

**Committee:** Economic and Social Council

**Topic:** Combating Youth Unemployment

**Student Officers:** Tomasz Dyjewski, Erim Habib



**Children and Youth: Fostering Peace  
and Security for Future Generations**

# **Table of Contents**

**I. Introduction**

**II. Definition of Key Terms**

**III. General Overview**

**IV. Major Parties Involved and their Views**

**V. Relevant United Nations Documents**

**VI. Questions to Consider**

**VII. Conclusion**

**VIII. Bibliography**

## I. Introduction

One of the main goals of societies around the world is to create a better future and thus we place a lot of value on education, experience, and training of the following generation. Yet, according to Plan International, an independent non-governmental organization that works on advancing children's rights and equality, globally there are 621 million youth between the ages of 15 and 24 that are not in education, training or employment. Despite the world's efforts to reduce the rate of youth unemployment, it has stayed consistent since 2015 at an average of 13%. The greatest concern, however, is in the developing and emerging countries where youth unemployment has increased.

In addition, it is important to recognize that youth unemployment affects girls differently than boys. According to the UN Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth<sup>1</sup> disparities are especially persistent in Southern Asia, the Arab States, and Northern Africa. This, in turn, has many negative implications on future gender equality and the role of women in society. The issue must be tackled immediately as every year more youth entering the workforce find themselves jobless. Furthermore, it is important to consider that while spending worldwide on education has increased in recent years many college graduates now struggle to find jobs. This, in turn, could lead to massive long term debts and negative impacts on the economy and society as a whole.

The issue of youth unemployment is a special one considering the delicacy of the situation. On one hand, the strict laws preventing youth exploitation in developed nations prevent their abuse it also makes the market less flexible. Firms are often reluctant to employ youths considering their limited experience and regulations they must abide. On the other hand, loosening the laws regarding youth employment may discourage education, especially in less developed nations, where some families heavily rely on their children for income. There are consequences regardless of the solutions and choices made, ergo both long term and short term implications should be at the forefront of the discussions during our committee.

## II. Definition of Key Terms

### a) Youth unemployment:

as defined by the United Nations youth unemployed people are those who do not have a job but are actively seeking or looking for one.

### b) Unemployment rate:

calculated by  $\frac{\text{Number of unemployed}}{\text{Total labor force}} \times 100$  is the percentage of the labor force that is considered unemployed

### c) Labor force:

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/2016/08/global-youth-unemployment-rise/>

a total number of employed and unemployed people who are of age. The working age in most nations tends to be between 16 to 65 years.

**d) Cyclical unemployment:**

A form of unemployment caused by a decrease in the demand for labor due to reduced economic activity.

**e) Labor market:**

refers to the demand and supply of labor where firms supply labor and households demand jobs

**f) Under employment:**

a condition where people in a labor force are employed less than full-time although they would like to work full-time or work jobs that are inadequate in respect to their skills, education or training. In essence, someone working a job they are overqualified for is a form of underemployment. An important issue as underemployment is often a waste of potential.

**g) NEET:**

Acronym referring to youth Not in Education Employment or Training.

### III. General Overview

**a) Consequences of Youth Unemployment**

**i) Economic Consequences**

One of the main consequences of unemployment as well as youth unemployment is the **loss of GDP**. Because consumption is an part of GDP low unemployment means that citizens have low disposable income meaning that countries with high unemployment may see stagnation in their GDPs. Linked to low consumption is a **decrease in tax revenue**. Considering that most goods and services are taxed low consumption of them will mean governments will have a more difficult time collecting revenue to support government spending or help the economy in times of recession. Consequently, this will also mean that the government will have to **increase spending on benefit programmes**. Unemployed youth often may lead to a decrease in their employability in the future, possibly resulting in higher rates of homelessness and unemployment forcing them to rely on government benefits. On a smaller scale, youth unemployment as previously mentioned will also result in a **decrease in income for individuals**. For families with low-income teenagers may experience social discrimination and exclusion. In the long run youth with low work experience, especially from the lower economic and

social groups, may lead to an **increase in income inequality**. Although youth from higher economic and social groups may also experience youth unemployment their ability to be employed regardless is higher than those from lower income families.

**ii) Social Consequences**

Aside from lower personal incomes and social exclusion youth unemployment may result in **increased crime rates**. Although evidence is not conclusive, a trend may be observed that in lower income areas crime rates tend to be higher, however, this may be caused by other factors. In addition, youth unemployment may lead to a rise in **untrained and inexperienced youth** potentially decreasing their employability in the future.

**b) Causes of Youth Unemployment**

- i) Lack of necessary skills and qualifications** to perform many jobs. Many jobs require specific abilities and knowledge that many young people lack. This, in turn, is largely related to education systems around the world and brings up the questions whether our education systems are adequate enough and
- ii) Geographical factors** youth unemployment varies significantly depending on location. In more rural areas youth unemployment tends to be higher than in urban areas. According to a study conducted in Scotland although youth employment is higher in rural areas, it is often in low skill and security sectors. Because of that, there are also limited opportunities for them to develop their skills and gain higher paying jobs<sup>2</sup>.
- iii) Local social factors** such as cultural traditions, socioeconomic obstacles, and family history play a big role in deterring or disabling opportunities for employment. Women and girls in this aspect face even greater barriers to entry. In Northern Africa and some Arab States, female youth unemployment is almost double that of men at 44.3 and 44.1%, respectively<sup>3</sup>.
- iv) Local economic factors** such as differences in the economic stability of a certain market and the economic policies that regulate the market affect the willingness and ability of employers to provide jobs alongside other components of youth unemployment
- v) Lack of access to resources** often times entrepreneurs rely on loans from banks in order to start their businesses. Young people often times lack the ability

---

<sup>2</sup> Further reading: [www.researchgate.net/publication/37183899\\_Youth\\_Unemployment\\_in\\_Rural\\_Areas](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/37183899_Youth_Unemployment_in_Rural_Areas)

<sup>3</sup> Source: <https://plan-international.org/eu/youth-unemployment-facts>

and the knowledge to do so restricting them to jobs that are available in the market.

- vi) **Strict employment laws** many nations have strict regulations on youth employment to ensure that young adults aren't exploited. Stricter regulations although necessary in some countries make it harder to employ and let go, young adult workers.

#### **IV. Major Parties Involved and their Views**

Naturally, the biggest parties hindered by the problem of youth unemployment are the employers and the young people in the labor force. Legislative bodies and groups of people with the authority to govern the issue in their respective jurisdiction are also major stakeholders. Out of all parties involved, it likely is the young labor force that is in a situation that they would describe as unjust or unfair. Many young people are complaining that education systems are not preparing them to be effective members of the workforce. While disparities in the quality of education between private and public institutions of tertiary education matter when discussing the lack of necessary skill and qualifications of newly graduates, there is an overall consensus on the disconnect between the demands of the labor market and the curriculum provided by educational institutions as a whole. Like many young graduates, employers are also unsatisfied with the skill and qualifications of prospective employees. Employers believe that young graduates lack the work experience or the set of skills that are necessary for the success of their businesses. As making profits and acting in the interests of its shareholders is the ultimate goal of a business, many employers have incentives to not hire newly graduates. Therefore, many young people opt out for work opportunities such as internships to be able to gain experience in their respective fields. Those who are not lucky enough to have support systems that allow them to work full time with minimal or no pay must rely on their parents for such periods of time. Those who are even more unlucky may not have the opportunity that opportunity go work jobs outside of their respective fields that pay minimum wage to support themselves.

This market failure is a product of the ineffective policies and policymakers that create the system in which jobs are created and provided. While many young people believe that it is not solely the responsibility of public legislators to ensure employment opportunities, there is a general perspective that government support of education and work opportunities is insufficient. Furthermore, the public sector has a real incentive to develop solutions to youth unemployment. Increased youth unemployment can have dramatic effects on public spending. One effect of youth unemployment is that it squeezes public funding dry over time through the welfare required to support a large unemployed population. Being unable to create employment also causes losses in the public spending budget by discounting the income tax that the said workforce would be paying.

##### **a) Youth Unemployment Around the world**

**vii) Europe:** In Europe despite the economies recovery from the financial crisis high youth unemployment rates in some areas remain persistently high. Most notably in Greece, Spain and Italy have 38.5%, 34.6%, and 32.2% respectively as of October 2018. This causes major concerns for governments as long periods of unemployment often discourage youth from working effectively causing degradation of skill and education over time. This prompted the EU to launch the “Youth Guarantee” programme aimed at reducing youth unemployment as well as providing continued education, apprenticeship, and traineeship. Since its creation and an initial investment of 6 billion euros the YG programme has resulted in 2 million fewer unemployed youth as well as 1 million fewer youth not in employment, education or training (NEETs)<sup>4</sup>. This has had a strong impact on the youth unemployment rate as seen below which dropped from 24.4% in 2013 when the plan was initiated to 16.8% as of 2017. Further efforts are being made and additional funds are added to the programme each year.

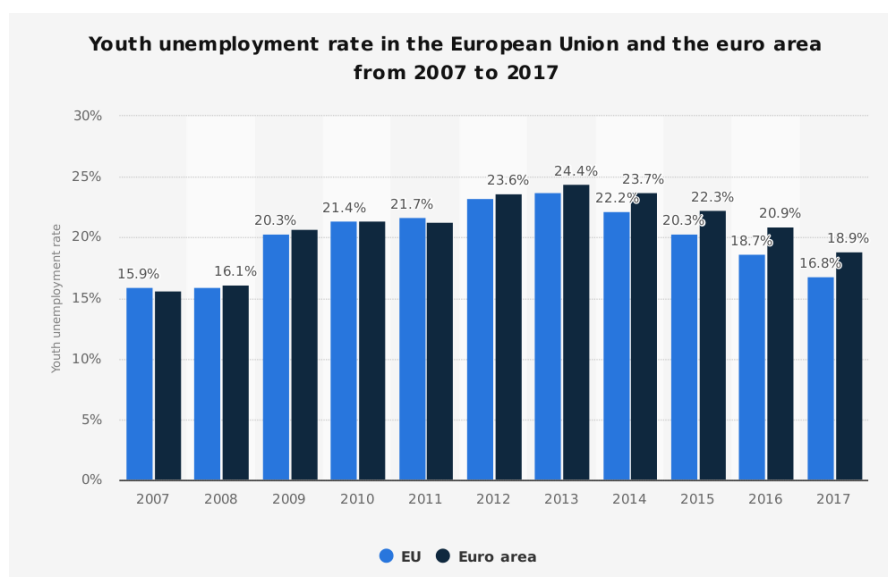


Figure 1: Youth Unemployment Rate in Europe<sup>5</sup>

**viii) Africa:**

According to the world bank, youth accounts for 60% of Africa’s unemployment. Although youth unemployment varies from country to country according to the African Development Bank in most countries youth unemployment is double that of adult unemployment. Further considering that Africa has approximately 200 million people aged between 15 and 24 youth<sup>6</sup> it is important that the future labor

<sup>4</sup> Source: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1079#navItem-7>

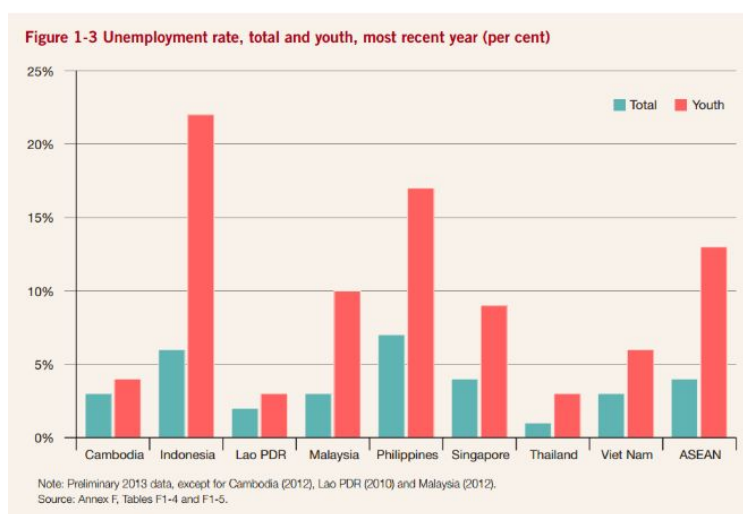
<sup>5</sup> Source: [www.statista.com/statistics/253519/youth-unemployment-rate-in-the-european-union-and-the-euro-area/](http://www.statista.com/statistics/253519/youth-unemployment-rate-in-the-european-union-and-the-euro-area/)

<sup>6</sup> Source: [un.org/africarenewal/magazine/special-edition-youth-2017/africas-jobless-youth-cast-shadow-over-economic-growth](http://un.org/africarenewal/magazine/special-edition-youth-2017/africas-jobless-youth-cast-shadow-over-economic-growth)

market will be able to support its massive labor force. **Underemployment** in Africa is also a large issue. Many well-educated university graduates may be found doing low skill jobs such as cleaning floors, working as cashiers, driving taxis etc. This is caused by a lack of jobs in the market causing a waste of potential. Many efforts have been made in the last decade to eliminate youth unemployment both by governments, individuals and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Most notably the International Labour Organization has launched multiple projects across 27 nations with a budget of over US\$ 80 million<sup>7</sup>.

**ix) Asia:**

In East Asian youth unemployment is lower than in Europe, however, it still poses a challenge for many nations. Similarly, to Africa many Asian nations suffer from **underemployment**. Often high skilled youth work low skilled jobs often in poor working conditions without social protection. Without any financial support from the government youth in poverty often join the informal sectors of the economy. This, on the other hand, may inadvertently lead to child labor which leaves them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Common in Cambodia, India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Myanmar, and Philippines an estimated 41 million children are forced to work 1 to 28 hours. Yet youth unemployment in many countries still accounts for the majority of unemployment.



**Figure 2: Youth Unemployment in East Asia<sup>8</sup>.**

<sup>7</sup> Further reading and source: [www.ilo.org/addisababa/areas-of-work/youth-employment/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/addisababa/areas-of-work/youth-employment/lang--en/index.htm)

<sup>8</sup> Source: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/05/youth-unemployment-in-east-asia/>



Further disparities among gender can also be found in many Asian nations. An important aspect to consider in fixing youth unemployment<sup>9</sup>.

### Youth employment statistics, 2009

	East Asia	South Asia	South-East Asia and the Pacific
Youth unemployment (millions)	12.8	15.3	8.3
Youth unemployment rate (%)	8.9	10.3	14.7
Male	10.3	10.1	14.0
Female	7.4	10.9	15.7
Ratio of youth to adult unemployment rates	2.6	3.1	5.0

#### x) **South America and the Caribbean:**

1 in 5 young workers in South America and the Caribbean cannot find jobs and when they do they are low-quality jobs with low future prospects<sup>10</sup>. Similarly in other areas of the world youth unemployment accounts for a significant amount of unemployment, up to 40% in some countries<sup>11</sup>. However, even when youths find jobs 6 out of 10 are ‘informal’ meaning that there aren’t any benefits, contracts, or social security rights. This, in turn, has discouraged many young adults from pursuing education and jobs effectively contributing to social exclusion, crime rate, social instability, and poverty. According to the ILO, there has been a rise in youth unemployment in the region from 18.9 per cent in 2016 to 19.5 percent in 2017 meaning that the amount of unemployed youth rose from 9.8 million to 10.2 million. However, this seems to be largely due to an increase in youth unemployment in Brazil as the region excluding Brazil has experienced 1% decline in youth unemployment<sup>12</sup>.

#### b) **Major organizations and bodies**

##### i) **International Labor Organization (ILO):**

A United Nations organization the ILO was created in 1919 with aims to set international labor standards and promote social protection as well as work opportunities. Up to the mid-1970s the ILO largely focused on protecting youth in their workplaces, however, in 2005 the ILO changed its approach. Realizing that youth unemployment is an rising issue the ILO adopted an “ integrated

<sup>9</sup> Source and further reading: [www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms\\_098144.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_098144.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Source: [www.youthemploymentdecade.org/en/repor/america-latina-afronta-la-labor-paliar-desempleo-juvenil](http://www.youthemploymentdecade.org/en/repor/america-latina-afronta-la-labor-paliar-desempleo-juvenil)

<sup>11</sup> Source: [www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/06/youth-unemployment-is-a-huge-problem-for-latin-america-here-s-how-to-solve-it/](http://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/06/youth-unemployment-is-a-huge-problem-for-latin-america-here-s-how-to-solve-it/)

<sup>12</sup> Source: [www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---americas/---ro-lima/---sro-port\\_of\\_spain/documents/publication/wcms\\_614132.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---americas/---ro-lima/---sro-port_of_spain/documents/publication/wcms_614132.pdf)

strategy, one that combined supportive economic policies and targeted measures addressing labor demand and supply as well as the quantity and quality of employment<sup>13</sup>” launching the **Youth Unemployment Programme (YEP)** the same year. The ILO is a tripartisan organization, meaning that they are largely divided into separate bureaus that work in unisense to ensure better representation for all parties involved. These constituents are **The Bureau for Workers’ Activities (ACTRAV)** and **The Bureau for Employers’ Organizations(ACT/EMP)**.

#### **1. The Bureau for Workers’ Activities (ACTRAV)**

The Bureau for Workers’ Activities operates with the main goal of ensuring that the interests of workers and unions are heard and not neglected. They work in close relation to trade unions to advocate for fair worker rights

#### **2.The Bureau for Employers’ Organizations(ACT/EMP):**

The Bureau for Employers’ Organisation is responsible for communicating with employer organizations around to world to ensure justifiable circumstances for businesses and enterprises to survive, thrive and create employment opportunities

## **V. Relevant United Nations Documents**

### **a) United Nations Resolutions**

#### **i) Resolution 2006/15 (Ref. E/2006/26)**

Created by the Economic and Social committee in 2006 this document consists of 17 operative clauses aimed at implementing plans to increase youth employment. It further encourages the cooperation of different bodies such as the ILO, World Bank and the UN to work together in reforming education as well as labor standards.

#### **ii) Resolution A/RES/50/81**

One of the first resolutions of its kind created in 1995 it calls for the creation and implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY). It further provides a framework and guidelines on which governments can rely on to facilitate a better environment for youth. It covers 15 areas that need improvement including employment.

---

<sup>13</sup> Source: [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/documents/publication/wcms\\_547338.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_547338.pdf)

**iii) Resolution A/RES/56/117**

Further building upon resolution **A/RES/50/81** this resolution ensures the implementation of the WPAY and encourages further collaboration among member states. It also calls upon for further funding, increase in the use of technology to promote education and networking possibilities for youth as well as greater dialogue between the youth and governmental bodies.

**b) World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth**

**i) Lisbon Declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes**

Created during a conference held in Lisbon, Portugal in August 1998 by Youth ministers from 146 states. This document contains 88 clauses which focus on youth development and progress similarly to the WPAY<sup>14</sup>.

## **VI. Questions to Consider**

- How can youth balance education and work at the same time?
- What wages should youth be paid for their work?
- Is increasing youth employment going to decrease the rate of education?
- How can reducing youth unemployment affect income and gender inequality?
- Can youth unemployment be solved through change in legislature?
- Will increasing youth employment lead to a rise in forced labor?
- How does labor affect the development of youth?

## **VII. Conclusion**

In conclusion, youth unemployment is a complex issue affecting millions of people world wide and having a serious implication on our future as a whole. If left unaddressed governments around the world may be facing a crisis in the form of increased poverty, crime, a decrease in social welfare, social instability and many more. The youth is our future, and as a society, our inability to provide them with jobs, training or education will cripple our ability to progress.

---

<sup>14</sup> Document: [www.youthpolicy.org/library/wp-content/uploads/library/1998\\_Lisbon\\_Declaration\\_Eng.pdf](http://www.youthpolicy.org/library/wp-content/uploads/library/1998_Lisbon_Declaration_Eng.pdf)

Young people shouldn't be viewed as an issue or a problem to solve instead youth should be viewed as a solution.

Effectively finding jobs for young adults, making sure that they possess the skills necessary for jobs in the labor market will allow our society to fix many of its issues such as income inequality, gender inequality, poverty and unemployment. Although progress has been made in the eradication of youth unemployment a lot more can still be done. This is not an easy issue to deal with, there aren't clear solutions that are applicable in every case. In your resolutions, it is important you consider the duality of your solutions and what kind of impacts they may have not only on youth but on society as a whole.

During our debates, it will be up to you to find ways to facilitate talks between governments and youth, to fix the disparities among young men and woman, find the right and balance between education and work among many other things. As we enter the workforce this issue will be more relevant and relatable to you dear delegate and thus hopefully thinking critically about youth unemployment will help you in the future navigate through the labor market. Good luck and see you in April!

## **VIII. Bibliography**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wDjD8iAgnR4>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Youth\\_unemployment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Youth_unemployment)

<https://plan-international.org/eu/youth-unemployment-facts>

<http://www.unworldyouthreport.org/>

<https://www.economicshelp.org/blog/517/economics/reasons-for-youth-unemployment/>

<http://www.hsrc.ac.za/en/review/hsrc-review-september-2013/the-young-and-the-discontented-youth-views-on-unemployment>

<https://peacechild.org/youth-unemployment-causes-and-solutions/>

<https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/who-we-are/tripartite-constituents/lang--en/index.htm>