



Even in good times, young people find it hard to get the right foothold in the labour market. Today, young people are two to three times as likely to be unemployed than adult workers. Of the world's total number of unemployed in 2010, nearly 40 per cent – or about 75 million – were between 15 and 24 years of age.¹ The failure to provide more and better jobs for young people is a concern for both industrialized and developing countries. In Spain and Greece the youth unemployment rate doubled between 2007 and 2011, and now stands at 46 and 42 per cent, respectively. In Puerto Rico, the rate of unemployment among youth is nearly 30 per cent, and it is about 20 per cent in Colombia. Young people are generally the first to lose their jobs in times of economic contraction and the last to find jobs when the economy rebounds. Data from Brazil and Chile shows that employment declined much more quickly among young people during economic downturns.²

In many countries the unemployment picture is aggravated by the large numbers of young people engaged in poor quality and low-paid jobs with intermittent and insecure work arrangements, both in the formal and informal economy. About 28 per cent of all young workers in the world – or 152 million – work but live in households that earn daily less than the equivalent of US\$1.25, the so-called working poor. Millions of young people are trapped in temporary, involuntary part-time or casual work that offers few or no benefits and limited prospects for advancement. They also face obstacles to enjoying their rights at work in practice, since it is very difficult to decide to join a trade union when faced with the threat of reprisals and non-renewal of temporary contracts.

Both developed and developing countries must create millions of quality jobs for the young people now entering the labour market. This is particularly true in developing and transition countries, where the challenge is more fundamental – not only creating jobs for young people, but also improving the conditions of work and income of young people who are often underemployed and working without adequate protections in the informal economy. Young people are all too often at the centre of a vicious circle of poverty, inadequate education and training, poor jobs and insufficient income. This “poverty trail”, from youth to adulthood, and from one generation to the next, is fraught with danger for today's societies. The costs are enormous – for individuals as well as s

economic and social opportunities “provide the oxygen in which disaffection spreads and extremism flourishes”

No political or security policies can work without economic engagement through employment, the elimination of discrimination and second chance opportunities for young people in disaffected communities

The impact of disaffection, lawlessness and extremism deeply affects businesses, employees, communities and countries

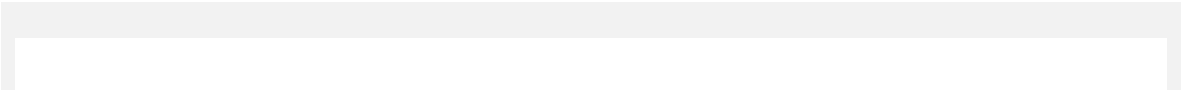
ILO,

Geneva, forthcoming.

Recent studies points to serious shortcomings relating to the provision of education and training worldwide³. In addition to the 67 million children out of school, hundreds of millions of those who are in school receive poor quality education with little prospect of gaining the skills they need to be productive members of society. There is often a significant mismatch between the education provided and the requirements of employers. This has a direct impact on both businesses and economic growth, by impeding the supply of adequately skilled workers, limiting growth and profit potential and stifling worker productivity.

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Fair Globalization⁷ as a “governance” Convention – speaks of promoting “full, productive and freely chosen employment”. This prospect offers grounds for optimism for countries to implement an active policy that promotes decent work for youth.

⁷ http://www.ilo.org/global/meetings-and-events/campaigns/voices-on-social-justice/WCMS_099766/lang--en/index.htm