises, and to assist young persons in the informal economy to move to the formal economy. Small and medium-sized enterprises, including cooperatives, can be an engine of job creation and seedbeds for innovation and entrepreneurship. In some countries, many small and medium-sized enterprises are marginal and operate outside of the formal

---

economy. The right to participate in employers' and workers' organizations by persons establishing or working in small businesses is important.

**27.** Tripartite dialogue can inform policies that target specific industries and sectors with strong potential for youth employment. In developing countries, policies seeking to increase agricultural production, rural non-farm industries, manufacturing, tourism and technological capabilities could provide real prospects for raising both economic growth and decent employment for youth. The provision of adequate high-quality public services, especially in developing countries, in areas such as health care, education, utilities, power and water is required and will directly generate additional decent work for youth as well as providing an enabling environment for increased private investment and job growth. There is considerable scope to expand economic activity in key sectors through public and private initiatives which will also help economic and job growth. The development of skills relevant to technology, when coupled with education and vocational training, can open up new opportunities for young people.

**28.** Labour market and social protection policies and employment legislation and regulations, which take into account international labour standards and social dialogue and recognize the right to collective bargaining, and the promotion of freedom of association, workplace safety, policies on wages and hours of work and other labour standards, should ensure adequate protection of young workers and the improvement of their employment prospects. The regulatory environment for enterprises should create an investment climate that fosters economic growth and the decent employment of young persons.

**29.** Governments in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations should establish labour market information and monitoring mechanisms to ensure a regular flow of information on the employment situation, specifically of young people. In order to avoid precarious employment situations that deny workers basic rights, and ensure occupational safety and health protection, labour inspection and national labour administration systems should play a key role and need to be strengthened, where necessary.

**30.** Measures to address the working conditions of youth in the informal economy include small business management training, enhanced cooperation and organization of micro- and small enterprises and the full enforcement of social and labour protection through processes such as well-resourced labour inspection systems, labour courts and functioning tripartite institutions. The organization of informal economy workers and employers through their respective organizations is also important to achieving this objective. Emphasis should be placed on necessary regulatory changes (including the removal of barriers to business entry) to enable young people in the informal economy to make the transition into the formal economy through incentives, such as management training, increased access to credit and simplified registration systems.

**31.** An enabling environment for investment and enterprise creation is essential for growth and employment. This includes effective public and private investment in essential physical and social infrastructure, inclusive of quality public services, recognition of property rights, good governance, stable institutions, political stability,

---

the rule of law including labour law, and a conducive legal framework for private investment, as advocated in the Job Creation in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Recommendation, 1998 (No. 189).

**32.** Access to universal, free, quality public primary and secondary education and investment in vocational training and lifelong learning are essential for individual and social enhancement and preparation for future working life. Education for all is an effective means of combating child labour and eradicating poverty.

**33.** Education, vocational training, core skills – including literacy and numeracy – labour market services and work experience and awareness of labour rights and occupational health and safety are essential components of a comprehensive policy to enhance the employability of young people. Education and vocational training policy should be broadly based, have a link to employment policy and should be responsive to the development of core skills being used in workplaces. A key function of the education system should be the progressive development of employability skills among young people.<sup>112</sup>

**34.** Vocational education and lifelong training responsive to the evolving demand for skills in the labour market, along with apprenticeship schemes and other measures that combine training with work, are fundamental to improving youth employability. A variety of initiatives, including public and private partnerships, and appropriate incentives for individual and collective investments in human resources development, can ensure the continued relevance of vocational education and training to labour market needs. Enterprises have a critical role to play in investment in training. A number of mechanisms used in combination to further investment in training and to guarantee access are required.<sup>113</sup> National policies should aim to provide all young women and men with the broadest possible access to responsive vocational education and training opportunities. Such policies should be guided by the relevant provisions of the Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142), and the Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195). Education and training authorities should seek to:

<sup>112</sup> “Employability is defined broadly. It is a key outcome of education and training of high quality, as well as a range of other policies. It encompasses the skills, knowledge and competencies that enhance a worker’s ability to secure and retain a job, progress at work and cope with change, secure another job if he/she so wishes or has been laid off, and enter more easily into the labour market at different periods of the life cycle. Individuals are most employable when they have broad-based education and training, basic and portable high-level skills, including teamwork, problem solving, information and communications technology (ICT) and communication and language skills, learning to learn skills, and competencies to protect themselves and their colleagues against occupational hazards and diseases. This combination of skills enables them to adapt to changes in the world of work. Employability also covers multiple skills that are essential to secure and retain decent work. Entrepreneurship can contribute to creating opportunities for employment and hence to employability. Employability is, however, not a function only of training – it requires a range of other instruments which results in the existence of jobs, the enhancement of quality jobs, and sustainable employment. Workers’ employability can only be sustained in an economic environment that promotes job growth and rewards individual and collective investments in human resources training and development.”, para. 9 of the resolution concerning human resources training and development, ILC, 88th Session, 2000.

<sup>113</sup> Para. 12 of the resolution concerning human resources training and development, ILC, 88th Session, 2000.

- 
- Integrate basic skills such as literacy, numeracy and, where possible, technological knowledge into education, equipping students with a foundation for the world of work.
  - Incorporate career guidance and support, knowledge of industry along with industrial relations and essential labour issues, such as occupational safety and health, into the early years curricula.
  - Foster career entry and career development, including the recognition of prior learning to facilitate transfer between educational programmes and through the transfer of relevant educational qualifications and credits.
  - Make education more responsive to labour market needs by directly engaging educators with industry partners in the sector and encouraging student contact with industry. Programmes which, in the latter school years, combine learning with work or work experience can bring students and employers together.

**35.** Public and private employment services can provide career guidance and counselling, impart up-to-date labour market information and support young people in finding, securing and retaining jobs. Where necessary, public employment services should be strengthened.

**36.** Taking into account relevant provisions of the Employment Policy (Supplementary Provisions) Recommendation, 1984 (No. 169), active labour market policies and programmes (ALMPs) can greatly facilitate initial employment as well as re-entry into employment. Labour market programmes could target youth, in particular disadvantaged young people, or mainstream programmes could be adapted to the needs of the individual. ALMPs are more likely to be effective when they are well targeted; meet the specific requirements of the intended beneficiaries, based on a careful analysis of the local employment situation; are linked to demand for real jobs; and include measures to improve the competencies, skills and sustainable employment opportunities of beneficiaries.

**37.** Social benefit programmes to support unemployed and underemployed youth should be established where they do not exist. Social benefit programmes should contribute to job search and labour market efficiency. However, public policy should assist young people to move into decent work or education as soon as possible.

**38.** Governments should take responsibility for the regular monitoring and evaluation of the performance of policies and programmes promoting decent work for young people. Assessing performance against established benchmarks is a proven method for moving forward. Knowledge about what works and what does not work, the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of policies and programmes on youth employment should be compiled and disseminated widely and creatively. Tools which support employers, workers and governments to identify areas of work where there are gaps in the application of international labour standards are important and should be developed.

---

## **An ILO plan of action to promote pathways to decent work for youth**

**39.** With regard to ILO work on youth employment, the Decent Work Agenda provides the paradigm, and the Global Employment Agenda, including its ten core elements and crosscutting themes,<sup>114</sup> which include the “four Es”<sup>115</sup> of the Youth Employment Network (YEN), provide the policy pillars.

**40.** The ILO, in close collaboration with the social partners and relevant international agencies, should continue to play a leading role in the Youth Employment Network to promote decent work for young persons and to synchronize the work of the YEN with these conclusions. The ILO should continue to promote the expansion of the YEN to include more countries, both developing and developed. The ILO, through the full commitment of its constituents, should ensure that it has the funds required to give effect to these conclusions and be a strong technical partner of the YEN.

**41.** The ILO should, with its tripartite constituents, strengthen partnerships with international financial institutions and United Nations organizations in order to give a central place to the promotion of youth employment in development policies and poverty reduction strategies, and in the forthcoming review of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. This should include promotion of the ILO Decent Work Agenda and the Global Employment Agenda. The ILO should play a role in promoting the resolution of the international debt problem and advocate increased resource flows into developing countries.

**42.** The ILO plan of action, with particular focus on developing countries, is based on three pillars: building knowledge; advocacy; and technical assistance.

### ***Building knowledge***

**43.** In order to assist countries in developing their policies and programmes addressing the youth employment challenge, the ILO should expand knowledge on the nature and dimensions of youth employment, unemployment and underemployment. Particular emphasis should be placed on gathering factual data and empirical evidence on the effectiveness of country policies and programmes and in synthesizing the results of country studies and evaluations. This analysis should collect examples of where policy interventions have been successful and where they

<sup>114</sup> Promoting trade and investment for productive employment and market access for developing countries; promoting technological change for higher productivity, job creation and higher standards of living; promoting sustainable development for sustainable livelihoods; a call for policy integration to ensure macroeconomic policy for growth and employment; decent work through entrepreneurship; employability through improving knowledge and skills; active labour market policies for employment, security in change, equality, and poverty reduction; social protection as a productive factor; occupational safety and health – synergies between security and productivity; productive employment for poverty reduction and development.

<sup>115</sup> Employability, equal opportunities, entrepreneurship and employment creation.

---

have not, and should extract lessons learned from such experiences. The ILO should facilitate global peer partnerships to promote better performance and disseminate and share best-practice experiences and models among its constituents, such as industry training and skills development, education linkages and human resources practices.

**44.** The ILO should develop a research agenda that includes the ILO strategy for evaluating the success of its youth-oriented technical cooperation projects, and use evaluation information to feed back into programme design. The ILO may draw on its experiences through evaluating its other youth-related efforts, for example the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC).

**45.** The ILO should strengthen research and knowledge dissemination on the ten core elements covered in the ILO Global Employment Agenda and the relationship between these core elements and the achievement of decent work for youth, including a regularly updated web site and database, publications, newsletters and practical guides. The ILO should partner, as appropriate, with other international organizations in the gathering of information and empirical research.

### ***Advocacy and the promotion of decent work for youth***

**46.** The ILO should undertake a campaign to promote the conclusions of the general discussion on promoting pathways to decent work for youth. This campaign should include an international, regional and national focus which is developed in conjunction with the social partners. The campaign should have as its core objective the promotion and implementation of these conclusions with a specific focus on information for young people themselves, taking into account the specific needs and interests of young workers, including an appropriate focus on young women and other vulnerable groups. In conjunction with its constituents, the ILO should be responsible for:

- an international promotional campaign aimed at young people to promote decent work with a focus on employment creation, workers' rights and employability, as detailed in these conclusions;
- working directly with workers and employers in the development of tool kits which will assist governments and workers' and employers' organizations to promote awareness of their rights and responsibilities for decent work.

The ILO should target this campaign at young people through communication means that are most familiar to young people, including youth media and networks for students and other young people. The Committee on Employment and Social Policy of the Governing Body of the ILO should oversee the campaign.

**47.** The ILO should strengthen cooperation with multilateral institutions and other international organizations to promote policy coordination which makes the achievement of high and sustainable levels of employment growth a priority for all relevant international institutions. The ILO should also promote the strong emphasis on decent work for youth and the Global Employment Agenda in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, as well as decent work country programmes, YEN national action

---

plans and other country-level activities undertaken by international financial institutions.

**48.** The ILO should promote good practice on policies and programmes for youth employment through tripartite meetings. This should include giving special attention to the gender dimension of the youth employment challenge, as well as the specific needs of young people affected by HIV/AIDS, and of those facing particular disadvantage due to disability, ethnic origin, labour migration and other specific circumstances.

**49.** The ILO should give a cross-cutting youth dimension to all its work. In particular, it should seek age-disaggregated data relating to employment and the world of work and include specific sections addressing the youth dimension in its research, studies and reports, including those relating to international labour standards and the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, as appropriate.

### ***Technical assistance***

**50.** The ILO should:

- (i) continue and intensify the provision of guidance and policy advice, particularly to developing countries, based on the Global Employment Agenda to promote decent work for youth;
- (ii) organize periodic, regional youth employment technical meetings in order to build knowledge and exchange experiences among youth employment policy-makers and the social partners;
- (iii) enhance the capacity of employers' and workers' organizations to effectively participate in the setting of policies and programmes in favour of youth employment, through its programme of technical cooperation, the International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin, and other means;
- (iv) strengthen the capacity of labour administration to promote the application of labour legislation at the workplace, for the benefit of all workers, including young women and men;
- (v) assist developing countries in establishing and strengthening inspection services, public employment services, data-gathering and monitoring and evaluation systems on youth employment;
- (vi) seek additional funding from donors to expand its programme of technical cooperation for the promotion of decent work for young women and men.

**51.** The ILO should maximize the comparative advantage of its tripartite structure in its activities to promote decent work for young persons. In addition to the role of governments already noted, the ILO should support employers and workers and their respective organizations, as the case may be, to:

- 
- (i) review job descriptions to promote the hiring of youth, recognizing that young people bring positive attributes to work;
  - (ii) recognize skills and productivity, not just qualifications or years of experience, to ensure that young workers have equal opportunities to other workers;
  - (iii) help educate, train and mentor through investing in education and training, participating in training bodies and assisting school-to-work transition;
  - (iv) work with industry partners, young people's networks and youth organizations to inform young people, schools, training bodies and employment agencies of both industry needs and expectations of young people;
  - (v) to assist young people and employers of young people to:
    - develop basic learning skills of literacy, numeracy and technological skills;
    - actively look for work and job opportunities, including entry-level work that combines employment with education or work experience;
    - prepare for the responsibilities of the world of work and career development by developing employability skills or upgrading skills through technical vocational training, and/or in the workplace.

**52.** The ILO should support efforts to strengthen the capacity of workers' and employers' organizations to reach out and engage young workers and employers of young workers to ensure that their specific needs are taken into account in social dialogue processes, including collective bargaining.

### **International labour standards relevant to work and young persons**

In addition to the Conventions on fundamental principles and rights at work and their related Recommendations – the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87); the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98); the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29); the Forced Labour (Indirect Compulsion) Recommendation, 1930 (No. 35); the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105); the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), and Recommendation, 1951 (No. 90); the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), and Recommendation, 1958 (No. 111); the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and Recommendation, 1973 (No. 146); the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), and Recommendation, 1999 (No. 190) – and to the priority Conventions on employment and labour inspection and their related Recommendations – the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122), and Recommendation, 1964 (No. 122); the Employment Policy (Supplementary Provisions) Recommendation, 1984 (No. 169); the Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81), and its Protocol of 1995; the Labour Inspection Recommendation,



---

1947 (No. 81); the Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129), and Recommendation, 1969 (No. 133) – , these instruments include in particular: the Employment Service Convention, 1948 (No. 88), and Recommendation, 1948 (No. 83); the Labour Administration Convention, 1978 (No. 150), and Recommendation, 1978 (No. 158); the Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181), and Recommendation, 1997 (No. 188); the Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142), and Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195); the Job Creation in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Recommendation, 1998 (No. 189); the Part-Time Work Convention, 1994 (No. 175), and Recommendation, 1994 (No. 182); the Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation, 2002 (No. 193); the Workers’ Representatives Convention, 1971 (No. 135), and Recommendation, 1971 (No. 143); the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159), and Recommendation, 1983 (No. 168); the Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97), and Recommendation (Revised), 1949 (No. 86); the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143), and the Migrant Workers Recommendation, 1975 (No. 151); the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169); the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), and its Protocol of 2002; the Occupational Safety and Health Recommendation, 1981 (No. 164); the Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184), and Recommendation, 2001 (No. 192); the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), and Recommendation, 2000 (No. 191); the Medical Examination of Young Persons (Industry) Convention, 1946 (No. 77); the Medical Examination of Young Persons (Non-Industrial Occupations) Convention, 1946 (No. 78); the Medical Examination of Young Persons Recommendation, 1946 (No. 79); the Protection of Wages Convention, 1949 (No. 95), and Recommendation, 1949 (No. 85); the Minimum Wage Fixing Convention, 1970 (No. 131), and Recommendation, 1970 (No. 135); the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102); the Employment Promotion and Protection against Unemployment Convention, 1988 (No. 168), and Recommendation, 1988 (No. 176); the Hours of Work (Industry) Convention, 1919 (No. 1), and the Hours of Work (Commerce and Offices) Convention, 1930 (No. 30); the Night Work Convention, 1990 (No. 171), and Recommendation, 1990 (No. 178).